

SYLLABUS
PSYD15 LEC30: The Science of Behaviour Change
Summer 2021
Thursdays 7:00-9:00pm [via Zoom](#)

Instructor

Dr. Kaitlyn Werner

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Office Hours: Mondays 1:00-2:00pm [via Zoom](#)

Course Description

This seminar offers a selective review of the scientific literature on sustainable strategies for behaviour change in different domains (e.g., health, savings, education).

By the end of this course, you will have:

- Gained knowledge about the basic theories and components of behaviour change, as well as the current status of the empirical literature on behaviour change.
 - In-depth understanding of the design policies and interventions that improve societal well-being.
 - Learned about cutting-edge methods of behaviour change research and applied those methods to your own novel intervention study.
 - Gained first-hand experience interacting with leading researchers on the science of behaviour change, both through learning from the experts (e.g., via seminar videos, podcasts) and attending talks at a virtual conference on behaviour change.
 - Learned about different career paths involving behavioural science both in academia (e.g., being a professor in psychology and other fields, including health and business) and industry (e.g., government, research institutes, organizations).
 - Practiced developing your scientific voice and reasoning, including both verbal expression (e.g., during class discussions, presentation) and written expression (e.g., in the final paper).
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Course Structure

This course is designed to introduce you to science of behaviour change, as well as to provide training in being a sophisticated consumer of science. Most of our weekly readings are primary sources that describe original empirical research, rather than a textbook that has already digested the science for us. During weekly class meetings, much of the time will be dedicated to group discussion aimed at fostering a meaningful understanding of the material. Thus, the success of this seminar depends on everyone's preparation, and everyone's preparation will depend on carefully completing all of the weekly readings, as well as the other assignments, described below.

Grading and Course Requirements

Overview:

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|-----------------------------|------------|
| 1. In-Class Participation: | 15% |
| 2. Reaction papers (5): | 25% |
| 3. In-Class Presentation: | 15% |
| 4. Research Proposal Paper: | 45% |
| a. Abstract & Bibliography | 15% |
| b. Final Paper | 30% |

1. In-Class Participation and Attendance

Because the class is discussion-based, it requires full attendance and active participation – your contribution is vital. You will be asked to complete the assigned reading (which may include podcasts or YouTube videos) prior to class and come prepared to discuss it. All readings are available in the “Modules” tab on Quercus, where all content will appear embedded within that week’s module.

During the discussion, please be cordial and respectful of others, even if you do not share the same opinions. Your participation grade will depend on quality as well as quantity of participation. Good participation includes punctuality, eagerness to participate, showing respect to others’ contributions, facilitating discussion, paying careful attention to classmates’ presentations, and offering constructive feedback, questions, and comments. I recognize, however, that in-class participation may be more challenging for certain students. Students who find it challenging to speak in class are invited to speak with me within the first three weeks of the semester, to discuss alternative strategies for participation.

****Note about Zoom:** Due to the obviously inconvenient time we are living in, and hosting class via Zoom, I understand that some of you may not be able to “participate” in each class discussion by contributing your own voice / connecting via video.

I will not require that everyone use their camera to connect to our discussions, but I would greatly prefer that you do, if you can. It’s nice to be able to recognize faces over the course of a semester. That being said, if you cannot connect via video, I ask that you use a clear photo of your face as your Zoom profile picture.

Our discussions will be recorded and then uploaded to Quercus on Friday after class.

2. Reaction Papers

To foster thoughtful, exciting, and worthwhile discussion, I ask that you prepare reaction papers to the weekly readings. These are designed to get you thinking about the readings, while ensuring that everyone has something to contribute during class discussion. You have some freedom in deciding how to complete this assignment. Spend some time highlighting the main points of the readings, *but most of your paper should do other things: e.g., connect these main points, critique a study or its findings (or the authors’ interpretation of the findings), consider/discuss/develop new ideas, and/or propose a new study.* Your goal should be to show me that you really understand the material. To this end, I also encourage you to bring in relevant material from other courses. Details are as follows:

- Papers are due on **the day of each class (Thursday) at Noon**. These papers should be submitted online via Quercus. Cut-off will be strict, as I will read all papers and compile discussion questions before class later in the evening.
- You may only turn in one reaction paper per week.
- Papers should be about **2-pages double-spaced** (or approximately 600 words)
- Papers will be graded on scale ranging from 5 (excellent) to 0 (Fail).
- Each paper should end with 1-2 discussion questions for me to pose to the class.

