

WESTERN UNIVERSITY
LONDON CANADA

Department of Psychology
Fall/Winter 2026

Psychology 3620G Section 001

The Psychology of Work Motivation and Leadership

Tentative Course Outline

1 Calendar Description

This course addresses theory and research on motivation and leadership in a work context. Emphasis is placed on the research methods used in the critical evaluation of theory and the application of research findings as a guide to evidence-based design of motivation systems and leadership development practices.

Antirequisite(s): [Psychology 3690F/G](#) if taken in 2019-20, 2020-21, 2021-22, 2022-23, 2023-24 or 2024-25.

Prerequisite(s): 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 and Environment 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.

Format: 3 seminar 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: John Meyer, PhD

Office & Phone: 8411 SSC; 519-661-3679
Office Hours: By appointment
Email: meyer@uwo.ca

Teaching Assistant: TBA
Office: TBA
Office Hours: TBA
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Time and Location of Classes: Thursday, 1:30 – 4:30pm, UC 1105

3 Course Materials

For required course readings, see Class Schedule; readings will be made available through the course website on OWL.

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 Be aware of and understand key psychological principles as they apply to work motivation and leadership. Understand how these principles were established empirically and can be applied in the workplace.	In-class lectures and discussion, case studies, exercises, and videos	Mid-term and final tests; term papers
Knowledge of Methodologies Have a basic understanding of the research methods used by I/O psychologists in the investigation of motivation and leadership in the workplace.	In-class lectures and discussion	Mid-term and final tests
Application of Knowledge Understand and be able to explain how theory and evidence-based psychological principles can be applied to guide human resource management practices in organizations, including the design of compensations systems, work design, and leadership development.	In-class lectures and discussion, case studies, exercises, and videos	Mid-term and final tests; participation in in-class activities; term papers
Communication Skills	In-class discussion, case studies, and	In class participation; term papers

Learn to communicate and debate ideas in a constructive and collegial manner.	debates; written assignments	
Awareness of Limits of Knowledge Identify and think critically about limitations of I/O psychological research methods and findings	In-class lectures and discussion	Mid-term and final tests; participation in in-class activities; term papers

5 Evaluation

Attendance and Participation (10% of final mark). Students are required to attend in person classes and participate in the general discussion of issues as well as in-class exercises. Students who cannot attend class on a given day should notify the instructor and provide an explanation. Grades will be based on attendance and participation excluding those days when student have legitimate reasons for absence.

Term Papers (30% of final mark). Students will be required to submit **two** 1500-word term papers, each worth 15% of the final grade. The 1500 word limit does not include references or the required brief AI Usage Statement (see Section 8 below). The first term paper will address an issue pertaining to Work Motivation in an Era of Change and will be due by **11:55pm on February 10, 2026**. The second term paper will address a Leadership Challenge in a Changing World of Work and will be due by **11:55pm on March 31, 2026**. More detail on potential topics, formatting, referencing, submission procedures, etc. will be provided in class. Late papers will be **penalized at a rate of 10% per day** unless students receive accommodation. **Note: the second term paper is designated for this course as the assessment requiring supporting documentation for accommodation.**

Midterm Test (30% of final mark). The midterm test will cover reading and lecture materials for January 7 to February 11 and will consist of multiple choice and short written-answer questions. The test will be held in class on February 25. Students who miss the test and receive accommodations (as required) will be given an opportunity to write a make-up test.

Final Test (30% of final mark): The final test will cover reading and lecture materials for March 4 to April 8 and will consist of multiple choice and short written-answer questions. The test will be held on the date to be set by the Registrar's office. Students who miss the test and receive accommodation (as required) will be given an opportunity to write a make-up test.

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

See above for policy regarding each component of the evaluation.

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

Mid-term Test: Thursday, February 25 (reading & lecture material from January 7 to February 11). Dates for any make-up tests will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

Final Test: TBA (Final exam period) (reading & lecture material from March 4 to April 8. Dates for any make-up tests will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

Term Papers: The first term paper is due on February 10 at 11:55 pm and the second term paper is due on March 31, at 11:55pm.

7 Class Schedule

TOPICS AND READINGS (Tentative)

Note: Readings will be made available on the course website in OWL.

Assigned readings are required unless designated as ‘optional.’ Optional readings will include information presented in class and provide students with additional coverage and background.

INTRODUCTION

Jan. 7 Introduction: Evidence-based Management

Pfeffer, J., & Sutton, R.I. (2006). Evidence-based management. *Harvard Business Review*, 84(1), 63-74.

