

# PSYC 216 001

## Questioning Psychological Science in the Media

Tues & Thurs  
11:00am – 12:30pm  
LSK 201

### Instructor



#### ***Dr. Grace Truong***

**Office location:** Kenny 3505

**Office hours:** Fridays, 3:00pm-4:00pm

**Email:** gracet@psych.ubc.ca

**Grace in ≤ 25 words:** BC born and raised; all degrees from UBC; studies ownership + attention; likes hiking, food, board games, and oceans; dislikes bad drivers and heat waves

#### **In This Syllabus**

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### Teaching Assistants (TAs)

#### ***Oliver Jacobs***

**Office location:** Kenny 3010

**Office hours:** Fridays, 1:00-2:00pm

**Email:** ojacobs@psych.ubc.ca

#### **TA in ≤ 25 words:**

Oliver is a graduate student in cognitive psychology under Dr. Kingstone. His work involves using VR to study the relationship between head and eye movement.



#### ***Robbie Ruddell***

**Office location:** Scarfe 2405

**Office hours:** Mondays, 4:00-5:00pm

**Email:** robbie.ruddell@ubc.ca

#### **TA in ≤ 25 words:**

Robbie is pursuing his M.A. in Counselling Psychology. His thesis is exploring validity evidence for the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale.



### Course Description

Psychological claims are all around us, but only some are backed by scientific evidence. Throughout this course, you will investigate how research is presented in the media (e.g., blogs, podcasts, opinion articles), and critique it by applying basic principles of psychological research methods. As you become a more skillful consumer of psychological research, you will be able to translate psychological science to help others and yourself.

By the end of this course, you should be able to:

1. Identify & evaluate the validity of psychological claims made in the media or everyday conversation
2. Scrutinize the types of evidence used to support psychological claims
3. Distinguish experimental from non-experimental designs & match them to appropriate behavioral claims
4. Find, read, & summarize empirical journal articles
5. Use evidence from empirical journal articles to make a psychological claim for a lay audience
6. Contrast psychology's scientific *Way of Knowing* with other disciplines you are familiar with
7. Critique questions from popular surveys & the claims drawn from them
8. Interpret results presented in graphs & infographics
9. Compare effect size with statistical significance
10. Collaborate in a team setting to solve problems

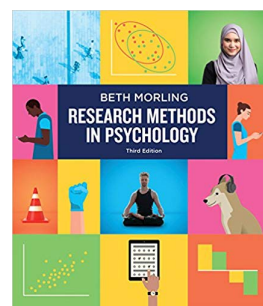
**Withdrawals:** Withdrawal from this course without record of the course on your transcript must occur before Sep 17 2019, or before Oct 11 2019 for withdrawal with a standing of "W" on your transcript.

## Course Materials

### Required Textbook

Morling, B. (2018). *Research Methods in Psychology: Evaluating a World of Information 3rd Edition*. New York: Norton.

Certain topics will require material not found in the textbook. Readings for these topics will either be posted on Canvas or be available through the UBC Library.



### Course Website:

Lecture slides, assignments, and grades will be available through Canvas. Please keep in mind that my lectures slides are to help me lead your learning, but they are not meant to serve as a replacement for coming to class. You are also welcome to use the Canvas course page to contact other students (e.g., arrange to share notes for missed classes, clarify a difficult topic, etc.) via the discussion board.

## Learning Appraisals at a Glance

Learning Appraisal Activity	Date	Percent of Total Grade
Piazza Participation	1 note before class on Sept 24, Oct 8, Oct 31, Nov 12, Nov 21 (each) 10 replies on or before Oct 22 10 replies between Oct 23 – Nov 29	5%
Midterm	Oct 22 (in class)	30%
Popular Media Assignment	Nov 25	25%

Project Peer Feedback	Nov 26 & Nov 28 (in class)	2%
Group Peer Assessment	Nov 21	3%
Final Exam	TBD	35%
<b>Total</b>		<b>100%</b>
Bonus REC/HSP	Nov 29	3%

## Learning Appraisal Descriptions

### **Examinations**

The midterms and the final exam will consist of multiple choice and short answer questions. All exams will be based on lecture material, activities, multi-media and the required readings. These will draw on both lectures and the readings and, for superior performance, you must have a clear understanding of both these sources of course content. The final exam will be longer than the midterm exams and will be cumulative.

