

Psychology of Childbirth

Psyc 207
Section 001
Winter Term 1
Year: 2022/23



Psych 207: Contemporary Topics in Cognitive and Biological Psychology

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This course examines different forms of human knowledge and how cognitive, biological, and social processes can shape and sometimes misshape this knowledge. Our knowledge about the process of giving birth comes from multiple sources, including scientific evidence, cultural beliefs, medical practices, the mass media, and personal experiences. The ways by which we come to possess, use, and question the validity of this knowledge will be discussed.

Location and times for classes

Lecture room: Hennings Buildings Rm 202 (6224 Agricultural Road)

Lecture times: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 11:00 am - 12:30 pm

Inclusive Learning Statement

As your faculty, I am committed to creating an accessible learning environment for all class members. Please reach out to the Centre for Accessibility very early in the semester if you have particular learning needs. You can also feel free to let me know if there is anything I can do in my teaching practices to accommodate access needs. You do not need to disclose anything to me, just inform me of ways to remove any barriers to your learning. Being inclusive of people with diverse backgrounds and experiences benefits everyone's learning. It is my intent that all students are well served by this course, and that the diversity that all students bring to this class be viewed as a resource, strength & benefit. Your suggestions are encouraged and appreciated.

Please note: This course has a large focus on the importance and role knowledge has in society as well as in everyday life. It is important to acknowledge that while having these conversations, some individuals have been left out. Previously, our language has been used to identify anyone who gives birth as women, this is not true. In this course, we will try to use inclusive language including 'birth givers', 'people with uteruses', etc. to describe the nature of the birth and the experience in an inclusive manner.

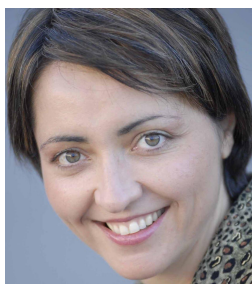
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Andre is a Masters student in
Cognitive Neuroscience under
the supervision of Dr.
Christoff.



Learning objectives

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

1. Identify and analyze the sources (e.g., social, personal, scientific) of your own knowledge about birth.
2. Understand the cognitive, biological, and social mechanisms that shape our knowledge about birth.
3. Discuss how and when, in the context of birth, knowledge can include
 - a. incomplete truths
 - b. self-fulfilling truths
 - c. culturally-determined truths
 - d. motivated truths
 - e. point-of-view truths
 - f. illusory truths
4. Distinguish the different domains of knowledge about birth (scientific, medical, personal, traditional, visceral), question the validity of knowledge within each domain, and understand how different domains interact to form our overall knowledge of birth.
5. Use course material across different course parts to form a critical understanding of our knowledge about birth.

Class attendance

Regular attendance of classes is expected by UBC, however, this expectation is not always reasonable or possible given the complexity of the human existence. If you miss class, you are responsible for obtaining missed notes and important announcements. Your classmates are a vital resource, so don't forget to use them.

UBC Canvas

This course will require you to use the course's [UBC Canvas](#) site. To access it, you will need to log in with your UBC CWL. Important updates, information, assignments, surveys, discussion boards, and assigned readings, and other materials and announcements will be posted and completed through UBC Canvas. You are responsible for checking the site frequently.

Resources

- Powerpoint slides will be made available online on the course's [UBC Canvas](#) site.
- Assigned readings are going to be posted on the [UBC Canvas](#) site.
- There will be no textbook for this class.

Important dates

Tuesday, Sept 6: First day of class (Course overview and introduction)

Monday, Sept 19: Last day to withdraw without W standing

Friday, Oct 28: Last day to withdraw with W standing

(The course cannot be dropped after Oct 28)

<u>Grade Evaluation</u>		
Evaluation	Due Date	Worth
Exam 1 Covering material from the Sept 8 to Oct 4	Oct 6	25%
Exam 2 Covering material from Oct 11 to Nov 8	Nov 17	25%
Final Exam Covering all material from Sept 11 to Dec 6	Date set by registrar (Exam period December 11-22, including Saturdays)	30%
Short Paper Assignments Papers will be approximately 250-500 words long. Each paper will receive a pass or fail evaluation.	Tuesdays or Thursdays by 11:59 starting Sept 15	1.5% each for a total of 12%
Participation Grades Surveys and discussion boards on Canvas will be open for 24 hrs of a class.		8%

Class participation: 9% total

- iClicker participation during lectures
- completing in-class surveys
- Surveys and Discussion Boards will be issued and completed in the classroom and through [UBC Canvas](#).

Class participation grade will be determined by the percentage of iClicker questions you answered in class and the percentage of in-class surveys you completed *during your attendance in class*. If you complete 75% or more of these items, you will receive a full participation score of 9%. If you complete less than 75% of these items, you will receive participation points as listed in the table below.

Your particular answer to in-class iClicker question will NOT affect your class grade. Although you should try to answer each question to best of your knowledge, when it comes to your course grade, it does matter whether you answer correctly or not. All that is required for you to earn participation points is to provide a response.

If you miss a class and miss the opportunity to participate through in-class surveys or iClickers, you will not be able to make up for this participation (no exception to this policy, sorry).

