POL487H1F: Psychology of International Security

Topics in International Politics II
Faculty of Arts and Sciences
Department of Political Science
Fall 2024

Professor Caleb Pomeroy	**Meeting Details**
Email: caleb.pomeroy@utoronto.ca	LEC0101
Office: Zoom or Sidney Smith 3107	Time: Thursdays, 9am-11am
Office hours: Wednesdays, 10-11:30am	

Course Description. This course provides an in-depth engagement with the political psychology of international security. The course consists of three parts. We first take up fundamental political questions – like "what is power?" and "what is war?" – and engage the diverse answers that psychological IR scholarship currently provides. Noting that war is the most destructive invention in human history, we then use these lenses to critically engage political psychological theories for why states fight. The final third of the course uses all of this theoretical and empirical knowledge to examine security and war in our lifetime, beginning with the emergence of "terrorism" as a security issue in the post-Cold War period and concluding with forward-looking questions surrounding nuclear and cyber security.

Introductory-level knowledge of international relations (namely, completion of POL208H1, POL208Y1, POL209H5, or POLB80H3) is required. Additional courses on basic statistics and international security would also be helpful but these are not required prerequisites. The course assumes no background in psychology. Students are encouraged (but not required) to follow current events in foreign affairs through periodicals, such as *Foreign Affairs* and *Foreign Policy*. There is no required textbook for the course. All readings will be posted on the course's online Quercus page (https://q.utoronto.ca/courses/356230).

Course Objectives
- Gain an understanding of leading psychological and behavioral theories in the social sciences.
- Apply the above theories to better understand international security and the causes of war.
- Use psychological research to make persuasive policy arguments.
- Generate novel insights about international security through your own original research.

Course Format. Each seminar session engages a different question or topic in the political psychology of international security. We'll open each seminar with a brief summary of the readings, and I will add some high-level context for how the readings fit into the field's development. Then, the majority of the meeting time will be devoted to a discussion of the readings as a class and in smaller break-out groups, centered around guiding questions.

Evaluations and Course Grade. The course uses an "Oxford-inspired" approach to assessment. This teaching philosophy treats you as a fellow researcher and policy advocate. Rather than regurgitating "facts," this approach instead values your ability to take the week's material and

communicate your unique and creative ideas about that material through written and oral rhetoric. This provides an opportunity to sharpen skills that will benefit you well into the future. The final grade is assessed on the following:

1. Policy Essay (25%) – <u>due via Quercus on October 17 at 5pm EST</u>

   In the first third of the course, we engage questions that have occupied political thinkers for centuries. In this *Foreign Affairs*-style essay (2,000 words maximum, including references), you will provide your own answer to <u>one</u> question and use that answer to shed light on a pressing policy issue today. Examples and details will be discussed in class and provided on Quercus.

2. Research Paper (45%) – <u>due via Quercus on December 9 at 5pm EST</u>

   For the course's term paper, you will write a short academic research paper (5,000 words maximum, including references) that applies one theoretical perspective from the course to a topic of your choice, selected in consultation with the instructor. *Original research is required*, but the form that this research takes is flexible, and the expectations will be reasonable within the constraints of a single term. As examples, you might qualitatively assess the use of moral language in leaders' public versus private statements about a specific war. Or, you might conduct a basic quantitative analysis of public opinion data on a current security issue. More examples will be provided and more details to follow.

   To ensure that your paper idea is feasible and on track for successful completion, a research paper outline (worth 5% of the overall research paper grade) is <u>due Monday, November 11 by 5pm EST</u>. This is a paragraph-level outline that bullet points each part of your eventual paper. Examples and details will be discussed in class and provided on Quercus.

3. Discussion Participation (30%)

   This seminar is primarily discussion-based. Attendance will be recorded at each meeting, and you must contact the instructor for an excused absence. The expectation is that you have read each assigned reading for that session and arrive prepared with thoughtful opinions about each reading.

