



**Psychology 4000A – Biological Bases of Mental Disorders - Fall 2017**  
**Issues in Psychology (4000 Series)**  
**Department of Psychology**

**Location:** Tuesday, 3:05-5:45 pm, W866

**Course Dropbox:** adjacent to C866

**Instructor:**

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**Course Description:**

At the University of Lethbridge, the *Issues in Psychology Series* courses at the 4000 level are designed to allow students to expand their knowledge of the fundamental principles of several disciplines accrued during lower-level courses. This semester, *Biological Bases of Mental Disorders* builds upon your knowledge of abnormal psychology and the biological and cognitive factors that are implicated in the pathology of atypical behaviour. As well, emphasis will be placed on the research methodology used to investigate these relationships. This is NOT a lecture-based course; thus, it is not suitable for students who cannot commit to attending every class, to participating fully in class activities, and to spending a significant amount of time each week outside of class time working on course requirements.

**NB:** Students should note that the sociology of mental illness, current legal policies, cultural stigma, counselling for persons with mental disorders, clinical diagnostic procedures, and complementary and alternative therapies are NOT topics that are emphasized in this course.

**Prerequisite Courses and Background Preparation:**

Prerequisites for this course are: Psychology 2030 AND Neuroscience 2600 AND one of Psychology 3130, Psychology 3525, or Psychology 3535 AND three additional courses (9.0 credit hours) at the 3000 level in Psychology or Neuroscience (one of which must have a science designation). Students who do not have the required prerequisite courses (e.g., verified transfer credits) may be deregistered from the course without warning. In *exceptional circumstances*, a prerequisite waiver will be considered for a student who has adequate equivalent background. If you are considering requesting a waiver, you must contact me prior to add/drop. Submitting a request for a waiver does not guarantee that you will receive one; each case will be evaluated individually, and you will have to provide supporting documentation for prior courses not taken at the U of L.

**Required Readings and Textbook:**

(1) Required Readings. There is no formal textbook for course content. Required readings (e.g., journal articles) will be made available on Moodle.

(2) Required Textbook. Northey, M., & Timney, B. (2015). *Making sense in psychology: A student's guide to research and writing* (2nd ed). Don Mills ON: Oxford University Press.

**Course Rules and Regulations:**

You are expected to attend and to arrive on time for every class. Should you have an ongoing situation that prevents you doing so, please speak to me prior to the end of add-drop. You are encouraged to bring your laptop or tablet to each class to facilitate access to online resources during in-class activities. On the other hand, cell phones **MUST** be turned off during the class and texting is absolutely prohibited. Should you choose to use your cell phone during the class, or you are using your laptop/tablet for off-task use during the class, you will be asked to pack up your things and leave. As this is a senior course, it should go without saying that you are expected to be respectful toward your fellow classmates and your professor. Spontaneous discussion is always welcome, but that does not include using the class time for conversation and other activities that are unrelated to the course material; conducting a social chit-chat session during a classmate's presentation (or when your professor is speaking), and abruptly arriving or leaving during a class. These behaviours are rude, disrespectful, and disruptive to students and professors alike. Finally, a diversity of viewpoints will inevitably exist in the university classroom. Voicing well-reasoned disagreement with others' viewpoints and asking questions is perfectly fine; being combative, intolerant, or disrespectful towards others is not (see the University Calendar Section 5.b.1). **NB.** All students are expected to be familiar with the entirety of Part 4 of the current University of Lethbridge Calendar that governs Academic Regulations, Policies, and Program Requirements. In particular, all students are expected to have read and understood Sections 4, 5 and 9. You can access the current calendar for 2017/2018 at the following link: <https://www.uleth.ca/ross/academic-calendar/2017-18>.

**Students with Special Needs:**

If you have a documented condition that prevents you from fully participating in this course, including evaluation procedures, it is your responsibility to contact me regarding your individual situation. Please note that no accommodations will be given without official notification from the Accommodated Learning Centre (<http://www.uleth.ca/ross/accommodated-learning-centre/>), and not all supports are available for this course (see below).

**Course Information Online:**

**Moodle:** All course information will be available from the Moodle LMS system and students will be able to track their standing in the course by accessing the Moodle grade book. Students should check Moodle often for running updates. All students are expected to be aware of copyright regulations regarding intellectual property and distribution of course material. With the exception of information that is freely available online, all course information should be treated as copyright protected. You are free to download and print a **SINGLE** copy of any materials posted for your use within Moodle, and you are free to take your own notes in class and from the readings (of course!). You are ***not permitted*** to distribute the information in any form to persons not registered in this course in this semester, including turning in your material to the Students' Union Note Bank at the end of the semester. Once the information is in your hands, you are legally responsible for what you do with it. Audio recording, video recording, or taking still photographs of in-class activities or class members is ***strictly prohibited***. This includes students with special needs. Doing so violates intellectual property rights, and the privacy of your classmates and your professor who have not consented to have their voice/questions/image captured.

**Email:** Other than the running posts to Moodle, my primary method of communicating with you for general notices will be via in-class announcements or by email to the class listserv. Please check your U of L email account on a regular basis, or have that account forwarded to your preferred provider. Please do your best to remember to do regular housekeeping of your U of L account so that you do not miss important notices due to a full mailbox. **NB:** If your email to me concerns questions about course

information that has been made available in class, has been posted to Moodle, is given within this syllabus, or is sent from a non-uleth account do not expect a reply.

