

PSYC*7160, Course Outline: Fall 2025

General Information

Course Title: Employee Development: Methods and Outcomes

Course Description: This course explores employee development in an organizational context. Employee learning and development is a key focus for employees and organizations. This course covers job analysis, career development, succession management, multi-source feedback, training, coaching and mentoring.

Credit Weight: 0.50

Academic Department (or campus): Psychology

Semester Offering: Fall 2025

Class Schedule and Location: 2:30-5:20PM Monday ANNU 002

Instructor Information

Instructor Name: Jeffrey Spence

Instructor Email: spencejr@uoguelph.ca

Office location and office hours: By appointment

GTA Information

No TA for this course.

Course Content

Specific Learning Outcomes:

- 1) Depth and Breadth of Understanding: Students should be able to: demonstrate mastery of a body of knowledge; gather, review, evaluate, and interpret information; compare the merits of alternate hypotheses in core areas of I/O psychology; and critically evaluate the limits of their own knowledge and how these limits influence analysis.
- 2) Reading Comprehension: The understanding of theoretical and empirical literature on job performance and related topics. Students should demonstrate a well-developed ability to extract theoretical and empirical information from complex psychological articles, and to generate ideas and questions from written text in the field of psychology.
- 3) Inquiry and Analysis: A systematic process of exploring issues, objects and works in psychology through the collection and analysis of evidence that result in informed

conclusions or judgments. Students should be able to: ask and attempt to answer many questions from a critical perspective, develop novel hypotheses to explore further possibilities, and plan quality research.

4) Methodological Literacy: The ability to understand, evaluate, and design appropriate methodologies for rigorous psychological science. Students should be able to: design appropriate methodologies for novel psychological research situations, and tailor methodologies to particular populations and circumstances.

5) Written Communication: The ability to express one's ideas and summarize theory and research through a variety of writing styles. Students should: write in a sophisticated manner clearly conveying their message to a target audience, use a breadth of vocabulary appropriate to the discipline of psychology, effectively edit their own work; and avoid grammar, spelling, and structural errors.

6) Oral Communication: Includes interpersonal skills, oral speaking and active listening as they apply to the class topic. Students should be able to demonstrate the ability to present information in ways that the receiving party can easily understand, exhibit confidence as a public speaker, facilitate discussion of complex concepts effectively, actively listen, reflect upon, and respond effectively to questions while acknowledging limitations to one's psychological knowledge.

Lecture Content:

Week 1: Course introduction. Schedule presentation dates.

Week 2: Introduction to training, history, and effectiveness overview.

Week 3: Transfer of training

Week 4: Training motivation

Week 5: Coaching

Week 6: Aptitude

Week 7: Leader and leadership development

Week 8: Succession planning

Week 9: Distributed practice

Week 10: Onboarding and socialization

Week 11: AI and employee learning

Week 12: Does training have to be fun?

Course Assignments and Tests:

Assignment or Test	Due Date	Contribution to Final Mark (%)	Learning Outcomes Assessed
In-class participation	Graded each week.	25%	1-6
Critical analysis of weekly readings	Graded each week.	20%	1-5
Communal Discussion Leading questions	Graded each week	20%	1-5
Pick a Topic presentation	Scheduled throughout term.	25%	1-6
Summary Presentation	Scheduled throughout term.	10%	1-6

Additional Notes (if required):

In-class participation (25%). Students are required to come to class prepared, having completed the reading and engage with classmate about the weekly topics and presentation. This requires being present both physically (attendance) and psychologically (active listening, participating, and refraining from other activities during presentations, discussions, and practical exercises (e.g., off topic phone and laptop activity). Each class students will receive a grade between 0-5. Refraining from off topic activities = 2 points, 1 point for listening, 2 points for participating. Unaccounted for absence results in a grade of 0/5 for the week. 12 classes each worth 5 points = 60 points total.

Critical analysis of weekly readings (20%). Every week that there are assigned discussion readings (weeks 2 through 12), students will be required to provide a critical analysis of EACH reading. These critical analyses are to be submitted electronically (on Dropbox) before class each week. These analyses are expected to contain:

- a) Brief summarize the purpose of the article (1-2 sentences).
- b) Interpretation of what question/problem that you think that the article is the contributing to/what was the articles contribution?
- c) Your opinion if the article was effective at making a contribution to the literature. Why or why not?
- d) Provide a critique the article that may include: identification of flaws (in theory, logic, methods, statistical etc.), alternative explanations, oversights, interpretation

errors/inconsistencies, over interpretations, suggestions for how to improve work/extend the work.