### **Piazza Participation and Reflections**

Communicate and engage outside of class using Piazza. The system is catered to efficiently sharing ideas, generating collaboration, sharing information and getting you help fast from classmates, the TA, and myself. The formula for calculating Piazza participation is as follows:

$$\left[\frac{n}{5} * 2\right] \text{reflection notes} + \left[\frac{n}{20} * 2\right] \text{replies} + \left[\frac{n}{60}\right] \text{days online}$$

- Reflection notes are personal reflections (150–300 words) on the assigned media piece for the lecture and must be submitted before that lecture starts for credit (max.  $n = 5$  reflection notes)
- Replies can be either comments on personal reflections or answers to questions that one of your peers has asked (max.  $n = 20$  replies). The maximum number of (counted) replies per assigned media piece is 3.
- Days online is meant to credit students that are very engaged in Piazza discussions (max.  $n = 60$  days online)
- Contributions must be thoughtful and either further the discussion or answer the question effectively to be credited. Pure summaries and comments on the writing style will not be credited.

### **Group Peer Assessment**

Effective collaboration requires that students come to class prepared and ready to engage with their team members. Most in-class activities and work will be conducted in teams of students assigned near the end of the first month of class. To hold students accountable for in-class participation with peers, students will be evaluated by their group members at the end of the semester to calculate a group peer assessment grade. The assessment will evaluate each student's attendance, preparation, contributions to team discussions, engagement in activities, and collaborative spirit.

## Popular Media Assignment

The major assignment for the course is your opportunity to bring psychology to the masses! The assignment is a popular media presentation of some concept in psychology. Students should introduce the concept, summarize the research literature, and examine at least one research article in-depth. Students should then analyze the research for reliability, validity, warranted conclusions, and potential limitations. The assignment can be completed in multiple formats, including video or screencast, podcast, infographic, or in a traditional essay format. For all formats except the essay, students can work in groups of 2-3 students. The essay format is safe and does not require group work; however, I would encourage you to take the opportunity to develop a new skill by exploring the more unconventional format options. Details of the assignment, including guidelines & the marking rubric are available in the assignment document posted to Canvas.

Guidance for completing the assignment will be addressed throughout the semester in various lectures. Students will be given time to work on their assignment in class on October 17<sup>th</sup> to consult with the instructor or TA. **Attendance on Oct 17th is MANDATORY (see assignment document for details).**

## ***Research Experience Component (REC/HSP credits/Library Assignments)***

You have the opportunity to earn up to three (3) extra percentage points on your overall final grade by participating in studies regularly conducted by the Psychology Department and coordinated through the human subject pool (HSP). This provides the valuable opportunity to observe the research process directly and to contribute to the ongoing research activities at UBC. The extra grades are obtained by signing up for the Introductory Psychology Subject Pool through their website: <https://hsp.psych.ubc.ca/>. Please note that any inquiries about credits should be directed to HSP or the experimenters that you worked with, \*not\* the instructor. One percentage point is assigned to your final grade for each hour of participation. Credits can be recorded and tracked via the subject credit website. These credits are added to your grade at the end of the course. If you do not correctly assign your credits to this course, you will NOT receive credit so please make sure you have done this correctly.

As an alternative to participating in studies, you may choose to complete library writing projects, in which you read and summarize a research article; each article summary counts as one hour of research participation. For each summary, you must select a research article (not a letter to the editor, commentary, or review paper) published between 2000 and the present in the journal *Psychological Science*. Each summary should be about 500 words and should describe the research question, methods, and results of the study presented in the article. Complete instructions on how to complete the library-writing projects can be found on p.4 ("The Library Option") of the guide at <https://psych.ubc.ca/undergraduate/opportunities/human-subject-pool/> in the document entitled "Subject Pool Information for Participants." You must adhere to the complete instructions detailed in the guide to receive your credits.

