COURSE OUTLINE FOR PSYCHOLOGY 720
CONTEMPORARY PROBLEMS IN PSYCHOLOGY, NEUROSCIENCE & BEHAVIOUR
2006-07

Content
The course includes four sections, each approximately six weeks in duration. The first two sections will be completed in the fall term, and the second two sections in the winter term.

Section A: Research Ethics and Professional Issues
Instructors: Bruce Milliken (millike@mcmaster.ca)
Allison Sekuler (sekuler@mcmaster.ca)

Section B: Animal Behaviour / Evolution
Instructor: Reuven Dukas (dukas@mcmaster.ca)

Section C: Development
Instructor: Louis Schmidt (schmidt1@mcmaster.ca)

Section D: Behavioural Neuroscience
Instructor: Judith Shedden (shedden@mcmaster.ca)

Tentative Schedule of Section Dates
Section A  September 11 – October 20
Section B  October 23 – December 1
Section C  January 8 – February 16
Section D  February 26 – April 6

When and Where
The regular meeting times may vary between the sections, but will be confirmed by the section instructor no later than two weeks prior to the start of the section. Whenever possible, we’ll hold the regular meetings in one of the department’s second or third floor seminar rooms, again to be confirmed by the section instructor two weeks prior to the start of the section.

Course Objectives
This course has at least three important objectives. First, by offering content from three of the four research areas represented in the department, we hope to provide you with the background required to take full advantage of the research opportunities available to you in this department. We like to think (and others tell us it’s true) that our department is unique in its cohesion, and in the amount of interaction among students and faculty across a wide range of research areas. This course is one of the tools we use to encourage this type of department-wide interaction. Second, this course offers an opportunity to teach first-year graduate students the analytical and communication skills needed for a successful scientific career. Third, we feel that the participation of all first-year students in this course sets the social context in which you’ll pursue your graduate studies over the next several years, and this social context is important to both you and the vibrancy of the department. We hope you’ll take advantage of the opportunity to learn from each other, as you’re a select group with an exciting and diverse range of backgrounds and research interests.
Assessment

Assessment methods may vary across the four sections, but will include some combination of class participation, oral presentations, written presentations, quizzes, and/or formal exams. The assessment methods and their relative weightings will be outlined at the beginning of each section. The overall course grade will be determined by an equal weighting of grades from Sections B, C and D, and will be reported as a letter grade, following the table below. Section A will be graded on a Pass/Fail basis, and will not contribute weight toward the final course grade unless the student is deemed to have performed below expectations, earning a Fail grade. In the event that a student receives a Fail grade in Section A, this mark will count as 25% of the final grade, with the marks from each of the other three sections also contributing 25% to the final grade. Coursework not completed by due specified due dates will be subject to penalties for lateness as described at the beginning of each section.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Numerical Grade</th>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>90 – 100</td>
<td>A+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85 – 89</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80 – 84</td>
<td>A-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>77 – 79</td>
<td>B+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>73 – 76</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70 – 72</td>
<td>B-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 – 69</td>
<td>F *</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Grades in graduate courses below B- are considered failing grades
COURSE OUTLINE FOR PSYCHOLOGY 720
CONTEMPORARY PROBLEMS IN PSYCHOLOGY, NEUROSCIENCE & BEHAVIOUR
SECTION A: RESEARCH ETHICS AND PROFESSIONAL ISSUES

Content
The section focuses on research ethics and professional issues that are often relatively new to first year graduate students.

When and Where
The regular meeting time for this section will be Wednesday, 9:30-11:20am, in Room 316.

Reading and Assignments
The core reading is “On Being a Scientist” (http://www.nap.edu/catalog/4917.html). Students will be assigned readings both from the core reading and from supplementary reading, and will be asked to complete written and oral assignments, as appropriate for each discussion topic.

Tentative schedule of topics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WEEK BEGINNING …</th>
<th>TOPIC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>September 11</td>
<td>Introduction, Research Ethics 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 18</td>
<td>Research Ethics 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 25</td>
<td>Research Ethics 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 2</td>
<td>Publish or perish?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 9</td>
<td>Student / supervisor relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 16</td>
<td>Science and the media</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The order of topic discussions may change depending on availability of guest lecturers. Students will be notified of changes at least 3 days in advance of the course meeting.

Assessment
This section will be graded on a Pass/Fail basis. To pass the section,

i. students are expected to attend all class meetings unless they have explicit, written permission of the Instructors;
ii. students are expected to complete all required written and oral assignments by the specified due dates;
iii. students are expected to read required course materials in advance;
iv. students are expected to participate fully in class discussions.

A failing grade will count 25% toward the final grade, and be given the numerical value 32/100 for purposes of averaging with the grades of the other sections.