

PSYCHOLOGY SEMINAR DESCRIPTIONS (FALL 2017)

PSY 420F – The Psychology of Human Sexuality

Sexuality is a topic of growing interest in psychology. Although sexual selection is arguably the strongest driver of human evolution and the management of sexual needs is deeply intertwined with cultural practices, psychology has left many fundamental questions regarding human sexuality largely unanswered. This course will survey multiple issues including sexual orientation, sexual attraction, short and long term sexual relationships, sexual fantasy, and paraphilias. It will also include outside speakers with relevant expertise. *Please be aware that we will be covering some very sensitive material.* **Dr. Geoff MacDonald, Wednesdays 1-3 p.m.**

PSY 471F – Developmental Cognitive Neuroscience

This course will ask how changes in the developing brain can influence theories of cognitive development. To answer this question, we will first briefly survey methods in (developmental) cognitive neuroscience and go over the process of human brain development. We will then review core concepts including the role of experience in brain development and the specialization of brain regions. Finally, we will cover specific topics including the development of sensory and motor systems and the development of multiple aspects of learning and memory. In all cases, we will ask whether neural measures inform our understanding of how cognitive processes change with age. Successful completion of *PSY202H1* and *PSY270H1* is required; *PSY210H1* and *PSY493H1* are recommend. **Dr. Amy Finn, Mondays 2 – 4 p.m.**

PSY 471F – Visual Cognition

This course will examine current issues in the field of visual cognition. Researchers in visual cognition take the perspective that vision is an active process, and our visual perceptions are not solely based on visual sensations, but also involve a host of ongoing cognitive processes such as attention, priming, visual working memory, and motor programming. This course will use articles recently published in the top journals in the field to gain insights into how our cognitive processes combine with our visual processes to determine what we see (or, at least, what we think we see). In addition to reading current research papers, the seminar will involve discussions, oral presentations, thought experiments, and two written assignments. *PSY202H1*, *PSY270H1*, and *PSY280H1* are required prerequisites for this particular subtopic. **Dr. Jay Pratt, Fridays 2 – 4 p.m.**

PSY 490F – Biological Clocks and the Temporal Regulation of Behaviour

The fact that biological rhythms are a ubiquitous aspect of animal behaviour, has become well known and accepted both within scientific circles and in the general populace. However, the ways in which clocks are useful in determining the temporal program of physiology and behaviour is not well known. Some aspects of rhythmicity are innate while others are learned. Various different influences on performance, such as sensory processing, memory formation, motivation, or emotionality, may be influenced by internal timekeeping in different ways. The synchronization of internal clocks has an enormous effect on mental and physical performance, and this includes the rhythms of the internal microbiome. This course will look at these various ways in which clocks participate in regulating behavioural timing, and how they are coordinated in regulating the daily temporal program of physiology and behaviour. **Dr. Martin Ralph, Tuesdays 10 a.m. – 12 p.m.**