

PSYC 216:
QUESTIONING PSYCHOLOGICAL SCIENCE IN THE MEDIA

FALL 2021, TERM 1
TUES-THURS 3:30 – 5 PM
HENRY ANGUS 098



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Email policy: Please include “PSYC 216” in the subject line. Note that emails may not be answered on weekends.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Psychological claims are all around us, but only some are backed by scientific evidence. In this course you will discover the basics of psychological research methods and learn how to apply them to critically understand research presented in the media – in blogs, podcasts, news articles. As you become a more skillful consumer of psychological research, you will be able to translate psychological science to help others, and yourself!

LEARNING GOALS

By the end of this course you will be able to:

1. **Evaluate** the validity of psychological claims in the media (or in everyday conversation)
2. **Scrutinize** the evidence being used to support psychological claims
3. **Distinguish** between experimental and non-experimental designs & match them to appropriate psychological claims

4. **Read** empirical scientific journal articles
5. **Construct** accurate summaries of psychological research that are appropriate for a lay audience
6. **Interpret** results presented in graphs and infographics
7. **Contrast** statistical effect size with statistical significance

COVID-19 SAFETY

Masks

You are required to wear a non-medical mask during our class meetings, for your own protection and the safety and comfort of everyone else in the class. For our in-person meetings in this class, it is important that all of us feel as comfortable as possible engaging in class activities while sharing an indoor space. Non-medical masks that cover our noses and mouths are a primary tool for combating the spread of COVID-19. Further, according to the provincial mandate, masks are required in all indoor public spaces including lobbies, hallways, stairwells, elevators, classrooms and labs. There may be students who have medical accommodations for not wearing a mask. Please maintain a respectful environment.

Course Structure and Attendance

Classes will be held in person on Thursdays, and in Zoom on Tuesdays (see course schedule for more details). All classes will be recorded and uploaded to Canvas. As you will see in the learning appraisals section, no components of the grade require in person presence.

If you are sick, it is important that you stay home. Complete a self-assessment for COVID-19 symptoms here: <https://bc.thrive.health/covid19/en>. In this class, the marking scheme is intended to provide flexibility so that you can prioritize your health and still succeed. **If you miss class because of illness you don't need to notify me.**

Midterms will be administered online.

If you are feeling ill at the time of a final exam, do not attend the exam. You must apply for deferred standing (an academic concession) through Arts Academic Advising. Students who are granted deferred standing (SD) will write the final exam/assignment at a later date.

If I (the instructor) am feeling ill: If I am unwell, I will not come to class. I will make every reasonable attempt to communicate plans for class as soon as possible (by email, on Canvas, etc.). If I am well enough to teach, but am taking precautions to avoid infecting others, we may hold the class online. If this happens, you will receive an announcement in Canvas informing you how to join the class. Our classroom will still be available for you to sit in and attend an online session. Otherwise:

- I may ask you to do an activity or read something in place of class time
- One of my colleagues or the TAs will substitute

COURSE MATERIALS

The required text for this course is *Research Methods in Psychology: Evaluating a World of Information, 4th edition* (Morling, 2021). All additional readings and media material will be available on the Canvas course website. You will be expected to read, listen to, or watch all additional materials unless otherwise noted.

LEARNING APPRAISALS AT A GLANCE

Learning Appraisal Activity	Date	Percent of Total Grade
Piazza Participation		
5 Media Reflections	9/23, 10/5, 10/26, 11/4, 11/18	5%
1 Debunking Post	11/23	2%
Inquisitive Participation	12/7	3%
Midterm	10/19	30%
Popular Media Project	11/29	25%
Group Peer Assessment	11/29	5%
Final Exam	TBA	30%
Total		100%
Bonus HSP	12/7	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.

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. The essay format is safe, 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.

You will work in groups of 2-3 students.

Guidance for completing the assignment will be addressed throughout the semester in various lectures and in Piazza “project” space. Students will be given time to work on their assignment in class on October 12th to consult with the instructor or TA.

