
PSYC*4580 - Special Topics in Behavioural Sciences

Winter 2026 Course Outline

Section: 02

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 provides an in-depth examination of specific theoretical and methodological advances for understanding human and/or animal behaviour. Specific topics will vary according to the expertise of the instructor, but could include advances in Social Psychology, Industrial/Organizational Psychology, Cognitive or Behavioural Neuroscience.

Prerequisite(s): 14.00 credits including PSYC*3290, 1.00 credits in Psychology at the 3000 level

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

Department(s): Department of Psychology

Course Description

What makes someone a psychopath? How do you determine if someone has psychopathy? Are they born that way or do they become psychopaths later in life? Are all psychopaths criminals? These are some of the questions we will be tackling in this course. This course is designed to familiarize students with knowledge of the fundamentals of research, theory, and developmental understanding of psychopathy.

Lecture Schedule

WedFri 11:30am-12:50pm in GRHM*2310 (1/5 to 4/21)

Instructor Information

Stephanie Craig

Email: scraig07@uoguelph.ca

Additional Support

GTA

Natalie Stearns

Email: nstearns@uoguelph.ca

Learning Resources

Required Resources

Weekly readings will be available under the "Content" section of our Course link (Website) (<https://courselink.uoguelph.ca/>)

Cost of Textbooks and Learning Resources

Textbook / Learning Resource	Required / Recommended	Cost
Readings available on courselink	Required	NONE

Students are advised that prices are often determined by the publisher or bookstore and may be subject to change.

Please note that I may recommend a book during class that will have an associated costs. These will never be required but simply provide additional reading should a student be interested in a specific aspect of the course.

Course Level Learning Outcomes

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

1. Have a better understanding of callous unemotional traits and psychopathy
2. Have gained knowledge about the clinical and forensic implications of psychopathy.
3. Engage in meaningful science communication skills across both oral and visual mediums.
4. Have gained knowledge about theoretical orientations regarding psychopathy.
5. Be able to respond to others' points and questions thoughtfully and respectfully.

Schedule of Topics and Assignments

Day	Date:	Topic	Activities	Due
Wed	1/7	Intro and course outline		
Fri	1/9	What is psychopathy? Moral development		
Wed	1/14	CU traits Intro		
Fri	1/16	CU traits		
Wed	1/21	History of Psychopathy		
Fri	1/23	Assessing Psychopathy: PCL-R		
Wed	1/28	Assessing Psychopathy: PCL-R, SV and YV		
Fri	1/30	Assessing Psychopathy: Other measures		
Wed	2/4	Assessing Psychopathy: Case example		
Fri	2/6	Primary and Secondary Psychopathy Psychopathy and Criminality		
Wed	2/11	Psychopathy and Gender		
Fri	2/13	Snake in Suits: Psychopathy in the Workplace		
Wed	2/18	Winter Break		
Fri	2/20	Winter Break		
Wed	2/25	Exam review		
Fri	2/27	MIDTERM EXAM		
Wed	3/4	Presentation and Infographic instructions		
Fri	3/6	Presentations		
Wed	3/11	Presentations		
Fri	3/13	Presentations		
Wed	3/18	Presentations		
Fri	3/20	Presentations		
Wed	3/25	Presentations		
Fri	3/27	Presentations		
Wed	4/1	Presentations		

Fri 4/3 Holiday
Wed 4/8 Presentations

Assessment Breakdown

Description	Weighting (%)	Due Date
Lecture participation	13%	Weekly
Infographic	25%	April 8, 2026
Flash talk presentation	25%	March 20- April 8, 2026
Peer Evaluation	12%	April 8, 2026
Midterm exam	25%	Feb 27, 2026

Assessment Details

Participation

Lecture Participation

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You are expected to attend all classes. As this is a fourth-year course, active participation during lecture style classes (first 6 weeks) is expected. Although the quantity of your ongoing contributions will be considered, the quality is particularly important. Participation in class discussion should reflect your completion of assigned readings and active engagement with lecture material. You will be expected to engage in group discussions using skills, including initiation of a topic or idea, clarifying and paraphrasing either content from the readings/class or from a member of the class, offering counter-arguments, demonstrating willingness to consider other perspectives, and generally engaging in a productive and critical discussion of course material.

Peer evaluation (10%): As this is also a large class, and I appreciate that many students are not comfortable speaking out in front of the class, participation will be peer marked. At the beginning of the term, every student will be put into a group. Please sit close to your group members during class as we will take part in "Think, Pair, Share" activities where I ask the class to discuss a question amongst their group members for a couple minutes, before we discuss as a class. At the end of week 3 and week 6 you will be asked to rate each group member for their participation the previous 3 weeks. I highly recommend that you do this *in class* so you do not forget!

See Feedback Fruits on Courselink for a breakdown of the grade.

Midterm

Midterm

25

Mid-term exam content will be based on the material presented in the class and any readings that are noted to be important for the midterm. Note that the readings are to help students understand the material presented in class. To be familiar with all of the information required for the exams, you need to complete the indicated readings and attend the lectures.

All midterm exams will be held in person and will be 60 minutes in length. The exams in this course contain a range of question types such as: multiple choice, fill in the blank, and written components (e.g., short answer). You will not be able to attempt the exam multiple times.

