



**DEPARTMENT OF ARTS AND EDUCATION**

**COURSE OUTLINE – WINTER 2019**

**PY4090 (A3): Topics in Controversial Issues in Psychology – 3 (3-0-0) 45  
Hours for 15 Weeks**

**INSTRUCTOR:** Dr. B. Galenza                      **PHONE:** 780-539-2994  
**OFFICE:** C-403                                      **EMAIL:** bgalenza@gprc.ab.ca  
**OFFICE HOURS:** Mon 8-11:30, Wed 8:00-1:00, Fri 8:00- 10:00; weekend mornings by  
appointment.

**CALENDAR DESCRIPTION:** In this course, students will have an opportunity to discuss, analyze, and debate a variety of contemporary and psycho-social controversial issues in the field of psychology and in our societies and cultures including psychological diagnoses, therapy, gender identity, sexual behavior, violence, religion, politics, the Self, intelligence, education, sex, drugs, and rock'n'roll, and others. The topics covered will vary with the instructor who teaches the course, and students shall enjoy a great latitude in selection of their topics.

This year's course will be a discussion and interpretation of sex, drugs, rock 'n' roll, violence, politics, religion, self, and/or education, described, explained, and interpreted from the psychological perspective. This is an upper-level course so an in-depth understanding of central and peripheral theories in the field is required.

**PRE-REQUISITES:** PSY 1040 and 1050. Suggested: Advanced courses in Learning, Cognition, Social, Personality, Developmental, Abnormal, Counselling, and Brain.

**RECOMMENDED TEXT/SELECTED READINGS:** TBA

**DELIVERY MODE(S):** Lecture/Discussion/Student Presentation

**COURSE OBJECTIVES:** Four major area papers (8-10 pages minimum, typed and double spaced) are assigned. Students will write four major papers and present their findings in four minor class presentations and will take part in class discussions. As a result of taking this course, students will demonstrate the ability to:

1. define, explain, analyse, and interpret current social issues and problems from the perspective of psychological principles, theories, and concepts.

2. develop the skills of structuring, organizing, and interrelating knowledge of these perspectives, not simply a rote listing of details and definitions, as demonstrated by writing structured, organized, related, interrelated, and applicable summary papers and taking part in class discussions.

3. develop the skills of evaluation of the concepts and principles of these perspectives on the basis of how well they describe and explain the chosen social issues by using higher order cognitive skills of independent thought, logic, reason, and data, rather than relying on authority, tradition, emotion, personal feelings, or personal experiences.

4. express themselves in written and verbal form using higher academic standards of grammatically correct and properly spelled Standard English.

**LEARNING OUTCOMES:** Students shall analyze and discuss the following contemporary and controversial social and cultural issues from the perspectives of advanced psychological theories from Learning, Cognition, Social, Developmental, Personality, Abnormal, Counselling, and Brain. Students may choose what topics they wish to investigate within the general themes listed below or may follow the professor's more narrowly-defined lead. Students may substitute other hot topics after consultation if they wish.

#1. Rogers' Student-Centered Education (papers and presentations due Feb 1<sup>st</sup>).

#2. Sex: Gay and straight, deviations, pornography (due Feb 15<sup>th</sup>).

#3. Violence: Youth, media, domestic (due Mar 22<sup>nd</sup>).

#4. Religion: Belief systems, narratives, cults (due Final Exam date).

**TRANSFERABILITY:** UC, UL, AU,

**\*Warning:** Although we strive to make the transferability information in this document up-to-date and accurate, **the student has the final responsibility for ensuring the transferability of this course to Alberta Colleges and Universities.** Please consult the Alberta Transfer Guide for more information. You may check to ensure the transferability of this course at Alberta Transfer Guide at <http://transferalberta.alberta.ca/transfer-alberta-search/#/audienceTypeStep>

\*\* 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.**

**EVALUATION:**

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: the first is worth 20%, the second and third are 25%, the final is worth 30%. 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.

### **GRADING RUBRIC:**

Papers will be graded according to the extent that students have achieved the following criteria:

1. Written organized and structured papers reflecting the students' organized and structured schemas of knowledge concerning the concepts in the field of Learning.
2. The thesis shall be clearly stated and shall form the organizing structure for the entire paper such that all discussed points shall relate to that thesis (1 point).
3. All concepts shall be placed correctly in their proper context within the field of Learning. Students shall present the Big Picture of the concepts before rushing to the details (1 point).
4. The essential elements of theories and principles shall be identified, abstracted out, defined, explained, and examples generated thereof (5 points).
5. Proper sequencing of ideas and concepts, written from the general to the specific, and from the simple to the complex. Organization shall follow the logical or chronological sequences inherent in these theories and principles. Papers shall show cohesion, a unified whole. Concepts shall be linked to the thesis, used to support that thesis, concepts shall stay on topic, and there shall be no padding. (2 points).
6. There shall be a complete lack of extraneous information, unnecessary detail, or padding, demonstrating the students' ability to differentiate the essential information from the optional. Writing shall be precise and concise, terms shall be defined. (1 point).
7. Students shall express themselves in written and verbal form using higher academic standards of grammatically correct, properly punctuated, and correctly spelled Standard English (-2 points).
8. APA format is required (-1 point).
9. Particular requirements concerning the perspectives, theories, and principles to be covered are listed in Learning Outcomes listed above.

**GRADING CRITERIA:**

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

Alpha Grade	4-point Equivalent	Percentage Guidelines		Alpha Grade	4-point Equivalent	Percentage Guidelines
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 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:**

Jan 3<sup>rd</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup>: Student Centred Education; due Jan 29<sup>th</sup>.

Jan 24<sup>th</sup> – Feb 14<sup>th</sup>: Sex; due Feb 28<sup>th</sup>.

Feb 26<sup>th</sup> – Mar 19<sup>th</sup>: Violence; due Mar 26<sup>th</sup>.

Mar 21<sup>st</sup> – Apr 11<sup>th</sup>: Religion: due Exam day, TBA

**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. Engaging in cell phone behaviour will result in you being asked to leave the classroom.

**STATEMENT ON PLAGIARISM AND CHEATING:**

Cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated and there will be penalties. For a more precise definition of plagiarism and its consequences, refer to the section on Plagiarism and Cheating in the College policy titled Student Misconduct: Academic and Non-Academic at (<https://www.gprc.ab.ca/about/administration/policies/fetch.php?ID=68>).

Instructors reserve the right to use electronic plagiarism detection services on written assignments. **Instructors also reserve the right to ban the use of any form of electronics (cell**

phones, Blackberries, iPods, tablets, scanning pens, electronic dictionaries, etc.) during class and during exams.

\*\*Note: all Academic and Administrative policies are available at <https://www.gprc.ab.ca/about/administration/policies/>

### **Additional Information:**

**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.

### **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; rewrites are permitted.