
PSYC*3110 - Topics in Health Psychology

Winter 2026 Course Outline

Section: 01

Credits: 0.50

Land Acknowledgement: Guelph

The University of Guelph resides on the ancestral lands of the Attawandaron people and the treaty lands and territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit. We recognize the significance of the Dish with One Spoon Covenant to this land and offer respect to our Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee and Métis neighbours. Today, this gathering place is home to many First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples and acknowledging them reminds us of our important connection to this land where we work and learn.

Calendar Description

This course covers research in health psychology. Possible topics include the interplay of psychosocial factors, behaviour, and physical health; pediatric health psychology; health interventions at the individual, family, group or community levels.

Prerequisite(s): NEUR*2000 or 2.50 credits in Psychology

Department(s): Department of Psychology

Course Description

The purpose of this course is to provide you with an overview of the field of health psychology. The content matter of the course is intentionally broad and will cover such topics as social and behavioural dimensions of illness; social inequalities in health; psychosocial dimensions of smoking, alcohol, and obesity; methodology in health psychology; experience of health and illness; and several others. At the end of the course you should be able to distinguish between the different major approaches to health psychology, have knowledge of some of the main debates and areas of practice in the field, and be able to articulate the importance of attending to social and psychological aspects of health and illness.

Lecture content:

- What is health psychology? Social inequality and health. Culture and health belief systems. Qualitative methods in health psychology. Sexual health. Food and eating. Alcohol and drinking. Lay representations of illness. Health communication. Screening and immunization. Genetic risk. Risk communication. Medicine taking. Community approaches to health. Introduction to bioethics. Health research participation. Public deliberation in health policy. Advances in biotechnology

Lecture Schedule

MonWedFri 8:30am-9:20am in ROZH*102 (1/5 to 4/21)

Instructor Information

Kieran O'Doherty

Email: odohertk@uoguelph.ca

Office: Mackinnon Extension 3014

Office Hours:

Wednesdays, 9:30-10:30am

Additional Support

Teaching assistants:

Riya Sharma: rsharm32@uoguelph.ca

Serena Bunin: sbunin@uoguelph.ca

Textbooks

Group	Title	Author	ISBN
Required	Health Psychology Theory, Research & Practice (7th Edition)	David F. Marks, Michael Murray, Emeé Vida Estacio, Rachel A. Annunziato, Abigail Locke and Gareth Treharne	9781529609899 Paperback 9781529609905 Hardcover 9781529616194 Electronic Version

Learning Resources

Required Resources

Required readings (in addition to the textbook) have been posted on CourseLink. Please consult the class schedule about deadlines for readings.

Campus Resources

If you are concerned about any aspect of your academic program: Make an appointment with a Program Counsellor (<https://www.uoguelph.ca/uaic/programcounsellors/>) in your degree program. If you are struggling to succeed academically: There are numerous academic resources offered by the Learning Commons (<https://www.lib.uoguelph.ca/using-library/spaces/learning-commons/>) including, Supported Learning Groups for a variety of courses, workshops related to time management, taking multiple choice exams, and general study skills.

Cost of Textbooks and Learning Resources

The book store will have copies of the required textbook in eBook format and in paperback format:

180-Day eBook: (retail \$128.00)

Print Paperback format: (retail new copies \$228.95)

Prices are often determined by the publisher or bookstore and may be subject to change. You might also find less expensive options for the book online.

Course Level Learning Outcomes

At the end of the course successful students will:

1. Be familiar with key debates in the field of health psychology
2. Be able to formulate an argument in at least one of the topic areas covered.
3. Be able to critically engage with academic literature in the field of health psychology
4. Be able to distinguish between the different major approaches to health psychology
5. Be able to link academic knowledge in health psychology with practice for improved health

Class Attendance and Readings

Readings

In general, there will be readings for every week of lectures (up to two chapters from the textbook and up to two journal articles). It is expected that you have read journal articles prior to the relevant lecture and are prepared to discuss it in class (textbook chapter can be read before or after the relevant class). Required readings will be posted on CourseLink.

Class Attendance and Lecture Slides

To do well in this course you need to attend lectures regularly and take good notes. Although lecture slides may be posted online, they are not sufficient by themselves for you to gain a good understanding of the material. Usually, lecture slides will be posted ahead of time, but this may not always be possible. Guest lecturers may or may not make their slides available. Please also check CourseLink regularly for updates and announcements.

Teaching and Learning Activities

Course Outline Quiz – 2%

There will be an online quiz in the first week of class to test your knowledge of the Course Outline. Please make sure to complete the quiz by the deadline to ensure that you receive credit.

