

Psyc216-003 Course Syllabus

Questioning Psychological Science in the Media

M-W-F 12-12:50pm IRC 6

Instructor: Dr. Eva Zysk (she/her) PhD, PGCHE, SFHEA



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I have been enthusiastically teaching psychology and research methods in the UK and Canada for over 10 years. My research has involved OCD contamination fears and virtual reality treatment of social anxiety and public speaking fears. I also enjoy researching student transitions, well-being and wholistic academic success. In my free time, I play beach and indoor volleyball. How do you switch off?

Teaching Assistant: Leilani Forby (she/her)



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Leilani is a psychology PhD student whose research areas include mind wandering, social attention, and autism. Before starting her PhD, she was a film executive in Los Angeles where she developed, acquired, and marketed theatrical films. Leilani is friendly and eager to support your learning so please do reach out if you have any questions or need extra assistance in this course.

Dr. Zysk's Drop-In Office Hour:

My OH will include in-person & online options for maximal accessibility. They will typically be of "everyone-welcome" style which means everyone is welcome to join, ask questions, join in with discussions, or just listen in. I'm happy to discuss the course and related content, and provide success and well-being tips. You can pop in & out of my OH anytime as you please. If you have a private or personal matter, stay behind at the end of any of my OHs, or contact me by email to arrange an alternate time to meet.

TA Office Hour:

Most of my OHs will be open for virtual drop-in, so feel free to pop by with any of your questions. You do not need to make an appointment if you plan to visit during my OH, however, if you send me your question(s) in advance, I will be better prepared to assist you. If you have a personal matter to discuss, I will be happy to arrange a meeting time outside of my usual OH.

OHs Dates & Times:

Will vary weekly for maximum accessibility. See Canvas → Modules → Course Overview → Office Hours.

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 (such as in news articles, blogs, podcasts), and will 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.

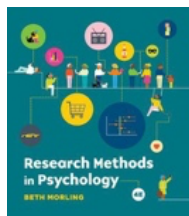
Lectures will involve us covering relevant information, gaining critical skills, engaging in interactivity, and working collaboratively to gain and share knowledge and ideas, engage in thought-provoking discussions, and solve problems.

Learning Objectives

Over the course of this term, you can expect to learn to:

1. Evaluate the validity of psychological claims made in the media (or in everyday conversation)
2. Scrutinize the evidence being used to support psychological claims
3. Distinguish experimental from non-experimental designs, and match them to appropriate behavioral claims
4. Understand conclusions from empirical journal articles
5. Construct accurate summaries of psychological research that are appropriate for a lay audience
6. Interpret results presented in graphs & infographics
7. Understand basic statistics, including contrasting effect size with statistical significance
8. Collaborate in a team setting to solve problems.

Course Materials & Class Info



Required Textbook: Morling, B. (2021). *Research Methods in Psychology: Evaluating a World of Information* (4th Edition). New York: Norton. You can choose the e-book version, the UBC looseleaf version, or the original soft-cover textbook version.

- Please keep the receipt as you may need it for accessing InQuizitive and the e-version of the textbook.
- In addition, there will be other assigned readings, videos, blogs, etc.
- Academic papers for assignments can be found through the [UBC Library](#).



Canvas: On Canvas you'll find course information; lecture materials; additional resources; activities; assessment info; Piazza; your grades; and other useful materials.

Ensure to set up your announcement alerts so you don't miss important information: Accounts → Notifications → Announcements → "Notify me right away" which will email you when I post a class announcement.

- Did you know you can also download the Canvas App?



iClicker: In most classes, you will use an [iClicker](#) to respond to in-class questions and polls to test your knowledge, cast votes, for and other interactivity. It is recommended

download the iClicker Cloud app on your smartphone. If you do not have a smartphone, you can use your laptop/tablet, or contact me and I can see if I can lend you an old-school iClicker remote so you are not prevented from taking part.

- To join our class, go to: <https://join.iclicker.com/YGDX>

piazza

Piazza is our class Q&A and discussion forum. You can find it on the left ribbon in our Canvas course.

What is it for? For one, it's your 24/7 place to ask any and all your non-personal questions, and where you will receive efficient help. You can also use it to communicate with classmates and to share information and

resources. **What will you be doing?** For top engagement points, students should aim to regularly be active on Piazza through helping provide answers, occasionally taking part in their choice of discussions, and in following along with the relevant posts (NB: you are not expected to read all the posts!). **How can you get started?** Sign up at the start of the course with both your first name and surname, and ideally your [UBC email address](#). My welcome message on Piazza explains how to use the forum.

