

PSYC*4460 Advanced Topics in Clinical and Applied Developmental Psychology, Course Outline: Fall 2025

General Information

This course is offered using Face-to-Face format. The course has a set day, time, and location of class.

Course Title: Advanced Topics in Clinical and Applied Developmental Psychology: Youth Mental Health in the Digital Age

Course Description:

This course will provide an in-depth exploration of youth mental health in the digital age. Drawing on research and theory from clinical and developmental psychology, we will examine how digital technologies and online environments shape adolescent well-being, identity, and development. Topics will include social media and mental health, cyberbullying and online aggression, body image and appearance pressures, self-harm and suicidality, as well as opportunities for digital activism, resistance, and community care. We will also consider the role of emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence and algorithms in shaping youth mental health and digital experiences. An intersectional lens will guide our discussions, highlighting how diverse experiences of race, gender, sexuality, class, and ability influence youth engagement with digital spaces.

The course is organized in three parts. We will begin by examining core issues in youth mental health, then explore theories and structural factors that help us understand these issues and finally turn to applied interventions and strategies for support. Class meetings will include short lectures to introduce key concepts, theories, and research, followed by guided discussion, case examples, and interactive activities. Students will critically engage with both peer-reviewed research and applied scenarios, learning how to evaluate evidence, question assumptions, and connect theory to practice. For their final project, students will create a youth-focused intervention that applies course material to a real-world issue related to digital technology and mental health.

Credit Weight: 0.5

Academic Department (or campus): Psychology

Semester Offering: Fall 2025

Class Schedule and Location: Fridays 8:30am-11:20am in ANNU 204

Instructor Information

Instructor Name: Dr. Rima M. Hanna

Instructor Email: hannar@uoguelph.ca
Office location and office hours: by appointment

GTA Information

GTA Name: Anastasia Mekhael
GTA Email: amekhael@uoguelph.ca
GTA office location and office hours: by appointment

Course Content

Specific Learning Outcomes:

After successful completion of this course, you should be able to:

1. Identify and explain core issues in youth mental health within digital contexts, including social media use, online aggression, body image, and self-harm.
2. Critically evaluate empirical research in clinical and developmental psychology, integrating evidence from peer-reviewed articles and applied case examples.
3. Apply key developmental and clinical theories to understand youth experiences in digital environments.
4. Analyze how intersecting identities such as race, gender, sexuality, class, ability, and migration status shape digital experiences and mental health outcomes.
5. Evaluate the implications of emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence and algorithms, for adolescent development and well-being.
6. Develop and justify a youth-focused intervention that integrates psychological theory, empirical evidence, and intersectional analysis.
7. Communicate ideas effectively through participation in class discussions, case-based activities, and written assignments.
8. Demonstrate appropriate academic independence, critical thinking, and personal organization in completing assigned course tasks.

Class meetings:

Class meetings will consist of a combination of short lectures, guided discussion of course material, and interactive activities. Mini-lectures will introduce key concepts, theories, and research in clinical and developmental psychology, while discussions and activities will provide opportunities to critically engage with readings, case examples, and applied scenarios.

The topics and content of this course will be divided into three main parts:

1. **Foundations and Core Issues in Youth Mental Health (Weeks 0–3):** identity development in adolescence, social media and well-being, cyberbullying and online aggression, body image and appearance pressures, and self-harm.

2. **Theories and Structural Challenges (Weeks 4–9):** developmental and clinical frameworks, intersectionality, trauma and inequality, the digital divide, youth activism, and the role of artificial intelligence and algorithms.
3. **Applied Responses and Interventions (Weeks 10–12):** digital interventions, equitable, culturally responsive, and evidence-based approaches, and the development of youth-focused intervention projects.

There will be dedicated readings and/or multimedia content for each class. These will be posted on CourseLink in advance. Students are expected to come to class having completed the assigned material, as this preparation will support meaningful participation in discussions, reflection papers, the case analysis, and the final intervention project.