Any student who is suspected of plagiarism will, at a minimum, not be granted credit, and their course instructor will be notified. Further action may be taken at a departmental or university level.

***The HSP system closes on the last day of classes. This will be your final day to earn research participation credits, and the final day to assign credits to this course.***

# University Policies

UBC provides resources to support student learning and to maintain healthy lifestyles but recognizes that sometimes crises arise and so there are additional resources to access including those for survivors of sexual violence. UBC values respect for the person and ideas of all members of the academic community. Harassment and discrimination are not tolerated nor is suppression of academic freedom. UBC provides appropriate accommodation for students with disabilities and for religious observances. UBC values academic honesty and students are expected to acknowledge the ideas generated by others and to uphold the highest academic standards in all of their actions.

Details of the policies and how to access support are available on [the UBC Senate website](#).

## Course Policies

### ***Attendance***

I expect you to attend every lecture. Lecture slides are NOT a substitute for lecture, and exams will contain a significant amount of content only provided in lecture. I will number our lecture slides so that you can take notes corresponding to each slide during lecture. If you must miss a class, please contact your fellow classmates to obtain notes and/or information on what you missed.

### ***In the Classroom***

Please be respectful of your classmates & me. This includes arriving to class on time, staying seated except during breaks & activities, & avoiding distracting behavior like texting or surfing the internet. On occasion, you might feel it is necessary to say something to a classmate. I won't police the class. However, if I find your talking distracting I will politely ask you to stop talking.

### ***Laptop Use***

I understand that many students use laptops or other electronic devices as learning tools. However, some students use their laptops during class for activities that are not related to this course. This can easily distract students sitting nearby. For this reason, I ask that anyone using a laptop or similar device for activities unrelated to the course sit at the back of the classroom.

### ***During Exams***

Every exam will require you to fill out a Scantron sheet in response to multiple choice questions, and therefore it is *your responsibility* to bring a **pencil** and eraser to every exam. You will not be allowed to write the exam if you are more than 30 minutes late, or if another student has already submitted his/her exam, if that occurs first. You will have **80 minutes** to write the midterm exam, and when time is called you must immediately stop writing, remain quiet and follow the instructions for submitting your exam. This means you will not be given extra time to put your name and/or student ID on your Scantron form or exam, change an answer, etc. Failure to comply with any of these instructions will result in a '0' on your exam.

### ***Missing Exams***

If you are aware of scheduled UBC-sanctioned sport travel or a religious obligation that conflicts with the date of an exam, you **MUST** contact the instructor within the *first two weeks of classes* so that alternate arrangements can be made. If you miss an exam/quiz for a university-approved reason, you must contact the instructor *before the exam* or as soon as possible after the exam. It is your responsibility to schedule a makeup exam **within one (1) week** of the original exam date (unless your situation warrants a longer period). If you miss an exam for any other reason (e.g., work commitments, sleeping in, forgetting there was an exam, etc.), you will receive a "0" on the exam.

## Reviewing Exams

There will be an exam review period scheduled after the exam marks are released. Your TA will run this review session, and will be available to answer any questions or concerns regarding your exams. Should you be unable to attend this review session, you must contact your TA to make alternative arrangements to see your exam. You must arrange to see your exam **within 2 weeks** of the grades being released. Following this two week period, your exam will not be available.

## Grades

In order to reduce grade inflation and maintain equity across multiple course sections, all psychology courses are required to comply with departmental norms regarding grade distributions. According to departmental norms, the average grade in a 100- and 200-level Psychology courses are 67 for an exceptionally strong class, 65 for an average class, and 63 for a weak class, with a standard deviation of 14. Scaling may be used in order to comply with these norms; grades may be scaled up or down as necessary by the professor or department. Grades are not official until they appear on a student's academic record. You will receive both a percent and a letter grade for this course.

