

Psychology 1002A 001-003 FW26
Psychology as a Natural Science
Western University
London Canada
Department of Psychology

Fall 2026

1. Calendar Description

An introductory survey of the methods and findings within modern scientific psychology. This course focuses on the biological aspects of human behaviour. The following topics will be covered: history and methodology, biological psychology, behavioural genetics, sensation and perception, learning, cognitive processes, and memory.

Antirequisites : Psychology 1000, Psychology 1000W/X, Psychology 1010A/B, Psychology 1100E.

Antirequisites are courses that overlap sufficiently in content that only one can be taken for credit. If you take a course that is an antirequisite to a course previously taken, you will lose credit for the earlier course, regardless of the grade achieved in the most recent course.

2 lecture hours; 1 lab hour, 0.5 course

Prerequisites: n/a

Unless you have either the prerequisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enrol in it, you may be removed from this course, and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

2. Course Information

Instructors

Dr. Mike Atkinson: psyc1002@uwo.ca Office hours: TBA

Dr. Jennifer Sutton: psyc1002@uwo.ca Office hours: TBA

Mode of delivery

Lectures (2 hours per week): In Person

Learning Labs (1 hour per week): In Person

Teaching Assistants: TBA, please see OWL site

There are a number of Graduate Teaching Assistants assigned to Psych 1002A. The graduate students have been part of the Department of Psychology from 1 to 6 years. Teaching Assistants will run the Learning Labs.

Please feel free to address any questions about the lectures, the program, or psychology in

general to them as well as to Dr. Atkinson & Dr. Sutton.

Any questions about the Learning Labs should be directed to the Teaching Assistant for your lab section.

Psych 1002A Course Site

The course website is located on OWL Brightspace <https://westernu.brightspace.com/>. You will find class meeting information, lecture slides, study suggestions, links to other resources, etc. This is where announcements for the course will also be posted. Please check Owl often.

Questions

Asking questions during lab or in lecture is an extremely important part of learning. We strongly encourage you to ask a question whenever you require clarification on an issue or have an observation to make yourself. You can also talk with us during Office Hours in our physical offices. Note: Routine questions such as When is the exam? What chapters are covered for the exam? etc., may already be addressed in this course outline.

3. Course Materials

Required Text:

Smith, S., Carter-Rogers, K., Atkinson, M.L., Mitchell, J.B., Passer, M.W., and Smith, R.E. (2026). *Psychology: Frontiers and Applications. 9th Canadian Edition*. Toronto: McGraw Hill Ryerson.

Cost: \$99.00 for 360-day access to Connect, which includes the ebook and online assignments you will need for each chapter, or \$163.15 for Connect plus a printed copy of the book.

If you will be taking PSY 1003B, note that we will continue with the same book, so there will be nothing new to buy for that course.

⇒ It is important to purchase the 9th edition of the text (this is the version included with Connect), as significant content has changed from earlier editions.

Recommended Text: Ellis, Toft & Dawson (2012). *Becoming a Master Student*. Nelson. This material will not be covered on exams, but may be useful to you for time management, note taking, etc.

4. Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes

This course is an introductory level survey of the methods and findings related to the biological and methodological elements of modern scientific psychology. The goal is to provide students with an overview of various topic domains within this realm of

psychology. As such, students will be exposed to diverse theoretical viewpoints and various methods and procedures for the scientific investigation of psychological issues.

Note: Modern psychology is scientific in nature. Consequently, we will spend a lot of time discussing science-related topics such as research design, neural functioning, sensory mechanisms, brain structure, etc.