Week	Class #/Date	Topics and assignments due	
0	Sep 5	Course introduction/course outline Reading peer-reviewed academic articles Writing for Psychology courses Respectful and effective participation 1 Foundations & Core issues Youth, identity, and the digital age	
1	Sep 12	Anxiety, depression, peer connection <i>Participation responses 1 due before midnight Sep 12</i>	
2	Sep 19	Cyberbullying and online aggression <i>Participation responses 2 due before midnight Sep 19</i>	
3	Sep 26	Appearance pressures, body image; self-harm <i>Participation responses 3 due before midnight Sep 26</i> <i>Reflection Paper 1 due before midnight Sep 27</i>	
4	Oct 3	2 Theories & Structural Challenges Developmental theories <i>Participation responses 4 due before midnight Oct 3</i> <i>Topics due for intervention proposal Oct 4</i>	
5	Oct 10	Clinical perspectives <i>Participation responses 5 due before midnight Oct 10</i>	
6	Oct 17	Social Psychological perspectives Intersectionality Theory <i>Participation responses 6 due before midnight Oct 17</i> <i>Reflection Paper 2 due before midnight Oct 17</i>	
7	Oct 24	Inequality, marginalization, digital divides Social determinants of digital access	

		Participation responses 7 due before midnight Oct 24	
8	Oct 31	Algorithms & AI Participation responses 8 due before midnight Oct 31 Case analysis due before midnight November 1st	
9	Nov 7	Digital activism, resistance, community care Participation responses 9 due before midnight Nov 7	
10	Nov 14	3 Applied Responses & Interventions Digital interventions & e-therapy Participation responses 10 due before midnight Nov 14 Intervention proposals due before midnight Nov 15	
11	Nov 21	Designing interventions that are equitable, culturally responsive, evidence-based Participation responses 11 due before midnight Nov 21	
12	Nov 28	Course wrap up Issues – theories – interventions Participation responses 12 due before midnight Nov 28 Final interventions due before midnight Dec 5	

Course Assignments:

Assignment or Test	Due Date	Contribution to Final Mark (%)	Learning Outcomes Assessed
Class attendance + participation responses	Fridays by midnight, starting Week 1	12 x 3% = 36%	1-8
Response/reflection papers (x2)	Fridays by midnight (Sep 27 th , Oct 17 th)	2 x 12 % = 24%	1-5, 7-8
Case Analysis	November 1 st by midnight	10%	2-5, 7-8
Final Intervention Project (chosen topic, short proposal, final paper)	Topic due October 4 th , Proposal due November 15 th , Final intervention due December 5 th	2% + 8% + 20% = 30%	1-8
Bonus marks (Participant Pool)	By end of pool	2%	

1. Reflection Papers $2 \times 12\% = 24\%$

You will submit two reflections (600-900 words each) in response to the readings for a given week prior to the due date. They should rely on a close reading of the texts and respond to one or more of the main arguments/issues in the texts. Feel free to comment on their relevance to your own thinking and research interests, but do not merely summarise material. Referencing is necessary when you use course material or if you use additional sources. Detailed instructions will be given on CourseLink in addition to what is below.

Guidelines for reflection papers:

- The main aim of these papers is to provide you with a written means of engaging with the course content. They are an opportunity for you to gather and express your thoughts, questions, reactions, and/or confusions in response to the reading material.
- There is no strict rule for how to write your papers, if they reflect an attempt to critically and creatively engage with, and make sense of, the ideas and topics raised for the week. Your papers should show an attempt to understand the material accurately but should not merely be a summary of course material, they should be a response.
- For example: you can write about links between theories and personal life experiences; or you can reflect on connections between course content and ideas in other courses you are taking; or you could relate course material to current events and issues.
- If your opinion about an issue changes during the course, you can write about this in a reflection paper.
- In later papers, you may also want to explore broader themes that appear to link the course topics together.
- The response papers are meant to be part of an ongoing reflection on new and sometimes complex ideas, and you can expect that your ideas about things will change as the course progresses. This means that your papers can be exploratory. Be aware, however, that your TA & instructor will look for evidence that you have read the course material when grading your papers.
- Please (PLEASE) limit AI use for these. 😊

Format for submissions:

- APA referencing is necessary for citing materials on your reading list and anything else you choose.
- Length is 600-900 words (2/3 double-spaced pages).
- Quality is more important than quantity!
- Submit via the CourseLink Dropbox (please double check that your file has uploaded).
- Use any of the following file formats: .doc, .docx, .pdf, .rtf.

Late submissions: 10% per day up to a maximum of 3 days, after which you will receive zero.