You are required to turn in **five** reaction papers, but you may turn in up to six (in which case only the best five will count toward your grade). What weeks you choose are up to you, though it is **mandatory** that one reaction paper should be a recap of your experience and what you learned during the conference during Week 5 (details to be discussed in-class). Reaction papers will constitute 25% of your final grade.

3. In-Class Presentations

During the last two weeks of class, you will be asked to give a 5-minute presentation telling the class about your proposed intervention study. You will receive written feedback on your idea from your peers and from me. You have total freedom in deciding how you want to present your intervention, but you should discuss all aspects of the research proposal described below.

As part of your participation grade, you may be asked to complete a brief feedback form for each presentation (exact format is TBD depending on time – more details to come later).

4. Research Proposal Paper

The major assignment for this course is a research proposal paper. You will be asked to formulate a research study based on a critical review of the literature and describe that study – you do not need to conduct the study. The paper should describe empirical research (e.g., not a theoretical review, or a case study) and it should relate to emotion regulation. The paper should be approximately 10-12 double-spaced pages, excluding the title page and reference list.

Several course assignments are designed to help support and structure your work towards this final paper over the course of the semester. More specific details for each of these assignments will be provided during the course:

A. *Paper Abstract & Annotated Bibliography*: You will be asked to complete a 200-250 word abstract describing the paper you are planning to write. You will also be asked to include an annotated bibliography that provides the APA citations for 10-15 references that are appropriate for your paper topic; for each reference, you should write 2-3 sentences describing how you will use this reference when writing your paper. This assignment is due on **July 9th by 12pm** and should be submitted on Quercus (go to “Assignments” and select the “Abstract & Bibliography” option). I will provide feedback via Quercus within several days of the due date.

B. *Near-Final Paper Draft (OPTIONAL)*: You will have the opportunity to submit a ‘near-final’ draft of your paper by **July 28th by 12pm**. This draft will NOT be graded and should ideally be *as close to the final paper as possible*. This draft provides an opportunity to receive constructive feedback to improve the final paper. While there will be plenty of opportunities to ask questions about the assignment in-class or during office hours, I will only give detailed feedback on ONE draft per student. If you are interested in receiving feedback on a draft of your paper, please submit it on Quercus (go to “Assignments” and select the “Near-Final Draft” option). I will actively monitor this submission portal and will aim to provide feedback within several days of submission

a. *** Note: feedback will likely take a bit longer if everyone submits on the final submission date – fret not! You will still receive feedback with at plenty of time to improve your final paper. However, if you’re interested in receiving feedback sooner, please consider submitting in advance of the final submission date) ***

C. *Final Paper*: Final papers will be due on **August 11th by 12pm**. The final paper will be submitted as a TurnItIn.com assignment, submitted through Quercus (go to “Assignments” and select the “Final Paper” option).

Statement regarding Turnitin.com: “Normally, students will required to submit their course essays to Turnitin.com for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their essays to be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University’s use of the Turnitin.com service are described on the Turnitin.com web site.”

Additional Guidelines for Final Paper:

The final paper will take the form of an **8-page, double-spaced** research proposal that includes the following sections:

- Motivation for this behavior change intervention, including at least 10 to 15 references to the scientific literature
 - What real-world problem does this intervention address and why is it important?
 - What contribution will the proposed study make to the scientific literature? In other words, what will we learn about behavior change from this study?
- Hypothesis
- Study design
 - Study sample (e.g., college undergraduates; nursing home patients)
 - Procedure
- Anticipated results and, if the data do not fit this pattern, how you will interpret null findings
- Optionally, in the Appendix, scripts or other text constituting the behavior change intervention itself

The final paper will be graded based on the following criteria:

- Does it motivate the problem with a practical contribution?
- Does it motivate the problem scientifically? That is, is it offering a new/compelling idea? Does it add to the research literature?
- Does it cover relevant, key findings from the literature? Does it do so thoroughly and accurately?
- Does it have a well-developed hypothesis that is clearly articulated, compelling, and novel?
- Does it include a compelling study design for testing the hypothesis using field data? The control group should be thoughtful and the strengths and limitations of the study design should be well-articulated.
- Is it well-written and clear?