Communal Discussion Leading Questions (20%). Starting in week 2, students are required to submit a discussion question for each reading. These will be submitted electronically (on Dropbox) before class. These questions will be posed to the class during the in-class discussion period. These can be based on the critical analysis but must be submitted as distinct questions separate from your critical analysis.

Summary of An Article Presentation (10%). Students will select from one article presented in the course outline to be summarized in a presentation format. The presentations should be pedagogically focused with the aim to teaching the class about the content, findings, and context of the work. These presentations will occur during class time in weeks 2 through 6.

Pick a Topic Presentation (25%). Each student will have 30-45 minutes of class time to present on a topic related to employee training and development. Students are required to select their own topic and have it approved by the course instructor. Presentation topics need to be finalized by the 5th week of classes. These presentations will be scheduled during the last six weeks of the course (weeks 7 to 12).

Final examination date and time: No final exam.

Course Resources

There are no costs associated with this course.

Required Texts:

Weekly readings will be acquired independently by students. References for readings are provided in course outline.

Other Resources:

Courselink website will contain all other relevant information or materials.

Field Trips:

No field trips.

Additional Costs:

No additional costs.

Course Policies

Grading Policies

All assignments will be graded in accordance with standards established by the University of Guelph. [Graduate Grade interpretation](#)

Failure to present selected topic will result in grade of zero.

Discussion questions submitted after the start of class will receive a grade of zero.

Presentations that are not completed by November 28th will be given a grade of zero.

Please note that these policies are binding unless academic consideration is given to an individual student.

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

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:

[Grounds for Academic Consideration](#)

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., final exam or major assignment).

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 [Graduate Calendar](#):

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](#)

Course Evaluation Information

Please refer to the [Course and Instructor Evaluation Website](#) .

Drop date

The last date to drop one-semester courses, without academic penalty, is November 28, 2025. For regulations and procedures for Dropping Courses, see [Current Graduate Calendar](#)

**Course Schedule:
Readings, Topics, and Dates**

(The content and schedule may be subject to change. Students will be notified of changes in lectures and on Courselink of any change)

Week 1 (September 8): Course introduction. Schedule presentation dates.

Week 2 (September 15): Introduction to training, history, and effectiveness overview

Readings:

Aguinis, H., & Kraiger, K. (2009). Benefits of training and development for individuals and teams, organizations, and society. *Annual review of psychology*, 60, 451-474.

Bell, B. S., Tannenbaum, S. I., Ford, J. K., Noe, R. A., & Kraiger, K. (2017). 100 years of training and development research: What we know and where we should go. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 102, 305.

Tharenou, P., Saks, A. M., & Moore, C. (2007). A review and critique of research on training and organizational-level outcomes. *Human resource management review*, 17, 251-273.

Summary presentation article: Training myth.

Wright, P. C., & Geroy, G. D. (2001). Changing the mindset: the training myth and the need for world-class performance. *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 12, 586-600.

Week 3 (September 22): Transfer of training

Readings:

Blume, B. D., Ford, J. K., Baldwin, T. T., & Huang, J. L. (2010). Transfer of training: A meta-analytic review. *Journal of management*, 36, 1065-1105.

Blume, B. D., Ford, J. K., Surface, E. A., & Olenick, J. (2019). A dynamic model of training transfer. *Human Resource Management Review*, 29, 270-283.

Summary presentation article: Great recession and human capital.

Kim, Y., & Ployhart, R. E. (2014). The effects of staffing and training on firm productivity and profit growth before, during, and after the Great Recession. *Journal of applied psychology*, 99, 361.

Week 4 (September 29): Training Motivation

Readings:

Colquitt, J. A., LePine, J. A., & Noe, R. A. (2000). Toward an integrative theory of training motivation: a meta-analytic path analysis of 20 years of research. *Journal of applied psychology, 85*, 678.

Chung, S., Zhan, Y., Noe, R. A., & Jiang, K. (2022). Is it time to update and expand training motivation theory? A meta-analytic review of training motivation research in the 21st century. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 107*, 1150.

Summary presentation articles: (a) Evaluating training effectiveness and (b) performance adaptation.

a) Alliger, G. M., Tannenbaum, S. I., Bennett Jr, W., Traver, H., & Shotland, A. (1997). A meta-analysis of the relations among training criteria. *Personnel psychology, 50*, 341-358.

b) Baard, S. K., Rench, T. A., & Kozlowski, S. W. (2014). Performance adaptation: A theoretical integration and review. *Journal of Management, 40*, 48-99.

