THE SCIENCE OF HUMAN NATURE

Why do we what we do? What factors play a role in shaping our personality? What biological and social elements help configure a person’s moral and emotional character? In this course, we examine landmark studies that shook standard beliefs about human nature in their time. We analyze those studies in their historical context and discuss their relevance to social, ethical, and policy debates. The studies may include research on mother love, obedience, conformity, bystander intervention in emergencies, deception, race, and gender stereotypes.

The readings for this course include the original publication of the studies we are covering and articles that situate them in their historical and social contexts.

In addition, each week we will watch footage of the original experiments/studies and/or other visual material, such as documentaries or interviews.

COURSE TOPICS AND READINGS

WEEK 1 (September 9): INTRODUCTION NO TUTORIALS

WEEK 2 (September 16): LOVE TUTORIALS START

Early Experiences: Mothers, Fathers, Peers, and Others

Readings:

WEEK 3 (September 23):  FEAR  TUTORIALS

The Power of Conditioning

Readings:


WEEK 4 (September 30):  OBEDIENCE  TUTORIALS

Readings:


WEEK 5 (October 7)  CONFORMITY  TUTORIALS

Readings:


October 14: No Class - Thanksgiving holiday

WEEK 6 (October 21): MIDTERM TEST - in class

WEEK 7 (October 28): HELPING TUTORIALS

Midterm test will be given back in tutorial groups.

Note: The last day to drop the course without penalties is November 4th. If you are having trouble with the course, please, come talk to us before then.

Readings:


WEEK 8 (November 4): AGRESSION TUTORIALS

Readings:


**November 11: No class - November pause**

**WEEK 9 (November 18): RACIAL IDENTITY**

Readings:


**WEEK 10 (November 25): SEX AND GENDER**

Readings:


WEEK 11 (December 2): LYING TUTORIALS

Readings:


WEEK 12: (Make-up Monday, December 4): REVIEW NO TUTORIALS

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING:

Attending Class:
Do the readings before class. Lectures complement the readings.

Participating in Tutorials: 10%
Tutorials will focus on discussing the primary sources, writing, and reviewing materials for the exams. Tutorials offer a smaller forum for discussion. By participating in discussions you learn to present your views, listen to other viewpoints, and engage in fruitful public debates.

It is difficult to do well in this course without attending the lectures AND participating in the tutorials.
Midterm Exam: 35%
Two short questions (out of three choices) and one essay (out of two).
It is important to find out how you are doing in the class sooner rather than later. The midterm will give us an indication of your strengths and weaknesses regarding your command of the material and your writing skills.

Take-home Essay: 20%
One essay question. Maximum length: 800 words. Due in class December 2nd.
Your essay must be handed in. It will NOT be accepted via email.

Final Exam: 35%
Two short questions (out of three choices) and one essay (out of two). The final will cover the material from the mid-term week to end of the term.

There are no make-ups for the tests, except in extraordinary unforeseen circumstances (see below).

Grade Revision Procedure:
The teaching assistants in the course will grade all the assignments. If you are dissatisfied with your grade for a particular question, you must write a short note (maximum one page) explaining why you think the grade is not correct. You must give this note to your TA no later than two weeks after getting your grade. After discussing your grade with the TA, if you are still unsatisfied, you can bring the assignment to the instructors for review. We all make mistakes, but please be aware that the TAs are highly qualified to grade all the assignments in this course. It is unlikely that we will change the grade given.
You are responsible for getting the graded assignments the day they are given back in tutorial. Requests for revision of grades will be accepted no earlier than a week after you receive your grade, and no later than two weeks after you receive the grade.

Late Assignments:
The penalty will be 10% of your grade for the assignment for each day (including weekend days) that your take-home test is late.

Extensions:
Extensions for assignments and make-up exams will only be given for major unforeseen personal disasters, and illness. We hope you will not need one. If you do, please come to see us *as soon as possible* and, if pertinent, bring the doctor’s note with the specific dates you were incapacitated. For this, you need to use the University of Toronto form available in the Faculty of Arts and Science “Registration Handbook and Timetable.”
Plagiarism:

Plagiarism is the use of words from an author without quotation marks and/or a proper reference. Plagiarism is a serious academic offence. Do not compromise your academic record and your moral integrity by plagiarizing. If you are having trouble doing an assignment, talk to your TA or come to see the instructors.

On Academic integrity: http://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/osai/students

SPECIAL NEEDS

If you have a disability, please come to see the instructors. We will be happy to accommodate your needs to do well in this course. The University of Toronto is committed to accessibility. If you require accommodations for a disability, or have any accessibility concerns about the course, the classroom or course materials, please contact Accessibility Services as soon as possible, or http://studentlife.utoronto.ca/accessibility.

E-MAIL POLICY

We will send some announcements via email during the semester. You are responsible for making sure that you are getting the emails sent to you via Blackboard. If you need to discuss something about the course with us, make an appointment to see us. You can also contact us or your TA by e-mail with specific questions regarding the material covered, after you have reviewed that material in the appropriate tutorial.

However, e-mail will not be used to explain material covered in lectures or tutorials that you missed. If you missed a class/tutorial, please obtain the pertinent information from another classmate.

E-mail will also not be used to answer questions about information that is stated on the syllabus. Please, make sure to look at the syllabus first before sending an email.

We and the TAs will answer your questions within two business days. If you don’t have a response by then, please re-send your note.

For any e-mail correspondence with us you must use your University of Toronto e-mail account. Emails sent from other accounts will not be answered.