Class participation activities – 10%

There will be in-class activities throughout the course, such as group discussions, partner work, or working out problems presented in class. You will be required to submit work on these activities at the end of each class in which the activity took place. For each activity in which you participate successfully, you receive 1%, up to a maximum of 10%. There will be at least 12 in-class activities throughout the course, so that you can afford to miss two class activities and still get the full 10% for this grade component.

Mid-term Exam 1 – 25% (15% if you choose to do the essay)

There will be a mid-term exam on Friday Jan 30. The exam will take place instead of the scheduled lecture – same time and place as the usual lecture would have taken place. The exam will cover materials from the textbook and all lectures and readings covered to that point.

Mid-term Exam 2 – 25% (15% if you choose to do the essay)

There will be a mid-term exam on Friday Mar 6. The exam will take place instead of the scheduled lecture – same time and place as the usual lecture would have taken place. The exam will cover materials from the textbook and all lectures and readings since the previous mid term and up to Mar 6.

Final Exam – 38% (28% if you choose to do the essay)

The final exam will take place on April 10, 8:30-10:30am. The final exam will emphasize all materials (textbook, lectures, additional readings) since the last mid-term exam, but content from the entire course may be examined.

Essay (optional) – 30% if you choose this assignment

The essay is an optional component of this course. If you intend to go to grad school or build a career that involves writing (e.g., working in policy, research, consulting, etc.), this assignment will allow you to develop your skills in using scholarly evidence to support a structured argument. If you choose to do this assignment, it has to be your work - **generative AI cannot be used for this essay**. To help you prepare for the essay, I will regularly link lecture content to the essay assignment. In class activities will also be designed to help you think through issues relevant to the essay assignment. You can also submit regular discussion notes on required readings to help build your writing skills. Please submit an electronic version of the essay. The final grade for the essay will be assigned by a TA or by Prof. O'Doherty.

Essay Guidelines

For students choosing to do the essay component of this course it will be worth almost a third of your final grade. This means that you should spend a significant amount of time and effort on the essay – I would recommend at least several weeks. My suggestion would be for you to work on the bulk of the paper during February, complete a draft by mid-March (about 1 week before the deadline), and use the remaining time before the deadline to do any last refinements on the paper before submitting. Please note that the essay topics go beyond the materials covered in the course. You are encouraged to research the existing literature on the subject and read extensively.

Essay Topics:

Choose one of the following topics on which to write your essay:

1. Is it the responsibility of individuals to do everything possible to maintain their own health? Or is it the duty of the government to enact policies that encourage good health? Discuss and use the subject of either (i) alcohol, (ii), smoking, or (iii) obesity to illustrate your argument.
2. The experience of an illness is not only determined by biology. Use the subject of either (i) cancer or (ii) HIV/AIDS to discuss this statement.

Essay Requirements:

- The purpose of the essay is for you to develop skills in formulating and expressing an argument using academic knowledge. Therefore:
- Begin with what experts in the field have said (i.e., look at the relevant peer-reviewed literature).
- Make sure that you know what has been said in the academic literature about this or similar issues (i.e., begin with a review of the relevant peer-reviewed literature); you need to demonstrate and articulate an understanding of research in the area.
- Consider different points of view.
- Logically work towards developing your own position on the issue.
- Choose a suitable title for your essay that reflects your argument and is within the scope of the topic
- The paper must include a meaningful engagement with relevant literature on the subject (don't rely on Wikipedia – you need to read and use peer reviewed publications); ensure that you provide a solid overview of relevant studies and/or theory on your chosen topic
- The essay should be between 2500 and 3000 words in length (including references)

- Please use 1.5 or double spacing and 12-point font
- Use page numbers, reasonable margins, and don't forget to include your name and student number
- Citations and references should follow the APA guidelines (note: different disciplines use different reference styles; make sure you use the right one)
- The essay must be original – it must be your own work (and yours alone), and not have been submitted or used for any purpose other than this course
- AVOID PLAGIARISM – this means that all ideas you use in your essay that come from your readings need to be cited; where quotes are used, make sure you give page numbers; distinguish clearly between your own thinking and arguments, and what you have read somewhere else and are using for your essay; READ the university guidelines regarding academic integrity here: <http://www.academicintegrity.uoguelph.ca/>
- **AI policy: for the purposes of this assignment, the use of generative AI is not permitted. Use of generative AI for this assignment will be considered to constitute academic misconduct.**
- Penalties:
 - Marks will be subtracted for essays significantly outside of the word length margins (see above)
 - Marks will be subtracted for late essays at a rate of 10% per day to a maximum of 30%. Any essay that is more than 3 days late will not be graded.

