



PSYC 207-901 Course Syllabus
**Contemporary Topics in Biological
and Cognitive Psychology**
2022/23 Winter Session Term 2

Acknowledgement

UBC's Point Grey Campus is located on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territory of the xwməθkwəyəm (Musqueam) people. The land it is situated on has always been a place of learning for the Musqueam people, who for millennia have passed on in their culture, history, and traditions from one generation to the next on this site.

Course Information

Course Title: Portraits of Madness

Course Code Number: PSYC 207-901

Credit Value: 3

Location: Woodward IRC 6

Time: Tuesday from 5.00 PM to 8.00 PM

Contact Information

Instructor: Dr. Rafal Skiba rskiba@psych.ubc.ca

TA: Alex Yu alexyu@psych.ubc.ca

*Include the course number (207 901) in the subject line of your email. We will typically respond within three days. If you haven't heard back after this time, feel free to email again.

Office Hours: are held by appointment. Please email your instructor or TA to set up a meeting.

About Your Instructor

Dr. Rafal M. Skiba is a researcher who has received the Michael Smith Health Research Trainee award and is currently working with Professor Todd Woodward at the University of British Columbia's Department of Psychiatry. They use neuroscientific and psychological techniques to study schizophrenia and test new treatment approaches to alleviate psychotic delusions. Dr. Skiba has also taught courses in psychology and cognitive neuroscience in the United States, Switzerland, and Canada.

About Your TA

Alex Yu is a PhD candidate in Neuroscience in the Behavioural Neurogenetics Lab. His research is aimed to understand how neuropeptides influence learning and memory. Alex is a UBC Psychology alumnus, graduated with a BSc in Psychology (now Behavioural Neuroscience).

Course Structure

This course is a 3-hour weekly **in-person** lecture course. The lectures will not be live-streamed and recorded. In the past, we had found many pedagogical and technological concerns regarding the benefits of recorded classes, such as problems with group assignments during the lecture, not attending the lectures, and low quality of recorded lectures. All lecture slides and video materials will be posted on our class Canvas page.

In addition to lectures, there will be small group discussions and smaller group projects on Canvas. Canvas modules contain lecture slides, thought questions, and additional reading and online video resources.

Schedule of Topics

Week 1	Introduction to the course
Week 2	Delusions & Hallucinations
Week 3	Delusions & Hallucinations
Week 4	Depression & Mania
Week 5	Depression & Mania
	Podcast groups
Week 6	Presentation groups
	Title page and Abstract
Week 7	Obsessions & Compulsions
Week 8	Obsessions & Compulsions
Week 9	Personalities
Week 10	Personalities
Week 11	Portraits of treatments of mental disorders
	Podcast groups
Week 12	Presentation groups
Week 13	Summary of the course.
Week 14+	Final paper due

Learning Outcomes

The main goal of this class is for students to gain a deeper understanding of how various states and feelings of madness are depicted in popular media, such as news, movies, and music, and to evaluate the accuracy and authenticity of these depictions based on current scientific knowledge. Through this process, students will develop critical thinking skills and media literacy to evaluate potential biases and agendas present in these representations. The class will also explore the impact of these portrayals on society's understanding and perception of mental health and the role of media literacy in shaping attitudes toward mental health and reducing stigma. By the end of the class, students should be able to evaluate the potential consequences and implications of inaccurate or stigmatizing portrayals of madness in popular media on individuals experiencing these conditions and society as a whole.

Learning Activities

Throughout the term, students will engage in various activities to deepen their understanding of the course material. These activities include attending lectures, participating in small group discussions, collaborating on group projects, taking quizzes to apply their knowledge to novel questions or cases, and writing a final paper. The final paper will require students to submit a title page and abstract in the middle of the course, followed by the complete paper at the end. There will be regular opportunities for students to ask questions and discuss issues with their instructor, Dr. Skiba, and the TA during lectures and meetings.