Formatting details and writing guidelines:

- Papers must follow the American Psychological Association (APA) formatting and citation style guidelines (7th edition).
- Papers must be double-spaced and font should be 12-point Times New Roman.
- All works that are referred to – directly or indirectly – **MUST** be cited in the text and in a reference page at the end of your work (also see section on Academic Integrity, below).
- Avoid quotes.
- Omit needless words. Good writing is concise.
- Grades will be based on content, organization, and conventions (spelling, grammar).

Course Schedule

Week	Date	Topic	Readings	Assignments
1	May 13	Introductions and Course Overview		
2	May 20	Self-Regulation and Behaviour Change	Duckworth & Gross (2020) Inzlicht et al. (2021)	
3	May 27	Goal Setting, Planning, and Pre-Commitment	Milyavskaya & Werner (2018) Ludwig et al. (2019) Ariely & Wertenbroch (2002)	
4	June 3	Incentives	Milkman et al. (2014) Volpp et al. (2009) Ariely et al. (2009)	
5	June 10	Attend Life Improvement Science Conference (Virtual, Free) – No class		
6	June 17	Conference Recap and Challenges with Research “In the Wild”	Berkman & Wilson (2021)	Reaction paper about conference experience due June 17 at 12pm
7	June 24	Reading week – No class		
8	July 1	Canada Day – No class		
9	July 8	Nudges	Thaler & Sunstein (2008) Economics Behaving Badly – NYT article	
10	July 15	Habits	Wood & Neal (2016) Galla & Duckworth (2015) Camerer (2021) – BCFG seminar video	Abstract and Bibliography due July 16 at 12pm
11	July 22	Mega-Study Approach to Applied Behavioural Science	Milkman et al. (2021) How Goes the Behaviour Change Revolution? – podcast Milkman (2020) – BCFG seminar video	
12	July 29	When are We Ready for Behaviour Change?	Dai et al. (2014)	In-Class Presentations on Research Proposal Optional Near Final Draft due August 2 at 12pm
13	August 5	Careers in Behavioural Science		In-Class Presentations on Research Proposal
End of semester is August 11, so no class this week Final Research Proposal is due Wednesday, August 11 by 12pm				

Course & University Policies

Email

- I will do my best to answer your emails within 48 hours during *weekdays*, but expect a longer delay if you email me between Friday afternoon and Sunday evening.
 - If you have questions that can't be answered briefly via email, it is best to come see me during my office hours.
 - Please try not to email me the night before an assignment is due. If you email me within 48 hours of a class or due date, I may not be able to respond to you in time. If you email me at least 48 hours ahead of time, I will be able to respond to you!
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Late Assignments

Since you have the choice of turning in your reaction papers on any of five topic weeks, late reaction papers will not be accepted. Additionally, in order to give you as much time as possible for your final paper, the final paper cannot be accepted after August 11 in accordance with university policy. If you need an extension on the time (e.g., instead of submitting at 12pm), please contact me and we can discuss a more flexible option!

Missed Presentation

Students who are absent on their assigned presentation date without legitimate documentation will receive a mark of zero for their presentation. If you have legitimate documentation to explain your inability to present on your assigned date, you must follow the departmental policy outlined below.

Rights and Responsibilities

AccessAbility Statement

Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. In particular, if you have a disability/health consideration that may require accommodations, please feel free to approach me and/or the AccessAbility Services as soon as possible. AccessAbility Services staff (located in Rm SW302, Science Wing) are available by appointment to assess specific needs, provide referrals and arrange appropriate accommodations 416-287-7560 or email ability@utsc.utoronto.ca. The sooner you let us know your needs the quicker we can assist you in achieving your learning goals in this course.

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is one of the cornerstones of the University of Toronto. It is critically important both to maintain our community which honours the values of honesty, trust, respect, fairness and responsibility and to protect you, the students within this community, and the value of the degree towards which you are all working so diligently. According to Section B of the University of Toronto's Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters (August 1995), which all students are expected to know and respect, it is an offence for students:

- To use someone else's ideas or words in their own work without acknowledging that those ideas/words are not their own with a citation and quotation marks, i.e. to commit plagiarism;
- To include false, misleading or concocted citations in their work;
- To obtain unauthorized assistance on any assignment;
- To provide unauthorized assistance to another student;
- To submit their own work for credit in more than one course without the permission of the instructor;
- To falsify or alter any documentation required by the University (e.g., doctor's notes).

