



## PSY203H1S: Psychological Research

0.5 credits

University of Toronto  
Summer 2024

Section	Day & Time	Delivery Mode & Location
LEC5101	Tuesday, 6:00 PM - 9:00 PM Thursday, 6:00 PM - 9:00 PM	In Person: SS 2125 In Person: SS 2125

Refer to ACORN for the most up-to-date information about the location of the course meetings.

**Office Hours:** Friday, 12-1 PM, over Zoom (<https://utoronto.zoom.us/j/82176047684>)

**Instructor:** Moaz Shoura (call me Moaz...until I get my PhD at least)

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### I. Your instructor



**Moaz Shoura:** I am a graduate student in the Department of Psychology at UTSC under the supervision of Dr. Adrian Nestor. My main research interests are the other-race effect, and how race is represented in neural network models, as well as humans (i.e., using Electroencephalography (EEG) to understand race perception). I have taught 2 courses in the past (PSYC70: Advanced Research Methods, PSYC50: Higher-Level Cognition) and have guest lectured for plenty of courses. Other teaching interests include statistics and machine learning.

## II. Course description, pre-requisites and learning goals

This course provides an introduction to conceiving, designing, and conducting research in psychology. It prepares students to be both consumers and producers of scientific research, and also addresses basic issues related to the work of psychological scientists such as theory development, research ethics, and scientific writing. Students in this course will gain insight into the scientific process as a whole – its advantages, difficulties, and limitations. As such, students will be able to better evaluate the knowledge that psychological science can provide, and integrate that knowledge into a broader worldview.

### Prerequisite

[PSY100H1/ PSY100Y5/ \( PSYA01H3 \*and\* PSYA02H3\)/ COG250Y1](#)

### Corequisite

[PSY201H1/ ECO220Y1/ EEB225H1/ GGR270H1/ IRW220H1/ POL222H1/ SOC202H1/ STA220H1 / STA238H1/ STA248H1/ STA288H1/ ECO220Y5/ PSY201H5/ STA215H5/ STA220H5/ PSYB07H3/ STAB22H3/ STAB23H3](#)

### Exclusion

[PSYB70H3](#)

After successful completion of this course, you will have demonstrated an improved ability to:

1. **Identify** the defining features of scientific research in psychology, including research ethics, design, and basic data analysis, and apply ethical standards to evaluate psychological science.
2. **Develop skills** to critically evaluate research claims from various sources, including news, popular media, and scholarly articles.
3. **Differentiate between** primary and secondary sources, recognize different types of articles (e.g., empirical research, meta-analyses, literature reviews), and identify the major sections of an empirical research article to understand the rationale, design, results, and conclusions.
4. **Evaluate** research designs based on internal validity, external validity, construct reliability and validity, and statistical results, and understand the relation between research designs and inference, including sample issues (e.g., WEIRD samples).
5. **Write clearly and effectively** in APA style, including proper paraphrasing, citing, and referencing of primary sources, and recognize the purpose of the APA style guide in the development of written work and research ideas.
6. **Interpret** basic psychological research, describe problems operationally for empirical study, evaluate studies' validity and generalizability, and understand the basics of measurement validity and reliability and their role in psychological research.

### III. Course readings

**This course will not use a textbook.** This course will prioritize strengthening your ability to become competent in consuming and evaluating primary literature and as such, will rely on such articles. Other than articles provided, the lectures will provide you with all the information you need to succeed in this course.

### IV. Lecture structure

The lectures will be structured into 2 “sections”:

1. Content lecture (typically the first 2 hours)
2. Analysis of primary research article (typically ~30 minutes)

### V. Course webpage

Please visit Quercus (<https://q.utoronto.ca/>) and sign in with your UTORid credentials to access our course webpage. This webpage will house all course-related materials, including announcements, discussion boards, lecture and related learning materials, assessments, and marks. You should expect to visit this webpage a few times per week to ensure you are up-to-date on any new happenings in the course throughout the term.

### VI. Course requirements and grading

Assessment category	
Assignment 1	10%
Assignment 2	15%
Term test 1	20%
Term test 2	20%
Final Exam	35%

#### Assignments (25%)

The assignments will touch on all learning outcomes of this course. They will develop your writing skills, as well as your general skills to identify the most relevant features of scientific research in psychology, including, but not limited to, critical evaluation of both primary and secondary sources, evaluation of research designs, and interpretation of results. Both assignments will be very similar in nature, with assignment 1 being a “simpler” version of assignment 2.

#### Assignment 1 (10%)

Assignment 1 will be split into 2 phases. In phase 1, you will submit an assignment per the instructions below (more instructions will be provided via Quercus), and you will be critiqued in detail by your TAs, to emulate a supervisor-graduate student relationship (more on this in-lecture). You will then resubmit the assignment based on the feedback received for phase 2 of the assignment.

You will be required to find a secondary source (media or news article) that makes a claim (with a reference(s) to a primary research article). Your job will be to 1. Identify the claim being made in the secondary source, 2. Summarize the evidence from the primary source, and 3. Critically evaluate the evidence from both the primary and secondary sources. More information will be provided on Quercus.

### **Assignment 2 (15%)**

Assignment 2 will be very similar to assignment 1, but the expectations will be higher (i.e., more information required regarding aspects like sample of interest, validity claims, etc.). There will be no phases for assignment 2. More information will be provided on Quercus.

### **Term tests (2 tests, 20% each)**

The goal of the term tests is to test your ability to think about psychological research in conceptual, experimental and applied manners. Each term test will include material from 3 lectures only, term test 1 will cover lectures 1-3, term test 2 will cover lectures 4-6.

