

**PSYC 217 - THINKING CLEARLY ABOUT PSYCHOLOGY**  
**Sections 001, 003**

**Instructor:** Dr. Victoria Savalei

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Course Website: log on to [www.vista.ubc.ca](http://www.vista.ubc.ca) to see the course

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Office Hours: by appointment only.

**Teaching Assistants (TA):** There are two TAs for this course. Kevin will assist mostly with section 1 and Evan with section 3, but you can see either one for help. TAs will be responsible for all grading, office hours, and handling questions posted on the website and sent via email. They will also hold Q/A sections before exams and allow you to view your exams in their offices. They will do a few lectures.

Name: Kevin Williams

Office: Kenny 2403

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OH: Thursday 2-3 pm

Name: Evan Ardiel

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OH: Tuesday, 12-1 pm

### **Required Textbooks**

Stanovich, K. E. (2007). How to think straight about psychology (8<sup>th</sup> ed.). Allyn and Bacon.

Pelham, B. W., & Blanton, H. (2007). Conducting research in psychology: Measuring the weight of smoke (3rd ed.). Thomson Wadsworth.

These books cover similar topics from different perspectives. The Stanovich text teaches you how to apply critical thinking skills to recognize and critically appraise pseudoscience. You will learn how to evaluate claims made by "experts" in the media and self-help literature. By examining common misconceptions about what psychology is as a science, this book will help you become a more critical and discriminating consumer of scientific knowledge. The second text, by Pelham and Blanton, is a more standard text on psychological methods. It will cover many of the concepts introduced in Stanovich more rigorously. It will also introduce you to most common research designs.

### **Attendance**

Examinations will cover both text and lecture material. The aim of the lectures will be to motivate the reading and give additional examples. In some cases, original material that does not appear in the texts will be presented. If you miss a lecture please ask a fellow student for notes. The TAs will generally not attend lectures and will not know what you missed. I will try to post overheads on the class website, but these can be cryptic if you

were not in attendance. You can use the class website to contact other students or post a question.

## Evaluation

Your final grade will be weighted as follows:

Midterm	60%
Final exam	40%

The exams will be a combination of multiple choice, true-false, fill-in-the-blank, and short-answer questions. The final exam is cumulative, with slightly more emphasis placed on the material covered since the midterm.

## Scaling Grades

I am required by the UBC Psychology Department to produce a class average between 63 and 67%. This means that your final grade will be based on your *rank* within the class. To spare you the anguish over what your grade actually is, we will scale the midterm grades accordingly. However, we cannot guarantee that more scaling will not be necessary to meet the departmental requirements at the end of the course. Thus, take your midterm grades as a rough guideline of where you stand relative to others.

## Taking Exams

It is very hard to be taking an exam in a tense atmosphere. The following rules are set up to create as relaxed and productive an atmosphere as possible. Please respect these rules and everyone will do better. Please no hats, caps, baggy clothes, high boots, etc. No PDAs, Blackberries, cell phones, calculators, or other electronic devices. If you have them in your bag make sure they are turned off prior to entering the room. Bring a picture ID. *Your exam will not be given to you without it.* Please keep your ID on your desk for the exam period. Needless to say, the exams of the people around you will be different from yours. The exams in the two sections will be completely different. *You must take the exam in the section that you are in.* Once you walk in and take the exam, you must see a TA first before you leave the room, to make sure you have turned in your exam.

## Missed Exams

If you miss an exam, you will be assigned a grade of 0. Make-up exams will only be given to students who had a serious medical condition on the day of exam (no headaches or minor colds please), with a note from a health professional detailing the condition. Please understand this: in order not to jeopardize the integrity of the exam for everyone, I would have to write a completely different make-up exam to accommodate you. This is not fun, and I don't plan on doing it, unless there is a true and real emergency.

## **Viewing Exams**

We will go over the answers in class. The TAs will also set up an exam viewing time; however, all exams remain the property of the university and you must return them to the TAs before you leave their office. If you want to dispute any aspect of grading, you must do so in writing within one week of receiving your scores. You must give an argument for why your answer should be considered correct.

