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**Faculty of Arts
Department of Psychology**
<http://psychology.concordia.ab.ca>

**Special Topics: Nature and Well-being
PSY 408B
Winter 2024**

Course description: This seminar course examines important topics regarding our relationship with the natural environment and its impact on our cognitive, emotional, and physical well-being. Note: Only open to Psychology students in the final year of the three-year Psychology concentration and students in the third or fourth year of the four-year Bachelor of Arts in Psychology program.

Prerequisites:	Psychology 319 and 3 rd year standing required
Co-requisites:	Academic Integrity Training 100
Credit Restrictions:	None
Hours:	(0 - 3 - 0 - 0): 39 Instruction hours.
Credit value:	3
Delivery:	Face-to-Face Delivery

Instructor:

Holli-Anne Passmore, Ph.D.

Office: AW 236

Phone: 1-780-479-9359

Email: Holli-Anne.Passmore@concordia.ab.ca

Office Hours: Mon, Wed, Fri 12:00pm to 12:45pm, 2:00pm to 2:45pm

Just drop in! If those hours don't work for you, talk to me before/after class or send me a email **and we will figure something out. I'm here to help - talk with me!**



Seminar times: Room: G303 on Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays (3:00pm - 3:50pm).

Required resources:

1. Moodle (CCMS) access. Students should check their course Moodle sites on a daily basis.
2. **Course pack:** The course pack will contain a list of foundational and up-to-date materials selected by the instructor from a variety of sources. This may include review articles, book chapters, and/or journal articles. Copies of all material are available on Moodle.

Optional resources:

1. American Psychological Association. (2019). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (7th ed.). American Psychological Association.
2. Online APA resources at:
https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/apa_style/apa_formatting_and_style_guide/general_format.html and <https://apastyle.apa.org/>

Course learning outcomes: The major objectives of this course are to develop your leadership, oral presentation, written communication, and critical thinking skills. **As a capstone course, this course demands more time and energy than most other courses offered by the psychology department.** You are not expected to already have excellent skills in all these areas. Students should aim toward improvement throughout the course.

This course also provides an opportunity for students to develop expertise in a specialized area of psychology by examining the fundamental role that nature plays in our overall well-being. Students will learn about major theories, empirical research, and current trends in this field through a discussion of classic works (theoretical and empirical), recently published research, and experiential exercises. Students also will further develop knowledge within this field, and in an area of psychology of their choosing.

This is a fourth-year seminar course. The course demands a significant amount of reading. Students who are not committed to preparing for, attending, and participating fully in all class activities should not register in this course. *The seminar classes are intended to be opportunities for the class to discuss and learn together. The success of this format is completely dependent on the participants. Each student is expected to be respectful of the views of others.* **Attendance, punctuality, and active high-quality participation are all necessary qualities.**

This seminar course lies at the intersection of positive, health, conservation, existential, and eco psychology. Course topics include theories and research examining the impact and role that exposure to and engaging with the beyond-human natural world has on our cognitive, emotional, and physical well-being.

Seminar topics:

The following major topics will be covered, depending on the rhythm of the course:

- Theories such as:
 - Biophilia Hypothesis
 - Attention Restoration Theory
 - Eco-Existential Positive Psychology
- Biophilic architecture
- Psychological ownership of nature
- Eco-anxiety
- Nature connectedness
- Nature-based interventions
- Policies about nature



A detailed seminar and presentation schedule will be discussed in the first class and posted on Moodle. You will sign up for slots for leading the class, and for various presentations.

Due dates for course requirements will be discussed within the first week of class. **It is your responsibility to keep track of the due dates for your assignments. Late work will not be accepted except in highly unusual circumstances and only if arranged prior to the deadline.**

TENTATIVE Lecture topics & Exam Schedule (see Moodle for most recent):

(See also next page for Assignments & Assignment Schedule)

