

WESTERN UNIVERSITY
LONDON CANADA
Department of Psychology
Winter 2027

Psychology 2036B Section 001
The Psychology of Physical Health and Illness

1 Calendar Description

This course will cover the role of psychological factors in the prevention of illness and the maintenance of good health, and treatment of already-existing illness. Topics will include the stress/illness relationship, psychological influences on physical symptom perception and reporting, personality and health, behavioral factors in disease, coping, adherence and compliance.

Antirequisites: Psychology 2330A/B, Psychology 3330F/G.

Prerequisites: n/a

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. Corey Isaacs

Office Hours: by appointment (via Zoom)

Email: cisaacs3@uwo.ca

Time and Location of Classes: Thursdays at 7:00 – 10:00 PM in HSB-40

For courses that include an online component, students must have a reliable internet connection and computer that are compatible with online learning system requirements.

3 Course Materials

Straub, R. O. (2023). *Health Psychology*, 7e. Macmillan Higher Education.

The textbook is available in a variety of formats, including print, ebook, and the Macmillan Achieve app. See the Macmillan website for more information about purchase options: www.macmillanlearning.com/college/ca/product/Health-Psychology/p/1319291732. If you choose to purchase access to their online *Achieve* platform, you can find your textbook materials here: <https://achieve.macmillanlearning.com/courses/oega8n>

I always recommend that students use the assigned edition of the course textbook, as there may be important changes between editions. While you may be able to use the previous edition of this textbook without too many problems, you absolutely should not use any earlier edition of this textbook or any other textbook.

4 Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes

This course provides a broad introduction to theories and research regarding the scientific study of human health. Students taking this course can expect to become more knowledgeable about a wide range of health-related issues. By the end of this course, successful students should have achieved the following outcomes:

Learning Outcome	Learning Activity	Assessment
Identify and describe the biological, psychological, and social factors that influence health and illness	readings, lessons, online discussions	exams, online discussions
Apply psychological theories and concepts to the study of health and illness	readings, lessons, online discussions	exams, online discussions
Understand the various influences on health-related behaviour and on health and illness	readings, lessons, online discussions	exams, online discussions
Critically evaluate theories, research methods, and findings from the field of health psychology	readings, lessons, online discussions	online discussions
Communicate ideas clearly and concisely, in language accessible to a non-specialist audience	readings, lessons, online discussions	online discussions

5 Evaluation

Exams (80% of final grade)

This class includes two midterm exams (each worth 20%) that will be administered during class time, and a final exam (worth 40%) that will be held during the final exam period. Exams will

cover material from both the textbook and the lectures. The final exam will be cumulative (i.e., it will assess material from the entire course), with an emphasis on material not already assessed on the midterm exams.

Online Discussions (20% of final grade)

There will be an online discussion posted to OWL during most weeks (10 throughout the course), and you will be required to participate in any FIVE of the discussions throughout the term to earn the *Online Discussions* component of your course grade. You can choose to participate in as many of the weekly discussions as you would like, in which case your best five discussion grades will be used to calculate your *Online Discussions* grade.

Forum grades will be earned based on the quantity and quality of your contributions to these discussions. A successful student in online education is one who takes an active role in the learning process. You are therefore encouraged to participate actively in the discussions to enhance your learning experience throughout the course.

Each discussion will be open for seven days, from 12:01 AM on Sunday until 11:59 PM the following Saturday. You will be required to post at least one question to the forum (before midnight on Monday) about the previous week's topic as a starting point for discussion. You will also be required to respond to at least two of your classmates' posts during the week. Once the discussion closes (at 11:59 PM on Saturday), no more posts can be made. You're advised to post early in the week, and always back up your work, as "technical difficulties" is NOT an acceptable excuse for missing a discussion deadline.

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.

Policy on Missing Coursework

Exams. Students who fail to write an exam at the scheduled time will receive a grade of zero unless they receive academic consideration for that exam. There will be a makeup exam for each of the midterms, held approximately one week after the scheduled exam. If a student is excused from both the midterm exam and the associated makeup exam, that portion of their course grade may be reassigned to the final exam.

Online Discussions. If a student fails to participate in at least five of the weekly online discussions, they will receive a grade of zero for each of the missed discussions. Because students only have to participate in five of the 10 discussion forums, students will not be excused from the online discussion requirement (i.e., flexibility is already provided to all students). If you have a long-term illness or other issue of concern that would prevent you from being able to participate in the

online discussions, please contact your home faculty's academic counselling office with appropriate documentation to request relief.

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.

Course grades within the Psychology Department are expected to 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

Midterm Exam 1	7:30 – 8:30 PM on Thursday, February 4
Midterm Exam 2	7:30 – 8:30 PM on Thursday, March 18
Final Exam	TBD (April 12 – 30)
Online Discussions	Weekly from Sunday at 12:01 AM – Saturday at 11:59 PM

7 Class Schedule

Changes to the class schedule will be announced on the OWL course website. Students are responsible for being aware of announcements made on OWL.

DATES	READING/TOPIC
Jan. 7	Chapter 1 – Introducing Health Psychology
Jan. 14	Chapter 2 – Research in Health Psychology
Jan. 21	Chapter 4 – Stress

Jan. 28	Chapter 5 – Coping with Stress
Feb. 4	Midterm Exam 1 (Chapters 1, 2, 4, & 5)
Feb. 11	Chapter 6 – Primary Prevention & Positive Psychology
Feb. 14 – 20	READING WEEK – NO CLASSES
Feb. 25	Chapter 7 – Exercise, Sleep, & Injury Prevention
March 4	Chapter 8 – Nutrition, Obesity, & Eating Disorders
March 11	Chapter 9 – Substance Use, Abuse, and Addiction
March 18	Midterm Exam 2 (Chapters 6 – 8)
March 25	Chapter 13 – Seeking and Obtaining Healthcare
April 1	Chapter 14 – Managing Pain
April 8	Chapter 15 – Complementary and Alternative Medicine
TBD (April 12 – 30)	Final Exam (Cumulative)

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

Use of electronic devices during lectures should be limited to class-related activities. No electronic devices will be allowed during examinations.

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.

Personal Response Systems ("Clickers")

In classes that involve the use of a personal response system, data collected will only be used in a manner consistent to that described in this outline. It is the instructor's responsibility to make every effort to ensure that data remain confidential. However, students should be aware that as with all forms of electronic communication, privacy is not guaranteed.

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

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).

Copyright Statement

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