   In addition to participation in the reading discussion throughout the semester (25%), at some point in the semester you will provide a short (5-minute) discussant summary of <u>one reading</u> to help kick-off discussion at the beginning of class (worth 5% of the overall discussion grade).

Grading Scale and Late Work Policy. The course uses the standard University of Toronto undergraduate grading scale. A 2% penalty will apply to late assignments, deducted per day, including weekends. Any assignments received a week or more after the deadline will continue to be deducted a full letter grade (e.g., from an A- to a B-) per week.

Syllabus Structure. Each session engages a specific question or theme from varying intellectual perspectives. The required readings are, obviously, required. However, each session lists optional

readings for students who want to dig deeper into that session's material. These readings are truly optional for that session. However, the expectation is that some of the optional readings for the relevant session(s) selected for your policy essay and research paper will receive engagement in your policy essay and research paper. Further, if you plan to pursue graduate education in political science, it is highly recommended that you explore some of the optional readings. If you plan to pursue graduate education, please also feel free to get in touch with me for thoughts and strategic advice on doing so.

Course Outline and Reading List
Note: Material subject to change at instructor's discretion

Week 1 (Sep 5) – The Big Questions, or Why Are We Here?
No required readings. We'll discuss the reasons you should take this course, one reason being that war is the most destructive invention in human history. And, to understand war, we need to understand human psychology.

If it has been a while since you have taken an introductory IR course, be sure to read the following before the next session:
- Snyder, Jack (2004) "One world, rival theories," *Foreign Policy*, 145: 52-62.

For background on the "behavioral revolution" in the social sciences (including in IR), see the below optional readings. In short, it's a very vibrant time to do psychological IR:
- Thaler, R. H. (2016). Behavioral economics: Past, present, and future. American economic review, 106(7), 1577–1600
- Hafner-Burton, E. M., Haggard, S., Lake, D. A., & Victor, D. G. (2017). The behavioral revolution and international relations. International organization, 71(S1), S1–S31
- Kertzer, J. D., & Tingley, D. (2018). Political psychology in international relations: Beyond the paradigms. Annual review of political science, 21, 319–339
- Davis, J. W., & McDermott, R. (2021). The past, present, and future of behavioral IR. International organization, 75(1), 147–177

Week 2 (Sep 12) – What is rationality?
Common wisdom suggests that enlightened rational capacity – our propensities for logic and reason – makes humans unique among animals. What does it mean to be "rational," and are rationality and psychology necessarily opposites?

Reading:
- Kahneman, D. (2003). Maps of bounded rationality: Psychology for behavioral economics. American economic review, 93(5), 1449–1475
- Rathbun, B. C., Kertzer, J. D., & Paradis, M. (2017). Homo diplomaticus: Mixed-method evidence of variation in strategic rationality. International organization, 71(S1), S33–S60

Optional:
- Fearon, J. D. (1995). Rationalist explanations for war. International organization, 49(3), 379–414
- Mercer, J. (2005). Rationality and psychology in international politics. International organization, 59(1), 77–106

Part I.

The first third of this course engages fundamental political questions, beginning with the observation that IR lacks a formal sovereign. Some scholars suggest that this gives international politics a unique flavor in comparison to domestic politics.

Week 3 (Sep 19) – What binds human groups together, and is anarchy a useful concept?
Human psychology often primes us to sort individuals into ingroups and outgroups. In the modern era, this perceptual tendency has both advantages (e.g., identifying allies versus threats) and disadvantages (e.g., racial prejudice, feelings of national superiority). Here, we'll discuss how different dimensions of national identity can temper or amplify tendencies towards conflict.

