
PSYC*4540 - Practical Applications of Psychology

Winter 2026 Course Outline

Section: 04

Credits: 1.00

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 is a required capstone course for students in Psychology's BA and BSC Honours major programs, excepting those who are taking the Honours Thesis courses (PSYC*4780, 4880). The course adopts a problem-based learning approach in which students will be presented with problems resembling those that they will face in their professional and personal lives. Students will apply their psychological knowledge and skills to analyze the problem, consider solutions, and communicate recommendations to hypothetical stakeholders.

Prerequisite(s): 14.00 credits including PSYC*3290, (PSYC*3000 or 7.50 credits in Psychology)

Restriction(s): PSYC*4870, PSYC*4880. Restricted to students in BAH.PSYC or BAH.PSYC:C with a minimum 70% cumulative average in Psychology courses.

Department(s): Department of Psychology

Course Description

"There does not exist a category of science to which one can give the name applied science. There are sciences and the applications of science, bound together as the fruit of the tree which bears it", Louis Pasteur

Psychology is the scientific study of behaviour and the mind. This rich theoretical understanding of how we behave has many implications and contributions in real-world settings. This is a capstone course for you to apply key concepts that you learned over the course of your Psychology degree to address practical problems you may encounter in your professional and personal lives after graduation.

Lecture Schedule

Mon 7pm-9:50pm in MCKN*226 (1/5 to 4/21)

Instructor Information

Bryan Hong, PhD

Assistant Professor

Email: bryan.hong@uoguelph.ca

Office Hours:

By appointment (<https://calendly.com/bryan-hong/office-hours>)

My name is Dr. Bryan Hong (he/him), and I am looking forward to being your course instructor this semester! You can call me Dr/Professor Hong or by my first name, Bryan.

Additional Support

In addition, **Genevieve Barlow** will be your graduate teaching assistant (GTA) in this course, helping to answer questions on course content, review assessments, and provide project advice. You can reach her via email at barlowg@uoguelph.ca.

When contacting us via email, please use include the course code and section ("PSYC4540*04") in the subject line, in addition to the topic of the email. We will try to respond to all emails within 2 business days. All course communication should be sent from your official UofGuelph email.

Learning Resources

Required Resources

For this course, we will be using a variety of course materials, including journal articles, news articles, and other media (e.g., videos, podcasts, etc.)

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

All assigned materials for this course will be made freely available on CourseLink.

Course Level Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, a successful student will be able to:

- Identify, evaluate, and synthesize evidence from psychological research that is relevant to real-world problems across various domains
- Apply key concepts, methods, and theories across disciplines of psychological research to help address a given practical issue
- Communicate findings and recommendations to a variety of audiences (e.g., scientists, layperson, organizations, etc.) across different formats
- Examine the role of psychology research in real-world settings, including potential ethical and practical implications
- Foster effective collaborative skills by contributing in a respectful, professional, and meaningful manner in group work and discussions

This will help you achieve the following specific learning outcomes:

1. **Critical and creative thinking**
 - a. Depth and breadth of knowledge
 - b. Inquiry and analysis
 - c. Problem solving
 - d. Creativity
2. **Literacy**
 - a. Information literacy
3. **Global understanding**
 - a. Sense of historical development
4. **Communication**
 - a. Reading comprehension
 - b. Written communication
 - c. Oral communication
 - d. Integrative communication
5. **Personal and ethical behaviour**
 - a. Ethical reasoning
 - b. Teamwork
 - c. Personal organization and time management

Schedule of Topics and Assignments

Day	Date:	Topic	Activities	Due
Mon	1/5	Course Overview		
Mon	1/12	Seminar 1	Project Brainstorm	

Mon	1/19	Seminar 2	Project Teams Formed	
Mon	1/26	Seminar 3		
Mon	2/2	Seminar 4	Project Proposal/Team Contract Due	Sunday, February 1 @ 11:59PM ET
Mon	2/9	Seminar 5		
Mon	2/16	Winter Break		
Mon	2/23	Seminar 6	Issue Paper Due	Sunday, February 22 @ 11:59PM ET
Mon	3/2	Seminar 7		
Mon	3/9	Seminar 8		
Mon	3/16	Seminar 9		
Mon	3/23	Project Presentations	Project Report Due	Sunday, March 22 @ 11:59PM ET
Mon	3/30	Project Presentations	Last day to submit entries for Reflective Journal	Monday, March 30 @ 11:59PM ET
Mon	4/6	N/A	Personal Reflection Due	Sunday, April 5 @ 11:59PM ET

Assessment Breakdown

Seminar discussions – 15%

Seminars will involve small groups of students discussing assigned readings on issues related to applied psychology. You will be working together with a small group of other students in the class to talk through and elaborate upon the assigned readings and connect it with ideas, concepts, and theories from psychology research.