Learning Materials

For this course, the instructor will provide students with journal articles through Canvas under each lecture module. In addition to reading these articles, students will also be required to watch fragments of various movies as part of the course. Some of these movies will be assigned by the instructor to watch before class, and all the assigned movies can be found in one of the UBC video streaming libraries (more information on this can be found at <https://guides.library.ubc.ca/streamingmedia>)

Assessments of Learning

Assessment of learning will be based on performance on assigned tasks with the following weightings:

- 1. Group project: 30%**
 - Podcast 15%
 - Presentation 15%
- 2. Participation: 10%**
 - Top Hat 7%
 - Canvas discussion 3%
- 3. In-class quizzes: 25%**
 - There will be five quizzes, each worth 5%
- 4. Title page and abstract in the APA style: 10%**
- 5. Final paper in the APA style: 25%**

****Please do not rely on Canvas to correctly calculate your grade in the course. Based on how assignments are structured, the point values on the Canvas gradebook don't always match those we use when calculating grades. Additionally, there are many things that can go wrong in Canvas's calculations. Course grades are calculated independent of Canvas.****

To reduce grade inflation and maintain equity across multiple course sections, all psychology courses are required to comply with departmental norms on grade distributions: the mean grade in a 200-level class is 72% for a strong class, 70% for an average class, and 68% for a weak class, with a standard deviation of 13. This means that about half of the class will be in the A and B range (combined). **Scaling may be used** to comply with these norms; grades may be scaled up or down as necessary by the instructor or department.

GROUP PROJECTS

Students will work in small groups (maximum of 4 people). The groups will be created through a random assignment procedure. The groups will be asked to do two tasks during the semester. The order of this task will be randomly assigned to each group.

1. Podcast: For this assignment, you and your group mates will create a 10-minute podcast discussing a song, poem, or movie that represents a particular emotion or mental state covered in class. You will need to analyze how the emotion or mental state is depicted in the chosen piece of art and discuss the psychological interpretation of this concept. Additionally, you should address any common misunderstandings or misinterpretations of the emotion or mental state that may exist among the general public.
2. Presentation: For this assignment, you and your group mates will create a 10-minute presentation discussing a song, poem, or movie that represents a particular emotion or mental state covered in class. You will need to analyze how the emotion or mental state is depicted in the chosen piece of art and discuss the psychological interpretation of this concept. Additionally, you should address any common misunderstandings or misinterpretations of the emotion or mental state that may exist among the general public.

PARTICIPATION

Top Hat – 7%: Active participation and engagement will promote better comprehension and retention of the material you are learning. During each class, Dr. Skiba will post multiple-choice questions to the Top Hat polling app for students to answer in real-time. This allows you and I to gauge your understanding of the concepts being taught and provides you with practice answering multiple choice questions in preparation for exams. For each class, students will receive one mark for answering 75% of the questions and one for answering at least one question correctly.

Canvas – 3%: You will also gain 3% of the participation grade by participating in our Canvas discussion forums.

QUIZZES

Dr. Skiba will assign you a movie and/or popular article to read about a topic of the next class. At the beginning of every second class, you will have to answer a few multiple-choice questions on Canvas or TopHat. There will be five quizzes.

FINAL PAPER

For this assignment, you will be asked to write a paper about the misconceptions of mental states and emotions that are often presented in mass media. Your first task will be to choose a topic and write a lay abstract outlining your proposed study. The final paper should be a maximum of 2000 words and include the following sections: Introduction, where you define the concept from a peer-reviewed source and present common misconceptions about it in the general public; Analysis, where you select examples of movies, songs, or books that depict the concept in popular culture and explain any issues with the representation of the concept in these sources; and Discussion, where you use one of the articles or other peer-reviewed sources discussed in class to support your critique of the representation of the concept. Further details about the assignment can be found on Canvas. The paper needs to be written in the APA style. Please check this link for help with the APA formatting style: <https://guides.library.ubc.ca/apacitationstyle>.

LATE/MISSED ASSIGNMENTS

Late assignments will not be accepted unless accompanied by a physician's note documenting the student's incapacitating illness with the dates of incapacity.

Students who cannot write the final paper must apply for an academic concession from [Arts Academic Advising](#). Or the [Centre for Accessibility](#).

EXTRA CREDIT

Students can earn up to three (3) extra percentage points on their overall final grade by participating in research conducted in the Psychology Department through the Human Subject Pool (HSP). Participating in research allows you to observe the process and contribute to ongoing research at UBC. You may get points via this mechanism by one of two: a) Participating in a research study that provides extra credit through the HSP or b) completing a library writing project in which you read and summarize a peer-reviewed research article.

More information about how you can earn extra credits through either of these options is provided on the Human Subject Pool website. There you will find a detailed guide about how to participate in the HSP, how-to videos, and a list of FAQs. You can sign up for studies ~~ager~~ If you want to take advantage of these opportunities for extra credit, you must set up an online account at the UBC Psychology Research Participation System to sign up for studies (or submit your research summaries) and manage your extra credit points. **Be sure to assign your credits to this course if that is your intention.**

COMMUNICATION

If you have a question about course material, you should first post your question on the Piazza website. You will receive access to Piazza through your Canvas. Your colleagues, TA, and instructor monitor Piazza and will answer your questions there.

