

# PSYC\*4750, Course Outline: Winter 2026

## General Information

**Course Title:** Seminar in Motivation and Emotion

**Course Description:** This course provides an in-depth examination of motivation and emotion—the neurocognitive mechanisms and corresponding subjective feelings that focus thoughts and behaviours in an adaptive way toward some objects and events in the environment and away from others. The course material and assignments will cover what is known about motivation and emotion from research in the fields of biological-, cognitive-, and social-psychology, emotion theory, and cognitive-affective neuroscience.

**Credit Weight:** 0.50

**Academic Department:** Department of Psychology

**Semester Offering:** Winter 2026

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

**Class Schedule and Location:** M/W/F 8:30am-9:20am in LA\*204

## Instructor Information

Instructor Name and Email: Dr. Mark Fenske - [mfenske@uoguelph.ca](mailto:mfenske@uoguelph.ca)

**Expectations about Email Communication:** I do my best to answer emails within 2 business days. I do not check or answer emails on Saturdays or Sundays. I prefer that you ask your questions during class so that everyone can benefit from the discussion. Only questions that can be answered simply (e.g., “yes” or “no”, or with a short sentence) will be answered by email. Questions requiring longer answers will result in a request for you to talk with me directly. If the matter is private, please come to office hours to discuss.

Office hours: Mondays from 3 - 4 PM via Zoom.

Go to [https://calendly.com/mark\\_fenske/office-hour-10-min-slot?](https://calendly.com/mark_fenske/office-hour-10-min-slot?) to book a time.

## GTA Information

GTA Name: Isabelle Hau

GTA Email: [ihau@uoguelph.ca](mailto:ihau@uoguelph.ca)

## **Course Content**

### **Specific Learning Outcomes:**

#### Critical & Creative Thinking:

- Depth & Breadth of Understanding (Master)
- Inquiry & Analysis (Master)
- Problem Solving (Master)

#### Literacy:

- Information (Master)
- Methodological (Master)
- Quantitative (Reinforce)

#### Communication:

- Oral (Master)
- Written (Master)
- Reading (Master)
- Integrative (Master)

#### Professional and Ethical Behaviour:

- Ethical Reasoning (Reinforce)
- Ethical Issues in Research (Reinforce)

These Learning Outcomes will be achieved through the successful completion of the following Objectives. By the end of this course you should be able to:

- 1) understand contemporary methods and recent advances within cognitive and social psychology, emotion theory, and cognitive-affective neuroscience regarding the study of human motivation and emotion.
- 2) demonstrate critical assessments of the usefulness of experimental designs and research techniques for revealing the psychological and neural substrates of motivation- and emotion-driven thoughts and behaviour.
- 3) show an ability to articulate the value of collaboration across scientific disciplines and the use of multiple converging approaches to address complex scientific questions.
- 4) demonstrate and assess the visual, written and/or oral communication skills needed to effectively convey to others how research findings can help us understand how motivation/emotion influences human thought, feelings, and behaviour and can otherwise aid successful outcomes in day-to-day activities.

