

WESTERN UNIVERSITY
LONDON CANADA

Department of Psychology
Fall/Winter 2026

Psychology 2020B Section 001

Drugs and Behavior

1 Calendar Description

Survey of the major drugs of abuse, including alcohol, nicotine, caffeine, opiates, stimulants, inhalants, and sedative-hypnotics. Discussion will focus on historical and current patterns of use and abuse, behavioural and psychological effects of acute and chronic use, psychological processes involved in drug effects, neurochemical bases for action, and treatment issues.

Antirequisites: Not Applicable

Prerequisites: Not Applicable

3 lecture hours; Course Weight: 0.5

Unless otherwise stated, students are responsible for ensuring that they have successfully completed all prerequisites prior to enrolling. Where prerequisites have not been met, the instructor may require the student to withdraw from the course. In accordance with Western policy, this decision is not subject to appeal.

In the event of a discrepancy between this outline and Senate or University policies, the latter shall prevail. The instructor reserves the right to modify elements of this course outline for pedagogical or operational reasons. Any such changes will be communicated to students in a timely manner.

2 Course Information

Instructor: Dr. Riley Hinson

Office and Phone Number: 6334 SSC 519-661-2111 x84649

Office Hours: By appointment

Email: hinson@uwo.ca

Teaching Assistant: TBD

Time and Location of Classes: TBD Monday, 2:30-4:30 and Wednesday, 2:30-3:30

Website: There is a Brightspace site for this course. Access to this site is via your id name and password (this is typically your last name and the code involving a combination of numbers and

upper and lower case letters). ***Important course information will be posted at the website, and this is the main method of communicating information to students. It is the student's responsibility to check the web site regularly for important course information. If you miss a course component (test, make up test, etc.) when the information for that course component has been posted on the web site, then you will receive a grade of zero (0) on that component.***

3 Course Materials

All material that will be tested will be presented in the class lectures. If you would like to have a complete copy of most of the material that might be presented in class, you may purchase the entire set of my lectures from the Bookstore. You are not required to purchase this, as only the material presented in the lectures will be tested. If you are considering purchasing the lectures from the Bookstore, make sure you get the correct book. Here is a link to show the Text Notes https://bookstore.uwo.ca/textbook-search?campus=UWO&term=W2025A&courses%5B0%5D=650_UW/PSY2020A You may also contact me about this if you wish. The price of the Text Notes is set by the Bookstore. The price is listed as \$79.

4 Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes

The purpose of this course is to acquaint students with the major drugs of use and abuse. These include alcohol, nicotine, caffeine, opiates, marijuana, sedatives, hallucinogens, stimulants, inhalants, steroids and other miscellaneous drugs. The history of use of the different drugs will be presented. The current use of drugs will be described. The behavioral effects will be presented. Behavioral and biopsychological research aimed at identifying factors involved in drug use will also be discussed.

By the end of this course, the successful student should be able to

- recognize and identify major drugs of abuse when they are discussed in texts, news, public forums
- recognize and identify major concepts related to drug addiction
- recognize and identify major experimental procedures related to the study of drug addiction
- compare, classify, and interpret information about drugs and drug addiction as presented in texts, news, media or public forums

The following table outlines the course learning outcomes and how they are assessed.

Student Learning Outcomes, Activities and Assessment

Course Learning Outcome	Learning Activities	How Assessed
• Recognize and identify major drugs of abuse • Recognize and identify major concepts related to drug addiction • Recognize and identify major experimental procedures related to the study of drug addiction	• Lectures	• Mid-term and final tests involving MC questions
• Compare, classify and interpret depictions of drugs and drug addiction as they may appear in text, news, media or public forums	• Lectures • Discussion of media stories about drugs taken from media websites	• Mid-term and final tests involving MC questions

5 Evaluation

The evaluation and testing formats for this course were created to assess the learning objectives as 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. Weightings and assessment formats may be adjusted where required to support course learning objectives, with appropriate notice to students.