Preparation for each seminar, at a minimum, consists of:

1. Reading the context document at the top of the reading list, introducing and contextualizing the issue.
2. Reading all of the assigned readings. Assigned readings will range in format, including articles, videos, and podcasts, and are created both by and/or for academics and non-academics. A full list of the assigned readings for each Seminar topic, along with a brief context document, can be found on CourseLink.
3. Reflecting on what you have read and preparing to discuss the issue with your group. This will likely involve taking notes and preparing brief discussion points, although this written contribution will not be directly evaluated. Another helpful way to prepare is to identify additional materials outside of the assigned readings that are relevant to the issue, especially if it is an issue that you are passionate about, and/or plan to write your Issue Paper about.

To better get to know the other members of the class, new groups will be created randomly every week, each with a maximum of five discussants. During your group discussion, you will be asked to come up with three most important takeaways from your discussion. We will come back together as an entire class and share some of these takeaways together.

At the end, you will also provide feedback for all the discussants (including yourself) in your group using a rubric provided by the instructor. This rubric is designed to help capture everyone's contributions in a way that encourages interpersonal skills, positive interdependence, and individual accountability. This feedback will be used to help determine your discussant grade for that seminar. To protect the anonymity of your peer evaluators, discussant grades will not be released on a weekly basis. Instead, your up-to-date average will be released every few weeks (i.e., after seminars 3, 6, and 9). Additional details about the Seminar Discussions will be made available on CourseLink.

Issue paper – 15%

The Issue Paper is an opportunity for you to dig deeper as an individual on an issue from your Seminar Discussions that you found the most interesting. For example, you can explore some of the complexities and subtleties of the issue, discuss alternative viewpoints and explanations, and reflect on potential implications and implementations. Additional details about the Issue Paper will be made available on CourseLink.

Project report and presentation – 55%

The Project component of this course is designed to provide an Experiential Learning opportunity. Here, we will simulate a workplace setting where you have been hired as consultants by an organization who could benefit from your expertise in psychology. You are being tasked with reviewing evidence from psychological research about a topic of interest and communicating your findings back in the form of a written report and an oral presentation.

You will be working with a small team of other students in the class with common interests to learn more about applications of psychology in a practical domain, such as criminal justice, education/development, physical/mental health, society, or the workplace. During the first two meetings,

we will brainstorm ideas together by having everyone share ideas for potential topics. We will narrow our long list by eliminating topics that are not sufficiently popular. Ultimately, we will settle on topics for which there are of interest by at least 5-6 students. By our third meeting, we will have formed teams based on your interests which will then meet and discuss their common interests in an effort to come to an agreement on the specific application they plan to pursue.

Teams will then start working on their projects during the second half of our classes until Monday, March 16. During that time, the instructor will be available for consultation. Teams should have a written Project Proposal and Team Contract that lays out their plans for the project, including the unique contributions to be made by each team member (and by when those contributions will be completed). Your Project Proposal and Team Contract is due on Sunday, February 1 @ 11:59PM ET – your team should be prepared to have an informal discussion about your proposal/contract to the instructor in class on Monday, February 2 to help ensure that the instructor and students are on the same page as far as expectations for this project. **Your Project Proposal and Team Contract will make up 5% of your final grade.**

The Project Report is due on Sunday, March 15 @ 11:59PM ET and should be submitted via CourseLink. You will then make a formal Project Presentation to the entire class during our meetings on March 23 and March 30. **Your Project Report will make up 35% of your final grade and your Project Presentation will make up 10% of your final grade.** Additional details about the Project Report and Presentation will be made available on CourseLink.

