**Beyond Ligilimency:**

**The Psychology of Harry Potter**

**Arts & Sciences 1138.\*\*, Freshman Seminar**

**Spring 2017 Semester, 1 Credit Hour**

**Day/Time: Tuesdays 12-1:50 pm (7 weeks)**

**Room**



Dr. Melissa Beers 125 Psychology Building

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@mjbeers1 Office Hours: F 10-11 and by appointment

**Course Description**

J.K Rowling’s Harry Potter series is the best-selling series of all time. The series is indeed a fine example of captivating storytelling, but it is also rich with examples of critical concepts in the field of Psychology. This seminar will explore concepts in psychological science that are also recurring themes in the Harry Potter series, including adolescence and development, interpersonal relationships, social conflicts, social influence, prosocial and antisocial behavior, resilience, and more.

To get the most out of this course, students should have read the Harry Potter series and/or watched the films. You must be familiar with the characters and major plot points. As we discuss relevant literature, we will delve into the Harry Potter world to discuss examples that illustrate these concepts, and we will seek out examples where the book seems to get the research right as well as examples of ideas that are more fiction than science.

**Course Objectives**

O To understand and explore fundamental concepts in the field of psychology

O To contrast the portrayal of psychological concepts in media and literature

O To engage in critical reflection and discussion, applying psychological research to personal experience

**Texts**

Each week, one relevant scholarly article, chapter, and/or video will be available on Carmen. All texts will be free, open-source resources available in multiple formats.

**Course Policies**

* We will meet just one day a week, so your attendance is essential. We will notice and miss you if you do not attend. Missing more than two of our sessions will result in an unsatisfactory grade.
* Your active participation in this class is key to its success for everyone. This is not a passive endeavor where you can sit back and let others do the heavy lifting. Each class will rely on you coming prepared to engage with new ideas and contribute to the discussion
* Each week you will submit a written reflection on one concept and its relevant themes in the Harry Potter universe, both reflecting on the psychological concepts discussed as well as examples in the Harry Potter texts or movies that illustrate the concepts accurately or inaccurately. All reflections will be required to earn a satisfactory grade.

**Grading and Assessment**

ASC 1138.\*\* is graded Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory (S/U). The criteria for determining a grade of “S” are based on attending at least six of seven class sessions and completion all of class assignments by the deadlines set in this syllabus and on Carmen(Canvas).

**Academic Integrity**

It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term “academic misconduct” includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee (Faculty Rule 3335-5-487). For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct (<http://studentlife.osu.edu/pdfs/csc_12-31-07.pdf>).

**Accomodations**

The University strives to make all learning experiences as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience academic barriers based on your disability (including mental health, chronic or temporary medical conditions), please let me know immediately so that we can privately discuss options. You are also welcome to register with Student Life Disability Services to establish reasonable accommodations. After registration, make arrangements with me as soon as possible to discuss your accommodations so that they may be implemented in a timely fashion. SLDS contact information: [slds@osu.edu](mailto:slds@osu.edu); 614-292-3307; slds.osu.edu; 098 Baker Hall, 113 W. 12th Avenue.

**Weekly Schedule (all readings posted on Carmen/Canvas)**

**Week 1 – Our fascination with magic: Psychological science and extraordinary beliefs**

READ: Syllabus

DUE: Ice-breaker activities

**Week 2 – The Hogwarts years: Themes in adolescence and development**

READ: Galván, A. (2013). The teenage brain: Sensitivity to rewards. *Current Directions in Psychological Science, 22*, 88–93.

Lansford, J. (2013). Adolescent Development. In R. Biswas-Diener & E. Diener (Eds), *Noba textbook series: Psychology*. Champaign, IL: DEF publishers. DOI:nobaproject.com.

View: TED Talk: The Mysterious Workings of the Adolescent Brain (Blakemore): <https://www.ted.com/talks/sarah_jayne_blakemore_the_mysterious_workings_of_the_adolescent_brain?language=en>

### **Week 3 –The greater good: the science of heroism and prosocial behavior**

READ: Poepsel, D. L. & Schroeder, D. A. (2013). Helping and Prosocial Behavior. In R. Biswas-Diener & E. Diener (Eds), *Noba textbook series: Psychology*. Champaign, IL: DEF publishers. DOI:nobaproject.com.

DUE: Reflection from Week 2: Adolescence in Harry Potter

**Week 4 – All for the House Cup: Intergroup relations in the world of Harry Potter**

READ: Dovidio and Gaertner (1999). Reducing Prejudice: Combating Intergroup Bias. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 101-105.

Fiske, S. T. (2013). Prejudice, Discrimination, and Stereotyping. In R. Biswas-Diener & E. Diener (Eds), Noba textbook series: Psychology. Champaign, IL: DEF publishers. DOI:[nobaproject.com](http://www.nobaproject.com/).

DUE: Reflection from Week 3: Heroism in Harry Potter

### **Week 5 – Harry gets by with a little help from his friends: Social support**

READ: Brannan, D. & Mohr, C. D. (2013). Love, Friendship, and Social Support. In R. Biswas-Diener & E. Diener (Eds), Noba textbook series: Psychology. Champaign, IL: DEF publishers. DOI:[nobaproject.com](http://www.nobaproject.com/).

DUE: Reflection from Week 4: Stereotyping, prejudice, and conflict in Harry Potter

### **Week 6 – The Voldemort effect: Understanding evil and malice**

View: TED Talk: The Psychology of Evil (Philip Zimbardo)

READ: Zimbardo, P. *The Lucifer Effect* (excerpt posted on Carmen)

DUE: Reflection from Week 5: Interpersonal relationships and social support in Harry Potter

### **Week 7 – The boy who lived: Resilience and overcoming adversity**

READ: How people learn to become resilient: <http://www.newyorker.com/science/maria-konnikova/the-secret-formula-for-resilience>

View: TED Talk: TBD

DUE: Final Reflection

**Instructor Biography**

**Dr. Melissa Beers**

Dr. Melissa Beers is trained in social psychology, with an emphasis on research design and data analysis. She has taught at Ohio State for 16 years is currently the Program Director for Introduction to Psychology (1100) and Introduction to Social Psychology (2367.01). Her research interests primarily focus on effective teaching practices and assessment of student learning. She is a proud member of Ravenclaw house and her Patronus is a Tortoiseshell Cat.