GROUP PEER ASSESSMENT

Effective collaboration requires that group members are actively contributing to the joint project. You will work on the popular media assignment in teams of students assigned near the end of the first month of class. To hold students accountable for the project work 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, and collaborative spirit.

PIAZZA PARTICIPATION

To practice the material we are learning, discuss questions and ideas we will be using Piazza. The system is created to efficiently share ideas, generate collaboration, share information and get help from classmates, the TA, and myself. You first need to sign-up for Piazza here: piazza.com/ubc.ca/winterterm12021/psyc2160012021w1

Please use access code: **research**

There are three different ways to contribute on Piazza:

- 1) Media Reflections are personal reflections on one of the assigned media pieces that all students will be expected to read, watch, or listen to and then evaluate based on our knowledge of research methods.
 - A strong reflection note will clearly and correctly evaluate the assigned media piece, and/or underlying research article according to concepts we encounter during class. Although quality is more important than quantity, I expect that a strong response will average between 200-500 words in length.
- 2) Debunking Posts are meant to act as a culmination of our work this term. Each student will be expected to make one debunking post in which they find a psychological claim in media that is incorrect, and then discuss the reasons why this claim is incorrect.
 - Students should find articles or other media that has not already been ‘debunked’ in another student’s post. You can search *Piazza* for keywords (like the author or title of your media) to see if your media has already been discussed.
 - A strong debunking post 1) clearly summarizes claim(s) made in the media source, 2) discusses limitation(s) of the claim, 3) proposes an alternative (and better!) claim that is justified, and 4) discusses how the audience would react differently to the alternative claim.

- 3) Thoughtful or Helpful Replies to media reflections and debunking posts are ways that we can help each other consider new ways of thinking about psychology in the media, and through that improve our and our peers' understanding of the course! Replies are encouraged (anonymous or signed), but they will not affect your grade.

INQUISITIVE PARTICIPATION

Inquisitive is an active learning tool provided by Norton publishers that goes together with our textbook – *Research Methods in Psychology: Evaluating a World of Information*. I expect you to read a chapter ahead of the class and complete Inquisitive quiz before the class begins. A quiz is considered completed when you reach 100%. Here is how that will translate into course grade:

If you complete (reach 100%)	You will receive...
7 or more quizzes	3%
6 quizzes	2.5%
5 quizzes	2%
4 quizzes	1.5%
3 quizzes	1%
2 quizzes	0.5%

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

Attending classes will help you learn the material better and with less effort. Having said that, the course is designed to work remotely in its entirety. Notice that you will have to interact with your peers for the popular media assignment. If you are unable to do that offline, make sure to coordinate and work with your peers using online resources (zoom, google slides, etc.). At any point in this course, **if you are sick, it is important that you stay home**, and you **don't need to notify me**.

Treat others respectfully

You are expected to treat all classmates, teammates, instructor, and Teaching Fellows, with respect in and out of the classroom, face-to-face and in writing (e.g., on email). This includes arriving on time and minimizing distractions for other students.

During exams

Every exam will require you to fill out a Scantron sheet or Canvas Quiz in response to multiple choice questions, and therefore it is your responsibility to bring a pencil and eraser to every in-class 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. When time is called you must immediately stop writing, remain quiet and follow the instructions for submitting your exam. Failure to comply with any of these instructions will result in a '0' on your exam.

Missing exams

Course policy is that we do not give make-up midterms. If you miss an exam for a medical reason, because of a UBC-sanctioned sport travel, or for a religious obligation, you must contact Dr.Dudarev **before the exam**. In case of an illness or an emergency, contact us as soon as

possible. You might be required to apply to Arts Advising, and they might require documents to support the reason you missed a midterm. *If you are excused from one of the midterms we will distribute that proportion of your grade across the other exams.*

Presence at the Final Exam is mandatory. If you absolutely must miss the final exam due to an extenuating circumstance like severe illness, you or your caregiver must submit the Arts Advising Online Concession Form¹. If you have 3 or more exams scheduled to start and finish within a 24 hour period you may request to write the second exam on a different day. However, you must give the instructor of the second exam one month notice. 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

You may review your midterm exam after the exam marks are released. Your TA will be available to answer any questions or concerns regarding your exams. 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.