% of completed assignment	<10%	10-20%	20-30%	30-40%	40-50%	50-60%	60-70%	70-75%	>75%
Participation mark	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

Exams content and missed exams

Exams will be based on the material covered in class and on the assigned readings. Exams will consist mostly of **multiple-choice questions**, but may also contain a few **fill-in-the-blanks and short answer questions**. **The final exam will be cumulative, more questions will have to do with untested material.** More details about the exams will be provided closer to exam dates.

If you must miss any of Exam 1 or 2, for any reason, the other exam will be worth 30% and your final exam will be worth 50% of your course grade. No make-up will be held for exam 1 and 2. Note that the final is going to be harder, so it is best not to miss those exams 1 and 2. **No accommodation** will be provided for missing more than one exam.

If you absolutely must miss the final exam due to an extenuating circumstance like severe illness, you or your caregiver must apply for Academic Concession by contacting your Faculty's Advising Office (e.g., Arts Advising through the Centre for Arts Student Services). Once academic concession has been granted, students will be allowed to take the make-up final exam.

COURSE CONTENT AND STRUCTURE

There will be two main themes in the class that will be discussed and introduced. The two themes will appear in lectures throughout the term.

Theme 1: Common knowledge about birth

This theme will discuss notions that have become "common knowledge" about birth (e.g., "Birth is painful" and "Birth is dangerous"). We will discuss the following kinds of truths that can form part of our knowledge, and the cognitive, biological, and social mechanisms that underlie their formation:

- incomplete truths
- self-fulfilling truths
- culturally-determined truths
- motivated truths
- point-of-view truths
- illusory truths

In addition, we will discuss the cognitive, biological, and social mechanism underlying the following topics:

- How attention shapes knowledge
- How experience shapes knowledge, including the role of expectations, explanations, and interpretations
- How culture shapes our associative memory and associative learning
- How our associative memory shapes our intuitive judgments, including the role of processing fluency

Theme 2: Non-common knowledge about birth

This theme will discuss different domains of knowledge about birth and the cognitive and biological mechanisms by which various factors shape this knowledge.

- Scientific knowledge

- Medical knowledge
- Traditional knowledge
- Visceral knowledge
- Personal knowledge
- Authoritative Knowledge

Throughout the course, we will discuss the mechanisms by which various factors shape our knowledge about birth, including: Emotions and Risk, Language and Metaphor, Attention, Technology, Evolution, Resource Scarcity, Pain and Morality

Required materials

There will be no textbook for this class. **However, you will need to acquire your own iClicker (or iClicker Cloud).** Physical Clickers are no longer supported by UBC. Make sure you register your iClicker cloud account to the course via the canvas page. This must be completed by September the 8th to gain participation marks.

There will also be a number of required films for viewing. The main films will be:

- **The Business of Being Born (Original Documentary)** - Due Sept 13th
- **More Business of Being Born** - Due Sept 13th
- **The Mama Sherpas (Assignment 3)** - Due Sept 27th
- **Microbirth (In lieu of Nov 15th class)**

The original documentary *The Business of Being Born* and *More Business of Being Born* (both episodes) can be viewed through “McIntyre Media platform”, a UBC library resource (accessed here: [1](#), [2](#)). The films can also be purchased and downloaded from

www.thebusinessofbeingborn.com.

The Mama Sherpas can be viewed through “Alexander Street Press”, a UBC library resource (accessed here - then search title). The film can also be purchased and downloaded from <http://www.themamasherpas.com/>.

Microbirth can be viewed through “Kanopy”, a UBC library resource ([accessed here](#) - then search title).

The following is a provisional list of topics and assignments. PLEASE KEEP IN MIND THAT EXACT DATES AND TOPICS MAY CHANGE AS WE GO ALONG WITH THE COURSE. The due dates for assignments noted on Canvas will be the official due dates.

Date	Topics Covered	Assignments
Sept 8	Introduction	After class watch “The business of being born (Original Documentary)” & “More business of being born” iClicker set up due
Sept 13	Life, condensed	
Sept 15	Can knowledge change pain	Assignment 1 Due
Sept 20	Why does labour hurt	
Sept 22	Pain, upstaged	Assignment 2 Due

Date	Topics Covered	Assignments
Sept 27	More than nociception	
Sept 29	Associative memory	Assignment 3 Due
Oct 4	Heuristics vs. Statistics	All "For Midterm 1" readings due (see canvas in "Files"/ "Readings")
Oct 6	EXAM 1	
Oct 11	Over- and Under-estimation of risk	Assignment 4 Due
Oct 13	Safe until proven otherwise	
Oct 18	Anchoring & Procedural Knowledge pt. 1	Assignment 5 Due
Oct 20	Anchoring & Procedural Knowledge pt. 2 / movie viewing the practice	
Oct 25	Medicolegal pressures	Assignment 6 Due
Oct 27	Knowledge, limited	
Nov 1	Thinking, limited	Assignment 7 Due
Nov 3	Casual constriction	
Nov 8	Single Cases & counterfactuals	
Nov 10	Midterm Break (No class)	
Nov 15	Watch Microbirth (No in-person class)	All "For Midterm 2" readings due (see canvas in "Files"/ "Readings")
Nov 17	EXAM 2	
Nov 22	Why are C-sections rising?	
Nov 24	Motivated reasoning	Assignment 8 Due
Nov 29	Can we control birth?	
Dec 1	Tradition, Knowledge, and birth	
Dec 6	Tradition, Knowledge, and birth pt. 2	
Check Exam Schdule	FINAL EXAM	All "Final" readings due (see canvas in "Files"/ "Readings")

