



Psychology (PSYC) 401

Learning Through Life (Revision 3)

Delivery mode: Individualized study online [↗](#)

Credits: 3

Areas of study: Arts or Social Science

Prerequisites: Since this is an advanced course, learners are expected to have previously completed a variety of junior- and senior-level social science courses. **PSYC 381** is recommended.

Precluded: MDDE 612. (PSYC 401 cannot be taken for credit if credit has already been obtained for MDDE 612.)

Challenge: PSYC 401 is not available for challenge.

Faculty: Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences [↗](#)

Status: Replaced with new revision, see the **course listing** [↗](#) for the current revision **✖**

Overview

This reading course is concerned with how adult learners make meaning of their experience. It examines the transformation theory of Jack Mezirow and looks at learning through the creation of meaning schemes and meaning perspectives.

One of the main themes in PSYC 401 is the role that beliefs and assumptions play in adult learning and how they underlie the basis of experience. In addition, the course examines what happens when assumptions are distorted, the contribution of reflection, and the dynamics through which adults come to see the world in a different light. The course combines elements of sociology and philosophy with a psychological base to provide a holistic approach to the study of life experience.

Objectives

After completing *Psychology 401*, a student should be able to

- 1.** define meaning perspectives and meaning schemes, and compare these terms to similar terms used by other authors.
- 2.** describe the role of meaning perspectives and meaning schemes.
- 3.** describe the place of language in meaning perspectives and meaning schemes.
- 4.** discuss the contribution of Habermas's theory of communicative competence to Mezirow's theory of adult learning. Your discussion should include instrumental, communicative, and emancipatory learning.
- 5.** outline four forms of adult learning based on meaning perspectives and meaning schemes.
- 6.** describe the role and importance of reflective learning according to Mezirow.
- 7.** define content, process, and premise reflection, and give concrete examples of each.

8. explain a range of distortions, including their origins, that may lead to dysfunctional meaning perspectives in adult life.
9. describe the development of meaning perspectives, and identify factors that facilitate such development.
10. outline at least six major philosophical and ethical considerations when fostering transformative adult education.
11. analyze the development and change of meaning perspectives and meaning schemes within a case study.
12. analyze the development and change of meaning perspectives and meaning schemes using a case study from your own life experience. You may draw from your work situation, your community volunteer activities, or your hobbies, travel, and personal study.
13. evaluate the usefulness and limitations of Mezirow's analysis of the creation of meaning with particular reference to your case study.


Evaluation


To **receive credit** [↗](#) for PSYC 401, you must complete all three assignments, achieve a grade of D (50 percent) or better on the case study and achieve a composite grade of **D (50 percent)** [📄](#). The weighting of assignments is as follows:

Activity	Weight
Life Situation Survey	15%
Theory Review	30%
Case Study	55%
Total	100%

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





Materials

Mezirow, Jack. 1991. *Transformative Dimensions of Adult Learning*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.  (Print)

Ehrlich, J., & Goldsmith, R. (2009). *The Most Dangerous Man in America* [Motion picture]. Berkely, CA: Kovno Communications.
 (Audio/Video)

All other course materials can be accessed via the online course site.

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.

Opened in Revision 3, October 25, 2011

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View **previous revision** 