Discussion notes on journal articles – optional

Each week there will be assigned readings, and most lectures will require preparatory reading of at least one journal article. You may submit short discussion notes on the required journal readings (NOT the text book chapters). The format of discussion notes should be one paragraph in length (maximum half a page), in which you write down your thoughts on the article. You can focus on such things as the implications of the article for practice or policy; you could come up with a few discussion questions that are raised by the article and elaborate on why you think they are relevant; or you could come up with your own ideas here. Submission of discussion notes is intended to help guide your engagement with the required readings and to give you opportunities to develop your writing skills.

Discussion notes should be submitted electronically via CourseLink before the lecture in which the article is discussed.

Assessment Breakdown

Note: The Essay assignment is optional. If you decide to do the essay, other assessments are re-weighted accordingly. Percentages in parentheses refer to weighting if you decide to do the essay.

Description	Weighting (%)	Due Date
Course outline quiz	2%	Week 2 (Jan 14)
In class participation activity	10%	see details above
Mid term exam 1	25% (15%)	Week 4 (Jan 30)
Mid term exam 2	25% (15%)	Week 8 (Mar 6)
Essay (optional)	(30%)	Week 10 (Mar 16)
Final exam	38% (28%)	April 10
Discussion notes	0%	see reading list

Final Exam

Date: Apr 10

Time: Fri 8:30am-10:30am

Location: TBA *Please see Web Advisor closer to the date of scheduled final for location.*

To understand rules and regulations regarding Examinations students are encouraged to read Student's Responsibilities (<https://calendar.uoguelph.ca/undergraduate-calendar/undergraduate-degree-regulations-procedures/examinations/>)

If the student is unable to meet the final exam requirements due to medical, psychological or compassionate circumstances they are encouraged to review Student's Responsibilities in the Academic Consideration, Appeals and Petitions (<https://calendar.uoguelph.ca/undergraduate-calendar/undergraduate-degree-regulations-procedures/academic-consideration-appeals-petitions/>) section of the Academic Calendar.

Grading Schemes

There are two grading schemes in this course, depending on whether you choose to do the essay assignment.

Scheme 1 (no essay)

Course outline quiz: 2%
In-class participation activities: 10%
Mid Term exam 1: 25%
Mid Term exam 2: 25%
Final exam: 38%

Scheme 2 (with essay)

Course outline quiz: 2%

In-class participation activities: 10%
Mid Term exam 1: 15%
Mid Term exam 2: 15%
Final exam: 28%
Essay: 30%

Last Day to Drop Course

The final day to drop Winter 2026 courses without academic penalty is the last day of classes: April 06

After this date, a mark will be recorded, whether course work is completed or not (a zero is assigned for missed tests/assignments). This mark will show on the student's transcript and will be calculated into their average.

Course Grading Policies

Submission of Assignments

The essay and discussion notes need to be submitted via CourseLink. Only electronic copies need to be submitted.

Late Assignment

Marks will be subtracted for late essays at a rate of 10% per day to a maximum of 30%. Any essay that is more than 3 days late automatically receives 0%.

Marks will be subtracted for essays significantly outside of the word length margins (2500-3000 words).

Re-grading Policies

For exams, you may come to Prof. O'Doherty's office hours and ask to review your exam. Please look through your answers carefully, and you may discuss them with Prof. O'Doherty. If at this point you believe an error was made, you may request a re-grade. Please note that you will not be given additional marks for individual answers on the spot; rather, the exam will be regraded in its entirety.

For the essay, carefully read the feedback you were given. Consult the marking scheme and carefully/thoughtfully review your work in light of the feedback you were given. You may discuss your essay grade with a TA or with Prof. O'Doherty. After this, if you believe an error was made, write a short and specific statement indicating why you think there is an error (i.e. you must clearly justify the re-grading).

Re-grading requests must be submitted to Dr. Kieran O'Doherty by email, within one week (i.e. by 5pm on 7th calendar day) after the assignment/exam is returned.

Note: Materials will be re-graded in entirety and all appropriate adjustments made. Grades may go up or down following a re-grade request.

Course Standard Statements

Course Policies

How to ask questions about the course

Before asking a question about the course, please check the Course Outline. If you cannot find the answer, you may ask questions in the "Discussion" part of CourseLink. You can also ask questions either during class, before class, or after class. If you would like to have a one-on-one conversation, please see me during my office hours. In general, please do not ask questions via email. Because of extremely high email volume, I will not respond to

emails relating to course content, exam format, or assignments that are covered in the course outline or were discussed in class. Please do not expect the TAs or me to answer emails in the evenings or on weekends.

