

Psychology 4000D – Biological Bases of Mental Disorders
Issues in Psychology (4000 Series), Spring 2012
Department of Psychology
The University of Lethbridge

Location:

T Th; 10:50 to 12:05; W866

Instructor Information:

Instructor: Dr. Margaret Forgie

Office Hours: By appointment at our mutual convenience.

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Course Description:

The Issues in Psychology Series courses are designed to allow students to expand their knowledge of the fundamental principles of a specific discipline that were accrued during lower-level courses. This semester, Psychology 4000D is intended to build upon your knowledge of mental illness by focusing on the biological factors that underlie these disorders. In doing so, we will focus on aspects of behavioural endocrinology, neurophysiology, neurochemistry, brain plasticity, genetics and so forth.

I will provide some of the presentations, and we will have at least one full class related to writing, lecturing, researching your topic and so forth. Beyond that, students will be responsible for presenting information. You will also be responsible for leading the class discussions that will be based on weekly readings from the required text and the review articles that will accompany each presentation (see below). You will be responsible for all the material covered in class and the readings. It is your responsibility to make sure that your notes are complete. Barring illness or other exceptional circumstances that may arise, all students are expected to attend every class. Furthermore, all students are expected to be prepared to participate in discussions and to have read the background material for each class.

Please note that the main theme of this course is not education, counselling, or sociocultural issues related to drug abuse or pharmacological interventions for mental disorders.

Required Prerequisites:

The prerequisites for this course are Neuroscience 2600, and at least one of Psychology 3130, Psychology 3525, or Psychology 3535, in addition to one other 3000-level course in Psychology or Neuroscience. Regardless of specific background, I expect all students to have a working knowledge of the fundamentals of physiology, neurochemistry, neuropsychology and learning theory that contribute to pathological behaviours. **NO PREREQUISITE WAIVERS WILL BE GIVEN FOR THIS COURSE.**

Lectures and Required Reading:

1. *Course Content:* Rather than using a published textbook for course content, required readings will consist of a series of published journal articles that will be made available online using the Moodle Learning Management System. I will post some of the readings, and students will be responsible for choosing the rest (see Course Requirements).

2. *Supplemental Research and Writing Reference Guide:* For many years I have required students to purchase a reference text to assist with written assignments, presentations, and so forth. This

semester, due to a change at the level of the publisher, several versions of the *Making Sense* Text are in current circulation. Those students that are purchasing this text for the first time should choose either Option 1 or 2 as listed below. Those students that have already purchased Option 2 do not need to purchase a new edition. Students that have already purchased and used Option 3 should consider upgrading their text as the revised versions reflect current writing conventions and Internet usage in research.

Option 1: Northey, M., & Timney, B. (2012). *Making Sense in Psychology: A student's guide to research and writing*. Oxford University Press: Don Mills, ON.

Option 2: Northey, M., & von Aderkas, P. (2011). *Making Sense in the Life Sciences: A student's guide to research and writing*. Oxford University Press: Don Mills, ON.

Option 3: Northey, M., & Timney, B. (2007). *Making Sense in Psychology and the Life Sciences: A student's guide to research and writing, Fourth Edition*. Oxford University Press: Don Mills, ON.

Course Information Online:

Moodle: For new or returning students, the University of Lethbridge has replaced Blackboard/webCT with Moodle (<https://moodle.uleth.ca/>). I will use Moodle to provide an online grade book to allow you to track your standing in the course. I will also post supplemental material (e.g., information sheets explaining assignment details and all reading material. If you are not familiar with Moodle, please contact the CRDC.

Email: My primary method of communicating with you for general notices and points of interest to supplement lecture material will be via email and in-class announcements. Please check your U of L email account on a daily basis, or have that account forwarded to your usual email provider. Please do your best to remember to do regular housekeeping so that you do not miss important notices that relate to this course due to a full mailbox. Any requests for information pertaining to matters of a confidential nature (e.g., your particular standing in the course) must be sent from your U of L account. Please include your student number and your full legal name as it appears on your registration. Please do not abuse the class listserv by sending communications that are not relevant to this course.

