

WESTERN UNIVERSITY
LONDON CANADA

Department of Psychology
Winter 2026

Psychology 3720G Section 001

The Psychology of Prosocial and Antisocial Behavior

1 Calendar Description

The course will consider the social, situational and personality factors responsible for the occurrence of antisocial behaviours such as violence and aggression, and of prosocial behaviours such as helping others in disaster or crisis situations.

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 (or Psychology 2780E or permission of the Department at Huron).

3 lecture hours; 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. Julian Scheffer
Office & Phone:	WIRB 5170
Office Hours:	By Appointment

Email: jscheff3@uwo.ca

Teaching Assistant: Devinder (Dave) Khera

Office: [To be determined]

Office Hours: [To be determined]

Email: dkhera@uwo.ca

Time and Location of Classes: 12:30-3:30pm on Mondays, SSC 3014

3 Course Materials

NOTE: An ebook version of each of these textbooks is available for free on our OWL course website and via the Western library website. The **Dovidio** text is available for unlimited student use, but the **Krahé** may have a limit of three active users at a time. Therefore, students may desire to purchase the **Krahé** textbook to avoid delays.

Dovidio, J. F., Piliavin, J. A., Schroeder, D. A., & Penner, L. A. (2013). *The Social Psychology of Prosocial Behavior*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
(\$111.00 for EBook, \$109.10 for physical copy)

Krahé, B. (2025). *The Social Psychology of Aggression (4th Edition)*. New York, NY: Psychology Press.
(\$104 for Ebook)

Course Materials Link: [To be determined]

4 Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes

The following table outlines the course learning outcomes and how they are assessed. At the end of the course, students should understand the basic theories, methods, and findings in the literature on prosocial and antisocial behaviour. Topics include theories, mechanisms, and situational influences on such behaviours. This course is organized around content-focused lectures, weekly assigned readings, in-class discussion and participation. Students will generate a research idea and write a proposal according to APA standards.

Learning Outcome	Learning Activity	Assessment
Depth and Breadth of Knowledge Describe and evaluate current theory and methods relevant to prosocial and antisocial behavior	Lectures Assigned readings Summary Proposal Final Paper	Exams Summary Proposal Final Paper
Knowledge of Methodologies Critically evaluate effectiveness of different approaches to studying prosocial	Lectures Assigned Readings Summary Proposal	Exams Summary Proposal Final Paper

and antisocial behaviours	Final Paper	
Application of Knowledge • Apply concepts and theories learned to understand when and why prosocial or antisocial behaviour occurs	Lectures Summary Proposal Final Paper	Exams Summary Proposal Final Paper
Communication Skills • Describe and summarize research from the literature on prosocial and antisocial behaviour • Communicate effectively through oral and written methods	Lectures Summary Proposal Final Paper	Exams Summary Proposal Final Paper

5 Evaluation

Course grades will be based on two exams, a four-page summary of research proposal, and the full research proposal paper.

First Exam (32.5%): The first exam will focus on prosocial behaviour. Testable content includes all material covered between Weeks 1-5. This includes all lesson materials (notes, lecture material, activities, and videos) and assigned textbook chapters. The examination will be 80 minutes in length and will consist of multiple-choice questions and short answer questions.

Exam 2 (32.5%): The second exam will focus on antisocial behaviour. Testable content includes all material covered between Weeks 6-11. This includes all lesson materials (notes, lecture material, activities, and videos) and assigned textbook chapters. The examination will be 80 minutes in length and will consist of multiple-choice questions and short answer questions.

Summary of research proposal (10%) - Students will have the opportunity to apply the course materials by formulating a novel research idea and proposing a study to address it. The research project you propose must address a research question directly related to prosocial and/or antisocial behaviour. For the research proposal summary, you will prepare a concise document outlining the theoretical background and rationale for the proposed research question, the objective(s) and method of the proposed work, and the anticipated findings and implications. There is a strict four-page limit for the proposal summary (double spaced, 1-inch margins on all sides, APA formatting), with a fifth page allotted for a reference list. **The research proposal summary is due on or before February 25th, 2026, before midnight.**

Final Research Proposal Paper (25% written component) - Students will have the opportunity to apply the course materials by formulating a research question and proposing a study to answer it. The final paper should [1] provide a brief literature review, [2] outline a hypothesis (or hypotheses) you are interested in testing, [3] specify a method for examining the proposed question, [4] describe your expected results, and [5] discuss implications and plausible alternative accounts of what the research may yield. There will be a strict 15-page limit, with the 16th page allotted for a reference list.

The final paper must be at least 2500 words, not including references (double-spaced, formatted with 12-point Times New Roman; 1-inch margins on all sides; written in accordance with APA guidelines) and **is due on April 8th, before midnight**.

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

In this course, your written assignments have a no-questions-asked 3-day grace period. This means that you can submit any of these assignments up to 3 days past the posted deadline without penalty. As such, requests for academic consideration for these assignments will be denied.