You can show you have read my message by providing your poll response, and to start collecting your engagement points.

- Piazza is a valuable resource, but it does have an annoying fault. By default, it will email you constant updates on posts. Save yourself a headache now by right away changing the settings - click on the cog symbol in the blue ribbon (top right), then select "Account/Email Settings". You can completely unsubscribe from receiving email updates, and just pop by Piazza regularly at your own time.
- Piazza measures various statistics, and thus students engaging with Piazza may receive engagement credits in different ways. One of the highest valued engagement methods on Piazza is to help answer your peers' questions if you think you know the answer. But don't worry - we will be on hand to 'endorse' correct answers, and can correct any less accurate responses.
- You can make anonymous posts anytime, but note that Piazza does not add anonymous posts to the overall engagement score.

Class Preparation: There will typically be a brief selected reading or the like before each class. There will be no textbook pre-readings before each lecture. Tip: I invite you to look over the notes from each previous class, however briefly, e.g. as you wait for class to start. To help maximise your engagement points, bring your iClicker and your name plate to every class.

Interactivity & Collaboration: This course is highly interactive and collaborative. Students will discuss material and work to solve problems in groups every class. You will complete two assignments with peers also. Come to each class prepared to get involved, learn from one another, and importantly, have fun doing so!

- I want this course to be accessible to (and fun for) all my students. If you experience anything which may hinder your abilities to be involved, please contact me and we can work together to find a suitable solution.
- A few of our classes may be virtual, allowing us to interact in various ways.

Class Notes: I will make my slides available for review purposes after each session. The slides may be a summary and are not meant to act as a substitute for attending lectures. Ensure you take and add your own notes from each session; never rely on the uploaded notes alone. Get a copy of your peer's notes for any class you may miss.

Health Concerns / Personal matters: If you are experiencing psychological or physical ill-health, please arrange for an appointment with your personal GP, or you can assess UBC's [Student Health Services](#). Please reach out to me if you are in need and there are any barriers preventing you from accessing any resources. Also, please contact me if there is a way I can help accommodate any needs you may have and make this course accessible to you. If you require an extension or have missed a midterm, in the first instance you should aim to contact your Faculty Academic Advising office, and supply any evidence of your circumstances that you may have. They will liaise with me with regards to a new assignment deadline or alternate time to sit the referral exam. Please see the final page of the syllabus for further details.

Assessments

You will demonstrate to what extent you can meet the learning objectives in the assessments as below. Further information about the assessments follows. You will receive detailed information in class and on Canvas closer to each due date.

Assessment Style	Brief Overview	Deadline / Date	% of Grade
Assignment 1* (recommended; but you can opt-out)	Infographic (team)	<i>Choice of deadline:</i> Feb 3 rd 9am (+0.25/10 earlybird bonus), <u>OR</u> Feb 6 th 9am**	10%*
Midterm	Chapters 1-3, 5, & data	Feb 13 th 12pm	15%*
Assignment 2	Multi-Media Assignment (team)	<i>Choice of deadline:</i> Mar 24 th 9am (+0.5/25 earlybird bonus), <u>OR</u> Mar 29 th 9am**	25%
Final Exam	Cumulative	<i>Exam period:</i> April 17 th –28 th	25%
Class Engagement: Peer Component	Peer grade for your engagement in in-class peer discussions	Regular engagement throughout the term	8%
Class Engagement: Activity & Homework Component	In-class engagement (e.g. iClicker), homework task completion, Piazza participation	Regular engagement throughout the term	10%
InQuizitive	Best 5 textbook quiz results	Regular participation throughout the term	5%
Research Experience Component (REC)	Either (a) Research participation or (b) Library Project	(a) April 13 th (b) April 3 rd (See HSP website)	2% (+1% bonus)
Course Engagement Bonus	Up to 2% of bonus points can be earned for exceptional engagement in this course	Anytime during or throughout the term	(+2% bonus)
<i>Possible Total Final Grade:</i>			<i>103%</i>

** I compassionately understand that sometimes students may have ‘off’ days, struggle with exam anxiety, or face other setbacks that can impact academic performance. I also understand that there can sometimes be challenges with teamwork. To ease your worries, I will calculate your final grade as follows:*

