University of Nevada, Reno (UNR)
Psychology 410 – PHILOSOPHICAL CRITICISMS OF PSYCHOLOGICAL RESEARCH
Section XXX – Class Call # XXXXX

Instructor
Class Location
Time
Phone & Email
Office Hours & Location

Course Catalog Description
(3.0 Credits): Review of criticisms of psychological research by philosophers in the tradition of ordinary language analysis.
Prerequisites: PSY 101, Junior or Senior class standing. Completion of all general education courses that build Core Objectives 1-3 and satisfy Core Objectives 4-8.

Required Texts

Course Overview & Objectives
This course is designed to introduce the student to philosophical methodologies and to apply these to some major issues in psychology. This course is interdisciplinary as it examines the interface between psychology and philosophy by examining questions such as:
1) What is critical thinking?
2) Can philosophical methodologies such as conceptual explication help with problems in psychological science? (CO 9)
3) What are the limits of psychological research methods? (CO 9, 12)
4) What philosophical insights might help psychology, such as cognitive therapy?
5) What is behaviorism? What are the strengths and weaknesses?
6) What is postmodernism?
7) To what extent can Eastern philosophies such as Zen aid psychotherapy development and outcomes? (CO 12)
8) From a philosophical perspective is the APA ethical code satisfactory? If not, what can be done to improve it? (CO 12)
9) Does psychology have political biases or ideologies that affect research questions asked and methods used? What is political philosophy? What are the major alternatives? (CO 9, 12)

This course satisfies Silver Core Objective 13 (Integrative Experience): “Students will be able to integrate and synthesize Core knowledge, enabling them to analyze open-ended problems or complex issues.”

This course integrates Core Objectives 1 and 3 through critical analysis of readings, presentations and films. Moreover, by critically evaluating the present-day science of psychology (e.g., its impact, interpretations, influence on society, ethical concerns) this course also integrates Core Objectives 9 and 12.
Silver Core Objective 1 (Effective Composition & Communications): “Students will be able to effectively compose written, oral, and multimedia texts for a variety of scholarly, professional, and creative purposes.”

Silver Core Objective 3 (Critical Analysis & Use of Information): “Students will be critical consumers of information, be able to engage in systematic research processes, frame questions, read critically, and apply observational and experimental approaches to obtain information.”

Silver Core Objective 9 (Science, Technology & Society): “Students will be able to connect science and technology to real-world problems by explaining how science relates to problems of societal concern; be able to distinguish between sound and unsound interpretations of scientific information; employ cogent reasoning methods in their own examinations of problems and issues; and understand the applications of science and technology in societal context.”

Silver Core Objective 12 (Ethics): “Students will demonstrate understanding of the ethical principles in general or in application of specialized knowledge, results of research, creative expression, or design processes. Students will demonstrate an ability to recognize, articulate, and apply ethical principles in various academic, professional, social, or personal contexts.

This course provides a multifaceted learning experience, including active course participation and interaction, extensive writing, and an integration of material from a number of sources. Upon successfully completing this course, you will be able to:

- Explain in written and oral communication how underlying philosophical methodologies interact with contemporary psychology by describing specific instances. (CO 1, 3, 9, 13)
- Effectively critique psychological methodologies and explain their limits. (CO 3, 13)
- Discuss the role of philosophical problems in psychological research (CO 9)
- Engage in critical thinking regarding the role of psychology in philosophical problems (CO 3, 13)
- From a philosophical perspective, critically evaluate the APA ethical code. Take and defend a position in whether or not it is satisfactory. (CO 3, 12)
- Discuss of the role of historical contributors to present day views of philosophical psychology (CO 13)

**Evaluation of Student Performance**
Throughout the course, students will need to critically evaluate the role of science, technology, society, and ethics to the assigned readings. Content as well as quality of writing or oral performance will be graded. This will be evaluated by the instructor across the semester according to:

1) The student’s oral contribution and improvements
2) The student's improvements in critical thinking as demonstrated in their written and oral performance.

Grades will be based on four sources:

1) Essay midterm test (20%)
   a. In-class essay related to the readings.
2) Essay final exam (30%)
   a. Cumulative final with questions related to the readings given beforehand.
3) In-class participation (25%)
a. Student involvement is expected and required. Students are expected to have read the materials prior to attending class and have comments and questions ready.

4) Presentations (25%)
a. Summaries and critical analysis of required weekly readings presented to the class to facilitate class discussion.

Grades will be assigned as follows:

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<th>Grade</th>
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<tr>
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<td>93-100%</td>
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<td>59.9% or below</td>
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**Academic Dishonesty**
Cheating, plagiarism or otherwise obtaining grades under false pretenses" constitute academic dishonesty according to the code of this university. Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated and penalties can include canceling a student's enrollment without a grade, giving an F for the course or for the assignment. For more details, see the University of Nevada, Reno General Catalog.

**Disability Services**
Any student with a disability needing academic adjustments or accommodations is requested to speak with me or the Disability Resource Center (Thompson Building, Suite 101) as soon as possible to arrange for appropriate accommodations.

**Academic Success Services**
Your student fees cover usage of the Math Center (784-443 or www.unr.edu/mathcenter), Tutoring Center (784-6801 or www.unr.edu/tutoring), and University Writing Center (784-6030 or http://www.unr.edu/writing_center). These centers support your classroom learning; it is your responsibility to take advantage of their services. Keep in mind that seeking help outside of class is the sign of a responsible and successful student.

**Statement on Audio and Video Recording**
Surreptitious or covert video-taping of class or unauthorized audio recording of class is prohibited by law and by Board of Regents policy. This class may be videotaped or audio recorded only with the written permission of the instructor. In order to accommodate students with disabilities, some students may have been given permission to record class lectures and discussions. Therefore, students should understand that their comments during class may be recorded.
Course Calendar

Weeks 1, 2, 3
First readings:
What is critical thinking and what are philosophical methods?
1. 1) Cornman, Lehrer, & Papas - Philosophical problems and arguments (Skim first 60 pages) - found at:
   http://books.google.com/books?id=cRHeqYZgYfUC&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false
2. 2) Love is a fallacy - found at:
   http://www.whstigers.org/UserFiles/Servers/Server_4255074/File/Hopper/Love_Is_a_Fallacy.pdf
3. 3) O'Donohue - Clinical psychology and the philosophy of science (Chapters 1 & 2)

Presentations 1, 2, 3

Weeks 4 & 5
Second Readings:
Epistemology, Logical Positivism and Popper (Chapters 3 & 4)

Presentations 4 & 5

Weeks 6 & 7
Third Readings:
Kuhn and the Post-Kuhnians (Chapters 5 & 6)

Presentations 6 & 7

Weeks 8 & 9
Fourth Readings:
Post modernists (Chapters 7)

Presentations 8 & 9

Weeks 10 & 11
Fifth Readings:
Conclusions (Chapter 8)

Presentations 10 & 11
Midterm Exam

Weeks 12 & 13
Sixth Readings:
O'Donohue, Lloyd, & Lavin - Philosophy and cognitive therapy: A reassessment of the relationship (First 100 pages)

Presentations 12 & 13

Weeks 14 & 15
Seventh Readings:
O'Donohue, Lloyd, & Lavin - Philosophy and cognitive therapy: A reassessment of the relationship (The remaining pages)

Presentations 14 & 15
Final Exam