## **Psychology Department's Position on Academic Misconduct**

Cheating, plagiarism, and other forms of academic misconduct are very serious concerns of the University, and the Department of Psychology has taken steps to alleviate them. The department has implemented software that can reliably detect cheating on multiple-choice exams by analyzing the patterns of students' responses.

In all cases of suspected academic misconduct, the parties involved will be pursued to the fullest extent dictated by the guidelines of the University. Strong evidence of cheating or plagiarism may result in a zero credit for the work in question. According to the University Act (section 61), the President of UBC has the right to impose harsher penalties including (but not limited to) a failing grade for the course, suspension from the University, cancellation of scholarships, or a notation added to a student's transcript.

For details on pertinent University policies and procedures, please see Chapter 5 in the UBC Calendar (<http://students.ubc.ca/calendar>) and read the University's Policy 69 (available at <http://www.universitycounsel.ubc.ca/policies/policy69.html>).

## **Bonus Credit**

You can participate in the Human Subject Pool of the Psychology Department to take part in the experiments conducted in our department. You can add up to **2% bonus points** to your final grade by participating. You may review how many course credits you have earned online, at: <http://hsp.psych.ubc.ca>. Way more important than course credit, you will have personally contributed to scientific progress and gained a deeper understanding of experimental methods in psychology. Please show up to experiments if you sign up!!

**Psychology 217: Thinking Clearly About Psychology**  
**Fall 2007 Course Outline**

Week	Date	Topic	Reading
1	Sept 5, W	Course Intro	
	Sept 7, F	The Science of Psychology	Stanovich, Ch 1;
2	Sept 10, M	The Science of Psychology (cont'd)	Pelham & Blanton, Ch. 1 & 2 (skip ethics)
	Sept 12, W	Falsifiability	Stanovich, Ch 2
	Sept 14, F	Operational Definitions	Stanovich, Ch 3
3	Sept 17, M	Case Studies	Stanovich, Ch. 4; Pelham & Blanton, pp. 145-153
	Sept 19, W	"The Amazing Randi"	
	Sept 21, F	Correlation and Causation	Stanovich, Ch. 5
	Sept 24, M	Controls	Stanovich, Ch. 6
4	Sept 26, W	The "artificiality" criticism	Stanovich, Ch. 7
	Sept 28, F	Converging Evidence	Stanovich, Ch. 8
	Oct 1, M	Multiple Causation	Stanovich, Ch. 9
	Oct 3, W	Interactions	Stanovich, Ch. 9
5	Oct 5, F	Interactions (cont'd)	
	Oct 8, M	<i>Thanksgiving. No class.</i>	
	Oct 10, W	Probabilistic Reasoning	Stanovich, Ch. 10
	Oct 12, F	Probabilistic Reasoning (cont'd)	
6	Oct 15, M	The Role of Chance in Psychology	Stanovich, Ch. 11
	Oct 17, W	Q/A Session	
	Oct 19, F	<b>Midterm Exam</b>	
	Oct 22, M	Exam Review; Reliability	Pelham & Blanton, Ch. 3
7	Oct 24, W	Reliability (contd)	
	Oct 26, F	Validity	Pelham & Blanton, Ch. 3
	Oct 29, M	Threats to Validity	Pelham & Blanton, Ch. 5
	Oct 31, W	Scale Construction	Pelham & Blanton, Ch. 4
8	Nov 2, F	Nonexperimental Research	Pelham & Blanton, Ch. 6
	Nov 5, M	Nonexperimental Research (cont'd)	
	Nov 7, W	Experimental Research	Pelham & Blanton, Ch. 7
9	Nov 9, F	Experimental Research (cont'd)	
	Nov 12, M	<i>Remembrance Day. No class.</i>	
	Nov 14, W	Quasi-experimental research	Pelham & Blanton, Ch. 8
	Nov 16, F	Quasi-experimental research (cont'd)	
10	Nov 19, M	Choosing Research Design	Pelham & Blanton, Ch. 9
	Nov 21, W	Choosing Research Design (cont'd)	
	Nov 23, F	Basic Statistics	Pelham & Blanton, Ch. 10
11	Nov 26, M	Research Ethics	Pelham & Blanton, Ch. 2
	Nov 28, W	How to Think Straight about Psychology	Stanovich, Ch. 12
	Nov 30, F	Q/A Session	