- If you perform better on Assignment 2 than Assignment 1, your Assignment 1 grade will be dropped and your Assignment 2 grade will become worth 35%.*
- (Additionally) If you perform better on the final exam than on the midterm, your midterm will be worth 10%, while your final exam mark will become worth 30%.*

*** You will be asked to submit a Team Log alongside your assignments. The log should list the division of labour, who was present at each meeting, the interim deadlines, and to what extent they were met by each team member. Please keep this log up-to-date. It may be fairly brief, and will not influence the team’s overall grade. Before submitting the document, each member should sign that the log is a fair and accurate representation of the work division. In case of any group difficulties that cannot be resolved between members, please schedule an appointment with me or the TA and bring your Team Log.*

Assignments: I will provide the details of each assignment in a lecture and the detailed assessment specifications will be posted on Canvas. The bonus incentives are meant to help avoid missing final deadlines, but your team is free to choose whichever deadline is preferable. Late work will be reduced by 10% per day for first 5 business days, after which point the assignment will not be accepted. Ensure your group plans ahead in case of any pesky technological issues.

- Information about the opt-out process for Assignment 1 will be communicated in class.

Exams: Exams will be comprised of multiple-choice items and likely some written-response. Details will be provided in advance of each exam. Exams will be based on lecture material, activities, the required readings, and the take-away messages from any multi-media used. Exams will assess your knowledge, interrogation skills, and ability to apply what you learned.

- **Final Exam:** final exam details are released mid-February by the UBC Exams Office. You will need to ensure you are available for the set dates (April 17-28th, including Saturdays) as there is no alternative date for this exam. The final exam is cumulative, but with an emphasis on material since the midterm.

For information on scaling, illness & make-up assessments, re-marking, extensions, and missed exams, please see the final page.

Class engagement: *Peer component*: Your engagement with this course will in part be evaluated by your group members, who will get to work with you for the duration of the term. The grade they provide will take into account your class preparation, contributions to team discussions, engagement in activities, effort, and collaborative spirit. Your peers' grades will be averaged to provide a grade out of 8 points. Peer grades tend to correlate strongly with the students' attendance, other engagement, and with other peer's evaluations of them so are known to be valid and reliable.

Class engagement: *Activity & homework component*: This grade will primarily comprise of your attendance, engagement in class polls, and completion of small homework tasks. While I hope that you can attend most classes, it's okay if there are a few you miss. There will be some leeway so you can still get top engagement grades even if you can't join us for every class or if you miss a piece of homework. Most activities and homework grades are simply completion- or effort-based, not correctness-based. Much of the homework can be done with peers; in such cases you can submit identical copies of your answers. You are welcome to check with peers any questions you are unsure about (before or after submitting), and in cases where your peers are also stumped, you are encouraged to ask on Piazza after the deadline has passed. It is important you do not submit incomplete homework, or homework lacking reasonable effort—contact your TA if you submitted prematurely by accident. Other course contributions may also be noted to boost your score, e.g. active participation in lectures, leadership, standing out in an area, etc.

Piazza: For top engagement points, students should aim to regularly be active on Piazza through helping provide answers, occasionally taking part in their choice of discussions, and in following along with the relevant posts (NB: you are not expected to read all the posts!).

InQuizitive Quizzes: These brief quizzes are based on the Morling textbook and are due after the end of each chapter we cover. Complete at least 5 quizzes, but if you complete more, we will take your top 5 scores! Aim to complete these without notes, as these are primarily in place to best get you prepared for the exams; trusting and investing in this method is more likely to help you achieve a higher overall final grade.

- **InQuizitive practice quizzes:** These adaptive smart-quizzes are programmed to assess your current knowledge and help you determine where to focus your study efforts. They will help you comprehend the textbook material and prepare you for exams, but are formative and optional.

Research Experience Component:

Psychology is an active and exciting scientific discipline. Much research in psychology is carried out at universities just like ours. Towards this course, you will be asked to complete a research experience component as way of introducing you—in a hands-on and interactive way—to cutting edge research conducted by the Psychology department. This REC will be worth 2% of your grade and you can choose between two options detailed below (or mix & match for a total of 2 credits). You can learn more about the REC at <https://psych.ubc.ca/hsp>. Direct any technical questions to hspresearch@psych.ubc.ca.

