

WESTERN UNIVERSITY
LONDON CANADA

Department of Psychology
Fall/Winter 2026

Psychology 3316F Section 200

PSYCHOLOGICAL TRAUMA

1 Calendar Description

This course covers the psychobiological theories and research aimed at helping us understand the diversity of human responses to traumatic life experiences, including sexual assault, childhood maltreatment and war.

Antirequisites: n/a

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.

2 Lecture hours; 1 Experiential Learning hour; 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: Paul Frewen, PhD, C.Psych.
Office & Phone: UH B3-264
Office Hours: Wed 1:00-1:30, 3:30-4:00
Email: pfrewen@uwo.ca

Teaching Assistant: To Be Announced (TBA)
Office: n/a
Office Hours: n/a
Email: TBA

Time and Location of Classes: Wed 1:30-3:30 in UCC-56 (Blended)

3 Course Materials

Gold, S. N. (2017). APA Handbook of Trauma Psychology: Foundations in knowledge. Washington: American Psychological Association. <https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1037/0000019-000>

* Note: Online Library Resource, there is NO NEED to purchase an individual copy.

4 Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes

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

Learning Outcome	Learning Activity	Assessment
Depth and Breadth of Knowledge: <i>Make connections</i> between Psychological Trauma and Other Psychology Topics, particularly Abnormal and Clinical Psychology; <i>Explain differences and linkages</i> between the primary theories, research methods and core ideas of trauma psychology	<i>Attendance and Participation</i> in Face-to-Face <i>Learning</i> ; Asynchronous Readings and Videos	Multiple Choice Final Exam (50%)
Knowledge of Methodologies: <i>Critical inquiry</i> in identifying the underlying assumptions, points of view, and paradigms typical of trauma psychology research, thereby <i>determining the reliability and validity</i> of researchers' methods and conclusions	Critique of case presentation of trauma psychology in popular media (fictional and non-fictional)	Written Essay: ≈2000 words
Application of Knowledge: Experiential Learning – Reflection upon participation in various psychological research protocols (SONA).	Participate in 10 credits of psychology research sessions of direct relevance to course (research listings will be provided on BrightSpace)	Written Reflections: ≈200 words each x10 for total of ≈2000 words; Marked Pass/Fail

5 Evaluation

Multiple Choice Final Exam	50%
Recorded, Narrated PowerPoint Presentation (Essay Component) Note: Failure to complete the assignment will require formal supporting documentation (i.e., , students cannot use an undocumented absence for this assignment).	20%
Research Participation and Summaries/Critiques (Essay Component)	10x1%=10%
Case study (Fictional or Non-Fictional) (Essay Component)	20%

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

Assignments are due on dates specified and are otherwise assessed late penalties of 5% per day.

Recorded, Narrated PowerPoint Presentation is a “designated assessment” and there requires formal supporting documentation to be submitted without late penalty (i.e., this assignment cannot be submitted late via undocumented absence).

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.

Because this is an essay course, as per Senate Regulations, you must pass the essay component to pass the course. That is, the average mark for your written assignments must be at least 50%.

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.

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

	Date
Multiple Choice Final Exam	During Final Examination Period
Recorded, Narrated Critical Appraisal & Knowledge Translation	Oct 1
Case study (Fictional or Non-Fictional) (Essay Component)	Nov 1
Research Participation Summaries & Reflection	Dec 1

7 Class Schedule

Week	DATE	TOPIC & Hyperlinked Asynchronous Lecture Videos	Required Readings
1	09/09	Introduction to Trauma Psychology	• Vol1-Ch2 Defining Trauma
2	09/16	Introduction to... (Continued)	• Vol1-Ch10 Acute Stress Disorder and PTSD
3	09/23	Different Kinds of Traumatic Events	• Vol1-Ch15-Complex Trauma and Complex PTSD
4	09/30	Different Kinds... (Continued)	• As above
5	10/07	Different Kinds... (Continued)	• As above
6	10/14	FALL STUDY BREAK	• n/a
7	10/21	Trauma Exposure as a Transdiagnostic Vulnerability Factor & PTSD Comorbidity	• Vol1-Ch14 Other disorders associated with psychological trauma
8	10/28	Non-trauma memory focused (Present-centered) therapies	• Vol2-Ch11 Emotion Regulation and Skills-Based Interventions
9	11/04	Trauma memory focused (Past-centered) therapies	• n/a
10	11/11	Trauma-related Emotion Dysregulation & Self	• n/a
11*	11/18	Posttraumatic Dissociation	• Vol1-Ch13 Dissociation as a Trauma-Related Phenomenon
12	11/25	Resiliency and Growth	• Vol2-Ch5 Trauma Resiliency and Posttraumatic Growth
13	12/02	Review	• n/a

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

No electronic devices will be allowed during examinations.

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.

Use of AI: Permissive & Guided AI Policy (Responsible use, transparency, and skill-building)

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.

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

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.

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.