

WESTERN UNIVERSITY
LONDON CANADA

Department of Psychology
Fall 2026

Psychology 2550A Section 001

INTRODUCTION TO PERSONALITY THEORY & RESEARCH

1 Calendar Description

A survey of the history, methodology and content of the study of individual differences. Topics to be covered include: evaluation of typical personality assessment methods and a consideration of modern empirical research in personality theory and assessment.

Antirequisite(s): Psychology 2050 if taken before 2016. 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.

Prerequisite: A mark of at least 60% in 1.0 credits of Psychology at the 1000 level.

Lecture hours: 3
Course Weight: 0.5

<https://www.registrar.uwo.ca/academics/timetables.html>

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: Julie Aitken Schermer
Office & Phone: SSC 4429 ext. 84699
Office Hours: By appointment
Email: jharris@uwo.ca

Teaching Assistant: Sereena Dargan
Office: SSC 8424D (only accessible by elevators C/D)
Office Hours: By appointment
Email: sdargan@uwo.ca

Time and Location of Classes: Thursdays 12:30-3:30, SH 3345

3 Course Materials

This course is using a REQUIRED custom textbook published by Wiley and available through the bookstore:

[Dellelce Family Bookstore - West https://bookstore.uwo.ca/textbook-search?campus=UWO&term=W2026A&courses%5B0%5D=001](https://bookstore.uwo.ca/textbook-search?campus=UWO&term=W2026A&courses%5B0%5D=001) UW/PSY2550Aern University

Please acquire EITHER the print or the e-book (not both)

4 Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes

The following learning objectives can be best met through your active involvement in the class.

Learning Outcome	Learning Activity	Assessment
<i>Depth and Breadth of Knowledge.</i> • Learning Outcome 1: Know the difference between personality theories. • Learning Outcome 2: Understand the main research findings within each area of personality psychology.	Lectures and course readings.	Multiple choice exams and quizzes.
<i>Knowledge of Methodologies.</i> • Learning Outcome 1: Understand the differences between a theory and a quasi-theory in personality psychology. • Learning Outcome 2: Correctly determine the methodology used to test personality theories.	Lectures and course readings.	Multiple choice exams and quizzes.
<i>Application of Knowledge.</i> • Learning Outcome 1: Correctly ascertain the hypothesis which would be tested for each area of personality psychology. • Learning Outcome 2: Determine the appropriate terminology to describe individual differences.	Lectures and course readings.	Multiple choice exams and quizzes.

<i>Communication Skills.</i> • Learning Outcome 1: Discuss and debate various theories of personality.	Lectures	In-class discussions will be helpful for understanding the concepts in the exams.
<i>Awareness of Limits of Knowledge.</i> • Learning Outcome 1: Correctly determine what variables or factors may confound results. • Learning Outcome 2: Understand that not all variability is explained and correctly determine the source(s) of measurement error.	Lectures and course readings.	Multiple choice exams and quizzes.
<i>Autonomy and Professional Capacity.</i> • Learning Outcome 1: Understand the cultural context with respect to personality psychology. • Learning Outcome 2: Correctly determine what are the indicators of certain personality disorders and their prevalence within society.	Lectures and course readings.	Multiple choice exams and quizzes.

5 Evaluation

Weekly quizzes (starting Sept. 24), best 7 of 9, = 15%.

Exam 1 = October 29, in class, 60 multiple choice questions, 10 questions per lecture chapter, lecture chapters 1-6 = 35%

Exam 2 = December exam period (Dec. 11-22), cumulative final exam, 10 multiple choice questions per lecture chapter, lecture chapters 1-11 = 50%

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

As per policy, instructors may designate **one assessment per half-course** weight as requiring formal supporting documentation in their course outline. In other words, students cannot use an undocumented absence for this “designated assessment”. **Final exams require documentation.**

For this course, Exam 1 (midterm) is the designated assessment and students will not be able to use an undocumented absence.

Flexibility in assessment:

1. flexible completion of Quizzes (count the 7 highest marks out of 9 quizzes toward the course grade)

***Policy:* When flexibility in assessment is incorporated, a request for consideration may be denied, or may not be necessary at all.**

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.

***Note.* Grades are not adjusted based on “need”. You are responsible for your grades.**

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: see section 5

7 Class Schedule

Date	Chapter Title	Source
Sept. 10	Introduction to Course	Outline
Sept. 17	Personality Part I	Chamorro-Premuzic (2015). Personality and Individual Differences (3 rd ed.) Ch. 2
Sept. 24	Personality Assessment	Carducci, B.J. (2015). Psychology of Personality (3 rd ed.) Ch. 2
Oct. 1	The Classic Trait Viewpoint	Carducci, B.J. (2015). Psychology of Personality (3 rd ed.) (Ch. 6)
Oct. 1	The Elaboration of the Trait Viewpoint	Carducci, B.J. (2015). Psychology of Personality (3 rd ed.) (Ch. 7)
Oct. 8	Dispositional Traits	McAdams, D.P. & Dunlop, W.L. (2022). The Person (6 th ed.) (Ch. 4)
	<i>Reading Week</i>	
Oct. 22	Emotional Life: Extraversion and Neuroticism	McAdams, D.P. & Dunlop, W.L. (2022). The Person (6 th ed.) (Ch. 5)
Oct. 29	EXAM 1 IN CLASS	Lecture chapters 1-6 = 35%, 60 questions, 2 hours
Nov. 5	Self-Regulation: Agreeableness and Conscientiousness	McAdams, D.P. & Dunlop, W.L. (2022). The Person (6 th ed.) (Ch. 6)
Nov. 12	Expanding your Mind: Openness to Experience	McAdams, D.P. & Dunlop, W.L. (2022). The Person (6 th ed.) (Ch. 7)
Nov. 19	The Behavioral Genetics Viewpoint: The Basic Biological Unit of Personality	Carducci, B.J. (2015). Psychology of Personality (3 rd ed.) (Ch. 8)
Nov. 26	Stability and Change in Personality Traits	McAdams, D.P. & Dunlop, W.L. (2022). The Person (6 th ed.) (Ch. 8)
Dec. 3	Personality Part II (last class)	Chamorro-Premuzic (2015). Personality and Individual Differences (3 rd ed.) (Ch. 3)

8 Academic Integrity

Scholastic offences are taken seriously, and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site:

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

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

Recording devices are not allowed in class.

No electronic devices are allowed during examinations.

Use of AI

AI Policy:

This course is designed to develop your own critical thinking, writing (quizzes), and analytical skills. Accordingly, the use of generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools (e.g., ChatGPT, Claude, Copilot) to generate course content is **not permitted**. 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 (for quizzes)
- 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: aeu@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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