

GRANDE PRAIRIE REGIONAL COLLEGE
PY 2090: A3
CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES IN PSYCHOLOGY
LECTURE TIMES: Wed & Fri, 1:00 - 2:20 AM
Jan 7 - Apr 8, 2008
(3-0-0) UT to all Alberta Universities (3)

Instructor: Dr. Bruce Galenza
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Office Hours: Mon: 10:00-11:30; Tues: 8-12, Wed: 10-12, Thur:
8-12; Fri 8-9:30, or by appointment.
Pre-requisites: PSY 1040 and 1050

REQUIRED TEXTBOOK/SELECTED READINGS: TBA

THE COURSE:

This course will be a discussion and interpretation of contemporary and controversial issues and theories in the field of human behaviour, as applied to such topics as sex, violence, rock 'n' roll, and religion.

THE GOALS:

This course may be different from other courses you have taken. There will be no memorization of lists of facts or definitions; students must learn the material, organize it for themselves so that they understand it. Further, students are required to develop the skills of discussing, both through written and verbal communication, their knowledge of course material. Students are expected to contribute to, and take their turn in leading, class discussions. Four projects (8-10 pages, typed and double spaced) are assigned.

FURTHER GOALS:

As a result of participating in this course, students will demonstrate the following learning outcomes through written and oral communication:

1. Knowledge structures; organized, related and interrelated information, the ability to identify, abstract out, structure the essential elements of contemporary issues seen through psychological theories and perspectives, supported by reason and evidence.

2. Procedural knowledge; the nature of evidence and theory, research methods and procedures, and communication of ideas.
3. Metacognitive judgment; independent, critical, and analytic thought concerning the reasons and evidence supporting views on these issues. Students are required to present both (or all) sides of the issues rather than take one side and defend it. Beliefs, opinions, and personal attacks are not welcome.
4. Attitudinal considerations; understanding the value of this work and its application.

This course shall discuss, in a seminar format, a variety of ideas of controversial, topical, weird, and politically incorrect issues. Students may choose what topics they wish to cover within the general themes listed below or may follow the professor's more narrowly-defined lead.

#1. Rogers' Student-Centered Education (Jan 9th - 28th, due Jan 30th).

#2. Sex: Gay and straight, deviations, pornography (Jan 30 - Feb 25th, due Feb 27th).

#3. Violence: Youth, media, domestic (Feb 27th - Mar 18th, due Mar 20th).

#4. Religion: Belief systems, narratives, cults (Mar 20th - Apr 8th, due Apr 15th).

GENERAL COMMENTS:

- My preferred teaching style is interactive lecture, derived from the teaching philosophy that little is learned until responses are made (either verbally or written).
- I am extremely available for student consultation, and I will be more than happy to proof students' rough drafts and to further discuss course material.
- Late papers will be graded, but penalized 2 points per day. As adequate time is allotted between the end of the unit and the due date, no excuses other than medical and major emergencies will be accepted. Papers with spelling and grammatical errors will be penalized. Papers with multiple errors will be returned ungraded.

ASSESSMENT: Research psychology recognizes the authority of, and bases its judgments 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. This will be explained fully in the first class period.

Assessment will be based on the four major papers, each equally weighted. 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 the Blackboard discussion board.

A GENTLE WARNING: Some students try to copy work from textbooks or other published writing and claim it as their own. This form of cheating is called plagiarism or theft of intellectual property. This is easy for me to spot; the difference in writing style between undergraduates and professionals is immediately obvious.

Other students may try to buy papers from the Internet, or copy from other students. This is also easy for me to spot, as a purchased paper is invariably different in scope from the highly specific requirements of this course. Further, it can be seen when the student shows no knowledge during class discussion of what was in the paper that he or she has just submitted.

If you cheat, you will be given a "0" for the paper, an "F" for the term, and I will write a letter to the administration recommending you be suspended from college.