There are other offences covered under the Code, but these are by far the most common. Please respect these rules and the values that they protect.

All suspected cases of academic dishonesty will be investigated following procedures outlined in the Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters. If students have questions or concerns about what constitutes appropriate academic behaviour or appropriate research and citation methods, they are expected to seek out additional information on academic integrity from their instructors or from other institutional resources.

Note: You may see advertisements for services offering grammar help, essay editing and proofreading. Be very careful. If these services take a draft of your work and significantly change the content and/or language, you may be committing an academic offence (unauthorized assistance) under the Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters.

It is much better and safer to take your draft to the Writing Centre as early as you can. They will give you guidance you can trust. Students for whom English is not their first language should go to the English Language Development Centre. If you decide to use these services in spite of this caution, you must keep a draft of your work and any notes you made before you got help and be prepared to give it to your instructor on request.

Writing-related campus resources:

The English Language Development Centre supports all students in developing better Academic English and critical thinking skills needed in academic communication. Make use of the personalized support in academic writing skills development and Café sessions to enhance your ability to do better in the various components of this course. Details and sign-up information: <http://www.utsc.utoronto.ca/eld/>

The Writing Centre helps all UTSC students improve their writing skills. We work with students in all years and all disciplines. Programs include writing groups, writing workshops, one-to-one tutoring, and both print and online resources. For information, resources, and to sign up for individualized feedback: <http://www.utsc.utoronto.ca/twc/>

Grade Scale

NUMERICAL MARKS	LETTER GRADE	GRADE POINT VALUE
90 - 100%	A+	4.0
85 - 89%	A	4.0
80 - 84%	A-	3.7
77 - 79%	B+	3.3
73 - 76%	B	3.0
70 - 72%	B-	2.7
67 - 69%	C+	2.3
63 - 66%	C	2.0
60 - 62%	C-	1.7
57 - 59%	D+	1.3
53 - 56%	D	1.0
50 - 52%	D-	0.7
0 - 49%	F	0.0

Psychology Department Missed Term Work Policy, SUMMER 2021

For missed term work (assignments and term tests) due to illness, emergency, or other mitigating circumstances, please follow the procedures outlined below.

Notes:

- The following reasons are not considered sufficient for missed term work: travel for leisure, weddings, personal commitments, work commitments, human error.
- Missed Final Exams are handled by the Registrar's Office and should be declared on eService: <http://www.utoronto.ca/registrar/missing-examination>
- Instructors cannot accept term work any later than five business days after the last day of class. Beyond this date, you would need to file a petition with the Registrar's Office: <https://www.utoronto.ca/registrar/term-work>

Accommodations for Illness or Emergency:

For missed work due to ILLNESS OR EMERGENCY, please complete the following **two-step** process:

1. Complete the **Request for Missed Term Work Accommodations Form** (<http://uoft.me/PSY-MTW>) and email it to Keely Hicks at keely.hicks@utoronto.ca ,
and
2. **Declare your absence** on [ACORN](#) (Profile & Settings > Absence Declaration)

Deadline: You must complete the above steps **within 3 business days** of the missed work.

Note: For this semester, we do not require any additional supporting documentation (ex. medical notes) to support your missed term work accommodation request.

Accommodations for Academic Conflicts:

For missed term work due to an ACADEMIC CONFLICT (i.e. two midterms scheduled at the same time), please complete the following process:

1. Complete the **Request for Missed Term Work Accommodations Form** (<http://uoft.me/PSY-MTW>), choosing "Other" as your reason for missed work and explaining the conflict in the space provided.
2. Take screenshots of your course homepages that demonstrate the conflict.
3. Email the form and screenshots to Keely Hicks (keely.hicks@utoronto.ca).

Deadline: You should report the conflict to Keely Hicks (keely.hicks@utoronto.ca) **at least two weeks (10 business days) before the date of the activity**, or as soon as possible if it was not possible to identify the conflict earlier.

Note: Multiple assignments due on the same day are not considered conflicts. Accommodations may only be possible in the case of quizzes and tests that are both scheduled during the same discrete period. Back-to-back tests/quizzes are not considered conflicts.

Note: Students are responsible for keeping their course timetables conflict-free. Students who choose to register in two synchronous courses with overlapping lecture/tutorial/lab schedules may not necessarily be accommodated.

