

WESTERN UNIVERSITY
LONDON CANADA

Department of Psychology - Winter 2027
Psychology 3130B Section 001
THE PSYCHOLOGY OF THINKING

1 Calendar Description

Theoretical and empirical studies on problem solving, reasoning, concept formation, thinking and cross-cultural variations in thinking processes. 3 lecture hours; Course Weight: 0.5.

Prerequisites: Both Psychology 2801F/G (or one of Health Sciences 2801A/B, Psychology 2840F/G, Psychology 2855F/G) and Psychology 2811A/B (or one of Biology 2244A/B, Economics 2122A/B, Economics 2222A/B, Geography 2210A/B, Health Sciences 3801A/B, MOS 2242A/B, Psychology 2830A/B, Psychology 2850A/B, Sociology 2205A/B, Statistical Sciences 2035, Statistical Sciences 2141A/B, Statistical Sciences 2143A/B, Statistical Sciences 2244A/B, Statistical Sciences 2858A/B, the former Social Work 2207A/B), or the former Psychology 2820E, or both the former Psychology 2800E and the former Psychology 2810, and one of Psychology 2115A/B, Psychology 2134A/B, Psychology 2135A/B.

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

Instructor:	John Paul Minda, PhD
Office & Phone:	5158 WIRB, 519-661-2111 ext 84689
Office Hours:	Thurs 1:00pm–2:00pm
Email:	jpminda@uwo.ca

Teaching Assistant:	TA information
Office:	TA information
Office Hours:	TA information
Email:	TA information

2.1 Course Operation

Lectures are **Tuesday from 9:30am – 12:20pm**. The three-hour lecture includes a short break. Slides and lecture material will be available on OWL prior to class. Lectures are live streamed on Zoom and recorded. The videos are uploaded to OWL and YouTube. In-class participation is expected, but if you are sick or cannot attend class, I encourage you to watch the remote lecture. If Western is closed in the event of severe weather, our class may meet live on Zoom at the same time.

2.2 Instructor Office Hours

My weekly office hours are **Thursday from 1:00pm – 2:00pm**. You can either come to my office (WIRB 5158) or join via Zoom. My office hours are for one-on-one meetings and are offered on a first-come, first-served basis. If you are coming to my office in WIRB, take the elevator to the 5th floor and use the hallway phone or email to let me know you are waiting, and I will let you in the office suite. If you have other concerns, please contact me by email. I generally reply to emails within 48 hours.

2.3 TA Office Hours

For all questions related to course content, exam preparation, or scheduling, please check Brightspace. For all other inquiries, please contact the TA. Please include the course number and section in the subject line of your email, along with a brief word or phrase detailing the nature of the email (e.g., 3130B 001: Midterm Exam Questions). All email correspondence must be from your @uwo.ca email; emails from other addresses will not be responded to. The TAs host weekly Zoom office hours on **(TBA)** and should be your first point of contact for reviewing course material after OWL forums. TA office hours are offered on a first-come, first-served basis.

3 Course Materials

3.1 Textbook

There is one required textbook for this course:

- Minda, J. P. (2020). *The Psychology of Thinking: Reasoning, Decision-Making and Problem-Solving*, 2nd Ed. SAGE, London: UK. (\$85.65 paperback, \$69.00 eBook)

The text is available:

- At the university [book store](#)
- From the [publisher](#)
- From [VitalSource](#)

If you do not wish to buy the text, it is available at the library on course reserve. The first edition of the text may also be used and it is [available for free](#) at the library. The first edition is lacking some content, but it is possible to do well in the course with the first edition.

3.2 Course Notes

Notes and slides from each class are available on the course website (OWL). A copy of the slides will be available prior to class for review and for notetaking. Students may share their own notes on the OWL site or other note-sharing sites. Your notes are your intellectual property; you can share as much or as little as you feel comfortable.

4 Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes

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

Learning Outcome	Learning Activity	Assessment
Students completing this course will gain insights into how people think and how the brain supports complex mental behaviour.	Assigned readings and lecture attendance	Quizzes and Exams
Students completing this course will learn how psychologists and neuroscientists study thinking and other complex mental phenomena.	Assigned readings, lecture attendance, and interactive demonstrations in class	Quizzes and Exams
Students completing this course will learn about thinking, cognitive biases, and heuristics and will understand how to improve their own thinking and apply cognitive psychological principles in their personal and professional lives	Assigned readings, lecture attendance, and interactive demonstrations in class	Quizzes and Exams

5 Evaluation

5.1 Quizzes

There are five online quizzes on the schedule below. Each quiz will be available on OWL right after class from 12:30pm – 10:30pm (for 10 hours) on the day on which it is scheduled. You can take the quiz any time during the posted time window. These quizzes are open book, open note. Each quiz is worth 4% of the final grade. I will drop the lowest grade of the five quizzes, and the remaining four quizzes will make up 16% of the final grade. Any missed quiz will be scored a “0”. Academic consideration will *not* be granted for missed quizzes.

5.2 Exams

There are two in-person exams in the course. Exam 1 is scheduled for Tuesday February 9 at the same time and location as the lecture (9:30am – 12:30pm, SSC 2050) and covers Units 1–5. The midterm is worth 42% of the final grade. Exam 2 will be scheduled by the registrar for the final exam period. Exam 2 covers the second half of the course (Units 6–11) and is worth 42% of the final grade.