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

COVID Safety: 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 to make it harder for COVID-19 to find a new host. Please wear a non-medical mask during our class meetings, for your own protection, and the safety and comfort of everyone else in the class. If you have not yet had a chance to get vaccinated against COVID-19, vaccines are available to you, free (see <https://covid19.ubc.ca/> for more information). The higher the rate of vaccination in our community overall, the lower the chance of spreading this virus. You are an important part of the UBC community. Please arrange to get vaccinated if you have not already done so.

If you're sick, it's important that you stay home – no matter what you think you may be sick with (e.g., cold, flu, other). If you think you might have COVID symptoms and/or have tested positive for COVID and/or are required to quarantine: You can do a self-assessment for COVID symptoms here: <https://bc.thrive.health/covid19/en>

Do not come to class if you are sick, have COVID symptoms, have recently tested positive for COVID, or are required to quarantine. This precaution will help reduce risk and keep everyone safer. In this class, the marking scheme is intended to provide flexibility so that you can prioritize your health and still be able to succeed:

- You can earn 100% of the clicker participation marks by answering only 75% of the clicker questions.
- If your final exam grade is higher than your participation mark, we will replace your participation mark with your final exam grade.

If you do miss class because of illness:

- Make a connection early in the term to another student or a group of students in the class. You can help each other by sharing notes. If you don't yet know anyone in the class, post on the discussion forum to connect with other students.
- Consult the class resources on Canvas. We will post the slides for each class day.
- Use the discussion forum for help
- Come to office hours (they're online, so you can join from anywhere).
- If you are concerned that you will need to miss a particular key activity due to illness, contact us to discuss.

If you are sick on a midterm exam day, please email the instructor as soon as you are confident you should not come to the scheduled exam. We would strongly prefer that you contact us to make an alternate arrangement than for you to come to the exam while you are ill. If you do show up for an exam and you are clearly ill, we will make alternate arrangements with you. It is much better for you to email ahead of time and not attend.

If you are sick on a final exam day, do not attend the exam. You must apply for deferred standing (an academic concession) through Science Advising no later than 48 hours after the missed final exam/assignment. Students who are granted deferred standing write the final exam/assignment at a later date. Learn more and find the application online: <https://science.ubc.ca/students/advising/concession>

If I (the instructor) am sick: I will do my best to stay well, but if I am ill, develop COVID symptoms, or test positive for COVID, then I will not come to class. If that happens, here's what you can expect:

- If I am well enough to teach, but am taking precautions to avoid infecting others, we may have an online session or two. If this happens, you will receive an announcement in Canvas telling you how to join the class. You can anticipate that this would very likely be a last minute notification. Our classroom will still be available for you to sit and attend an online session, in this (hopefully rare) instance.

Subject Pool Extra-Credit Points

This class offers you the option to gain some practical knowledge about Psychology research: you can earn up to 3 points of credit toward your course grade by participating in studies that are posted on <https://ubc-psych.sona-systems.com>. Please register in this online system by end of the first month of class. You can also earn your first half hour of credit by completing pretesting survey that will make you eligible for a wider variety of studies. Please note that in a given term, you can earn no more than one hour of credit for online studies (not including the pretesting).

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. More information about this option can be found at: <http://www.psych.ubc.ca/resguide.psy>. All of your credits for study participation or the library option will be added to your final course grade, after any scaling that may have been applied.

Is this course right for you?

Psych 207 is a special topics course and every section is completely different. This section focuses on the Psychology of Childbirth. If this topic is not what you are looking for, you could examine the alternative offerings in other sections of Psych 207 (which are taught by different instructors). Psych 207 is not a required course, though it can serve as an elective or a Credit/D/Fail elective: <http://www.students.ubc.ca/coursesreg/registering-courses/credit-d-fail/>.

Learning Commons

The [Learning Commons](#) website 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.

Writing Skills

The [UBC Writing Centre](#) has tutoring services, including an [Online Writer's Workshop](#). Also, Purdue University offers an amazing collection of information about writing at their [Online Writing Lab](#).

UBC Academic Regulations

Information about academic regulations, course withdrawal dates and credits can be found in the [University Calendar](#).

Psychology Department Grading Policies

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 mean grade in 100- and 200-level classes is 67 for a good 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. 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. At UBC, they convert according to the key below:

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

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 scanned and compared to over 4.5 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 every student 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.

All graded work in this course, unless otherwise specified, is to be original work done independently by individuals. If you have any questions as to whether or not what you are doing is even a borderline case of academic misconduct, please consult your instructor. 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>).