

COURSE OUTLINE - Winter 2026

PY3750(A3): History of Psychology - 3 (3-0-0) 45 Hours for 15 Weeks

Northwestern Polytechnic acknowledges that our campuses are located on Treaty 8 territory, the ancestral and present-day home to many diverse First Nations, Metis, and Inuit people. We are grateful to work, live and learn on the traditional territory of Duncan's First Nation, Horse Lake First Nation and Sturgeon Lake Cree Nation, who are the original caretakers of this land.

We acknowledge the history of this land and we are thankful for the opportunity to walk together in friendship, where we will encourage and promote positive change for present and future generations.

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OFFICE HOURS:			

CALENDAR DESCRIPTION: Psychology is a relatively young science but its history is varied, intriguing, and extends well beyond the first psychologists. From its roots in early philosophy, physiology, and medicine, through the dawn of evolutionary theories and radical behaviourism, to the cognitive revolution and modern neuroscience, we examine the trends, competing theoretical perspectives, and socio-political influences on the current discipline of psychology.

PREREQUISITE(S):

Complete all of the following

PY1040 - Basic Psychological Processes (3)

Math 30 or equivalent

Or permission of the instructor

COREQUISITE(S):

None

REQUIRED MATERIALS: Henley, T.B. (2019). *Hergenhahn's an introduction to the history of psychology* (8th ed). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth. OR

Hergenhahn, B. R. (2009). *An Introduction to the History of Psychology* (6th ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth. ISBN: 978-0-495-50621-8

DELIVERY MODE(S): On-Campus Lectures and Discussion

COURSE OBJECTIVES: This course may be different from any other course you have ever taken. There will be no memorizing lists of facts, definitions, names, or dates; students must learn the roots and histories of psychological ideas, organize them for themselves so that they understand it, and apply it to their understanding of current psychological theory. Further, students are required to develop the skills of discussing, both through written and verbal communication, their knowledge of course material.

Please be aware that your normal strategies for passing classes may not work here and new strategies may have to be developed; do so quickly. We will mostly follow the text chapter by chapter with a few additions. Extra readings will be recognized, going beyond lecture material will be rewarded.

LEARNING OUTCOMES: As a result of taking this course, students will demonstrate the ability to discuss in written format the following issues:

EXAM #1 (Jan 29th, four questions worth 20% of your final grade):

- 1.1 What is the purpose or point of Mythos (as opposed to Logos); what does it try to do and how does it do it? Why the change from Mythos to Logos and why did it happen in Greece?
- 1.2 What are the Pythagorean and Platonic ideas of universals?
- 1.3 What were the major differences between temple magic medicine and medicine practiced by Alcmaeon and Hippocrates and what were its implications?
- 1.4 What does Protagoras mean by "Man is the measure of all things"?
- 1.5 Compare and contrast the Platonic and Aristotelian concepts of the origin of knowledge.
- 1.6 Compare and contrast Hergenhahn's concepts of vitalism, epiphenomenalism, and emergentism.
- 1.7 What does Heraclitus mean when he says you can't step into the same river twice? What's his point?
- 1.8 What is Empedocles' concept of homeostasis and what impact does it have on modern day psychology?
- 1.9 What's the point of Zeno's paradoxes?
- 1.10 Compare and contrast Popper's universalism versus Kuhn's relativism.

EXAM #2 (Mar 5th, five questions worth 25% of your final grade):

2.1 Compare and contrast the schools of thought of Skepticism, Epicurianism, Cynicism, Stoicism, and Cicero. What do they have in common and how are they different?

2.2 What are the views of Philo, Augustine, and the early Christians as to the psychology of Humankind? What lasting effects have they had on Psychology?

2.3 Compare and contrast the conclusions of the Scholastics such as Thomas Aquinas as to the proper uses of reason and faith.

2.4 Compare and contrast Socratic dialectics with Abelard's "Sic et non" as ways of determining truth.

2.5 What is the "Bonfire of the Vanities" argument of Luther, Savonarola, and Caliph Omar and what effect remains of their efforts on current psychology?

2.6 What brought Europe out of the Dark Ages?

2.7 What do you consider to be Newton's greatest contribution to the philosophy of science? Defend your view.

2.8 Explain the contributions of Bacon's "New Method" to current research psychology.

2.9 "Cogito, ergo sum." What was Descartes talking about; what was his point and what does it have to do with psychology?

2.10 What are the perspective of Hobbes, Locke, and Hume as to their perspectives as to the psychological nature of Humankind and how it shall be governed?

EXAM #3 (Apr 2nd , five questions worth 25% of your final grade):

3.1 What does it mean to say James Mill was the "Newton of the Mind"?

3.2 "The existence of either God, Natural Law, or Free Will precludes the existence of the other two." Discuss. What's that argument got to do with psychology?

3.3 What are Comte and Mach's concept of Logical Positivism and what is their greatest contribution to modern-day psychology?



- 3.4 Concerning the nature/nurture controversy, Locke holds the perspective of *tabula rasa*: all knowledge is learned through experience. What is Immanuel Kant's answer to this?
- 3.5 Define and explain Kant's "categorical imperative." (Next year: morality: Hume's relativism versus Kant's universals.)
- 3.6 Distinct from Socrates and Abelard, what is Hegel's idea of the dialectic process and where does it lead?
- 3.7 According to Rousseau and the Romanticists, what is the Nature of Man and how should he be studied?
- 3.8 What is Nietzsche's view of the Nature of Man? And who is Superman?
- 3.9 Muller held to vitalism, the idea that a life force animates all human behaviour, emotion, and cognition. What did Helmholtz, Weber, and Fechner replace this with and how did they do it?
- 3.10 What are the main arguments as to whether or not Psychology can ever be a science?

