








Psychology (PSYC) 289

Psychology as a Natural Science (Revision 7)

Status:	Replaced with new revision, see the course listing  for the current revision 
Delivery mode:	Individualized study online  with eText 
Credits:	3
Areas of study:	Arts, Science, or Social Science
Prerequisites:	None
Precluded:	PSYC 206 (PSYC 289 may not be taken for credit if credit has already been obtained for PSYC 206.)
Challenge:	PSYC 289 has a challenge for credit option.
Faculty:	Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences 

Overview

Psychology 289: Psychology as a Natural Science is the first of two introductory, first-year courses in psychology. This course focuses on the biological bases of behaviour, sensation and perception, consciousness, learning, memory, language, thinking and reasoning, and intelligence.

Specific topics covered include the structure and function of the brain, sleep, drugs, altered states of consciousness, touch, taste, smell, hearing, seeing, attention, visual perception, emotion, learning through conditioning (classical and operant conditioning), human memory systems, language and its development, reasoning and biases that affect it, problem-solving, and intelligence. In this course, students will acquire a broad understanding of these topics, including key concepts and terminology, as well as general research findings and the theories that psychologists have developed to explain them.

In addition to learning the content covered in the textbook and online resources, students are asked to select and read two brief reports about recent work in psychology (from secondary sources such as *Scientific American: Mind*), and for each article, write a short summary of the main ideas or claims and provide a personal response. This activity is an introduction to the research literature and provides students guidance about how to critically read and summarize such work. Students also participate in a research study (as a research participant) in order to experience research and see how some methods are employed first-hand. Students may opt to complete another assignment instead, if they do not want to participate in a study.

Outline

Psychology 289: Psychology as a Natural Science consists of nine units:

- Unit 1: History and Current Perspectives in Psychology
- Unit 2: Psychological Research
- Unit 3: Biopsychology
- Unit 4: Sensation and Perception
- Unit 5: Consciousness
- Unit 6: Learning



- Unit 7: Human Memory
- Unit 8: Language and Thought
- Unit 9: Human Intelligence

Learning outcomes

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate knowledge of theories, concepts, and key findings in selected areas of psychology: biological and cognitive psychology, perception, learning, consciousness, and intelligence.
2. Differentiate among basic forms of psychological research.
3. Use critical-thinking skills to evaluate claims based on the evidence provided.
4. Summarize and discuss brief reports of empirical research in psychology.
5. Apply knowledge in psychology to everyday situations.

Evaluation

Students will be evaluated based on five (5) quizzes, two (2) assignments, participation in a research study (or an alternative activity), and a final exam. To **receive credit**  for PSYC 289, students must complete and pass the final exam with a minimum grade of 60% and an overall course grade of at least **D (50 percent)** .

Activity	Weight
Quizzes (5 x 8% each)	40%
Assignment 1	7.5%
Assignment 2	7.5%
Research Participation or Alternate Assignment	5%

Activity	Weight
Final Exam	40%
Total	100%

The **final examination** for this course must be requested in advance and written under the supervision of an AU-approved exam invigilator. Invigilators include either ProctorU or an approved in-person invigilation centre that can accommodate online exams. Students are responsible for payment of any invigilation fees. Information on exam request deadlines, invigilators, and other exam-related questions, can be found at the [Exams and grades](#) section of the Calendar.

To learn more about assignments and examinations, please refer to Athabasca University's [online Calendar](#).

Materials

Weiten, W., & McCann, D. (2019). *Psychology: Themes and variations* (5th Canadian ed.). Cengage.  (eText)

eText

Registration in this course includes an electronic textbook. For more information on [electronic textbooks](#), please refer to our [eText Initiative site](#).

Publisher's online supplementary materials

MindTap for Weiten, W., & McCann, D. (2018). *Psychology: Themes and variations* (5th ed.). Cengage.

The textbook publisher supports *Psychology: Themes and Variations* through Mindtap, an interactive portal with exercises and media files.

Other materials

All other course materials can be found online, including a Study Guide with activities and study questions.

Challenge for credit

Overview

The challenge for credit process allows you to demonstrate that you have acquired a command of the general subject matter, knowledge, intellectual and/or other skills that would normally be found in a university-level course.

Full information about **challenge for credit** [↗](#) can be found in the Undergraduate Calendar.

Evaluation

To **receive credit** [↗](#) for the PSYC 289 challenge registration, you must write an online examination. It is worth 100% of your final grade and you must achieve a grade of at least **C- (60 percent [↗](#))** or more on the examination.

The **challenge examination** for this course must be taken online with an AU-approved exam invigilator at an approved invigilation centre. It is your responsibility to ensure your chosen invigilation centre can accommodate online exams. For a list of invigilators who can accommodate online exams, visit the **Exam Invigilation Network** [↗](#).



Challenge for credit course registration form

Important links

- › **Academic advising** [↗](#)
- › **Program planning** [↗](#)
- › **Request assistance** [↗](#)
- › **Support services** [↗](#)

Athabasca University reserves the right to amend course outlines occasionally and without notice. Courses offered by other delivery methods may vary from their

individualized study counterparts.

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View **previous revision** 