Reading:
- Rousseau, D. L., & Garcia-Retamero, R. (2007). Identity, power, and threat perception: A cross-national experimental study. Journal of conflict resolution, 51(5), 744–771
- Herrmann, R. K., Isernia, P., & Segatti, P. (2009). Attachment to the nation and international relations: Dimensions of identity and their relationship to war and peace. Political psychology, 30(5), 721–754

Optional:
- Tajfel, H., & Turner, J. C. (2004). The social identity theory of intergroup behavior. In Political psychology (pp. 7–24). Psychology Press
- Mercer, J. (1995). Anarchy and identity. International organization, 49(2), 229–252
- Brewer, M. B. (1999). The psychology of prejudice: Ingroup love and outgroup hate? Journal of social issues, 55(3), 429–444
- Stephan, W. G., Ybarra, O., & Rios, K. (2016). Intergroup threat theory. In T. D. Nelson (Ed.), Handbook of prejudice, stereotyping, and discrimination (pp. 255–278). Psychology Press
- Powers, K. E. (2022). Nationalisms in international politics. Princeton University Press (pp 1–31).
- Li, Q., & Brewer, M. B. (2004). What does it mean to be an American? Patriotism, nationalism, and American identity after 9/11. Political psychology, 25(5), 727–739
- Herrmann, R. K. (2017). How attachments to the nation shape beliefs about the world: A theory of motivated reasoning. International organization, 71(S1), S61–S84

Week 4 (Sep 26) – What is "law" without a sovereign?
Given that sovereigns enforce laws, and given that IR lacks a formal sovereign, how do states "regulate" bad behavior? Morality – our sense of right and wrong – is a key way that humans detect and respond to threats. When does morality restrain our worst impulses, and when does morality sharpen them?

Readings:
- Shannon, V. P. (2000). Norms are what states make of them: The political psychology of norm violation. International studies quarterly, 44(2), 293–316
- Kertzer, J. D., Powers, K. E., Rathbun, B. C., & Iyer, R. (2014). Moral support: How moral values shape foreign policy attitudes. Journal of politics, 76(3), 825–840

Optional:
- Rathbun, B. C., & Pomeroy, C. (2022). See no evil, speak no evil? Morality, evolutionary psychology, and the nature of international relations. International organization, 76(3), 656–689
- Fiske, A. P., & Tetlock, P. E. (1997). Taboo trade-offs: Reactions to transactions that transgress the spheres of justice. Political psychology, 18(2), 255–297
- DeScioli, P., & Kurzban, R. (2013). A solution to the mysteries of morality. Psychological bulletin, 139(2), 477
- DeScioli, P., & Kurzban, R. (2009). Mysteries of morality. Cognition, 112(2), 281–299
- Slovic, P., Mertz, C., Markowitz, D. M., Quist, A., & Västfjäll, D. (2020). Virtuous violence from the war room to death row. Proceedings of the national academy of sciences, 117(34), 20474– 20482
- Atran, S., & Ginges, J. (2012). Religious and sacred imperatives in human conflict. Science, 336(6083), 855–857
- Pomeroy, C., & Rathbun, B. C. (2023). Just business? Moral condemnation and virtuous violence in the American and Russian mass publics. Journal of peace research
- Fiske, A. P., & Rai, T. S. (2014). Virtuous violence: Hurting and killing to create, sustain, end, and honor social relationships. Cambridge University Press

Week 5 (Oct 3) – What is power?
Norms and moral cognition help to check most of our worst impulses, most of the time. Humans are an incredibly cooperative species. But, given that these norms are not enforceable laws in IR, sometimes the buck stops with "power." Here, we assess the psychological dynamics of this central IR variable.

Reading:
- Winter, D. G. (2010). Power in the person: Exploring the motivational underground of power. In A. Guinote & T. K. Vescio (Eds.), The social psychology of power (pp. 113–140). Guilford Press
- Pomeroy, C. (2024) "Hawks Become Us: The Sense of Power and Militant Foreign Policy Attitudes," *Security Studies*, 33(1), 88-114.

Optional:
- Fettweis, C. (2018). Psychology of a superpower: Security and dominance in US foreign policy. Columbia University Press
- Winter, D. G. (1993). Power, affiliation, and war: Three tests of a motivational model. Journal of personality and social psychology, 65(3), 532
- Guinote, A. (2017). How power affects people: Activating, wanting, and goal seeking. Annual review of psychology, 68, 353–381

- Herrmann, R. K., Voss, J. F., Schooler, T. Y., & Ciarrochi, J. (1997). Images in international relations: An experimental test of cognitive schemata. International studies quarterly, 41(3), 403-433

Week 6 (Oct 10) – What is security? What is war?
If states and leaders can use their power unchecked – regardless of our definition of power – why exactly is that a problem? We often know war "when we see it." But, when we think harder about it, what exactly is war? How do we define it, know it, and experience it?

