

**Psychology 403 B2**  
Winter 2011, TR 9:30-10:50  
<http://www.psych.ualberta.ca/~msnyder/p403b2/main.html>

**Instructor:** Dr. M.R. Snyder

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Office hours: T 1:00-4:00, or by appointment

**Readings**

Required and recommended journal articles listed on course website and available through U of A library.

**Course Components**

Individual Research Project

Proposal: 5%, due 17 February

Term paper: 35%, due 12 April

Peer editing: 10%

Video Podcasts

Five ideas: -1% to overall grade for each idea not submitted, due 25 January

Proposal: 5%, due 8 February

Script: 10%, due 3 March

Podcast and supporting website material: 35%, due 5 April

Attendance

<50% attendance, no bonus

50-75% attendance, +2% bonus

76-90% attendance, +4% bonus

91-100% attendance, +5% bonus

Note: penalties to attendance bonuses for consistent lateness, disruptiveness, etc.

**Additional Relevant Dates**

Formation of groups: 1 February

Draft copy of paper to editor: 17 March

Meeting between editor and writer of paper: by 25 March

Evaluation of podcasts: by 12 April

**Other Significant Dates:**

21 Jan. Winter Term registration deadline

21-25 Feb. Statutory Provincial holiday and Winter Term Reading Week

7 March 12:00-1:00 Students' Union election forum; no classes

18 March Last day for withdrawal from Winter Term courses

13 April Last day of Winter Term classes

15-30 April Final examinations

22 April Good Friday; University buildings closed

25 April Easter Monday; University buildings closed

### **Individual Research Project**

During the course students will be working on an individual research project of their own choice. Students will submit a proposal of their research topic, submit a draft of their paper for peer editing, and finally turn in a finished 12 page term paper.

For the proposal students must provide their research topic and an annotated reference list of at least 5 journal articles. That is, the appropriate APA references for the 5 articles selected, along with a brief (i.e., abstract length) explanation of the *relevance* for each article to the proposed research topic. The proposal will constitute 5% of your course grade.

We will be using peer editing for your term paper. This means each student must submit a draft copy of their paper on 17 March. This draft will be read and edited by one other student in class. The writer of the paper and the peer editor must meet to discuss the editor's evaluation by 25 March. The draft must be at least 7 pages in length, contain references, and a reference list. When the final term paper is turned in the edited draft copy along with the peer editor's evaluation must also be submitted. Part of a student's grade on the term paper will reflect development from the draft copy to the final paper. The peer editor will be evaluated on the thoroughness of his or her editing job of the term paper; this will constitute 10% of your course grade.

The final paper should be 12 pages in length (title page and reference list don't count), plus or minus one page where 12 point Times font, double spacing (i.e., 23 lines per page), and 1 inch margins are used. The paper must be appropriately referenced, having an absolute minimum of 12 sources. Along with your final paper you need to submit your draft copy, your editor's comment sheet, and the first page (either a printout or photocopy) of each source cited in your paper. Details about APA referencing format will be discussed in class and on the course website. Your paper will account for 35% of your course grade.

### **Video Podcasts**

Each student will produce short (i.e., 2.5-4 minutes) video podcasts on a very specific evolutionary psychology topic/idea that is of interest. Each podcast must include the research and/or theory from two studies. The ultimate aim is to mount the podcasts (along with a textual transcript of the dialogue in the podcast, list of references, additional links to related material, etc.) on the course website, making them available to the general public. Given the short nature of the podcasts, they will have to be carefully constructed to stay very much on a specific topic.

Ideas of what the podcasts might resemble would include things like Jay's Journal off *Daily Planet*, Rick Mercer's "Streeters", or the like. The audio podcasts from Skeptoid.com are excellent in terms of being focused on a topic and giving details, although obviously, as an audio/text only version this is going to differ in some respects to that of a v-podcast. *Mythbusters* and Penn and Teller's *Bullshit* are also good sources for ideas on how to present evolutionary psychology topics in an interesting and topical manner, although obviously the formats of these shows are quite different from a 2.5 to 4 minute segment.

I have to stress that content is much more important than form for this project. I *\*do not\** want students getting hung up or spending excessive time on the "stylistic" elements of the project at the expense of the content! The idea here is to present good science in an accessible and interesting format.

Although students will be put into small "support" groups, each student will produce his or her own video podcast. Group members are primarily there to assist with the actual mechanics of filming the podcasts (somebody has to hold the camera...)

### Podcast Components

Each student will submit 5 ideas that can be interpreted within an evolutionary psychology framework that could serve as the basis for a video segment. Try to come up with topical and interesting ideas. You should be able to convey each idea in one or two sentences at the most. Given that evolutionary psychology can be applied to so many aspects of life, don't feel that you have to take your ideas from well-known evolutionary psychology research. Don't worry about giving detailed information here; just providing a one or two sentence concept is all that is required. While you aren't graded on the ideas you submit, you will be penalized -1% for each idea that is not submitted. I will take all the ideas, eliminate the duplicates, and then distribute the remaining ideas randomly amongst students. Given the random distribution, obviously you may not end up with the specific ideas you proposed. Each student will pick one idea from those provided to serve as the basis for the video podcast.