All team members will receive the same grade for both the Project Report and Presentation. You will also be asked to give feedback on the contributions of each member of your team (including yourself). This feedback, in addition to your instructor's observations, will be used to determine your Individual Contribution grade. **Your Individual Contribution will make up 5% of your final grade.**

Personal reflection – 15%

A critical part of Experiential Learning is reflecting upon the learning process. The Personal Reflection is designed for you to reflect upon your experience working on the Project with your other team members. Your Personal Reflection is due on Sunday, April 5 @ 11:59PM ET. **Your Personal Reflection will make up 10% of your final grade.**

To help capture how your perspectives may have evolved as your Project evolved from development to completion, you will be asked to keep a Reflective Journal throughout the course. **Your Reflective Journal will make up 5% of your final grade.** To earn a full grade for your Reflective Journal, you must complete at least 5 entries by Monday, March 30 @ 11:59PM ET. Since these are designed to encourage you to reflect on your learning throughout the course, entries must be submitted at least five days apart from one another. The contents of this journal are intended to help you prepare your final Personal Reflection submission. Full points will be awarded for completing at least five submissions, provided that they are of sufficient length and quality.

Additional details about the Personal Reflection and Reflective Journal will be made available on CourseLink.

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

Attendance policy

This course has weekly, in-person activities that require your presence for a grade. It is understood that you may need to miss a few classes beyond your control. Your final seminar grade will be calculated based on your top eight discussions, meaning that you can miss one of the seminars without an excuse and without making up the work. In the event you need to miss additional seminars (e.g., for medical, psychological, compassionate, etc. reasons), please contact the instructor as soon as possible. They will ask you to demonstrate that you have read the readings and thought about how they would be discussed, with your responses being used to calculate your grade for that seminar.

In addition to the seminars, your attendance will also be critical for your time working on your Project with your team. If you will be absent, please also inform your team members using the communication mechanism discussed in your Team Contract.

Late and extension policy

Late assignments will be penalized by 10% per day, for up to 3 days (i.e. assignments that are submitted 25 hours past the deadline will receive a 20% late penalty). Assignments will not be accepted after 3 days – you will receive an automatic 0 on these assignments. In the case of extraordinary circumstances, please email me with the appropriate details to set up a time to discuss these on a case-by-case basis.

Extensions will only be granted for rare circumstances—please email me at least 72 hours before an assignment is due to request an extension.

In addition, I recognize that sometimes life happens—you will have ONE late ticket for individual assignments (i.e., Issue Paper and Personal Reflection) and ONE late ticket for group assignments (i.e., Project Proposal/Team Contract and Project Report). These late tickets can be used to extend the deadlines for these assignments by 24 hours, with no questions asked and no documentation necessary. To use the ticket, please email your GTA in advance and then submit the assignment in the usual way no later than 24 hours past the original deadline.

Grading dispute policy

If you believe that your assignment was graded unfairly, please first wait for at least 24 hours following the return of the assignment before contacting us. Then contact your GTA with details on where you think something was overlooked to set up a meeting to review your assignment. If you still feel as if your assignment was graded unfairly following this meeting, you can email me a short paragraph detailing your grade concern to request a regrade—grade disputes are not to be directed to your GTA. Keep in mind that the regrade is final and your mark could go up, go down, or stay the same.

Course Standard Statements

Lecture recordings and course materials usage policy

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 expressed written consent of the instructor.

Similarly, any course materials provided by the course instructor or GTA (including, but not limited to, the syllabus, lecture slides, handouts, recordings, etc.) are intended for those enrolled in this course solely. Under no circumstances are you allowed to disseminate course materials to external parties. Non-compliance with these terms violates an instructor's intellectual property rights and the Canadian Copyright Act—students violating this agreement will be subject to disciplinary actions.

Generative AI policy

Generative AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT, Gemini, etc.) should only be used in a limited capacity for this course. Under no circumstances should you use generative AI tools to create something in lieu of original work. However, you may find it a helpful tool to facilitate your achievement of course learning outcomes (e.g., exploring ideas, clarifying concepts, copyediting, etc.). If you do choose to use generative AI tools, you must properly cite and document their use with your submissions. Note that these tools have limitations and can produce outputs that are incomplete, inaccurate, and/or reflect biases—it is your responsibility to critically assess and evaluate the contents of anything you submit. You should be able to readily support and demonstrate knowledge of your submissions. You may not earn full credit if inaccurate or invalid information is found in your work. Unauthorized use of these tools will be considered a violation of the university's academic misconduct policy.

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/navigation/>) 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/>)