If you require SAS accommodations, please make arrangements with SAS to take the exam in their centre.

Please see the section on missed assessments regarding missed exams.

Assignment

Research-to-Pop Culture Presentation

25

In this assignment, you will select a peer-reviewed research paper related to callous-unemotional (CU) traits or psychopathy and deliver an 8-minute seminar-style presentation with 4 minutes for questions. You will summarize the key scientific findings and then apply the concepts to a pop culture example (e.g., a fictional character from film, television, literature, or media). You may NOT select political figures.

The goal is to demonstrate your ability to:

- Understand and communicate empirical research clearly
- Apply psychological theory to real-world or cultural contexts
- Critically think about how psychopathy-related traits are portrayed in media

More information can be found on Courselink.

Peer Evaluation

Presentation Peer Evaluations

12

Each student will be required to watch and listen to every oral presentation (aside from their own) and provide their assessment of its effectiveness and at least one 'burning question' that came to mind during the talks related to the topic for the presenter. Students will complete their peer evaluation, including their question to the presenter in Feedback Fruits on Courselink.

10% of your grade will be the ratings from your peers. See Courselink for Grading Rubric.

2% of your grade will be completing your peer feedback. You will receive 2/2 if you complete all 40 required peer feedback. To account for the possibility of missed opportunities to observe presentations and submit questions-and-assessments forms due to sickness, you need to complete just 42 of the 60-total possible evaluations (7 out of 9 classes). If you miss a class, you do NOT need to provide documentation, nor inform the instructor. You need to submit your FeedbackFruits for all Students within a class.

Assignment

Infographic

25

Communicating information (SciComm) is an important skill in research. However, these days, information that cannot be consumed quickly is often passed over. This project is designed to help you learn how to accomplish quickly relaying information to the public. You will take a topic with an original research paper (i.e., not a review paper) and put the results into an infographic. You can use more than one paper if you prefer to add information to your infographic. The paper must be different than your presentation paper. You should aim your infographic at informing the public about your topic of choice (i.e., be aware of your language and reading level). The infographic can be on any aspect of from the course (e.g., CU traits, psychopathy, psychopathy in the workplace etc.). You may work in partners for this project. More information about this project will be available on courselink and will be discussed during lecture. Please note that although infographics appear to be "easier" they can often take longer than expected. Please make sure to leave yourself enough time to complete the assignment.

Participation

Attendance

3

Instructor graded (3%): You will be asked to sign in at the beginning of each class. 3% of your grade will be computed based on your attendance. In order to account for illnesses or unexpected absences, a 3/3 will mean you attended 80% of classes. 2/3 will mean you attended 70% of classes. 1/3 will mean you attended 60% of classes. If you attend 50% or less you will get a 0.

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

Missed Midterm

Missed Exams: If you miss the exam due to illness, accident, or family affliction, **you must notify the TA (via email) within 48 hours of the missed exam.** Failure to do so, will result in a zero on the exam. One make-up exam day will be provided the next week. **If you miss the make-up quiz with a valid reason, you must notify the TA within 48 hours of the missed exam. If you miss the makeup exam, the weight of your exam will be moved to your infographic.**

Having work or a trip planned for the day of the midterm or exam is not considered a valid excuse for missing an exam.

You should be aware that if you miss the midterm as scheduled, you may not receive the requisite 20% feedback on your course work before the course drop deadline to determine whether or not you need to drop the course. Therefore, it is in your best interests to write tests as scheduled by the course instructor.

Late Assignment

Course assignments are strictly due on the dates outlined above. Late assignments will be penalized at 10% a day. Please note that these policies are binding unless academic consideration is given to an individual student. The timeframe and due dates for all assignments are outlined in this course outline. Please note that issues related to technological malfunctions (e.g., "I forgot to hit submit," hard-drive crashes, etc.) and leisure travel are not valid reasons for extensions. The only exceptions to these rules are for unforeseen, serious circumstances of personal illness or other issues.

Course Standard Statements

Course Policy regarding materials provided by instructor and her designates:

The material shared by the course instructor as part of this course, including copies of the lecture slides, are solely for the personal use of the authorized student and may NOT be reproduced, or transmitted to others, whether it is in their original format or a modified version, without the express written consent of the course instructor.

Policy on Emails:

Emails will usually be answered within two to three working days. Emails will not be answered on weekends. It is possible that some emails that are not from a university address (e.g., @hotmail.com) may be treated as spam. The university expects you to check your U of Guelph email account regularly and us to use it to communicate with you.

Plagiarism and AI written work

I am aware that AI written work has become increasingly popular. We will discuss it's use at the beginning of the term.

IMPORTANT: There is copyrighted material and intellectual property in this course, and it is not only unethical, but it is illegal to enter these readings and material into any AI database. No student is allowed to enter my lecture slides, readings, or any other course material into any AI database.

I also highly recommend that you do not rely entirely on AI for your presentation script or infographics as students often do very poorly on these assignments when relying on AI.

Open Text Field #2

<Optional Instructor Input>: If desired, instructors may add any additional content they so choose to. The title of this content block is editable.

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

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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/>)