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

Academic Misconduct

Cheating on exams will result in a score of 0 for that exam. All assignments (media reflections, inquisitive, etc.) except for the Popular Media Assignment must be completed independently. Sharing your answers to assignment questions or using another student’s work is considered cheating and will result in a score of 0 for that assignment. 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 very serious concerns of the University, and the Department of Psychology has taken steps to alleviate them. In the first place, the Department has implemented 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 (term papers, lab reports, etc.) that students submit for grading will be compared to over 5 billion

¹ <https://students.arts.ubc.ca/advising/academic-performance/help-academic-concession/>

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 originality that flag instances of matching text suggesting possible plagiarism; instructors receive copies of these reports for every student in their classes. During exams, the instructor and invigilators reserve the right to move students in their seating arrangement with no explanation provided.

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>).

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.

Access and diversity

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.

RESOURCES AT UBC

UBC Academic Regulations

Information about academic regulations, course withdrawal dates and credits can be found in the University Calendar at <http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/vancouver/>.

Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Academic accommodations help students with a disability or ongoing medical condition overcome challenges that may affect their academic success. Academic accommodations are not determined by course instructors. However, your instructor may consult with Centre for Accessibility should the accommodations affect the essential learning outcomes of a course. For more information, see <https://students.ubc.ca/enrolment/academic-supports/academic-accommodations-disabilities>.

Time Management

Plan your time wisely! See assignmentcalculator.library.ubc.ca for planning time to complete papers.

Learning Commons

is UBC's online hub for study and research support. This interactive website provides you with a wealth of academic resources, from tutoring and workshops to study groups and online technology tools. It also offers plenty of information on a variety of academic topics, and links to nearly all of the academic resources offered at UBC. <http://learningcommons.ubc.ca>

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.

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/*

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

Live Well, Learn Well: *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/*

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

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.

AMS Food Bank: 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.

UBC Psychology Clinic: 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

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.

COURSE SCHEDULE

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

 symbol = the class will be held on Zoom

Week	Date	In-Class Topic	Reading & Assignments
1	Sept 9	Welcome & Syllabus Critical Thinking	
2	Sept 14 	Sources of Information	Chapters 1, 2  Piazza participation begins
	Sept 16	Finding Media Claims & Journal Articles. Reading a Journal Article	 Chapter 2
3	Sept 21 	Visual Information	
	Sept 23	Three Claims, Four Validities	 Chapter 3
4	Sept 28 	Three Claims, Four Validities	 Chapter 3
	Sept 30	Truth and Reconciliation Day, no class	
5	Oct 5 	Identifying Good Measurement	 Chapter 5
	Oct 7	Identifying Good Measurement	 Chapter 5
6	Oct 12	Project work day	
	Oct 14 	Exam Review	
7	Oct 19 	Midterm	
	Oct 21 	Surveys	Chapter 6
8	Oct 26	Sampling & Frequency	 Chapter 7
	Oct 28 	Sampling & Frequency	 Chapter 7
9	Nov 2 	Bivariate & Multivariate Research	 Chapter 8
	Nov 4	Bivariate & Multivariate Research	 Chapter 9
10	Nov 9 	Experiments	 Chapter 10
	Nov 11	NO CLASS	
11	Nov 16 	Experiments	 Chapter 11
	Nov 18	Experiments	 Chapter 12
12	Nov 23	Final Project Consultations	Media Assignments are due NOV 29 (submit to Canvas)
	Nov 25 	Special Topics	
13	Nov 30	Popular Media Assignment Presentations	
	Dec 2	Popular Media Assignment Presentations	