The term tests will consist of 9 short-answer (SA) questions each, and will be 2 hours in length.

The term tests will take place in-class during lecture 4 and 8, respectively.

### **Non-cumulative, but comprehensive final exam (35% of course grade)**

The final exam will focus on the last four lectures of the course **BUT** will be comprehensive in nature. Concepts from lectures 1-3, and 5-7 will naturally link to those discussed in the final four lectures, reflecting the interconnected nature of topics in psychological research. The format of the final exam will be similar to the midterms.

Importantly, the date of the final is not announced by the University until the middle of the term. You should NOT make travel plans until you learn the date of your final exams. You CANNOT take the final at a different date/time unless you have a verifiable medical reason and will need to petition for a deferred exam with your College Registrar's Office.

Week	Date	Topic	Deadline
1	02-Jul-24	Foundations & ethics	
2	04-Jul-24	Research claims	
3	09-Jul-24	Sampling	
4	11-Jul-24	<b>Term test 1</b>	
5	16-Jul-24	Understanding variables	<b>A1 phase 1</b>
6	18-Jul-24	Research designs	
7	23-Jul-24	Writing and presenting research	
8	25-Jul-24	<b>Term test 2</b>	
9	30-Jul-24	Statistical foundations	<b>A1 phase 2</b>
10	01-Aug-24	Choosing statistical tests	
11	06-Aug-24	Qualitative research	
12	08-Aug-24	Literature synthesis	
	12-Aug-24		<b>A2</b>

## VII. Course policies

### **Late Assessment Submissions Policy**

A penalty of 5% per day (starting at 100%) will be deducted for late submissions. The last day that we can accept term work is 5 days after the official last day of classes for the term. Late submissions should be uploaded to Quercus in the normal manner. If a student misses the midterm due to illness or any other valid reason, please reach out to me as soon as possible. Students have one week from missing the date of the test to inform the instructor and submit an Absence Declaration on ACORN. Missed tests will be accommodated on a case-by-case basis and may involve make-up assessments, reweighing grades, or alternative assignments.

### **Plagiarism Detection Tool**

Normally, students will be required to submit their course essays to the University's plagiarism detection tool for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their essays to be included as source documents in the tool's reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University's use of this tool are described on the Centre for Teaching Support & Innovation web site (<https://uoft.me/pdt-faq>).

### **Religious Accommodations**

As a student at the University of Toronto, you are part of a diverse community that welcomes and includes students and faculty from a wide range of cultural and religious traditions. For my part, I will make every reasonable effort to avoid scheduling tests, examinations, or other compulsory activities on religious holy days not captured by statutory holidays. Further to University Policy, if you anticipate being absent from class or missing a major course activity (such as a test or in-class assignment) due to a religious observance, please let me know as early in the course as possible, and with sufficient notice (at least two to three weeks), so that we can work together to make alternate arrangements.

## **Students with Disabilities or Accommodation Requirements**

Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. If you have an acute or ongoing disability issue or accommodation need, you should register with Accessibility Services (AS) at the beginning of the academic year by visiting <https://studentlife.utoronto.ca/department/accessibility-services/>. Without registration, you will not be able to verify your situation with your instructors, and instructors will not be advised about your accommodation needs. AS will assess your situation, develop an accommodation plan with you, and support you in requesting accommodation for your course work. Remember that the process of accommodation is private: AS will not share details of your needs or condition with any instructor, and your instructors will not reveal that you are registered with AS.

## **Academic Integrity**

All suspected cases of academic dishonesty will be investigated following procedures outlined in the [Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters](https://governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/secretariat/policies/code-behaviour-academic-matters-july-1-2019) (<https://governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/secretariat/policies/code-behaviour-academic-matters-july-1-2019>). If you have questions or concerns about what constitutes appropriate academic behaviour or appropriate research and citation methods, please reach out to me. Note that you are expected to seek out additional information on academic integrity from me or from other institutional resources. For example, to learn more about how to cite and use source material appropriately and for other writing support, see the U of T writing support website at <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca>. Consult the Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters for a complete outline of the University's policy and expectations. For more information, please see [A&S Student Academic Integrity](https://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/current/academic-advising-and-support/student-academic-integrity) (<https://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/current/academic-advising-and-support/student-academic-integrity>) and the [University of Toronto Website on Academic Integrity](https://www.academicintegrity.utoronto.ca) (<https://www.academicintegrity.utoronto.ca>).

## **Specific Medical Circumstances**

If you become ill and it affects your ability to do your academic work, consult me right away. Normally, I will ask you for documentation in support of your specific medical circumstances. This documentation can be an Absence Declaration (via ACORN) or the University's Verification of Student Illness or Injury (VOI) form. The VOI indicates the impact and severity of the illness, while protecting your privacy about the details of the nature of the illness. If you cannot submit a VOI due to limits on terms of use, you can submit a different form (like a letter from a doctor), as long as it is an original document, and it contains the same information as the VOI (including dates, academic impact, practitioner's signature, phone and registration number). For more information on the VOI, please see <http://www.illnessverification.utoronto.ca>. For information on Absence Declaration Tool for A&S students, please see <https://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/absence>. If you get a concussion, break your hand, or suffer some other acute injury, you should register with Accessibility Services as soon as possible.

## **Accommodation for Personal Reasons**

There may be times when you are unable to complete course work on time due to non-medical reasons. If you have concerns, speak to me or to an advisor in your College Registrar's office; they can help you to decide if you want to request an extension or other forms of academic consideration. They may be able to email your instructors directly to provide a College Registrar's letter of support and connect you with other helpful resources on campus.