If you require or receive accommodation for extra time on course work, please connect with Accessible Education as soon as possible and let me know so that I can make accommodations.

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.

5.3 Policy on Missing Coursework.

If you are unable to take an exam as scheduled, you *must* obtain permission from your academic Dean via your counsellor to make up the exam. You *may not* use an undocumented absence for Exams 1 and 2. There are no make-up opportunities for quizzes.

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. Refer to this [Policy of Consideration](#) guidance. Following receipt of approved accommodation from Academic Counselling, a makeup exam will be rescheduled to take place approximately 10 days after the original exam date.

5.4 Final Grade

The final grade in this class will be a combination of your grades on the quizzes (16%), Exam 1 (42%), and Exam 2 (42%). This course is exempt from the Senate requirement that students receive assessment of their work accounting for at least 15% of their final grade at least three full days before the date of the deadline for withdrawal from a course without academic penalty.

The expectation is that course marks will be distributed around the following averages:

Grade	Description
70%	1000–level and 2099–level courses
72%	2100–2999 level courses
75%	3000–level courses (<i>this course</i>)
80%	4000–level courses

The Psychology Department follows Western's grading guidelines, (see [the policy](#) here.)

Grade	Range	Description
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

If course grades are significantly higher or lower than these averages, instructors may be required to adjust 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.

5.6 Exam Review

Grades will be released on OWL. Exams and quizzes may be reviewed by making an appointment with the TA during their exam review office hours (TBA). Neither the TA nor the instructor will re-grade questions or award points after the grades have been released.

6 Assessment/Evaluation Schedule

Exam/Quiz*	Date	Location	Content	Value*
Quiz 1	Jan. 19	online	Classes 1–3	4%
Quiz 2	Feb. 2	online	Classes 4–5	4%
Midterm	Feb. 9	SSC-2050	Classes 1–5	42%
Quiz 3	Mar. 2	online	Classes 6–7	4%
Quiz 4	Mar. 23	online	Classes 8–10	4%
Quiz 5	April 5	online	Classes 6–11	4%
Final Exam	April	TBA	Classes 6–11	42%

**Note: The lowest quiz grade will be dropped, you will be graded on the best 4 of 5 quizzes*

7 Class Schedule

Unit	Week	Topic	Readings
1	January 5	Introduction	Minda Ch. 1
2	January 12	Similarity	Minda Ch. 2
3	January 19	Knowledge and Memory	Minda Ch. 3
4	January 26	Concepts and Categories	Minda Ch. 4
5	February 2	Language and Thought	Minda Ch. 5
-	February 9	Exam 1, Unit 1–5	Minda Ch. 1–5
-	February 16	Reading Week	-
6	February 23	Inference and Induction	Minda Ch. 6
7	March 2	Deductive Reasoning	Minda Ch. 7
8	March 9	Context, Motivation, and Mood	Minda Ch. 8
9	March 16	Decision Making	Minda Ch. 9
10.1	March 23	Problem Solving	Minda Ch. 10
10.2	March 30	Creativity	Minda Ch. 10
11	April 5	Expertise	Minda Ch. 11
-	April TBA	Exam 2, Units 6–11	Minda Ch. 6–11

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.

8.1 *Statement on Use of Electronic Devices*

No electronic devices on any kind may be used during an exam. Laptops, smartphones, and tablet devices may be used during class and can be used for interactive activities during lecture.

8.2 *Plagiarism Detection Software*

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between Western and Turnitin.com.

8.3 *Use of AI*

Responsible use of artificial intelligence (AI) tools is **permitted** in this course as a support for learning, not as a substitute for critical thinking or scholarly work. All use of artificial intelligence tools must comply with Western University's academic integrity standards.

Students may use AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT, Claude, Copilot) for:

- Brainstorming ideas or refining research questions
- Improving clarity, grammar, or organization
- Preliminary or background exploration of topics

AI must not be used to:

- Generate full drafts or final versions of assignments
- Replace analysis, interpretation, or synthesis
- Fabricate, misrepresent, or cite sources that the student has not independently consulted
- Bypass engagement with course materials

You are ultimately responsible for all work submitted under your name. AI output should be critically evaluated, substantially revised, and integrated thoughtfully, not copied verbatim.

All written assignments must include a brief AI Usage Statement, indicating:

- Which tools were used (if any)

- The purpose for which they were used
- How the output was modified and incorporated

Assignments submitted without an AI Usage Statement will not be accepted. Misuse of AI or failure to disclose its use may constitute a scholastic offence and will be addressed in accordance with Western University's academic integrity policies. Students are responsible for ensuring that all work complies with Western's scholastic integrity standards.

8.1 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

11.1 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](#).

11.2 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.

11.3 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).

11.4 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.

11.5 Policy on the Recording of Synchronous Sessions

Some or all the learning sessions for this course may be recorded. The data captured during these recordings may include your image, voice recordings, chat logs and personal identifiers. The recordings will be used for educational purposes related to this course, including evaluations. The recordings may be disclosed to other individuals participating in the course for their private or group study purposes. Please contact the instructor if you have any concerns related to session recordings. Participants in this course are not permitted to privately record the sessions, except where recording is an approved accommodation, or the student has the prior written permission of the instructor. Students who require recordings as an accommodation should ensure this need is documented with Accessible Education.