2. Class Attendance and Participation Responses $12 \times 3\% = 36\%$

Class attendance and participation are important components of this course and will be part of your grade. Each week, you will submit a participation response to CourseLink by midnight on Friday. These responses provide you with an opportunity to critically engage with course readings, mini-lectures, and class discussions. Dr. Hanna will read and grade all submissions each week. Although participation responses will be cross-referenced with attendance lists, please put “ATTENDED FULL CLASS” or “ATTENDED HALF OF CLASS” or “DID NOT ATTEND” at the top of your submission.

AI tools are not needed for participation responses. You may write in bullet points or short form. These submissions are not intended to be polished pieces of writing, and you will not be graded on APA formatting or style. The purpose is to capture your thoughts, questions, and engagement with the material.

For each class, you will either respond to all three prompts:

1. Describe one thing (concept, theory, or research finding) from the readings that piqued your interest.
2. Describe one thing (concept, theory, or research finding) that came up in lecture or discussion that surprised you or piqued your interest.
3. Describe one thing (concept, theory, or research finding) from the readings or discussion that you disagreed with, found uncomfortable, or want to challenge further.

You are welcome to include other meaningful connections, memes, explanations, links, thoughts, rambles, etc.

You may also include optional notes to Dr. Hanna about course material/content (ex., if you enjoyed the articles, found them inaccessible, or want to read more on a particular topic).

OR

Respond to other prompts given in class.

Again, you may add other connections, memes, explanations, links, thoughts, rambles, etc.

Optional notes to Dr. Hanna about course material/content are always welcome.

If you cannot attend class, you may still complete the participation response by drawing only from the readings and posted materials.

Grading breakdown:

Attended full class and submitted on time - 10/10

Attended half of class and submitted on time - 6.5/10

Did not attend class but submitted on time - 3.3/10

NOTES:

Points deducted for arriving late or leaving early.

Points deducted for late submissions.

Points deducted if responses lack quality or substance.

3. Case Analysis 10%

You will complete one case analysis (4–5 double-spaced pages) based on a short vignette provided on CourseLink. The vignette will describe a realistic scenario faced by youth in digital contexts (ex., cyberbullying, online exclusion, body image pressures).

Your analysis should:

- Identify key psychological concerns raised in the case.
- Apply relevant developmental, clinical, or social theories to explain the situation.
- Discuss intersectional factors (ex., race, gender, sexuality, migration, ability) that may shape the youth's experience.
- Suggest potential directions for intervention or support, grounded in research.

The aim of this assignment is not to diagnose but to practice applying theories and evidence to concrete examples and to think critically about real-world challenges facing youth.

4. Final Intervention Project 2% + 8% + 20% = 30%

You will be designing a mock youth-focused intervention that addresses an issue related to digital technology and mental health. The intervention must clearly incorporate theory and research from clinical and developmental psychology and must integrate an intersectional perspective.

You will include a brief literature review on the issue (from which perspective/according to who), the context for potential intervention (why it is needed and according to who; what has already been tried; how it builds on previous work), a brief explanation of the theoretical context, the components of the intervention (what is involved and why it is included), and an implementation plan (how it could work).

There are three separate submissions for this assignment:

1. Topic Submission (2%) – a brief paragraph identifying your chosen issue and population (due Oct 4th).

2. Proposal (8%) – a 2–3 page outline including a short literature review and preliminary intervention design (due Nov 15th).
3. Final Paper (20%) – a 6–8 page paper including literature review, context, theoretical grounding, detailed intervention design, and implementation plan (due Dec 5).

You may use course material and outside sources. References are not included in the page count. More details will be provided on CourseLink. We will also have plenty of opportunities to discuss this assignment in class.

5. Bonus Marks 2%

You can earn 2% bonus marks by participating in studies posted through the participant pool. More information will be posted on CourseLink.

Final examination date and time: There is no final exam for this course.

Course Resources

Required Texts:

All required reading materials and recorded videos will be made available on Courselink.

Other Resources:

All course material will be available on Courselink.

Cost of Texts:

All resources for this course can be found within the Courselink site. There are no costs for required or recommended textbooks or learning resources for students in this course.

Course Policies

Grading Policies

A grade of 0 will be assigned for non-completion of any assignment when scheduled, except for documented medical or compassionate reasons (see Academic Consideration below).

Keep paper and/or other reliable back-up copies of the assignments (i.e., papers, participation responses, final intervention, etc.) as you may be asked to resubmit work at any time.

Course Policy regarding use of electronic devices and recording of lectures:

Electronic recording of classes is expressly forbidden without consent of the instructor. When recordings are permitted, they are solely for the use of the authorized student and may not be reproduced, or transmitted to others, without the express written consent of the instructor.