PART 1: Work Motivation

Jan. 14 Classic Theories and Basic Principles

Dinibutun, S.R. (2012). Work motivation: Theoretical framework. Retrieved from ResearchGate

(https://www.researchgate.net/publication/338543082_Work_Motivation_Theoretical_Framework?enrichId=rgreq-c8174a5d9faf4ef1290e98a574a4883b-XXX&enrichSource=Y292ZXJQYWdlOzMzODU0MzA4MjtBUzo4NDY1MTkxNzk2ODU4ODhAMTU3ODgzNzMwODI2Ng%3D%3D&el=1_x_2&_esc=publicationCoverPdf)

Stajkovic, A.D., & Luthans, F. (1997). A meta-analysis of the effects of organizational behavior modification on task performance, 1975-95. *Academy of Management Journal*, 40(5), 122-149. **(Focus on pp. 1122-1124, 1128-1135 and 1139-1143; i.e., skip details regarding analysis)**

Jan. 21 Contemporary Theories

Greenberg, J. (2011). Organizational justice: The dynamics of fairness in the workplace. In S. Zedeck (Ed.) *APA Handbook of industrial and organizational psychology* (Vol. 3, pp. 271-327). Washington, DC: APA. **(Focus on pp. 271-286)**

Locke, E. A., & Latham, G. P. (2002). Building a practically useful theory of goal setting and task motivation: A 35-year odyssey. *American Psychologist*, 57, 705-717.

Deci, E.L., Olafsen, A.H., & Ryan, R.M. (2017). Self-determination theory in work organizations: The state of the science. *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior*, 4, 19-43. **(Focus on pp. 19 -30)**

Jan. 28 Motivational Strategies I: External Inducements

Gerhart, B., & Fang, M. (2014). Pay for (individual) performance: Issues, claims, evidence and the role of sorting effects. *Human Resource Management Review*, 24, 41-52.

Deci, E.L., Olafsen, A.H., & Ryan, R.M. (2017). Self-determination theory in work organizations: The state of the science. *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior*, 4, 19-43. **(Focus on pp. 31-39)**

Feb. 4 Motivational Strategies II: Work Design and Engagement

Oldham, G.R., & Fried, Y. (2016). Job design research and theory: Past, present and future. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 136, 20-35.

Bakker, A. (2017). Strategic and proactive approaches to work engagement. *Organizational Dynamics*, 46, 67-75.

Feb. 11. Work Motivation in a Changing World of Work

Cappelli, P., & Eldor, L. (2022). Contracting, engagement, and the “gig” economy. In J.P. Meyer & B. Schneider (Eds.), *A Research Agenda for Employee Engagement in a Changing World of Work* (pp. 103-118). Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar Publishers.

Gagné, M., Parker, S.K., & Griffin, M.A. (2022). How does future work need to be designed for optimal engagement? In J.P. Meyer & B. Schneider (Eds.), *A Research Agenda for Employee Engagement in a Changing World of Work* (pp. 137-154). Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar Publishers.

February 13-21 Reading Week

Feb. 25 Mid-term Test

PART 2: Leadership

Mar. 4 Traditional Theories of Leadership

House, R.J. & Aditya, R.N. (1997). The social scientific study of leadership: Quo vadis? *Journal of Management*, 23(3), 409-473. **(Read pp. 409-430).**

Mar. 11 Neo-Charismatic Theories of Leadership

Conger, J.A. (2011). Charismatic leadership. In Bryman, A., Collinson, D., Grint, K., Jackson, B., & Uhl-Bein, M. (Eds.), *Sage Handbook of Leadership* (pp. 86-102). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

Wang, G., Oh, I-S, Courtright, S.H., & Colbert, A.E. (2011). Transformational leadership and performance across criteria and levels: A meta-analytic review of 25 years of research. *Group and Organization Management*, 36(2), 223-270. **(Focus on. 224-236 & 249-255)**

Mar. 18 New Genre Theories of Leadership

Hoch, J. E., Bommer, W. H., Dulebohn, J. H., & Wu, D. (2018). Do ethical, authentic, and servant leadership explain variance above and beyond transformational leadership? A meta-analysis. *Journal of Management*, 44(2), 501–529. **(Focus on pp. 501-509 & 520-526)**

Fischer, T., & Sitkin, S.B. (2023). Leadership styles: A comprehensive assessment and way forward. *Academy of Management Annals*, 17(1), 331-372.

Mar. 25 Paradoxical Leadership

Smith, W.K., & Lewis, M.W. (2011). Toward a theory of paradox: A dynamic equilibrium model of organizing. *Academy of Management Review*, 36(2), 381-403.

Apr. 1 Leadership Challenges in a Changing World of Work

Van Wart, M., Roman, A., Wang, X., & Liu, C. (2016). Operationalizing the definition of E-leadership. *International Review of Administrative Sciences*,
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0020852316681446>

Apr. 8. Work Motivation and Leadership: A Review & Integration

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 will be allowed to use electronic devices in class for purposes of note taking but they should not be used for non-class related purposes that will distract themselves or other students. No electronic devices are permitted during the midterm or final tests.

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

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.

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).

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

Students who require recordings as an accommodation should ensure this need is documented with Accessible Education. Should any student require such accommodations, other students will be informed that these recordings might include their voice or image. These students are asked to contact the instructor if they have any concerns related to session recordings.