<u>Letter Grade</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Letter Grade</u>	<u>Percent</u>
A+	90 - 100	C+	64-67
A	85 - 89	C	60-63
A-	80 - 84	C-	55-59
B+	76 - 79	D	50-54
B	72 - 75	F	0-49
B-	68 - 71		

## Academic Misconduct

Cheating on exams will result in a score of 0 for that exam. Lab assignments must be completed independently. Sharing your answers to lab assignment questions or using another student's work is considered cheating and will result in a score of 0 for that assignment. Using another student's clicker to answer questions for him or her is also considered cheating. If you are caught with more than one clicker in class, both clickers will be confiscated and you will both receive a 0 for course participation. All forms of cheating will be reported to the university for appropriate action.

## Psychology Department's Position on Academic Misconduct

Cheating, plagiarism, and other forms of academic misconduct are serious concerns of the University, and the Department of Psychology has taken steps to alleviate them. First, the Department uses software that can reliably detect cheating on multiple-choice exams by analyzing the patterns of students' responses. In addition, the Department subscribes to *Turnitin*, a service designed to detect and deter plagiarism. All materials (e.g., papers, lab assignments) that students submit for grading may be scanned and compared to over five billion pages of content located on the Internet or in *Turnitin's* own proprietary databases. The results of these comparisons are compiled into customized "Originality Reports" containing several, sensitive measures of plagiarism; instructors receive copies of these reports for students in their class.

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.



If you have any questions as to whether or not what you are doing is even a borderline case of academic misconduct, please consult me. For details on pertinent University policies and procedures, please see Chapter 5 (“Policies and Regulations”) in the UBC Calendar (<http://students.ubc.ca/calendar>).

### **Access and Diversity (Centre for Accessibility)**

UBC is committed to equal opportunity in education for all students including those with documented physical disabilities or learning disabilities. If you have a disability that affects your learning or performance on tests or exams please visit <http://students.ubc.ca/about/access> and take the necessary steps to ensure your success at UBC.

## **Helpful Resources**

### **The Kaleidoscope:**

*the-kaleidoscope.com*

A confidential peer-run mental health support group that takes place on campus at least once a week. You may attend the group if you are experiencing any kind of mental health related challenges, or if you're just feeling stressed about school in general. Registration is not required to attend the group. See the website for meeting times and locations. Food and drink are provided.

### **Counselling Services:**

*students.ubc.ca/livewell/services/counselling-services*

Phone number: 604-822-3811

Counselling services offers a variety of resources to help you maintain your mental health while in school. You may see a counsellor on an individual basis, attend group counselling, or to document an illness if you should require academic concession.

### **SpeakEasy:** *ams.ubc.ca/services/speakeasy/*

Phone number: 604-822-9246

A student run service that offers confidential support for students experiencing crisis. Also a good resource for additional information and referrals within the UBC community.

### **SHARE:** *www.vivreshare.org*

Self Harm Anonymous Recovery and Education is a program designed to promote self care and educate about self-harm. SHARE support groups meet biweekly; times and locations can be found on their website.

### **UBC Wellness Centre:** *students.ubc.ca/livewell/services/wellness-centre*

Phone number: 604-822-8450

Speak with other students about tips for managing stress, keeping healthy sleep and eating patterns, concerns about safe sex and more.

### **Access and Diversity:** *students.ubc.ca/about/access*

604-822-5844

Access and Diversity provides accommodations for students living with physical or mental disabilities.

### **Student Health Services:** *students.ubc.ca/livewell/services/student-health-service*

604- 822-7011

Student health provides students with a variety of healthcare related services to help you maintain your health while studying. Access to doctors and registered nurses.

**Mood Disorders Clinic UBC:** [ubc-mooddisorders.vch.ca/](http://ubc-mooddisorders.vch.ca/)

A psychiatric program designed specifically to treat individuals living with depression or bipolar disorder.

**Pacific Spirit Addiction Services:**

3rd Floor, 2110 West 43rd Ave Vancouver B.C. V6M 2E1

Phone number: 604-267-3970

A free and confidential service for youth and young adults up to the age of 24. Services include counselling, access to an addiction physician - including usage of a methadone maintenance program - and a drug education series.

**UBC Psychology Clinic:** [clinic.psych.ubc.ca](http://clinic.psych.ubc.ca)

Professional psychological services provided to the community, including assessment & treatment for children, adults & families by clinical psychology trainees.