- (a) **Human Subject Pool:** [Recommended] Most students will choose to earn their research experience component by participating in psychology studies (worth 1 credit for each hour) through the Department of Psychology's Human Subject Pool (HSP) system. You can sign up for studies by visiting <https://ubc-psych.sona-systems.com/>. If you register in the system by the end of the first month of classes you will have the opportunity to earn your first ½ credit with a brief online survey that may increase your eligibility for more interesting studies. The HSP closes on the last day of classes; you are strongly urged to participate in and confirm your credits long before then. *Ensure you assign your credits to the correct class.*
- (b) **The Library Option:** As an alternative to participation in HSP research, you may complete a library-writing project. Such projects consist of reading and summarizing the research question, the methods, and the results of a research article from the peer reviewed journal *Psychological Science*. You will receive 1 research participation credit for each article summary that meets the requirements listed online.

Bonus Points:

You may earn up to **1% extra credit** that will be added to your final grade (after any scaling) by doing up to 1 additional hour of study participation in the HSP (or summarizing another additional journal article for the library option). You may additionally earn up to **2% extra bonus points** for going above and beyond engaging with this course in your unique way(s). Thus, the maximum total grade in this course is 103%. ☺

Withdrawals: Withdrawal from this course without record of the course on your transcript must occur by January 23rd, or by March 3rd for withdrawal with a standing of "W" on your transcript. Please come see the Instructor if you have any questions about this course.

Course Feedback: I am always looking to improve the course and my teaching, and am open to change. At any point in the term and any number of times you are welcome to leave your thoughts, anonymously, about what you're enjoying and/or areas for improvement in the course here: <https://forms.office.com/r/SEhDWbCnt7>.

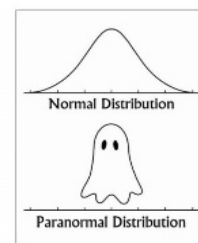
COVID-19 Safety and Illness Plan

- Vaccines have consistently been shown to be an effective way to help protect yourself and those around you from illness. UBC strongly recommends that all students, faculty and staff get vaccinated and if eligible, receive their booster dose. You can learn more at <https://immunizebc.ca>. Also remember to wash your hands regularly.
- Masks: All students have the right to choose to wear a mask or where public health orders permit, choose not to. Please ensure you act with compassion to all members of our class, regardless of their choice. If you feel more comfortable with grouping with those who also choose to wear a mask, you are welcome to create such groups, and/or I invite you to come sit at the front left-most side of the class at the start of term where other mask-wearing students will know they can join you. If you have any questions, special requests or concerns, please do not hesitate to reach out to me privately.
- **If you are feeling ill**, it is important that you stay home. Complete a self-assessment for COVID-19 symptoms [here](#).
- **If you miss class because of illness:**
 - o Find a classmate who is willing to share their notes. You can use Piazza forum to connect with students.
 - o Consult the class resources on Canvas.
 - o Attend the office hours if you have questions. You can attend some virtually if you are still symptomatic.
- **If you are feeling ill at the time of an exam**, do not attend the exam. See “Make-Up Assessments” below. You may be asked to complete a similar or alternative mode of assessment.
- If I feel unwell, I will not come to class. I will make every reasonable and timely attempt to communicate plans for class by a Canvas announcement. Our classroom will still be available for you as a study space in this time. If I feel well enough to teach, but am taking precautions to avoid infecting others, I may hold the class virtually. In any circumstance, I will post a detailed version of the lecture notes.

Further Important Course Details

Psychology Department’s Policy on Grade Distributions & Scaling: In order to reduce grade inflation and maintain equity across multiple course sections, Psychology courses are required to comply with departmental norms regarding grade distributions. The mean grade in a 200-level class is 70% for an ‘average’ class, 68% for a ‘weak’ class, and 72% for an ‘exceptionally strong class’, with a target standard deviation of 14. Final grades may be scaled as necessary by instructors or the department for each course. Thus, grades are not official until they appear on a student’s academic record. Grades always depend on students’ mastery of course material relative to their peers.

➤ Instructor’s note: Although it may sound daunting, I can explain about the advantages of this – ask in my OHs anytime.



Make-Up Assessments: Students unable to meet a deadline or sit an exam due to a serious medical problem, court appearance, or death in immediate family will be given the opportunity to make up the assessment if their request for an [academic concession](#) is approved by their advising office. For final exams, students who are granted deferred standing (SD) will write this exam later in the academic year. It is strongly recommended students contact their advisor as soon as they are able with evidence of the circumstance preventing their ability to make a deadline or sit an exam. Please note that UBC Health Services do not provide letters. In some cases, for first occurrences of an acute illness likely to be quickly resolved without seeing a health professional, students may directly apply to the instructor with a self-declaration form. Further information and policies can be found in the [UBC Calendar](#).