Week 5 (October 6): Coaching

Readings:

Bozer, G., & Jones, R. J. (2018). Understanding the factors that determine workplace coaching effectiveness: A systematic literature review. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology, 27*, 342-361.

Jones, R. J., Woods, S. A., & Guillaume, Y. R. (2016). The effectiveness of workplace coaching: A meta-analysis of learning and performance outcomes from coaching. *Journal of occupational and organizational psychology, 89*, 249-277.

Summary presentation article: Learning curves.

Morrison, J. B. (2008). Putting the learning curve in context. *Journal of Business Research, 61*, 1182-1190.

October 13th no classes

Week 6 (October 20): Aptitude

Readings:

Snow, R. E. (1992). Aptitude theory: Yesterday, today, and tomorrow. *Educational psychologist, 27*, 5-32.

Louridas, M., Szasz, P., de Montbrun, S., Harris, K. A., & Grantcharov, T. P. (2016). Can we predict technical aptitude? A systematic review. *Annals of surgery, 263*, 673-691.

Summary presentation articles: (a) Self-regulated learning and (b) job analysis.

- a) Sitzmann, T., & Ely, K. (2011). A meta-analysis of self-regulated learning in work-related training and educational attainment: what we know and where we need to go. *Psychological Bulletin*, 137, 421.
- b) Sanchez, J. I., & Levine, E. L. (2012). The rise and fall of job analysis and the future of work analysis. *Annual review of psychology*, 63, 397-425.

Week 7 (October 27): Leader and leadership development

Readings:

- Day, D. V., Fleenor, J. W., Atwater, L. E., Sturm, R. E., & McKee, R. A. (2014). Advances in leader and leadership development: A review of 25 years of research and theory. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 25, 63-82.
- Martin, R., Hughes, D. J., Epitropaki, O., & Thomas, G. (2021). In pursuit of causality in leadership training research: A review and pragmatic recommendations. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 32, 101375.

**First day of Pick a Topic presentations.*

Week 8 (November 3): Succession planning

Readings:

- Groves, K. S. (2007). Integrating leadership development and succession planning best practices. *Journal of management development*, 26, 239-260.
- Harrell, E. (2016). Succession planning: what the research says. *Harvard Business Review*, 94, 70-74. *short
- Karaevli, A., & Hall, D. T. T. (2003). Growing leaders for turbulent times: Is succession planning up to the challenge? *Organizational Dynamics*, 32, 62-79.

Week 9 (November 10): Distributed Practice

Readings:

- Donovan, J. J., & Radosevich, D. J. (1999). A meta-analytic review of the distribution of practice effect: Now you see it, now you don't. *Journal of applied psychology*, 84, 795-805.
- Vardal, O., Bonometti, V., Drachen, A., Wade, A., & Stafford, T. (2022). Mind the gap: Distributed practice enhances performance in a MOBA game. *Plos one*, 17, e0275843.

Week 10 (November 17): On boarding and socialization

Readings:

Conger, J. A., & Fishel, B. (2007). Accelerating leadership performance at the top: Lessons from the Bank of America's executive on-boarding process. *Human Resource Management Review*, 17, 442-454.

Liu, S., Watts, D., Feng, J., Wu, Y., & Yin, J. (2024). Unpacking the effects of socialization programs on newcomer retention: A meta-analytic review of field experiments. *Psychological Bulletin*, 150, 1-26.

Week 11 (November 24): AI and employee learning

Readings:

Park, J. J. (2024). Unlocking training transfer in the age of artificial intelligence. *Business Horizons*, 67, 263-269.

Shao, Y., Huang, C., Song, Y., Wang, M., Song, Y. H., & Shao, R. (2024). Using augmentation-based AI tool at work: A daily investigation of learning-based benefit and challenge. *Journal of management*, 01492063241266503.

Week 12 (November 28): Does training have to be fun?

Readings:

Sitzmann, T., & Johnson, S. (2014). The paradox of seduction by irrelevant details: How irrelevant information helps and hinders self-regulated learning. *Learning and Individual Differences*, 34, 1-11.

Tews, M. J., & Noe, R. A. (2019). Does training have to be fun? A review and conceptual model of the role of fun in workplace training. *Human Resource Management Review*, 29, 226-238.