Week	Dates	Monday	Wednesday	Friday
1	Jan. 10, 12		Introduction - Discussion	<i>How to: Lead a Seminar For This Class</i>
2	Jan. 15, 17, 19	Experiential activity	SLS 1: <i>Biophilia Hypothesis</i> IE due: Articles 1,2,3	SLS 2: <i>Biophilic Values</i>
3	Jan. 22, 24, 26	SLS 3: <i>Attention Restoration Theory</i>	SLS 4: <i>Eco-Existential Positive Psychology</i> IE due: Articles 4,5,6	SLS 5: <i>Nature and Meaning in Life</i>
4	Jan. 29, 31, Feb. 2	SLS 6: <i>Nature As a Basic Human Need</i>	SLS 7: <i>Nature Connectedness</i> IE due: Articles 7,8,9	SLS 8: <i>Eco-Anxiety</i>
5	Feb. 5, 7, 9	SLS 9: <i>Nature and Children</i>	SLS 10: <i>Psychological Ownership of Nature</i> IE due: Articles 10,11,12	SLS 11: <i>Human-Nature Relationship and Pro-environmental Behaviour</i>
6	Feb. 12, 14, 16	<i>How to: Write the Concept Integration and Literature Review Papers</i>	<i>How to: Present a Research Paper & Literature Review Topic</i>	Experiential activity
READING WEEK - get outside - play - BE - notice nature				
7	Feb. 26, 28, Mar. 1	SLS 12: <i>Policy Practices with Respect to Nature, Health, and Wellbeing</i>	SLS 13: <i>Biophilic Architecture</i> IE due: Articles 13,14,15	SLS 14: <i>Nature-Based Interventions</i>
8	Mar. 4, 6, 8	SLS 15: <i>Counseling and Ecotherapy</i>	special guest lecture: TBA	<i>flex class</i>
9	Mar. 11, 13, 15	CIPaper due Recent Research Paper Brief: 1, 2, 3, 4	Recent Research Paper Brief: 5, 6, 7, 8	<i>Recent Research Paper Brief: 9, 10, 11, 12</i>
10	Mar. 18, 20, 22	Recent Research Paper Brief: 13, 14, 15	Experiential activity	<i>flex class</i>
11	Mar. 25, 27, 29	Lit Reviews 1 & 2 Paper Due (1, 2)	Lit Reviews 3 & 4 Paper Due (3, 4)	
12	April 1, 3, 5		Lit Lit Reviews 5 & 6 Paper Due (5, 6)	Lit Reviews 7 & 8 Paper Due (7, 8)
13	April 8, 10, 12	Lit Reviews 9 & 10 Paper Due (9, 10)	Lit Reviews 11 & 12 Paper Due (11, 12)	Lit Reviews 13 & 14 Paper Due (13 & 14)
14	April 15, 17	Lit Reviews 15 Paper Due (15)	Class Wrap Up Activity & Discussion	

***SLS - Student-Led Seminar** ***IE - Insight Entries are due BEFORE class on the day noted**

*Papers for the topic each Seminar Class are included in the course pack on Moodle. Each student will sign up to present the topic/paper of their choice to and to lead the class that day as per the above schedule. *Each student will sign up to present their Research Paper Brief and their Literature Review Presentation on whatever slots are available.

- **Link to sign up for the seminar you want to lead: SIGN UP BY END OF DAY Thurs Jan 11**
<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/137zFfbak80pXp-f3uT6I8uKf4BdQAsBSgj2wRRa9chY/edit?usp=sharing>
- **Link to sign up for when you want to present your topic-relevant research paper presentation: SIGN UP BY END OF DAY Tues March 5**
<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1v333GBftIEaga11z4Ouqw9ckrdgJPSLPbkvfjgzatK0/edit?usp=sharing>
- **Link to sign up for when you want to present your literature review paper presentation: SIGN UP BY END OF DAY Tues March 19**
https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1nqnKomMXhZjt47i6zOE_wcxBkopnsKBUjLG3v5Cr7Kk/edit?usp=sharing

What to expect:

This is a seminar class. It is designed to be an opportunity for the class to discuss and learn together. The success of this format depends on you and your classmates' preparation for and participation in each class. There are no lectures per se. The instructor serves in an advisory role as an expert in this area, and for providing guidance, feedback, and mentorship.

The types of skills developed in this course are required for success outside of academia. These skills cannot be given; they must be developed through hard work. **As a capstone course, this course demands more time and energy than most other courses offered by the psychology department.** Don't worry; you are not expected to have excellent skills in all of these areas. Each student will struggle in certain areas and excel in others. You are expected to show improvement throughout the course.



This class relies on cooperation, positivity, and a sense of community. We will work together and help each other. We will learn to respectfully disagree, offer constructive criticism, and acknowledge the strengths of others.

Yes, this class is hard work! It is also worthwhile and rewarding. And fun!