There will be two term tests (see 7 for dates) and a Final Exam (set by the Registrar). Each of the term tests will be worth 33.333 marks, and the Final will be worth 33.334. All the tests will be in-person, in a paper-and-pencil format (location to be posted to Brightspace close to date of each test). The term tests will take place on Saturdays—they will not be during class time. All tests will be multiple choice. The tests will not be explicitly cumulative. There are general concepts, introduced and discussed at various points in the course, which are relevant to material discussed at any point in the course. These general concepts, applied to the material covered for a test, may be included on any of the tests. All tests will be open book. Students may have either the Text Notes and/or their own written/printed notes during all tests. **Electronic versions of notes are not allowed.**

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 per policy, instructors may designate **one assessment per half-course** as requiring formal supporting documentation in their course outline. In other words, students cannot use an undocumented absence for this “designated assessment”. The second term test is a “designated assessment”. An undocumented absence cannot be used for this test. To be excused from this test you have to attend Academic Counselling.

There will be a make up of missed Test 1 for students that have been excused either by academic counselling or by use of an undocumented absence. It is the student’s responsibility to know the rules for the use of an undocumented absence--

https://registrar.uwo.ca/academics/academic_considerations/index.html). There will be a make up of Test 2 only if excused by academic counselling. There will not be a make-up for those who are not excused, and a grade of zero will be recorded for the missed test/final exam.

The Psychology Department follows Western’s grading guidelines:

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/general/grades_undergrad.pdf

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

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. No additional assignments will be offered to enhance a final grade. Requests to change a grade because it is needed for a future program will not be considered.

6 Assessment/Evaluation Schedule

Test 1	33.333%
Test 2	33.333%
Final Exam	33.334%

7 Class Schedule

M January 4: Introduction I

W January 6: Introduction II

M January 11: Introduction III

W January 13: Introduction IV

M January 18: Alcohol I

W January 20: Alcohol II

M January 25: Alcohol III

W January 27: Alcohol IV

M February 1: Cannabis I

W February 3: Cannabis II

Test 1 will occur on Saturday, February 6 (time and location TBD) and will cover material presented in lectures from January 4 up through and including the lecture of January 27.

M February 8: Cannabis III and Tobacco I

W February 10: Tobacco II

Week of February 15-19--No Class due to Reading Week

M February 22: Tobacco III and Caffeine I

W February 24: Caffeine II

M March 1: Stimulants I

W March 3: Stimulants II

M March 8: Stimulants III

W March 9: Hallucinogen I

Test 2 will occur on Saturday, March 13 (time and location TBD) and will cover material presented in lectures from February 1 up through and including the lecture of March 8.

M March 15: Hallucinogens II

W March 17: Sedative-Hypnotics I

M March 22: Sedative-Hypnotics II

W March 24: Inhalants and Steroids

M March 29: Opiates I

W March 31: Opiates II

M April 5: Gambling and Gaming I

W April 7: Treatment I

The Final Exam will be scheduled by the Registrar. It will cover material presented in lectures from March 9 up through and including the lecture of April 7.

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.

Statement on Use of Electronic Devices

Students may use laptops and similar devices to make notes during classes. Electronic devices are NOT allowed during tests.

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**.

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: aw@uwo.ca Phone: 519 661-2147

10 Absence & Academic Consideration

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

11 Other Information

Helpful Websites

- Western's academic policies are available at the [Office of the Registrar](#).
- Departmental policies are available at the [Psychology Department website](#).
- Learning supports available at [Learning Development & Success](#).

Well-being

Western University provides a range of supports to promote student well-being. Students are encouraged to seek assistance when needed. Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to [Health and Wellness at Western](#) 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.

Grade Appeals

If you wish to appeal a grade, please read the [policy documentation](#) on requests for relief. 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).

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commercial purposes without the instructor's written consent.