Each chapter in the text covers a major interest area in psychology. By the end of this course, the successful student will be able to:

Learning Outcome	Learning Activity	Assessment
<i>Knowledge Acquisition</i> Identify major concepts, theories, and topics in <i>Psychology</i>	Reading text and attending lectures and learning labs	Multiple choice exams, lab participation, lab group video presentation video
<i>Critical Thinking</i> Distinguish between and identify the relative strengths and weaknesses of various theories in Psychology	Reading text and attending lectures and learning labs	Multiple choice exams & lab participation
<i>Problem Solving; Inquiry and Analysis</i> Apply concepts and theories from Psychology to everyday problems	Reading text and attending lectures and learning labs	Multiple choice exams, lab participation, lab group presentation video
<i>Communication</i> Ask questions about topics in Psychology	Learning Labs	Lab participation, lab group presentation video
<i>Critical Thinking; Problem Solving</i> Interpret statistical information presented in tables or graphs	Reading text and attending lectures and learning labs	Multiple choice exams & lab participation
<i>Knowledge Acquisition; Inquiry and Analysis</i> Identify common research designs used in Psychology	Reading text and attending lectures and learning labs	Multiple choice exams & lab participation

5. Evaluation

Your mark in the course will be based on two exams, learning lab assessments, online Connect graded assignments, and research participation credits. See Section 6 of this course outline for due dates and times.

Exams

The **Midterm exam** (worth 30%) is scheduled for Saturday, Oct. 24th (time TBD) and will cover chapters 1, 2, and 3 and accompanying lectures. The Midterm will consist of 60 – 80 multiple choice questions.

The **Final exam** (worth 40%) will be scheduled during the final exam period (Dec. 11 - 22, 2026) and covers chapters 4, 5, 6, and 7 and accompanying lectures. The Final will consist of 60 – 80 multiple choice questions. The day and time of the final exam is usually announced in October by the Registrar.

ALL EXAMS ARE WRITTEN IN PERSON. Room assignments for exams will be announced in class and on Owl about a week before the exam date.

Learning Lab Assessments

Work completed in the **Learning Labs** counts for 22% of your grade. Labs start meeting in the week of September 21st, and the last lab meeting will be in the week of November 30th. Note that there are no labs in the week of September 28th, during Reading Week (the week of October 12th), or in the week of December 7th.

Reflection questions: At the end of the learning labs, there will be a short, graded reflection on the activities that day, to be completed at that time. Each reflection is worth 2% of your final mark, and we will count the best 6 of your reflections for a total of 12% of your final mark.

Group video presentation: In a group, you will create a video presentation on a topic in Psychology. Groups will be formed early in the term and will work together to create the presentation. Midway through the term, your group will submit a progress report to your Teaching Assistant. More information will be available in your lab. All the components of the video presentation are together worth 10% of your final mark.

Connect Graded Assignments

The Connect online system is accessible on our course's Owl site. Connect includes your digital copy of the textbook and three exercises for each chapter to help you learn the material. Only the **Graded Assignment** for each chapter counts toward your mark in the course, but we encourage you to try the SmartBook Practice and Nongraded Review activities as part of your study routine.

The Graded Assignments for chapters 1 – 3 are worth 1% of your final grade, and the Graded Assignments for chapters 4 – 7 are worth 1% of your final grade.

Research participation

For the **research participation component** of the course, you will be asked to participate in 3 hours of research during the term for a total of 6% of your final mark. Each half-hour of participation is worth 1% (i.e., 1 credit), and you need 6 credits to earn the full 6%. A minimum of 1 hour (2 credits) must be an in-person study.

- ⇒ The SONA research participation software usually opens to students in the second half of September. You will receive an email to your @uwo.ca account about how to log in to the SONA website once it is open.
- ⇒ It is a good idea to get these research credits out of the way early in the term, as there may be fewer participation opportunities towards the end of the term. Credits may also be earned by summarizing research articles (each worth 2 credits) found on SONA.

The evaluation and testing formats for this course were created to assess the learning objectives listed in section 4 and are necessary for meeting these learning objectives. All evaluations listed in this course outline are required components of the course and together account for 100% of the final grade.

5.1 Policy on Missing Coursework

Students who encounter extenuating circumstances affecting their academic responsibilities may submit a request for academic consideration in accordance with Western University's Academic Consideration policies. Requests must be submitted through the [Student Absence Portal](#) and may require supporting documentation, as detailed below.

Missing an Exam: Students who miss the Midterm Exam or Final Exam without an approved academic consideration request will receive a grade of zero. Academic consideration requests for exams require formal documentation for the Midterm (designated assessment) and the Final (Finals-period exams always require formal documentation).