Evaluation:

SKILL	REQUIREMENT	WEIGHT
Critical Thinking (35%)	Participation in Class (20%) Insight-Entries on Articles (10%) Thoughts on Presentations (5%)	35%
Leadership (15%)	Individual Seminar Leading	15%
Oral Presentations (20%)	Recent Research Paper Brief	10%
	Literature Review Presentation	10%
Written Communication (30%)	Concept Integration Paper	15%
	Literature Review Final Paper	15%

Every requirement of the course must be passed at a satisfactory level in order to pass the course.

See also CUE's Extended Description of Grade Levels
([Section 9.3.2 of the calendar](#))
for further information on grading.

Please see Moodle for details of assignments including requirements and grading rubrics.

SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS

1. Critical Thinking Skills (35% total)

Class Participation

i. Attendance and Participation in Class (20%):

Attendance is expected for ALL scheduled classes. **More than 3 unexcused absences will strongly negatively impact your Class Participation grade.** Note that, **more than 5 absences in total will most likely result in failing your Class Participation assessment.** This is a SEMINAR course—attendance is not optional.

Seminars rely on class participation. It is not enough to attend class; you must come prepared to share your insights by contributing to detailed and rich class discussions. You are required to complete readings *before* class. Come prepared with some thoughts and questions to discuss from that day's reading. *Come prepared to share your insights by contributing to detailed and rich class discussions.*

ii. Insight Entries on Articles (10%):

Reading ALL the articles—not just the one you are leading the discussion on—is an important part of this course. The articles provide the foundation of the course and each article and concept builds on the previous one. Students will complete 5 brief Insight entries. Insight entries are to help you think a bit deeper about the course material, to become really engaged with it, and to demonstrate that you understood the main points of the articles and how the articles fit together. Insight entries help to stimulate class deep and meaningful class discussions; they also help prepare you to write the Concept Integration Paper.

Insight entries are due each Wednesday *before* the seminar class on the articles. Further details will be posted on Moodle.

See the schedule!

iii. Thoughts on Presentations (5%)

- For each student research paper presentation, you will complete, in class, a brief form regarding your questions and thoughts about the paper.
- For each student literature review presentation, you will complete, in class, a brief form regarding your questions/thoughts about the topic.

2. Leadership Skills (15% total)

Leading a Seminar

Each student will be responsible for leading at least one seminar session (pending course enrollment and schedule). Leading a seminar session does not entail a simple summary of the reading. It includes firstly reviewing/covering the main objectives and points of the reading. You can use any materials of your choosing (e.g., slides, handouts, video/audio clips, games, etc.) to do this. This portion should take between 15 to 20 minutes. For the remainder of the class time, your task is to lead the class through a rich discussion of the assigned reading.

As the facilitator, you are expected to be very familiar with material so you can:

- cover the larger main points of the article. Note that you will be provided with summary overview notes for your article which you can base your presentation on. (All students need to have read the material and be prepared to discuss it).
- lead the class in discussion. This means having a strategy for generating discussion, e.g. questions prepared ahead of time.
- make full use of class time (50 minutes).

We will go over how to lead a seminar in class. Please ensure you are adhering to the guidelines we will go over, More information will also be provide on Moodle.

SIGN UP BY END OF DAY Thurs Jan 11

link to sign up for the seminar you want to lead:

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/137zFfbak80pXp-f3uT6l8uKf4BdQAsBSgj2wRRa9chY/edit?usp=sharing>



3. Oral Presentations (20% total)

Recent Research Paper Brief Presentation(10%)

Each student will select a research article that is of relevance to the course. It is strongly suggested that students consult with the professor on their choice of recent research article. In a brief, 10-minute presentation, the presenter will provide an accurate description of the research including:

1. purpose of the study,
2. methodology, results,
3. limitations,
4. implications of the findings.

Further details will be posted on Moodle and discussed in class.

SIGN UP BY END OF DAY Tues March 5

link to sign up for your recent research paper brief presentation

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1v333GBftlEaga11z4Ouqw9ckrdgJPSLPbkvfjgzatK0/edit?usp=sharing>

Literature Review Presentation (10%)

Each student will select a research article that is of relevance to the course. It is strongly suggested that students consult with the professor on their choice of recent research article. In a brief, 10-minute presentation, the presenter will provide an accurate description of the research including:

5. purpose of the study,
6. methodology, results,
7. limitations,
8. implications of the findings.