There will be a 10% per day penalty for late submissions. As a *general* guide, the literature review and the description of the hypothesis/hypotheses should be 4-6 pages in length, the method should be 1-3 pages in length, the expected results should be 1-3 pages in length, and the implications/alternative accounts should be 2-4 pages.

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

First Exam: **February 8th** (in-class)

In the event that a short-term accommodation or absence interferes with your ability to take the first exam, you must submit a documented absence via the SAP (Student Absence Portal) within 24 hours and attend the make-up first exam (*to be determined*). Please be aware that the make-up exam will not be the same as the original exam other students have taken. Instead, it will be equivalent in difficulty and format but will contain new multiple choice and short answer questions.

Summary of Research Proposal: **February 25th** before midnight (submitted to Brightspace)

In the event that you are unable to submit the summary of research proposal on time, you have a no-questions-asked 3-day grace period. This means that you can submit this assignment up to 3 days past the posted deadline without penalty, or you will receive late penalties on the relevant course component (10% per day), in accord with University policy. As such, requests for academic consideration for this assignment will be denied.

Final Research Proposal Paper: **April 8th**

In the event that you are unable to submit the final research paper on time, you have a no-questions-asked 3-day grace period. This means that you can submit this assignment up to 3 days past the posted deadline without penalty, or you will receive late penalties on the relevant course component (10% per day), in accord with University policy. As such, requests for academic consideration for this assignment will be denied.

Second Exam: **During final exam period April 12-30** (TBD).

In the event that a short-term accommodation or absence interferes with your ability to take the second exam, you must submit a documented absence via the SAP (Student Absence Portal), and you must attend the make-up second exam (i.e., TBD). Please be aware that the make-up exam will not be the same as the original exam other students have taken. Instead, it will be equivalent in difficulty and format but will contain new multiple choice and short answer questions.

7 Class Schedule

Dates	Lesson	Reading	Topic
Jan. 4	Lesson 1	Dovidio Chapter 1	Introduction to Prosocial Behavior

Jan. 11	Lesson 2	Dovidio Chapter 2 Amormino et al. (2025)	Origins of Prosocial Behavior
Jan. 18	Lesson 3	Dovidio Chapter 3 Slovic et al. (2017)	When will people help?
Jan. 25	Lesson 4	Dovidio Chapter 4 Aknin & Whillans (2021)	Why do people help?
Feb. 1	Lesson 5	Dovidio Chapter 7 Halabi et al. (2026)	Being the Helper and Being Helped
Feb. 8	In-Class Midterm Exam (Lessons 1-5)		
Feb. 15	READING WEEK (no classes)		
Feb. 22	Lesson 6	Krahé Chapter 1	Aggression Definition and Measurement
Mar. 1	Lesson 7	Krahé Chapter 2 Kruglanski et al. (2023)	Theories of Aggression
Mar. 8	Lesson 8	Krahé Chapter 3 Twenge & Campbell (2003)	Development of Aggression
Mar. 15	Lesson 9	Krahé Chapter 5 Behrer & Bolotnyy (2023)	Situational Elicitation of Aggression
Mar. 22	Lesson 10	Krahé Chapter 6 Coyne & Stockdale (2021)	Media Violence and Aggression
Mar. 29	Lesson 11	Krahé Chapter 7 Sivarajasingam et al. (2005) Russell (2003)	Aggression as Part of Everyday Life
Apr. 5	No Class	No Class	(Office Hours by Appointment)
	Final Research Proposal Paper Due at 11:59pm on April 8th		
TBA (April 12 – 30)		FINAL EXAM (Lessons 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.

Statement on Use of Electronic Devices

During lesson lectures, laptops may be used to write notes, but students are required to keep their active screens to the content being discussed in the class only (e.g., lecture slides, course material) and no headphones or earphones may be worn. Any extra-curricular online or offline activities on the same laptop are prohibited, and audio output must remain muted so that other classmates and the instructor are not distracted. No cellphone or other electronic devices will be permitted. If needing to take a phone call in the case of an emergency, students should quietly exit the classroom. No recording device is permitted without the expressed consent of the instructor and class and may not always be available (see section below: *Policy on the Recording of Synchronous Sessions*).

During midterm and final examination, all electronic devices are prohibited and must be turned off prior to the beginning of the examination and not in the possession of the student (e.g., in a locker or in a bag at the front of the class).

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

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.

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: 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

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.

12 Land Acknowledgement

We acknowledge that Western University is located on the traditional territories of the Anishinaabek, Haudenosaunee, Lūnaapéewak, and Chonnonton. Nations, on lands connected with the London Township and Sombra Treaties of 1796 and the Dish with One Spoon Covenant Wampum. This land continues to be home to diverse Indigenous Peoples (First Nations, Métis and Inuit) whom we recognize as contemporary stewards of the land and vital contributors of our society.