Makeup Exams: If you miss the Midterm or Final exam and your request for academic consideration has been approved, you will be allowed to write a makeup exam. In line with Faculty of Social Science policy, students with approved academic consideration will be provided with **one** makeup exam opportunity for the missed Midterm or Final Exam, and no additional makeup exam opportunities will be provided.

The makeup exam day/time for the Midterm will be communicated to students with approved academic consideration once it has been set.

The makeup exam for the Final will be in January 2027 and will be communicated to students with approved academic consideration once it has been set.

Students who miss a makeup exam are not eligible for an additional makeup opportunity. Depending on their circumstances, they may:

1. Remain enrolled in the course and accept a grade of zero on the missed makeup assessment. Students should consult the course outline and calculate whether they can still achieve a passing grade in the course.
2. Withdraw from the course through [Student Center](#) before the [published drop deadline](#). A course dropped before the deadline will result in a withdrawal (WDN) without academic penalty. Part-time students should consult the Registrar's Office [refund schedule](#) to determine whether a tuition refund is available. Students enrolled full-time in 4.0-5.0 courses are generally not eligible for tuition refunds when a course is dropped.
3. If the published drop deadline has passed and the missed makeup assessment is supported by appropriate documentation, students may submit their documentation through the [Student Absence Portal](#) to request a **WDN (withdrawal without academic penalty)**. Approval is not automatic and remains subject to Faculty review. Requests for a second makeup assessment will not be considered.

NOTE: In order to receive credit for this course, you must write the Final Exam.

Missing Learning Lab Assessments

Lab reflections are worth 2% each, and there are 8 labs that include reflections in the term. We will count the marks from your best 6 reflections, so you can miss two reflections or delete your two lowest scores. As per Western policy, the built-in flexibility of this assessment means that it is not eligible for academic consideration requests, and such requests will be denied.

Lab group video presentation: The video presentation created by your group, along with the self-reflection and a peer evaluation will be due Friday, December 4th at 11:59pm, with an automatic grace period ending Sunday, December 6th at 11:59pm. As per Western policy, the built-in flexibility of this assessment means that it is not eligible for academic consideration requests, and such requests will be denied. Therefore, failing to turn in this assessment before the end of the grace period will result in a mark of zero.

Group progress report: Midway through the term, your lab video presentation group will submit a progress report describing progress on the presentation. The progress report will be due by Friday, November 6th at 11:59pm, with an automatic grace period of 48 hours until Sunday, November 8th at 11:59pm. As per Western policy, the built-in flexibility of this assessment means that it is not eligible for academic consideration requests, and such requests will be denied. Therefore, failing to turn in this assessment before the end of the grace period will result in a mark of zero.

Missing Lectures: If you miss a lecture and would like to attend another lecture, that will not be a problem. We teach the same class Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday in NCB 101. Monday and Wednesday classes are 4:30 to 6:30. Tuesday class is 7:00 to 9:00 pm.

Missing Research Participation Credits: Credits can be completed at any point in the term but MUST be completed by noon (12pm) on Dec. 9, 2026. The participation pool will be closed on that date, and opportunities to participate will end. Note that while you may complete your credits at any time during the term, they will not show up in the Owl gradebook until after the participation pool closes. As per Western policy, the built-in flexibility of this assessment means that it is not eligible for academic consideration requests, and such requests will be denied.

Missing Connect graded assignments: The Connect graded assignments for chapters 1 - 3 are due by Friday, October 23rd at 11:59PM. There is an automatic 48-hour grace period for late assignments that ends Sunday, October 25th at 11:59PM. The Connect graded assignments for chapters 4 - 7 are due by Friday, December 4th at 11:59PM, with an automatic grace period for late assignments ending Sunday, December 6th at 11:59PM. As per Western policy, the built-in flexibility of these assessments means that they are not eligible for academic consideration requests, and such requests will be denied. Therefore, you will receive a zero for any graded assignment you do not complete by the end of the grace period.