Each student will submit a short proposal for his or her podcast. The idea needs to be fleshed out to specify the particular evolutionary psychology principle(s) that are going to be focused on. Each proposal also needs to identify the two journal articles that will be focused on in the video and explain their relevance. Proposals will be evaluated by the professor. The proposals constitute 5% of your course grade.

For each podcast a script will need to be produced. The script must include the transcript of what is said (i.e., the dialogue), along with a breakdown of the action (i.e., stage directions), and any other visuals, details, etc. to be used. Remember that the most important element is the content; be careful to avoid being sidetracked by effects, locations, and props. The more precise a script is, the better the feedback that can be provided, and consequently, the better the final podcasts should be. Scripts will be evaluated and edited by the professor. The script constitute 10% of a student's course grade.

Each podcast will then need to be filmed. Each student's podcasts, along with the transcripts, links, etc. will be mounted on the course website. Each podcast and the supporting content will be graded by the professor and the other students in the class. The grade from this will constitute 35% of your course grade.

### Grading Scheme:

<u>Mark (%)</u>	<u>Grade</u>	<u>Letter Grade</u>	<u>Descriptor</u>
94-100	4.0	A+	Excellent
88-93.9	4.0	A	Excellent
83-87.9	3.7	A-	Excellent
78-82.9	3.3	B+	Good
73-77.9	3.0	B	Good
68-72.9	2.7	B-	Good
63-67.9	2.3	C+	Satisfactory
58-62.9	2.0	C	Satisfactory
55-57.9	1.7	C-	Satisfactory
52-54.9	1.3	D+	Poor
50-51.9	1.0	D	Minimal Pass
0-49.9	0.0	F or F(R)	Failure

Exam and assignment marks will be tallied at the end of the course and converted to the 4-point University grade scale.

**Posting of Grades**

Student grades will be posted (by student ID) on the course website in a PDF format. Any students who do not want their grades posted in this manner should contact the instructor in writing during the first two weeks of class to make alternative arrangements.

**Course Prerequisites:**

Students must have completed and successfully passed Psyc 302 (Introduction to Evolutionary Psychology) to receive credit in this course. Students who do not have the required prerequisite will have their registration in Psyc 403 cancelled; this may result in a loss of fees paid for this course.

**Course Objectives:**

We will examine several areas of research in evolutionary psychology in detail, critically evaluating the merit of the evolutionary psychology interpretation of the data.

**Cheating and Plagiarism:**

The University of Alberta is committed to the highest standards of academic integrity and honesty. Students are expected to be familiar with these standards regarding academic honesty and to uphold the policies of the University in this respect. Students are particularly urged to familiarize themselves with the provisions of the Code of Student Behaviour (online at [www.ualberta.ca/secretariat/appeals.htm](http://www.ualberta.ca/secretariat/appeals.htm)) and avoid any behaviour which could potentially result in suspicions of cheating, plagiarism, misrepresentation of facts and/or participation in an offence. Academic dishonesty is a serious offence and can result in suspension or expulsion from the University.

In particular, please note: No student shall represent another's substantial editorial or compositional assistance on an assignment as their own. Also, no student shall submit in any course or program of study, without the written approval of the course instructor, all or a substantial portion of any academic writing, essay, thesis, research report, project assignment, presentation or poster for which credit has been obtained by the student or which has been or is being submitted by the student in another course or program of student in the University or elsewhere.

**Contacting the Instructor:**

You may contact the instructor by:  
speaking with him before/after class or during his office hours (Tuesday and Thursday 1:00-2:30),  
phone (492-3834),  
leaving a written message for him at the Department of Psychology office (BSP-217), or  
via e-mail ([mrsnyder@ualberta.ca](mailto:mrsnyder@ualberta.ca)).

**E-mail Protocols:**

Some questions can be dealt with very easily with e-mail, although others can not. If you ask a question via e-mail that can not be easily addressed you will be instructed to see the instructor in person.

When communicating with the instructor or teaching assistant via e-mail, students **must** include "Psyc 403" in the subject line of their message – note the spelling: Psyc 403. Because

of recent problems with viruses and SPAM mail, any e-mail lacking the Psyc 403 subject line will be deleted.

Second, students **must** include their full name and student ID in any e-mail to the instructor or teaching assistant (your e-mail address and/or alias are insufficient).

Third, students **must** use their GPU account (i.e., an e-mail account with the @ualberta.ca suffix) when contacting the instructor or teaching assistant; e-mails from non-GPU accounts *will not* be responded to. Past experience has shown that for various reasons e-mails from non-GPU accounts are sometimes difficult to reply to and are more likely to present security risks; GPU accounts do not generally have these problems. If you need assistance in using your GPU account, contact Academic Information and Communication Technologies (780-492-9400, or <http://helpdesk.ualberta.ca>). Please be aware that it may take one to three business days for your e-mail to be answered.

If you e-mail the instructor and do not receive a reply within two or three days, please make sure you followed the above protocols correctly and either resend the e-mail or contact the instructor by another means.

**Note:** students are expected to come to class prepared, having read the assigned material being covered.