Remarking Appeals: If you have what you perceive to be an error in marking on any assessment or exam written-response, you may apply in email to the Instructor within two days the work was handed back for a re-marking of your entire assessment/written response section. Your request must detail why you believe the assessment/exam question be re-marked. If your request is approved, your work will be independently re-marked and the latter grade (whether lower or higher than the original) will be retained. For assignments, all your group members must provide written agreement for the remarking.

Copyright: All materials of this course (course handouts, slides, assessments, etc.) are the intellectual property of the course/instructor(s) or are licensed to be used in this course by the copyright owner. Redistribution of these materials by any means without permission of the copyright holder constitutes a breach of copyright and may lead to academic discipline. Students must request and receive verbal or written permission for any copies/recordings. Translation: please do not share any materials outside our course without my agreement. The instructor can grant permission even post-hoc - just ask.

Academic Integrity at University: Cheating, plagiarism, collusion and other forms of academic misconduct are serious concerns of the University, and the Department of Psychology has taken steps to alleviate them. This includes but is not limited to: dishonest or attempted dishonest conduct at tests (e.g., unauthorized use of books, notes, or other aids, communicating with others for purposes of obtaining information, copying from the work of others, and purposefully

exposing or conveying information to other students taking the test, changing test answers once tests are marked, and handing in work prepared by those not listed as contributors, etc. Please review UBC's Calendar entries on [Academic Honesty](#), [Academic Misconduct](#), and [Disciplinary Measures](#), and check out the [Student Declaration & Responsibility](#). The Department uses software that can reliably detect cheating on assignments and exams, including multiple-choice exams, through response patterns. Evidence of cheating or plagiarism may result in a zero credit for the work in question and a report to the department head, a failing grade for the course, suspension from the University, cancellation of scholarships, and/or a notation added to a student's university transcript. All graded work in this course, unless otherwise specified, is to be original and own work (or groupwork) and must be referenced fully and appropriately. Please consult the [APA guide](#) for information about how to cite all sources. You may also find bookmarking this [Learning Commons page](#) useful. If you have any questions as to whether or not your practice could be considered even a borderline case of academic misconduct, please consult your TA in advance of your submission. If you've made it to this point in the syllabus and read this document in full, please add to the Funnies folder on Piazza as a 'follow-up discussion' to Note @8 your favourite student-themed meme, comic, joke, or something that made you laugh on the news to demonstrate your thoroughness, engagement, and importantly, your sense of humour.

Diversity & Inclusion: This class strives to build a community where students of all gender identities, gender expression, sex, race, ethnicity, ability, health, age, sexual orientation, political and religious affiliation, socioeconomic background (this list goes on) feel included and are treated equitably. Please always ensure your words and actions are coming from a place of kindness and compassion whether you agree or disagree on any matter. If at any point you feel offended, threatened, or alienated by anything that happens in our class, please feel welcome to raise this with me or your TA.

Wellbeing: I will do my best to support your success during the term. This includes identifying concerns I may have about your academic progress or wellbeing through Early Alert. With Early Alert, faculty members can connect you with advisors who offer students optional support and assistance getting back on track to success. Only specialized UBC advisors are able to access any concerns I may identify, and Early Alert does not affect your academic record. For more information, visit www.earlyalert.ubc.ca. For information about addressing mental or physical health concerns, including seeing a UBC counsellor or doctor, visit www.students.ubc.ca/livewell.

University Values & 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 mental health, drug abuse, and 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.

Important Land Acknowledgement: The land on which UBC's Vancouver campus is situated is the traditional, ancestral, and unceded (occupied) territories of the Coast Salish peoples, including [xʷməθkʷəy̓əm \(Musqueam\)](#), [Tsleil-Waututh](#), and [Skwxwú7mesh \(Squamish\)](#) Nations. This land has been and continues to be a place of learning for the Coast Salish peoples, who for millennia have passed on in their culture, history, and traditions from one generation to the next on this site. These lands were taken without consent from Indigenous peoples. I welcome you to learn more. If you don't know whose land you're on, you can learn about Indigenous folks in your community here: <https://native-land.ca>. You are also encouraged to check out [UBC's Indigenous Portal](#).