### **Course Requirements:**

Please note that scheduling and deadlines should be considered tentative until after September 12 (end of initial add/drop period) when course enrollment can be finalized and all students have had the opportunity to attend the introductory seminars.

### **Major Project (80% total)**

The Major Project consists of Presentations, Critical Abstracts, and a scholarly Review Article on a single topic/question that you will research over the course of the semester. Topics will be assigned during the introductory classes.

Presentations (30% total). Students will be responsible for giving two (2) short, conference-length presentations (Part I: Introduction and Background Research for Major Project; Part II: Progress Report). Presentations (including a question period) will be approximately 30 minutes. In addition, students are required to submit a companion reading for each of their presentations. Scheduling of dates and other details will be discussed in the introductory classes and all material will be made available on Moodle.

**The companion readings are due one week prior to the scheduled presentation date and an electronic copy of presentation slides is due by 2:00 pm on the day of your presentation (Powerpoint only).**

**Penalty:** Failure to turn in required elements on time and/or to deliver your presentation on the scheduled date(s) will result in a grade of 0%.

Critical Abstracts (20% total). Each student is required to submit five (5) written assignments each consisting of a short critical abstract/critique of a piece of primary research (companion articles submitted by students). Each abstract will account for 4% of your final grade and will be assigned approximately every two weeks throughout the semester in relation to the presentation schedule. Details of this assignment, including required elements, will be discussed in the introductory classes and all related information will be posted to Moodle.

**Penalty:** If you fail to turn in an abstract on time, or you turn in an incomplete assignment, you will incur an automatic 25% deduction to your mark and those turned in more than 24 hours late will receive an automatic grade of 0%.

Review Article Assignment (30%). Students will be required to write a scholarly review article of their major topic. Details of this assignment including format, required elements, and topics will be discussed in the introductory classes and all related information will be posted to Moodle. First submission of this assignment is **due NO LATER than Tuesday, November 21, 2017 IN CLASS**. Assignments turned in to the dropbox after the start of class and any incomplete assignments will be considered late submissions.

**Penalties:** If you fail to turn in your assignment by the first submission deadline you will incur an automatic 25% deduction to your mark and you forfeit your right to turn in a revision. Your reduced mark will account for 25% of your final grade. Assignments turned in more than 24 hours after the deadline will receive an automatic grade of 0 for 25% of your final grade.

For eligible students who choose to submit a revision for re-grading, submissions are **due NO LATER than 4:00 pm, Friday, December 15, 2017. NO EXCEPTIONS & NO EXTENSTIONS**

**Penalty:** Any revision turned in after this deadline or one that does not include your original submission (including the target article) will not be graded and your mark on your first submission will stand.

**Class Activities (20% total)**

Over the course of the semester, classroom activities will focus on research methodology, critical thinking, and writing skills. In relation to these activities, students will be required to complete four (4) assignments; each worth 5% of your final grade. Students should note that in-class activities include both independent and group work.

**Penalty:** If you fail to turn in an assignment on time, or you turn in an incomplete assignment, you will incur an automatic 25% deduction to your mark and those turned in more than 24 hours late will receive an automatic grade of 0.

**Policy for Re-scheduling Presentations and Penalties for Late Submissions:** With the exception of *extreme extenuating circumstances* all students are expected to deliver their presentations on their scheduled dates and turn in graded work on time. Supporting documentation must be provided for any request to re-schedule your presentation or for an extension on any written work. Should you find yourself in an extreme situation, please contact me ASAP via email so that I may assist you. Otherwise, penalties will be levied as described above. There will be no opportunity to re-weight course components or to complete extra work to offset missed presentations, late assignments, or poor performance on any course element.

**A Note on Plagiarism:** Written assignments and presentation material will be graded under the assumption that students have read and understood the contents of Northey and Timney (2015); specifically here, Chapter 5 - *Ethical Issues in Research and Writing*. All assignments must be in your own words. Paraphrasing someone else’s words or ideas, even if you reference those words, is plagiarism. Stringing together a set of phrases with direct quotes is not writing in your own words. Likewise, turning in virtually identical papers from a pair or group, when students have been instructed to work independently is a violation. All forms of plagiarism or misrepresentation constitute serious academic offenses. Any case of suspected plagiarism, or duplication, will be dealt with severely, including the imposition of the maximum penalties allowable. The onus is on you to understand what constitutes plagiarism or misrepresentation and to take all steps to avoid both. It is also an academic offence to submit substantially similar work to two different courses for credit (see Part 4, Section 5 of the U of L Calendar regarding Academic Offenses).

**Grading Scheme:**

Letter grades will be assigned to all course components and final course percentages according to the following scale. You must meet or exceed the lower boundary for a grade category in order to be accorded that letter grade.

A+ ≥ 90	B+ 77 - < 80	C+ 67 - < 70	D+ 55 - < 60
A 85 - < 90	B 73 - < 77	C 63 - < 67	D 50 - < 55
A- 80 - < 85	B- 70 - < 73	C- 60 - < 63	F < 50