**BC Crisis Center:** [crisiscentre.bc.ca](http://crisiscentre.bc.ca)

Phone number: 604-872-3311

Non-profit, volunteer-driven organization that provides emotional support to youth, adults, and seniors in crisis in BC. Crisis line available 24/7.

**Distress Line:**

Phone number: 1-800-Suicide (784-2433)

If you are in distress or are worried about someone in distress who may hurt themselves, call 1-800-SUICIDE 24 hours a day to connect to a BC crisis line, without a wait or busy signal.

**AMS Food Bank:** [ams.ubc.ca/services/food-bank/](http://ams.ubc.ca/services/food-bank/)

If you are in a financial emergency AMS food bank can provide you with a food hamper. You are able to use the service up to 6 times each term.

**Live Well, Learn Well:** [students.ubc.ca/livewelllearnwell](http://students.ubc.ca/livewelllearnwell)


The Live Well, Learn Well initiative is a resource hub that provides students with information to help improve physical and mental wellbeing.













**Mental Health Awareness Club:** [ubcmhac.sites.olt.ubc.ca/](http://ubcmhac.sites.olt.ubc.ca/)

A club that offers opportunities to speak about mental health with others and strives to promote mental health awareness throughout the UBC community.








# Course Schedule

 symbol = there is an assigned media piece or academic resource for reading/listening/watching before class available on Canvas

Week	Date	In-Class Topic	Reading & Assignments
1	TH Sept 5	Welcome & Syllabus	
2	T Sept 10	Critical Thinking, Course Assessments	 Piazza participation begins
	TH Sept 12	Visual Information	 + other resource If you have a laptop or tablet, please bring it!
3	T Sept 17	Three Claims, Four Validities	 + Chapter 3
	TH Sept 19	Three Claims, Four Validities	 + Chapter 3
4	T Sept 24	Finding Media Claims & Journal Articles	 (38 min) + Chapter 2 If you have a laptop or tablet, please bring it!
	TH Sept 26	Reading a Journal Article	 + Chapter 2 In-Class Tutorial – reading a journal article
5	T Oct 1	Identifying Good Measurement	 + Chapter 5
	TH Oct 3	Identifying Good Measurement	 + Chapter 5
6	T Oct 8	The Scientific Way of Knowing	 + Chapter 1
	TH Oct 10	The Scientific Way of Knowing	 (56 min)
7	T Oct 15	Exam Review Session	Please bring your textbook and lecture notes to this class
	TH Oct 17	<b>Project Work Day</b>	Students will be given time to work on their popular media assignments
8	T Oct 22	<b>Midterm</b>	
	TH Oct 24	Surveys & Sampling	 + Chapter 6
9	T Oct 29	Surveys & Sampling	 + Chapter 7

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			Practice Group Peer Assessments
	TH Oct 31	Bivariate Correlations	 + Chapter 8
10	T Nov 5	Multivariate Correlations	Chapter 9
	TH Nov 7	Experiments	 + Chapter 10 If you have a laptop or tablet, please bring it!
11	T Nov 12	Experiments	 + Chapter 11 (pp. 311-329)
	TH Nov 14	Experiments	Chapter 12 (pp. 351-372)
1	T Nov 19	Special Topics	
	TH Nov 21	Special Topics	 Real Group Peer Assessments <b>Media Assignments are due Nov 25</b> (submit to Canvas)
13	T Nov 26	Popular Media Assignment Presentations	Students are required to submit peer feedback forms for in-class presentations
	TH Nov 28	Popular Media Assignment Presentations	Students are required to submit peer feedback forms for in-class presentations
<b>Final Exam</b> (cumulative, during final exam period, see note below)			

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*Schedule is subject to change as term progresses. Updates will be announced in class.*

### Important

The Final Exam will take place during the final exam period, which runs from December 3 to December 18. Saturdays are included in the final exam period. Your attendance at the final exam is mandatory.

You should not make travel plans until you learn the date of your final exam. You cannot take the final at a different date/time unless you have a verifiable medical reason.