The expectation for course grades within the Psychology Department is that they will be distributed around the following averages:

70%	1000-level to 2099-level courses
72%	2100-2999-level courses
75%	3000-level courses
80%	4000-level courses

The Psychology Department follows Western's grading guidelines, which are as follows (see: https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/general/grades_undergrad.pdf)

A+	90-100	One could scarcely expect better from a student at this level
A	80-89	Superior work that is clearly above average
B	70-79	Good work, meeting all requirements, and eminently satisfactory
C	60-69	Competent work, meeting requirements
D	50-59	Fair work, minimally acceptable
F	below 50	Fail

Note that in the event that course grades are significantly higher or lower than these averages, instructors may be required to make adjustments to course grades. Such adjustment might include the normalization of one or more course components and/or the re-weighting of various course components.

Policy on Grade Rounding: Course grades are rounded to the nearest whole number automatically. No additional assignments will be offered to enhance a final grade.

Requests to change a grade because it is needed for a future program, etc., will not be considered.

To maximize your grade, do your best on each assessment within the course.

6. Assessment/Evaluation Schedule

Assessment	%	Date	Notes
Midterm Exam	30	Saturday, October 24 th , time TBA	Covers chapters 1 – 3 and accompanying lectures
Final Exam	40	TBA in Final Exam period	Covers chapters 4 – 7 and accompanying lectures
Learning Labs	22	Meets throughout term: reflections due at end of lab meetings, group progress report due Friday, Nov 6, and group video presentation due Friday, Dec 4th	Best 6 of 8 lab reflections; group progress report and group video presentation deadlines have automatic 48-hour grace periods
Connect: Chapters 1 – 3 Graded Assignments	1	Due by 11:59PM October 23rd	Automatic grace period to 11:59PM October 25th
Connect: Chapters 4 – 7 Graded Assignments	1	Due by 11:59PM December 4th	Automatic grace period to 11:59PM Dec 6th
Research Participation Credits	6	Must be completed by 12pm (noon) December 9 th when research pool closes	Earned any time throughout term by signing up on SONA
TOTAL	100		

7. Class Schedule

Week	Topic	Chapter	Instructor
Sept 14	Intro & Science of Behaviour	1	MA
Sept 21	Methods	2	MA
Sept 28*	Neurons	3	MA
Oct 5	The Brain	3	MA
Oct 12	<i>Reading week, no lectures</i>		
Oct 19	Genetics	3	MA
Oct 26	Sensation	4	MA
Nov 2	Perception	4	MA
Nov 9	Consciousness	5	JS
Nov 16	Learning 1	6	JS
Nov 23	Learning 2	6	JS
Nov 30	Memory 1	7	JS
Dec 7	Memory 2	7	JS

*Note that no lecture will be held on Wednesday, September 30th in observance of the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. A recorded version of the lecture will be posted on Owl in addition to the in-person lectures on Monday and Tuesday.

8. Academic Integrity

Scholastic offences are treated seriously at Western University. Students are expected to understand and comply with the University's standards of academic integrity. Scholastic offences may result in penalties up to and including expulsion from the University. Please read [Western's Scholastic Offences](#) policy for definitions and examples of Scholastic offences.

Possible penalties for a scholastic offence include failure of the assignment/exam, failure of the course, suspension from the University, and expulsion from the University.

Statement on Use of Electronic Devices

Electronic devices of any kind (smart phones, smart watches, laptops, tablets, etc.) are not permitted to be used during exams. If you attempt to access an electronic device during an exam, it will be considered an academic offense.

Use of AI

This course is designed to develop your own critical thinking, writing, and analytical skills. Accordingly, the use of generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools (e.g., ChatGPT, Claude, Copilot) to generate course content is **not permitted**, unless explicitly authorized by the instructor for a specific assignment. All use of artificial intelligence tools must comply with Western University's academic integrity standards.

Students may not use AI tools to:

- Generate written text, arguments, analyses, or interpretations
- Draft or rewrite assignment responses
- Paraphrase substantial portions of source material
- Create references or cite sources not independently verified

Limited, non-substantive uses of AI (e.g., spelling or grammar checks) may be permitted only if they do not alter the intellectual content of the work. Any permitted use must be explicitly disclosed. All submitted work must represent the student's own thinking and independent effort. Students are fully responsible for verifying the accuracy, originality, and integrity of any material they submit. Unauthorized or undisclosed use of AI constitutes a potential scholastic offence and will be handled in accordance with Western University's policies on academic integrity. Students are responsible for ensuring that all work complies with Western's scholastic integrity standards.