**Lecture Content:** This schedule is tentative and subject to change throughout the semester.

Date	Topic
Jan. 05	Introduction
Jan. 07	Topic selection: Written <b>OR</b> Video + Discussion assignments
Jan. 09	Elements of a good video presentation – video examples
Jan. 12	Theory: Motivation and Emotion
Jan. 14-23	Methods: Cognitive-behavioural, Physiology, Neuroimaging
Jan. 26	Music assignment
<b>Jan. 28</b>	<b>Exam: Midterm</b>
<b>Jan. 30 - Feb.02</b>	<b>No class</b>
Feb. 04	Videos-class 1 (Group A reads)
Feb. 06	Videos-class 2 (Group B reads)
Feb. 09	Videos-class 3 (Group A reads)
Feb. 11	Videos-class 4 (Group B reads)
Feb. 13	Videos-class 5 (Group A reads)
<b>Feb. 16-20</b>	<b>No class: WINTER BREAK</b>
Feb. 23	Videos-class 6 (Group B reads)
Feb. 25	Videos-class 7 (Group A reads)
<b>Feb. 27</b>	<b>No class (Written presentation due for those not doing a video)</b>
Mar. 02	Videos-class 8 (Group B reads)
Mar. 04	Videos-class 9 (Group A reads)
Mar. 06	Videos-class 10 (Group B reads)
Mar. 09	Videos-class 11 (Group A reads)
Mar. 11	Videos-class 12 (Group B reads)
Mar. 13	Videos-class 13 (Group A reads)
Mar. 16	Videos-class 14 (Group B reads)
Mar. 18	Videos-class 15 (Group A reads)
<b>Mar. 20</b>	Videos-class 16 (Group B reads) <b>(music project due)</b>
Mar. 23	Videos-class 17 (Group A reads)
Mar. 25	Videos-class 18 (Group B reads)
Mar. 27	Videos-class 19 (Group A reads)
Mar. 30	Videos-class 20: (Group B reads)
<b>Apr. 01</b>	<b>No class</b>
<b>Apr. 03</b>	<b>No class - Holiday</b>
Apr. 06	Videos-class 21: rescheduled video presentations (A and B read)

## Course Assignments and Tests:

Assignment or Test	Due Date	Contribution to Final Mark (%)	Learning Outcomes Assessed
Midterm Exam	Jan. 28	15	1, 2
Music Project	Mar. 20	25	1, 2, 3, 4
Video presentation <b>OR</b> Written presentation	TBA <b>OR</b> Feb. 27	35	1, 2, 3, 4
Article Questions	Before assigned 'videos' class	10 (best 8 of 11)	1, 2
Video Assessments	End of each 'videos' class	15 (best 18 of 21)	1, 2, 4

### Additional Notes:

**Midterm Exam:** The Midterm exam will assess students' understanding of all material covered in the readings and in-class lectures on Theory and Methods. The format of the exam will be multiple-choice questions. Exam content will cover both lectures and any assigned readings.

**Assignment – Music Project:** Each student will be required to identify an auditory stimulus (i.e., a song or piece of music) that has the capacity to strongly elicit an emotional or motivational response, and briefly summarize the scientific research that best explains how the perceptual, conceptual, and/or other musical aspects of the chosen auditory stimulus are able to evoke such effects. This project is designed to provide you with experience in conducting a literature search and reading and summarizing the resulting journal article(s) while considering the scientific basis of common human experiences. The final summary must not exceed 600 words, not including your title and references.

**Assignment – Written Presentation:** Students will be required to complete **EITHER** the Written Presentation assignment **OR** the Video Presentation and Group-led Discussion assignment (**NOT BOTH**).

Those completing the Written Presentation assignment will be required to submit a written "blog post" presentation that highlights an empirical research paper. Possible topics will be provided on CourseLink. This project requires you to search for and select a journal article reporting research using one or more cognitive-behavioural, psychophysiological, and/or cognitive-neuroscience techniques to address a critical research question within your assigned topic, and then develop an understanding of how your chosen study fits within the context of prior research within that area. Such background knowledge will be critical for determining which details are crucial for understanding the advance in knowledge made by the study, and how to best translate this information to make it accessible to others. Each blog-post presentation will be assessed for how effectively it communicates the key objectives, findings and significance of the research reported in the chosen article, and for the extent to which it does so in a clear, concise, and engaging / entertaining way. Creativity is encouraged. This project is designed to enhance your inquiry and analysis skills, your depth and breadth of understanding, and your conceptual, methodological and quantitative literacy, while

developing valuable visual and written communication skills. The final written submission must not exceed 2000 words, not including your title, table/figure captions, and references.

**Assignment – Video Presentation and Group-led Discussion:** Students will be required to complete **EITHER** the Video Presentation and Group-led Discussion assignment **OR** the Written Presentation assignment (**NOT BOTH**).