Reading:
- Stein, J. G. (2013). Threat perception in international relations. The oxford handbook of political psychology.
- Búzás, Z. I. (2013). The color of threat: Race, threat perception, and the demise of the Anglo-Japanese alliance (1902–1923). Security studies, 22(4), 573–606

Optional:
- Hatemi, P. K., McDermott, R., Eaves, L. J., Kendler, K. S., & Neale, M. C. (2013). Fear as a disposition and an emotional state: A genetic and environmental approach to out-group political preferences. American journal of political science, 57(2), 279–293.
- Lopez, A. C. (2017). The evolutionary psychology of war: Offense and defense in the adapted mind. Evolutionary psychology, 15(4), 1474704917742720
- Yarhi-Milo, K. (2013). In the eye of the beholder: How leaders and intelligence communities assess the intentions of adversaries. International security, 38(1), 7–51
- Friedman, J. A. (2019). Priorities for preventive action: Explaining Americans' divergent reactions to 100 public risks. American journal of political science, 63(1), 181–196
- Choi, J.-K., & Bowles, S. (2007). The coevolution of parochial altruism and war. Science, 318(5850), 636–640
- Ginges, J., & Atran, S. (2011). War as a moral imperative (not just practical politics by other means). Proceedings of the royal society b: biological sciences, 278(1720), 2930–2938
- Tooby, J., & Cosmides, L. (2010). Groups in mind: The coalitional roots of war and morality. Human morality and sociality: evolutionary and comparative perspectives, 191–234
- Hall, J., Kovras, I., Stefanovic, D., & Loizides, N. (2018). Exposure to violence and attitudes towards transitional justice. Political psychology, 39(2), 345–363
- Böhm, R., Rusch, H., & Gürerk, Ö. (2016). What makes people go to war? defensive intentions motivate retaliatory and preemptive intergroup aggression. Evolution and human behavior, 37(1), 29 34

Part II.

The first third of this course started with the lack of final arbiter above the state, ending with the observation that this makes war possible. But, this does not imply that war is necessary or even likely. In the next third of the course, we'll investigate why states do and don't fight from a political psychological perspective.

Week 7 (Oct 17) – To Survive: Deterrence and Coercion
Historically, one of the most-cited reasons for war is the pursuit of security and survival.

Reading:
- McDermott, R., Lopez, A. C., & Hatemi, P. K. (2017). 'Blunt not the heart, enrage it': The psychology of revenge and deterrence. Texas national security review
- Powers, K. E., & Altman, D. (2023). The psychology of coercion failure: How reactance explains resistance to threats. American Journal of Political Science, 67(1), 221-238.

Optional:
- Jervis, R., Lebow, R. N., & Stein, J. G. (1989). Psychology and deterrence. JHU Press
- Jervis, R. (1982). Deterrence and perception. International security, 7(3), 3–30

———————   Policy Essay Due Thursday, October 17 by 5pm   ———————

Week 8 (Oct 24) – To Thrive: Status and Aggrandizement
Beyond our basic survival needs, humans often want to thrive. Although greed is seldom "good" even in interpersonal relations and domestic politics, why might greed be a problem in the context of IR?