University Policies

Disclaimer:

Please note that the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic may necessitate a revision of the format of course offerings, changes in classroom protocols, and academic schedules. Any such changes will be announced via CourseLink and/or class email. This includes on-campus scheduling during the semester, mid-terms and final examination schedules. All University-wide decisions will be posted on the COVID-19 website (<https://news.uoguelph.ca/2019-novel-coronavirus-information/>) and circulated by email.

Academic Consideration

When you find yourself unable to meet an in-course requirement because of illness or compassionate reasons, please advise the course instructor in writing, with your name, id#, and e-mail contact. See the academic calendar for information on regulations and procedures for

Academic Consideration:

[Academic Consideration, Appeals and Petitions](#)

Academic Misconduct

The University of Guelph is committed to upholding the highest standards of academic integrity and it is the responsibility of all members of the University community, faculty, staff, and students to be aware of what constitutes academic misconduct and to do as much as possible to prevent academic offences from occurring.

University of Guelph students have the responsibility of abiding by the University's policy on academic misconduct regardless of their location of study; faculty, staff and students have the responsibility of supporting an environment that discourages misconduct. Students need to remain aware that instructors have access to and the right to use electronic and other means of detection. Please note: Whether or not a student intended to commit academic misconduct is not relevant for a finding of guilt. Hurried or careless submission of assignments does not excuse students from responsibility for verifying the academic integrity of their work before submitting it. Students who are in any doubt as to whether an action on their part could be construed as an academic offence should consult with a faculty member or faculty advisor.

The Academic Misconduct Policy is detailed in the Undergraduate Calendar:

[Academic Misconduct Policy](#)

Illness

Medical notes will not normally be required for singular instances of academic consideration, although students may be required to provide supporting documentation for multiple missed assessments or when involving a large part of a course (e.g., papers).

Accessibility

The University of Guelph is committed to creating a barrier-free environment. Providing services for students is a shared responsibility among students, faculty and administrators. This relationship is based on respect of individual rights, the dignity of the individual and the University community's shared commitment to an open and supportive learning environment. Students requiring service or accommodation, whether due to an identified, ongoing disability or a short-term disability should contact [Student Accessibility Services](#) as soon as possible.

For more information, contact SAS at 519-824-4120 ext. 54335 or email accessibility@uoguelph.ca or the [Student Accessibility Services Website](#)

Student Feedback Questionnaire

These questionnaires (formerly course evaluations) will be available to students during the last 2 weeks of the semester. Students will receive an email directly from the Student Feedback Administration system which will include a direct link to the questionnaire for this course. During this time, when a student goes to login to Courselink, a reminder will pop-up when a task is available to complete.

[Student Feedback Questionnaire](#)

Drop date

The last date to drop one-semester courses, without academic penalty, is Friday November 28th, 2025. For regulations and procedures for Dropping Courses, see the [Schedule of Dates in the Academic Calendar](#)

Instructors must provide [meaningful and constructive feedback, at minimum 20% of the final course grade, prior to the 40th class day](#). For courses which are of shorter duration, 20% of the final grade must be provided two-thirds of the way through the course.

[Current Undergraduate Calendar](#)

Additional Course Information

Course instructors are allowed to use software to help in detecting plagiarism or unauthorized copying of student assignments. Plagiarism is one of the most common types of academic misconduct on our campus. Plagiarism involves students using the work, ideas and/or the exact wording of other people or sources without giving proper credit to others for the work, ideas and/or words in their papers. Students can unintentionally commit misconduct because they do not know how to reference outside sources properly or because they don't check their work

carefully enough before handing it in. Whether or not a student intended to commit academic misconduct is not relevant for a finding of guilt. Hurried or careless submission of assignments does not excuse students from responsibility for verifying the academic integrity of their work before submitting it. Students who are in any doubt as to whether an action on their part could be construed as an academic offence should consult with a faculty member or faculty advisor.

In this course, your instructor will be using Turnitin.com to detect possible plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration or copying as part of the ongoing efforts to prevent plagiarism in the College of Social and Applied Human Sciences.

A major benefit of using Turnitin is that students will be able to educate and empower themselves in preventing misconduct. In this course, you may screen your own assignments through Turnitin as many times as you wish before the due date. You will be able to see and print reports that show you exactly where you have properly and improperly referenced the outside sources and materials in your assignment.