Accommodations for Religious Conflicts:

For missed term work due to a RELIGIOUS CONFLICT, please complete the following process:

1. Complete the **Request for Missed Term Work Accommodations Form** (<http://uoft.me/PSY-MTW>), choosing “Other” as your reason for missed work and noting “Religious conflict” in the space provided.
2. Email the form to Keely Hicks (keely.hicks@utoronto.ca).

Deadline: You should report the conflict to Keely Hicks (keely.hicks@utoronto.ca) **at least two weeks (10 business days) before the date of the activity**, or as soon as possible if it was not possible to identify the conflict earlier.

Accommodations for Time Zone Conflicts:

If you are physically in a different time zone and a quiz or midterm is scheduled outside of 7:00am to midnight in your local time, please complete the following process:

1. Complete the **Time Zone Conflict Form** (<https://uoft.me/PSY-TimeZone>), and
2. Email the form to Keely Hicks (keely.hicks@utoronto.ca)

Deadline: You should report the conflict to Keely Hicks (keely.hicks@utoronto.ca) **at least two weeks (10 business days) before the date of the activity**, or as soon as possible, if it was not possible to identify the conflict earlier.

Accommodations for Students Registered with AccessAbility Services:

For missed **TERM TESTS** due to ACCESSABILITY REASONS:

- **Contact your AccessAbility consultant** and have them email Keely (keely.hicks@utoronto.ca) detailing accommodations required.

For missed **ASSIGNMENTS** due to ACCESSABILITY REASONS:

- If your desired accommodation is **within the scope** of your Accommodation Letter (ex. your letter includes “extensions of up to 7 days” and you need 3 days):
 1. Complete the **Request for Missed Term Work Accommodations Form** (<http://uoft.me/PSY-MTW>).
 2. Email the form and your **Accommodation Letter** to Keely Hicks (keely.hicks@utoronto.ca).

- If your desired accommodation is **outside the scope** of your Accommodation Letter (ex. your letter includes “extensions of up to 7 days” but you need more time than that):
 1. **Contact your AccessAbility consultant** and have them email Keely Hicks (keely.hicks@utoronto.ca) detailing the accommodations required.

Accommodation Procedure:

Within approximately one to five business days, you will receive a response from your instructor detailing the accommodations to be made (if any). **You are responsible for checking your official U of T email and Quercus course announcements daily**, as accommodations may be time-critical.

For missed assignments, **do not wait for an instructor response to resume work on your assignment.** Extension accommodations may be as short as one business day, depending on the nature of the illness/emergency. You should complete your assignment as soon as you are able and email it your instructor, noting that you have submitted your Missed Term Work Accommodations Request Form to Keely.

Note that ACORN will not allow you to declare **future absences**. For something like a scheduled surgery or an illness with a prolonged recovery period, if you would like to request accommodations in advance of the assignment deadline or midterm you should submit a Verification of Illness Form (<http://uoft.me/UTSC-Verification-Of-Illness-Form>) completed by your doctor, along with this form to Keely Hicks (keely.hicks@utoronto.ca).

Completion of this form does not guarantee that accommodations will be made. The course instructor reserves the right to decide what accommodations (if any) will be made. Failure to adhere to any aspect of this policy may result in a denial of your request for accommodation.

Missed Accommodations

If an accommodation is granted but a continued illness/emergency prevents you from meeting the requirements of your accommodation, you must repeat the missed term work procedure to request additional accommodations. **Please make it clear in your subject line that you are requesting a second accommodation.** Note that in the case of a missed make-up test, an opportunity to write a second make-up test may not be provided.

(E.g.) If you are given an extension but are still sick and need more time, or if you miss a make-up midterm, you would need to submit another Request for Missed Term Work Accommodations form and declare your extended absence on ACORN.

Importance of Three Business Day window:

If you are unable to submit your documents within the three business day window, **you must email Keely (keely.hicks@utoronto.ca) within the three business day window** to explain the nature of the delay, and when you will be able to provide your documents. Exceptions to the documentation deadline will only be made under **exceptional circumstances**.

Questions?

If you have any questions about this Missed Term Work policy, please contact Keely Hicks (keely.hicks@utoronto.ca) **well before** the date of the test / assignment deadline to describe your circumstances and inquire about procedures.