Course Technology Requirements

Generative AI

ChatGPT or other AI text generators can be useful to help prepare for exams or other uses. However, generative AI is not permitted in this course for use in the essay or the discussion notes. The objectives of these assignments are to develop skills in conducting literature based research and writing based on scholarly materials. Actually doing the essay and reading summaries yourself are key activities to achieve this. Use of automated text generators prevents full development of these skills. Since these assignments are optional, you do not need to cheat on them - you can simply choose not to do them. Use of ChatGPT or other AI text generators for written assignments in this course will be considered Academic Misconduct.

CSAHS Academic Misconduct Policy

The *Academic Misconduct Policy* is detailed in the Undergraduate Calendar. 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.

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.

Instructors **shall not** determine if academic misconduct has occurred. This is up to the Associate Dean Academic's office. Instructors shall not assign a grade of zero even if they believe that the student has committed some form of academic misconduct (e.g., copied material from a website like CourseHero) on an assignment or exam.

Instructors **can** determine if a student has poorly paraphrased and/or improperly cited material and can provide a grade accordingly as long as this is clearly identified as part of the assessment criteria via a rubric or other assessment tools.

For more information about Academic Integrity resources and how to prevent Academic Misconduct.

Standard Statements for Undergraduate Courses

Academic Integrity

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 (<https://calendar.uoguelph.ca/undergraduate-calendar/undergraduate-degree-regulations-procedures/academic-misconduct/>) is outlined in the Undergraduate Calendar.

Accessibility

The University promotes the full participation of students who experience disabilities in their academic programs. To that end, the provision of academic accommodation is a shared responsibility between the University and the student.

When accommodations are needed, the student is required to first register with Student Accessibility Services (SAS). Documentation to substantiate the existence of a disability is required; however, interim accommodations may be possible while that process is underway.

Accommodations are available for both permanent and temporary disabilities. It should be noted that common illnesses such as a cold or the flu do not constitute a disability. Use of the SAS Exam Centre requires students to make a booking at least 10 days in advance, and no later than the first business day in November, March or July as appropriate for the semester. Similarly, new or changed accommodations for online quizzes, tests and

exams must be approved at least a week ahead of time. For students at the Guelph campus, information can be found on the SAS website. (<https://www.uoguelph.ca/sas/>)

Accommodation of Religious Obligations

If you are unable to meet an in-course requirement due to religious obligations, please email the course instructor within two weeks of the start of the semester to make alternate arrangements.

See the Academic calendar for information on regulations and procedures for Academic Accommodations of Religious Obligations (<https://calendar.uoguelph.ca/undergraduate-calendar/undergraduate-degree-regulations-procedures/academic-accommodation-religious-obligations/>).

Copies of Out-of-class Assignments

Keep paper and/or other reliable back-up copies of all out-of-class assignments: you may be asked to resubmit work at any time.

Drop Date

Students will have until the last day of classes to drop courses without academic penalty. The deadline to drop two-semester courses will be the last day of classes in the second semester. This applies to all undergraduate students except for Doctor of Veterinary Medicine and Associate Diploma in Veterinary Technology (conventional and alternative delivery) students. The regulations and procedures for course registration are available in the Undergraduate Calendar - Dropping Courses (<https://calendar.uoguelph.ca/undergraduate-calendar/undergraduate-degree-regulations-procedures/dropping-courses/>).

Email Communication

As per university regulations, all students are required to check their <uoguelph.ca> e-mail account regularly. e-mail is the official route of communication between the University and its students.

Health and Wellbeing

The University of Guelph provides a wide range of health and wellbeing services at the Vaccarino Centre for Student Wellness (<https://wellness.uoguelph.ca/>). If you are concerned about your mental health and not sure where to start, connect with a Student Wellness Navigator (<https://wellness.uoguelph.ca/navigators/>) who can help develop a plan to manage and support your mental health or check out our mental wellbeing resources (<https://wellness.uoguelph.ca/shine-this-year/>). The Student Wellness team are here to help and welcome the opportunity to connect with you.

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).

Recording of Materials

Presentations that are made in relation to course work—including lectures—cannot be recorded or copied without the permission of the presenter, whether the instructor, a student, or guest lecturer. Material recorded with permission is restricted to use for that course unless further permission is granted.

Resources

The Academic Calendars (<http://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/?index>) are the source of information about the University of Guelph's procedures, policies and regulations which apply to undergraduate, graduate and diploma programs.

When You Cannot Meet a Course Requirement

When you find yourself unable to meet an in-course requirement because of illness or compassionate reasons please advise the course instructor (or designated person, such as a teaching assistant) in writing, with your name, id#, and e-mail contact. See the Undergraduate Calendar for information on regulations and procedures for Academic Consideration. (<https://calendar.uoguelph.ca/undergraduate-calendar/undergraduate-degree-regulations-procedures/academic-consideration-appeals-petitions/>)