Reading:

- Larson, D. W., & Shevchenko, A. (2010). Status seekers: Chinese and Russian responses to US primacy. International security, 34(4), 63–95
- Barnhart, J. (2021). The consequences of defeat: The quest for status and morale in the aftermath of war. Journal of conflict resolution, 65(1), 195–222

Optional:
- Renshon, J. (2016). Status deficits and war. International organization, 70(3), 513–550
- Dafoe, A., Renshon, J., & Huth, P. (2014). Reputation and status as motives for war. Annual review of political science, 17(1), 371–393
- Rathbun, B., Rathbun, N. S., & Pomeroy, C. (2022). No fair! Distinguishing between the pursuit of status and equity in international relations. International studies quarterly, 66(1), sqac002
- Magee, J. C., & Galinsky, A. D. (2008). Social hierarchy: The self-reinforcing nature of power and status. Academy of management annals, 2(1), 351–398

Week 9 (Oct 31) – READING WEEK: NO CLASS

Week 10 (Nov 7) – By Accident: Misperceptions and Miscalculations
Thus far, we have focused on relatively conscious reasons that leaders might intentionally engage in war. Unfortunately, sometimes states accidentally slide into wars that no one seems to want. What are the causes of these wars, and how do we avoid them?
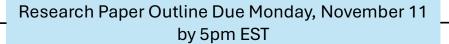
Reading:
- Jervis, R. (1988). War and misperception. Journal of interdisciplinary history, 18(4), 675–700
- Johnson, D. D., & Tierney, D. (2011). The rubicon theory of war: How the path to conflict reaches the point of no return. International security, 36(1), 7–40

Optional:
- Jervis, R. (1976). Perception and misperception in international politics. Princeton University Press
- Johnson, D. D., & Tierney, D. (2018). Bad world: The negativity bias in international politics. International security, 43(3), 96–140
- Levy, J. S. (1983). Misperception and the causes of war: Theoretical linkages and analytical problems. World politics, 36(1), 76–99
- Friedman, J. A., & Zeckhauser, R. (2018). Analytic confidence and political decision-making: Theoretical principles and experimental evidence from national security professionals. Political psychology, 39(5), 1069–1087
- Flynn, D., Nyhan, B., & Reifler, J. (2017). The nature and origins of misperceptions: Understanding false and unsupported beliefs about politics. Political psychology, 38, 127–150

Research Paper Outline Due Monday, November 11 by 5pm EST

Part III.

In the final third of the course, we pivot to questions of security and war in our lifetime, beginning with the U.S.'s post-Cold War focus on "terrorism" and concluding with emerging questions surrounding nuclear and cyber security.

Week 11 (Nov 14) – "Terrorism" and the Iraq War, 2003
Much of U.S. foreign policy over the past two decades centered on combatting "terrorism." What makes this supposed threat so psychologically salient for some? Here, we assess this question and examine the U.S.'s longest war, which some argue provides the strongest evidence to date for a behavioralist theory of war.

Reading:
- Kam, C. D., & Kinder, D. R. (2007). Terror and ethnocentrism: Foundations of American support for the war on terrorism. Journal of politics, 69(2), 320–338
- Lake, D. A. (2010). Two cheers for bargaining theory: Assessing rationalist explanations of the Iraq War. International security, 35(3), 7–52

Optional:
- Huddy, L., Feldman, S., Taber, C., & Lahav, G. (2005). Threat, anxiety, and support of antiterrorism policies. American journal of political science, 49(3), 593–608

- Hetherington, M., & Suhay, E. (2011). Authoritarianism, threat, and Americans' support for the war on terror. American journal of political science, 55(3), 546–560
- Duelfer, C. A., & Dyson, S. B. (2011). Chronic misperception and international conflict: The US-Iraq experience. International security, 36(1), 73–100
- Dyson, S. B., & Raleigh, A. L. (2014). Public and private beliefs of political leaders: Saddam Hussein in front of a crowd and behind closed doors. Research & politics, 1(1), 2053168014537808

Week 12 (Nov 21) – Technologies of War: Nuclear and Cyber Security
War has been a feature of human relations throughout evolutionary history. But, some argue that technological developments – like the advent of nuclear and cyber weapons – alter the nature of war. What does political psychology have to say?