Further details will be posted on Moodle and discussed in class.

SIGN UP BY END OF DAY Tues March 19

link to sign up for when you want to present your literature review presentation:

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1nqnKomMXhZjt47i6zOE_wcxBkopnsKBUjLG3v5Cr7Kk/edit?usp=sharing



4. Written Communication (30% total)

Concept Integration Paper (15%)

This paper consists of writing *an academic paper* on how a non-academic work or works outside of the domain of psychology exemplifies concepts regarding nature and wellbeing presented and discussed in this class. (Examples of a non-academic work outside the domain of psychology include: classic literature, works of fiction, popular movies, TV series, graphic novels.

Note that TED talks and nature-based documentaries are NOT suitable to base this paper on.)

This assignment will help you to develop, integrate, and apply your knowledge of the science and psychology of nature and wellbeing. It is also meant to help you develop an attitude of consilience towards learning, that is, “the linking together of principles from different disciplines especially when forming a comprehensive theory”. Essentially, this assignment assesses how well you can see these academic constructs and concepts at play in the world.

It is *strongly suggested* that students consult with the professor on their choice of non-academic work to base this paper on.

Literature Review Paper (15%)

Each student will write a literature review *on a topic of their choosing*. This can be *on anything within psychology* – it does not have to be on nature and wellbeing. Each student’s paper is due at the beginning of the class in which the student is delivering their literature review presentation.

A literature review is *a comprehensive overview and evaluation* of current research. A good description of this type of paper can be found in the 7th edition of the APA manual. This description reads, in part: “...by organizing, integrating, and evaluating previously published material, authors of literature reviews consider the progress of research toward clarifying a problem. In a sense, literature reviews are tutorials, in that [the] author[s]:

- Define and clarify the problem;
- Summarize previous investigations to inform the reader of the state of research;
- Identify relations, contradictions, gaps, and inconsistencies in the literature; and
- Suggest the next step or steps in solving the problem” (p. 10).

Specific requirements of the literature review will be posted on Moodle and discussed in class.

Class policies - please note!

Electronic devices: Cell phones and other electronic devices **are to be turned OFF** during all classes EXCEPT on days when the professor is providing information "how to" information. Classes **may not** be audio or video recorded, except with permission, which will only be granted for special circumstances.

It is expected that all students will at all times demonstrate respect for others' opinions, along with patience and common courtesy when others are speaking. **Please remember that some students (and your professor!) may have difficulty hearing; side conversations by students exacerbate this difficulty to attend to and hear class discussion and instruction.**



i. Academic Honesty

Academic honesty is fundamental to the academic enterprise. Students are urged to familiarize themselves with Section 9.2.5 of the Calendar and to take note that **cases of academic dishonesty (e.g., cheating, plagiarism, collusion, unauthorized submission for credit of previously graded work, and misrepresentation)** are serious offenses. **Penalties for academic dishonesty range from a grade of zero on the work in question to expulsion.**

Seriously. Make sure you understand the previous paragraph.

Appeals: refer to section 9.2.5 of the Calendar (Section H)

ii. Plagiarism & AI Generated Content

I have zero tolerance for either plagiarism or the use of AI text generators (e.g., ChatGPT) for any of your writing at any stage (including notes and drafts, as it will likely carry over to your final version).

Note that AI-generated writing is often easy to spot because it's bad: the writing style sounds important and formal while being broad and vague. It is often empty writing that does not demonstrate understanding.

The purpose of this course is to build your communication, creative, and critical thinking skills. Using AI DOES THE OPPOSITE! Using AI reduces both your ability and your skill level. Thinking, writing, and learning must be practiced. There are no true shortcuts. I want your ideas, not some robot's ideas and words pieced together from information on the internet.

iii. Classroom

Attendance is mandatory. Necessary and unavoidable absences should be discussed with the instructor. **A student who is unable to commit to attending all classes, or who misses more than 5 classes due to illness or other causes, will likely not be able to pass the participation criteria for this course.** Given this, the student will be advised to withdraw from the course. Please discuss your situation with me before making the decision to withdraw.

Not participating in discussion or activities is equivalent to not attending class. If you do not plan on contributing, then do not take this course.

Concordia provides learning accommodation services for students with disabilities. Please refer to Section 8.3.1 of the Calendar for more details.

