

**Department of Arts Commerce and Education
Grande Prairie Regional College**

**Controversial Issues in Psychology
PY 3030
3(3-0-0)UT**

Spring or Summer, 2002

Lecture Days/Times/Room Numbers

Instructor: Dr. Connie Korpan
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Office Hours: TBA
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Texts (tentative)

There is no assigned text for this course. A series of assigned readings will be used in place of a text book and will be compiled and sold to students at the cost of copying.

Course Prerequisite: PY1040

General Course Description

In this course, students will have an opportunity to discuss a variety of controversial issues in the field of psychology. This course will be in seminar format. The topics will be chosen by the instructor and students. For topics presented in the first half of the course, participants will read assigned articles and engage in class discussion. For the second half, students will do library research on a topic of interest to them, write a paper, and present their findings to the class.

Distribution of Grading

| | |
|---------------------|-----|
| Written assignments | 20% |
| Class presentation | 15% |
| Paper | 20% |
| Midterm | 20% |
| Final | 25% |

Written Assignments For each topic covered in class, you will be asked to write a short essay (2 typewritten pages each) that includes an indication of your opinion and a presentation of the argument(s) backing your opinion. Each assignment is worth x% (depends on number of topics covered).

Paper You will choose a controversial issue in psychology that is of interest to you. The topic must be approved by the instructor. You will write an 8 to 10 page paper on the issue. The paper will include a description of the issue and the varying views that have been advanced by others in Psychology or related fields. You will also present your opinion and arguments to back your opinion.

Class presentation Your presentation will be based on your paper. Presentations will be 20 minutes in length and will be graded in terms of pedagogical value (e.g. learning activities included for the audience), clarity of content presentation, and style.

Some Proposed Topics

- Should animals be used in research
- The role of science in the eugenics movement in Alberta
- Is IQ determined by genes (fixed) or can it be changed through education
- Can religious experience be explained in terms of brain activity
- Has love/aggression resulted from evolutionary processes
- Allegations of childhood abuse: false memories or repression
- Effects on media on behaviour: does violence on TV cause increased aggression in children; does pornography cause men to be more violent to women
- Diagnosis: how has our opinion of PMS, homosexuality, etc. been affected by their inclusion in psychiatric diagnosis manuals
- Therapies, smart drugs, etc. are worth the money
- Sex crimes (rape, pedophilia) is rehabilitation possible
- Dreams – what do they mean and should be pay attention to them

Grading

| Grade | Percentage | Comment |
|-------|------------|------------------|
| 9 | 90 – 100% | |
| 8 | 80 – 89% | <u>Excellent</u> |
| 7 | 72 – 79% | |
| 6 | 65 – 71% | <u>Good</u> |
| 5 | 57 – 64% | |
| 4 | 50 – 56% | <u>Pass</u> |
| 3 | 45 – 49% | Fail |
| 2 | 26 – 44% | Fail |
| 1 | 0 – 25% | Fail |

Student Responsibilities

Independent learning is a valuable skill that instructors at Grande Prairie Regional College wish to foster in their students. For this reason, you are held accountable for all lecture materials and readings. It is your responsibility to keep up with class work. For example, you are expected to attend all lectures. When absent, missed material is to be obtained by approaching a fellow

students (not the instructor). Also, you are expected to prepare for each lecture by reading the assigned chapters and handouts. Students who prepare learn and perform much better than students who do not prepare.

You are responsible for learning the material not discussed in class. Please feel free to approach me outside of class if you wish to get clarification on this material.

Late assignments will deduct 10% for each day late. Assignments more than three days late will not be accepted. Exceptions will be made for medical excuses, provided that a doctor's note is provided.

If you wish to withdraw from this course, you must do so by xxx. Withdraw from the course after xxx may result in a failing grade because a mark of 0% will be assigned to the incomplete portion of the course work.