Reading:
- Whitlark, R. E. (2017). Nuclear beliefs: A leader-focused theory of counter-proliferation. Security studies, 26(4), 545–574
- Pauly, R. B., & McDermott, R. (2023). The psychology of nuclear brinkmanship. International security, 47(3), 9–51
- **READ ONLY PAGES 1–5:** Shandler, R., Gross, M. L., & Canetti, D. (2023). "Cyberattacks, psychological distress, and military escalation: An internal meta-analysis," *Journal of Global Security Studies*, 8(1), ogac042

Optional:
- Hymans, J. E. (2006). The psychology of nuclear proliferation: Identity, emotions and foreign policy. Cambridge University Press (pp 1–46)
- Rathbun, B. C., & Stein, R. (2020). Greater goods: Morality and attitudes toward the use of nuclear weapons. Journal of conflict resolution, 64(5), 787–816
- Dolan, T. M. (2013). Unthinkable and tragic: The psychology of weapons taboos in war. International organization, 67(1), 37–63
- Saunders, E. N. (2019). The domestic politics of nuclear choices—a review essay. International security, 44(2), 146–184
- Van der Linden, S., Maibach, E., & Leiserowitz, A. (2015). "Improving public engagement with climate change: Five "best practice" insights from psychological science," *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 10(6), 758–763.
- Gries, P. H. (2005). Social psychology and the identity-conflict debate: Is a 'China threat' inevitable? European journal of international relations, 11(2), 235–265
- Kertzer, J. D., Brutger, R., & Quek, K. (2019). Perspective taking and the security dilemma: Cross-national experimental evidence from China and the United States
- Weiss, J. C. (2019). How hawkish is the Chinese public? Another look at "rising nationalism" and Chinese foreign policy. Journal of Contemporary China, 1–17

Week 13 (Nov 28) – MENTAL HEALTH DAY: NO CLASS

Research Paper Due Monday, December 9 by 5pm

Academic Integrity, Plagiarism, and Generative AI. Academic integrity is essential to the pursuit of learning and scholarship in a university, and to ensuring that a degree from the University of Toronto is a strong signal of each student's individual academic achievement. As a result, the University treats cases of cheating and plagiarism very seriously. The University of Toronto Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters outlines the behaviors that constitute academic dishonesty and the processes for addressing academic offences. Potential offences include, but are not limited to: using someone else's ideas or words without appropriate acknowledgement, submitting your own work in more than one course without the permission of the instructor in all relevant courses, making up sources or facts, and obtaining or providing unauthorized assistance on any assignment. Ignorance of these rules is not a defense in cases of violations, which can result in very serious academic sanctions.

Normally, students will be required to submit their course essays to the University's plagiarism detection tool for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their essays to be included as source documents in the tool's reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University's use of this tool are described on the Centre for Teaching Support & Innovation web site (https://uoft.me/pdt-faq).

The use of generative artificial intelligence tools and apps is strictly prohibited in all course assignments unless explicitly stated otherwise by the instructor in this course. This includes ChatGPT, Gemini, Claude, Microsoft Copilot and other AI writing and coding assistants. Use of generative AI in this course may be considered use of an unauthorized aid, which is a form of cheating. Students may not copy or paraphrase from any generative artificial intelligence applications for the purpose of completing assignments in this course. Representing as one's own idea, or expression of an idea, that was AI-generated is considered an academic offense in this course.

All suspected cases of academic dishonesty will be investigated following procedures outlined in the Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters. If you have questions or concerns about what constitutes appropriate academic behaviour or appropriate research and citation methods, please reach out to the instructor. Please visit the University of Toronto Academic Integrity and the UofT Writing Centre Resources websites for further details and help on the proper use of citations.

Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters. Please read the University's Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters. It applies to all your academic activities and courses. The Code prohibits all forms of academic dishonesty including, but not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, and the use of unauthorized aids. Violating the Code may lead to penalties up to and including suspension or expulsion from the University. You are expected to know the Code and inform yourself of acceptable academic practices – ignorance of the Code or the acceptable academic practices is not a valid defense if you are accused of a violation.

Commitment to a Diverse and Inclusive Learning Environment. The University of Toronto is committed to equity, human rights and respect for diversity. All members of the learning environment in this course should strive to create an atmosphere of mutual respect where all members of our community can express themselves, engage with each other, and respect one another's differences. U of T does not condone discrimination or harassment against any persons or communities.