Multiple Choice Exams

Computer-marked multiple-choice tests and/or exams will be subject to submission for similarity review by software that will check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns that may indicate cheating.

9. Academic Accommodations and Accessible Education

Western University is committed to providing an accessible learning environment. Students with disabilities or medical conditions requiring accommodation are encouraged to contact Accessible Education as early as possible. Accommodations will be implemented in accordance with University policy. Please review [Western's policy on academic accommodations](#) for student with disabilities. Accessible Education provides supports and services to students with disabilities at Western. If you think you may qualify for ongoing accommodation that will be recognized in all your courses, visit [Accessible Education](#) for more information. Email: aew@uwo.ca Phone: 519 661-2147

10. Absence & Academic Consideration

Please review Western's policy on [Academic Considerations](#)

11. Other Information

- Office of the Registrar: <https://registrar.uwo.ca>
- Student Development Services: www.sdc.uwo.ca
- Psychology Undergraduate Program:
<https://www.psychology.uwo.ca/undergraduate/index.html>

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Health and Wellness@Western <https://www.uwo.ca/health/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

Please contact the course instructor if you require material in an alternate format or if you require any other arrangements to make this course more accessible to you.

If you wish to appeal a grade, please read the policy documentation at:

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/appealsundergrad.pdf.

Please first contact the course instructor. If your issue is not resolved, you may make your appeal in writing to the Undergraduate Chair in Psychology (psyugrd@uwo.ca).

Copyright Statement

Lectures and course materials, including power point presentations, outlines, videos and similar materials, are protected by copyright. You may take notes and make copies of course materials for your own educational use. You may not record lectures, reproduce (or allow others to reproduce), post or distribute any course materials publicly and/or for

commercial purposes without the instructor's written consent.

LEARNING INFORMATION EFFICIENTLY

You will be expected to know the assigned chapters VERY WELL!

Many of the multiple-choice questions in this course are based on material from the chapters that is not explicitly covered in lecture. To be able to answer these questions correctly you will need to know and understand each of the concepts and processes described in the assigned chapters. This is a major learning task and many students run into difficulties because they do not know how to handle this learning task efficiently.

Just reading the assigned chapters is NOT enough! For most people the process of reading something, or even re-reading it, does not mean that they remember it. This is especially true for "heavy" course content such as that found in the psychology text. If you wish to learn the material from the text efficiently, you will need to approach it in a different manner.

Learn the text chapters using ACTIVE reading/learning strategies. Strategies recommended for efficient learning of text material can be divided into three types: pre- reading, reading for comprehension, and post-reading:

1. Pre-reading. Learn the headings and subheadings.

Instead of diving immediately into reading the chapter, spend a few minutes learning the headings and subheadings. The headings and subheadings tell you the important ideas that will be covered in the chapter. In the text they are laid out for you on the first few pages of the book in the table of contents. Look at these headings and subheadings, think how they have been ordered, try reciting them from memory, and then write them out on a separate sheet of paper.

2. Reading for comprehension. Read a few pages and THEN summarize.

Don't try to read most of the chapter in one sitting. It is much easier to learn the material in small chunks. Read a few pages carefully and THEN make a summary of the important points. Continue doing this until you have summarized about 10 pages - then take a break. You can summarize by highlighting sparingly AND making marginal notes, or by making separate written notes.

Note that much of the information in psychology comes in the form of arguments. Here are some of the important kinds of information that are crucial to knowing and understanding an argument: i) definitions of new terms, ii) essential explanations of the specific argument, iii) examples, iv) results of studies. If you make separate summary notes, try using point form and keywords. This has 2 advantages: the notes are made more quickly, and they are easier to read. As you record key terms and definitions ALWAYS relate them to the arguments of which they are a part.

3. Post- reading. Test yourself.

After actively reading 10 or more pages in the manner described above, try reciting (i.e., recalling from memory) all the important points under each heading and subheading that you have studied. This will reinforce the ideas you know and identify those that you need to review. Doing the study guide questions and relevant old exam questions after you have finished the entire chapter can also be very helpful.