EXAM #4 (TBA, four questions plus the required essay, worth 30% of your final grade):

- 4.1 Distinguish Wundt's concept of volition from free will.
- 4.2 What is the perspective of Structuralism in studying the human mind: what are its assumptions, its questions, and its conclusions?
- 4.3 What is the perspective of Functionalism in studying the human mind: what are its assumptions, its questions, and its conclusions?
- 4.4 Give two major examples of how "everything changed" in the field of psychology as a result of Darwin's theory of evolution.
- 4.5 What were Galton's arguments in favor of eugenics?
- 4.6 What were Cyril Burt's and Henry Goddard's lasting legacies on science?
- 4.7 What were the major contributions of Galton, Binet, Cattell, and Terman to the current field of Psychometrics?
- 4.8 In what sense is current psychology considered a "footnote" to William James?
- 4.9 Essay: THE BIG PICTURE: Define knowledge, reality, and truth, and discuss the relationship among them. That is: define knowledge (epistemology) and ways of knowing, reality (ontology) and ways of existence, and truth, and discuss the relationship among them. (This is the last question on the last exam. Develop your understanding of these concepts throughout the course. There are four ways of knowing: authority, reason, evidence, and self. There are four forms of existence: physical, abstract, principle, and information (where are natural law and universals?). Truth is how well knowledge matches reality. Define, explain, and give examples of all concepts.)

TRANSFERABILITY:

Please consult the Alberta Transfer Guide for more information. You may check to ensure the transferability of this course at the Alberta Transfer Guide main page <http://www.transferalberta.alberta.ca>

**** For courses with alpha (letter) grading, a grade of D or D+ may not be acceptable for transfer to other post-secondary institutions. Students are cautioned that it is their responsibility to contact the receiving institutions to ensure transferability**

EVALUATIONS: Assessment will be based on four exams: the first weighted at 20%, the second and third weighted at 25%, and the final exam worth 30%. Above, you will see four sets of ten questions; each of the four exams will consist of four randomly chosen questions from those lists. The final also has four questions of only nine questions with a required, in-gym essay for which you shall have three hours. Following the final grade assignments, students will be subjectively assessed for bonus points on the basis of their involvement in and contributions to the class, and attendance.

Research psychology recognizes the authority of, and bases its judgements on, carefully collected data, as opposed to opinion, tradition, or authority. In keeping with this philosophy, rather than me imposing my authority on you and telling you what you must know and then arbitrarily assigning cut-off points for grades through non-standardized tests, you as a class will inform me what you are capable of, through my careful measurement of your performance. Students will be assessed according to their relative position within the class. The field of psychology always measures human behaviour in this way. This method will be explained fully in the first class period; a handout is available if requested.

GRADING CRITERIA:

Please note that most institutions will not accept your course for transfer credit IF your grade is **less than C-**.

Alpha Grade	4-point Equivalent	Expected Percentage of Class Receiving		Alpha Grade	4-point Equivalent	Expected Percentage of Class Receiving
A+	4.0	2%		C+	2.3	16%
A	4.0	3%		C	2.0	13%
A-	3.7	7%		C-	1.7	9%
B+	3.3	9%		D+	1.3	7%
B	3.0	13%		D	1.0	3%
B-	2.7	16%		F	0.0	2%

The Percentage Guidelines listed above will obtain only if thirty or more students are enrolled and a perfectly normal distribution results. Deviations from the assumptions of normality will result in modified percentages. In short, this is NOT grading on the curve.

COURSE SCHEDULE/TENTATIVE TIMELINE:

The lecture schedule follows closely the sequence shown in the section titled learning outcomes. No dates are given as I intend to let student interests and abilities dictate our pace.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES: This is adult education. You will be treated as such and are expected to behave accordingly. It is expected that all students will display a

professional attitude and behaviour in the classroom. This includes reliability, respect for and cooperation with your fellow students and the instructor, attention to fellow students' questions and instructors' responses, determination to achieve first-class work while meeting deadlines, and constructive response to criticism.

STATEMENT ON ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT:

Academic Misconduct will not be tolerated. For a more precise definition of academic misconduct and its consequences, refer to the Student Rights and Responsibilities policy available at <https://www.nwpolytech.ca/about/polytechnic-leadership/policies-directory>.

****Note:** all Academic and Administrative policies are available on the same page.

If you cheat in any way, I will recommend an academic misconduct be filed, which can result in a zero for the paper, an "F" for the term, suspension, or expulsion. Please see the Student Rights and Responsibilities Policy for information on academic misconduct and how NWP handles it."

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

GENERAL COMMENTS:

There is so much more to learn than we can cover in our limited class time. Make the most of your college experience by reading the text and other sources beyond what is called for in the papers. It will also make your papers all the more insightful. Note that there are no assigned papers for many parts of the text; however, you are still responsible for this material for the final exam.

My preferred teaching style is interactive lecture, derived from the teaching philosophy that little is learned until responses are made (either verbally or written). What we shall be covering is the basis of the Liberal Arts Curriculum, also known as the Great Conversation. Join in.