*Video Presentation* - Those completing the Video Presentation and Group-led Discussion assignment will be required to create and display in class a 5-minute (or shorter) video presentation that highlights an empirical research paper. Possible topics will be provided on CourseLink. This project requires you to search for and select a journal article reporting research using one or more cognitive-behavioural, psychophysiological, and/or cognitive-neuroscience techniques to address a critical research question within your assigned topic, and then develop an understanding of how your chosen study fits within the context of prior research within that area. Such background knowledge will be critical for determining which details are crucial for understanding the advance in knowledge made by the study, and how to best translate this information to make it accessible to your classmates. The selected journal article must be uploaded to the corresponding CourseLink Dropbox at least one week prior to the scheduled date of the video presentation, along with a 'burning question' for classmates to consider while reading the article. Each video will be assessed for how effectively it communicates the key objectives, findings and significance of the research reported in the chosen article, and for the extent to which it does so in a clear, concise, and engaging / entertaining way. Creativity is encouraged. This project is designed to enhance your inquiry and analysis skills, your depth and breadth of understanding, and your conceptual, methodological and quantitative literacy, while developing valuable visual and oral communication skills.

*Group-led Discussion* – For those completing the Video Presentation and Group-led Discussion assignment, each video creator will be responsible for working with the other students whose videos are shown on the same day to develop and lead a post-presentation discussion. As part of this process, each student must submit, along with their selected journal article (i.e., one week prior to the scheduled date of their video presentation), a 'burning question' for the class to consider while reading the article and watching their video. Each group-led discussion will be assessed for the extent to which it engages in the class in discussion, and highlights connections among the various theoretical perspectives, methodological approaches and findings presented in the different videos and the broader significance of the group's area of research. This project is designed to enhance your inquiry and analysis skills, your depth and breadth of understanding, and your conceptual, and methodological, and quantitative literacy, while developing your inter-personal communication skills.

**Assignment – Article Short-Answer Questions:** For half of the classes involving student presentations, you will be assigned one of the empirical research articles selected by the student presenters for that class. You will read the article and provide brief written answers to a short series of questions about it prior to the class in which the article is presented. The questions will be posted and answered using the Quiz function on the CourseLink page before each of these classes. To account for the possibility of missed short-answer submissions due to sickness, only the best 8 of the 11-total possible submissions will count towards your final

grade. If you miss completing and submitting answers to the questions about one of the articles, this will be treated as one of the grades to be dropped—you do NOT need to provide documentation, nor inform the instructor. If you fail to submit article-question answers three times, each additional missed submission will be given a grade of zero and count as such toward your final grade.

**Assignment – Video-presentation Assessments:** Each student will be required to watch and listen to every video presentation (aside from their own video and those of the other students presenting on the same day) and provide their assessment of its effectiveness, including at least one comment about what went well in the video and another about what could have been improved. The paper-and-pencil assessments will be completed and submitted to the instructor at the end of each class. To account for the possibility of missed opportunities to observe videos and submit assessments due to sickness, only the best 18 of the 21-total possible forms will count towards your final grade. If you miss submitting a set of assessments, this will be treated as one of the grades to be dropped—you do NOT need to provide documentation, nor inform the instructor. If you fail to submit a set of assessments three times, each additional missed submission will be given a grade of zero and count as such toward your final grade.

## **Course Resources**

### **Required Text:**

There is no course textbook.

### **Cost of Texts:**

There are no costs for learning resources for students in this course.

### **Other Resources:**

All readings will be announced and made accessible through CourseLink.

## **Course Policies**

### **Grading Policies**

Completed assignments must be submitted by the due date indicated above. Early submissions are welcome. Late submissions will not be accepted. Failure to submit an assignment on time will result in a grade of zero for that assignment.

Additional grade-related information can be found in the calendar under [Undergraduate Grading Procedures](#)

### **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 a revision of the format of course offerings, changes in classroom protocols, and academic schedules is occasionally required. 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.

### **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., final exam or major assignment).

### **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](mailto: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 Monday April 6th 2026. For regulations and procedures for Dropping Courses, see the [Schedule of Dates in the Academic Calendar](#)

[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 may 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.