Course Requirements:

(1) Reading and Focus Questions (15%) Students will provide an up-to-date review article concerning their topic area to accompany their lecture material. Given current copyright changes, we will discuss how to distribute this information to the class during the introductory classes. In addition, each student will prepare five focus questions for their lecture that are based upon your supplied reading. You must also prepare an answer to each of your questions. **Both of these must be submitted no less than three (3) working days prior to your presentation.**

(2) Lecture (25%) Each student will be responsible for presenting a 50- to 60-minute lecture on an assigned topic/chapter of the required text, and you will then lead the class in the discussion session to be held afterward. You will be expected to expand beyond the text and your reading in both forums. Details related to this assignment will be discussed during the introductory classes and in-class workshops. **You MUST provide me with an electronic copy of your final presentation slides (Keynote or Powerpoint only) by 10:50 am on the day of your presentation.**

(3) Abstract Assignment (20%) As a companion to your lecture each student must submit a written assignment that is adapted from several standard abstracted and annotated formats. The assignment consists of writing a one-page, critical abstract of each of six (6) primary research

articles that address the same topic as your lecture (NOT including your selected reading or the text). The articles must have been published in a peer-reviewed (refereed) journal within the last six (6) years (i.e., 2005 or later – no exceptions). In contrast to third-year courses, this assignment will be given a letter grade and then you will have the opportunity to revise it once for a higher grade. An information sheet for this assignment will be available on Moodle and will be discussed during the introductory classes. **This assignment must be submitted NO LATER THAN the start of the class, on the day of your presentation.**

(4) Journal Assignment 25%. Each student will submit a written assignment that consists of an essay explaining a single, original research article (the target article) concerning any topic in the area of developmental disabilities. This assignment **MUST BE A DIFFERENT TOPIC FROM** your lecture, reading, and abstract assignment. Your target article must be a primary research paper that has been published in a peer-reviewed (refereed) journal within the last six (6) years (i.e., 2005 or later). Following initial grading all students will be given an opportunity to revise their paper **ONCE** for a higher grade. An information sheet for this assignment will be available on Moodle and will be discussed during the introductory classes. **This assignment must be submitted in class on Thursday, March 15, 2012.**

(5) Final Exam (15%). A conceptual, take-home, cumulative exam will be distributed in the last scheduled class of the semester. Material to be covered on this exam will be discussed in class prior to its distribution. Questions will be of essay format, and will require full referencing.

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 an official letter from the Disabilities Resource Centre (<http://www.uleth.ca/ross/disabilities/index.html>).

Grading Scheme:

Letter grades will be assigned to assignments and final course percentages according to the following scale:

A+ (90+)	B+ (77-79)	C+ (67-69)	D+ (56-59)
A (85-89)	B (73-76)	C (63-66)	D (50-55)
A- (80-84)	B- (70-72)	C- (60-62)	F (< 50)

NB. With the exception of extenuating circumstances (e.g., illness, bereavement, accident), all students must deliver their lecture, and submit the written assignments and final exam on the scheduled dates. You must provide supporting documentation should you be unable to meet course requirements. Should you encounter a serious problem, please contact Academic Advising.

Late submissions of your reading or focus questions will result in a 50% penalty. Late submissions of the Journal Assignment or the Abstract Assignment will result in a 25% penalty per day. Failure to deliver your lecture will result in a grade of zero percent (0%). All assignments will be graded under the assumption that students have read, and understood, the contents of the *Making Sense* text. In particular, all assignments must be in your own words. Paraphrasing someone else's words, even if you reference those words, is plagiarism. Plagiarism is a serious academic offense. Any case of suspected plagiarism will be dealt

with severely, including the imposition of the maximum penalties allowable (please consult the current U of L Calendar regarding academic offenses).