If you have a personal matter, such as an illness, you should email your TA and your instructor first. *If we do not reply in 72 hours, please email us again.*

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 academic community members. Harassment and discrimination are not tolerated, nor is suppression of academic freedom. UBC provides appropriate accommodation for students with disabilities and religious observances. UBC values academic honesty, and students are expected to acknowledge the ideas generated by others and 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](#).

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Cheating, plagiarism, and other forms of academic misconduct are *very* serious concerns. Please review Academic Honesty and Standards and/or Discipline for Academic Misconduct on the UBC Calendar for the university policy on cheating, plagiarism, and other forms of academic dishonesty and the consequences of academic misconduct. Also, visit the Learning Commons Academic Integrity for information on academic integrity and tips on appropriate citation of sources.

Evidence of cheating or plagiarism may result in zero credit for the work in question. In cases of academic misconduct, UBC has the right to impose harsher penalties, including (but not limited to) a failing grade for the course, suspension or expulsion from the University, cancellation of scholarships, and/or a notation on the student's transcript.

All graded work in this course, unless otherwise specified, is to be original work done independently. This is your education. You are investing a considerable amount of time, effort, and money into it. You won't develop the critical thinking skills provided by this education (which you will use in your professional and personal adult life) by using someone else's work.

Learning Analytics

Learning analytics includes the collection and analysis of data about learners to improve teaching and learning. Canvas provides analytics by capturing data about your activity and providing information that can be used to improve the quality of teaching and learning. In this course, I plan to use analytics data to:

- View overall class progress
- Assess overall class understanding (via statistics on quizzes and exams)

- Review statistics on course content being accessed to support improvements in the course
- Track participation in discussion forums
- Assess your participation in the course

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 don't hesitate to contact me if you are in need and if there are any barriers preventing you from accessing any resources. Also, please contact me if there is a way I can help accommodate any of your needs in this course. 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 regarding a new assignment deadline or alternate time to sit the referral midterm. Please see the final page of the syllabus for further details.

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:

- If your final exam grade is higher than your participation mark, we will replace your participation mark with your final exam grade.
- We automatically drop your lowest score among the two midterms.
- We automatically drop your two lowest assignment scores, so it's OK to occasionally miss an assignment (though it will help you on exams to complete them all, even for practice).

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.
- Use the discussion forum for help
- Come to office hours (they can be online so you can join from anywhere).
- See the marking scheme for reassurance about what flexibility you have.
- If you are concerned that you will need to miss a particular key activity due to illness, contact us to discuss.

Copyright

All materials of this course (course handouts, lecture slides, assessments, course readings, etc.) are the intellectual property of the Course Instructor or licensed to be used in this course by the copyright owner. Redistribution of these materials by any means without the permission of the copyright holder(s) constitutes a breach of copyright and may lead to academic discipline.

WELLNESS RESOURCES

Below you will find a list of resources you may want to utilize if you are struggling in any way to manage your responsibilities while in school or the stresses of life in general.

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.

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.

Access and Diversity: students.ubc.ca/about/access 604-822-5844

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

BC Crisis Center: <https://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. Crisisline 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.

UBC Sexual Violence Prevention & Reporting Office <https://svpro.ubc.ca/>

604-822-1588

A safe place for students, faculty, staff who have experienced sexual violence, regardless of where or when it took place. This includes any attempt or act of a sexual nature without consent. All gender identities, expressions and sexualities are welcome.

SASC

<https://www.ams.ubc.ca/student-services/sasc/>

604-822-2101

The AMS Sexual Assault Support Centre is here to educate, support, and empower people of all genders who have experienced sexual violence as well as their friends and family.

SpeakEasy: <http://www.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.

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.

Mood Disorders Clinic UBC:

<http://ubc-mooddisorders.vch.ca/>

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

Live Well, Learn Well:

<https://students.ubc.ca/health-wellness>

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:

<http://blogs.ubc.ca/ubcmhac/>

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 services for youth and young adults up to the age of 24. Services include Adult Counselling, access to an Addiction Physician - including usage of a methadone maintenance program - and a Drug Education Series.

AMS Food Bank:

www.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:

<http://clinic.psych.ubc.ca/>

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

The Kaleidoscope: the-kaleidoscope.com

A confidential peer-run mental health support group that takes place on campus 2-3 times 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.