Recording of classes is permitted only if recording is part of an approved accommodation plan or with prior written consent of the instructor. Please refer to Section 9.2.2 of the Calendar for more details.

Please refer to Section 9.2.4 of the Calendar for details regarding Educational Decorum. It is the responsibility of both students and instructors to facilitate the educational process.

At Concordia, Faculty Advising allows students to build a relationship with faculty members so they can plan their university education and access appropriate resources and services. To make use of faculty advising, please talk to your instructor or program coordinator for input or referral.

iv. Exam procedures

This is a seminar course. There are no tests or exams.

v. Missed work and missed exams

This is a seminar course. There are no tests or exams.

Late assignments will not be accepted except in highly unusual circumstances and only if arranged prior to the deadline. This policy makes it fair to everyone. Note that being busy, having many assignments due at the same time, work scheduling, laptops dying, getting the flu a couple days ahead of the deadline, etc. are **not** unusual circumstances. These things happen. **Plan ahead.** Do not wait until the last hour to start your assignments or to submit your Insight entries.!

Additional contacts and services:

a. Academic Administration

i. Dean of Faculty of Arts

Name: Dr. Brett Buchanan

Office: HA 224

Email: dean.arts@concordia.ab.ca

Telephone: +1 780 479 9216

ii. Department of Psychology

Department Chair

Name: Dr. Holli-Anne Passmore

Office: AW 236

Email: holli-anne.passmore@concordia.ab.ca

Telephone: +1 780 479 9359

iii. Registrar's Office (HA 120, registrar@concordia.ab.ca +1 780 479 9250)

b. Academic Support

i. Vice President of Campus Life

(Dr. Carmen Arth, vpcl@concordia.ab.ca, +1 780 479 9289, HA 227)ii. Student Life and Learning (studentlife@concordia.ab.ca, +1 780 479 9241, Student Success Centre)

iii. Manager, Indigenous Knowledge and Research Centre

(Danielle Powder, danielle.powder@concordia.ab.ca,

+1 780 479 9394, AW 124)

c. Writing Centre

i. The Writing Centre (located in the Student Success Centre across from the book store) is a free service that provides support for teaching and learning through writing for students, staff, and faculty.

- Throughout the academic year, one-on-one consultations are offered (book online at: <http://studyspaces.concordia.ab.ca>)

Concordia Calendar Table 9.3.2: Extended Description of Grade Levels

Grade Description		Letter Grade	Grade Point Value
Outstanding	Outstanding performance, demonstrating complete and comprehensive understanding of the subject matter; full mastery of concepts and skills; exceptional interpretive and analytical ability; originality in the use of concepts and skills; achievement of all major and minor objectives of the course.	A+	4.0
Excellent	Excellent performance, indicating superior grasp of subject matter and concepts; development of relevant skills to a high level; a high level of interpretive and analytical ability; originality or intellectual initiative; achievement of all major and minor objectives of the course.	A	4.0
		A-	3.7
Very Good	Very good to good performance, indicating thorough understanding of subject matter and concepts; development of relevant skills to a fairly high level; good interpretive and analytical ability; evidence of intellectual initiative; achievement of major and minor objectives of the course.	B+	3.3
Good		B	3.0
		B-	2.7
Satisfactory	intellectually adequate performance, of fair but not good quality, demonstrating an acceptable understanding of the subject matter and concepts; development of skills to C a satisfactory level; adequate interpretive and analytical ability; achievement of major objectives of the course; some minor objectives may not be achieved. The bottom of this range (C-) is the minimum satisfactory standard of achievement in a course. In courses graded CR or NC, cr denotes that the student has attained at least the C- level.	C+	2.3
		C	2.0
		C-	1.7
Poor	Minimally acceptable performance, demonstrating some understanding of basic subject matter and concepts and partial development of relevant skills, with some evidence of interpretive or analytical ability; achievement of most but not all major objectives of the course; failure to achieve several minor objectives.	D+	1.3
Minimal Pass	The bottom of this range (D) indicates that the student has achieved a marginal level of performance which may not be sufficient background for success at the next level in the discipline.	D	1.0
Failure	Unsatisfactory performance, demonstrating an inadequate understanding of the basic subject matter; failure to develop relevant skills; insufficient evidence of interpretive and analytical ability; and failure to achieve major and minor objectives of the course.	F	0