My courses in particular seek to foster an inclusive space built on sensitivity, understanding, and mutual respect. If you have a name and/or set of pronouns that differ from those that appear in your official college records, please let me know.

Discrimination against any individual based on protected status, which is defined as age, color, disability, gender identity or expression, national origin, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, or veteran status, will not be tolerated. The world is a complicated place so be kind and show respect for others' views. We learn and grow through exposure to alternative ways of thinking, not by convergence on a single right answer. When we talk over others, it shuts down debate rather than facilitating it. We need to tackle some really important issues in the 21st century, and we need to hear and consider the fullest possible range of ideas to do so.

Further, students at U of T come from a variety of socioeconomic backgrounds with varied lived experiences. If you encounter financial challenges related to this class, please let me know.

Accessibility Services. Academic accommodations and resources are designed to provide equitable opportunities for students with disabilities to achieve their academic goals. Disability-related accommodations are available through registration with the University of Toronto's Accessibility Services (https://studentlife.utoronto.ca/department/accessibility-services/). This helps maintain privacy and confidentiality and provides students with support when requesting and accessing accommodations. Students who register with Accessibility Services may also be eligible for disability-related services/equipment. Once you complete the registration process, you will work with an Advisor who can set you up with reasonable, disability-related accommodations and/or resources.

Students with accommodations have access to Letters of Accommodation that should be provided to course instructors outlining specific accommodations they can request within that course. For example, if a student is given more time to work on an assignment, this would be outlined in their Letter of Accommodation. Any accommodations not outlined in the letter from Accessibility Services are up to the instructor's discretion. Students can connect with their Accessibility Advisor to discuss their accommodations throughout the year.

Mental Health and Wellness. It is not uncommon for university students to experience a range of health and mental health issues that may result in barriers to achieving their academic goals. The University of Toronto offers a wide range of services that may be of assistance. You are encouraged to seek out these resources early and often.

The University of Toronto's Student Mental Health Resource Guide is an online tool where students can access various on-campus and off-campus mental health resources. Feeling distressed? Are you in crisis? Call Good2Talk (1-866-925-5454) or text GOOD2TALK to 686868 for a free, confidential helpline with professional counselling, information and referrals for mental health, addictions, and well-being (available 24/7). Further, feel free to visit "Feeling Distressed?" for more resources.

But, seriously. Being a student can be hard at times (and there's a lot going on in the world), so please also feel free to reach out to me directly or the resources mentioned above if you need a hand – we're in this together.

Family Care. The University of Toronto strives to provide a family-friendly environment. If you are a student with family care responsibilities, please feel free to let me know if you are struggling to also balance the course's requirements. You may also wish to visit the Family Care Office website: familycare.utoronto.ca.

Religious Accommodations. The University provides reasonable accommodation of the needs of students who observe religious holy days other than those already accommodated by ordinary scheduling and statutory holidays. Students have a responsibility to alert members of the teaching staff in a timely fashion to upcoming religious observances and anticipated absences, and instructors will make every reasonable effort to avoid scheduling tests, examinations or other compulsory activities at these times. Please reach out to the instructor as early as possible to communicate any anticipated absences related to religious observances, and to discuss any possible related implications for course work.

Specific Medical Circumstances. *Students are expected to request accommodations in advance of assignments or tests. Failure to do so may result in a late penalty being applied.* Students who are absent from academic participation for any reason (e.g., COVID, cold, flu and other illness or injury, family situation) and who require consideration for missed academic work should report their absence through the online absence declaration. The declaration is available on ACORN under the Profile and Settings menu. Students should also advise their instructor of their absence in advance. If an absence extends beyond 14 consecutive days, or if you have a non-medical personal situation preventing you from completing your academic work, you should connect with your College Registrar. They can provide advice and assistance reaching out to instructors on your behalf. *A Verification of Illness form is not currently required but may become required should the public health situation change.*