



PSYCHOLOGY 2550A (670)
Introduction to Personality Theory and Research
Summer 2026

Instructor: Dr. Graeme Haynes
Email: ghaynes@uwo.ca

Course Information

Calendar Description:

A survey of the history, methodology and content of the study of individual differences. Topics to be covered include: evaluation of typical personality assessment methods and a consideration of modern empirical research in personality theory and assessment.

Prerequisite(s): A mark of at least 60% in 1.0 credits of Psychology at the 1000 level.

Antirequisite(s):

Extra Information: 4 lecture hours.

Course Weight: 0.50

Breadth: Category A

Subject Code: PSYCHOL

Notice: Unless you have either the requisites for this course (fulfilment of pre-requisites, no anti-requisite conflicts), or special permission from your Dean to enrol in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

**PSY 2550a (650): INTRODUCTION TO PERSONALITY THEORY AND RESEARCH
KING'S UNIVERSITY COLLEGE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO
SPRING 2026**

1.0 CONTACT INFORMATION

Professor: Dr. Graeme Haynes

Email: ghaynes@uwo.ca

Office Hours: TBA

2.0 COURSE DESCRIPTION

A survey of the history, methodology and content of the study of individual differences. Topics to be covered include: evaluation of typical personality assessment methods and a consideration of modern empirical research in personality theory and assessment.

3.0 REQUIRED READING

Required text: Burger, J. (2018). *Personality*, 10th ed. Cengage Learning. (\$77.95 - \$180.95 on publishers' site)

4.0 COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES

The primary objective of this course is to introduce you to the wide array of theories and empirical studies in personality psychology (including the psychoanalytic perspective, the trait perspective, the behavioural perspective, and the humanistic perspective). You will become familiar with classic and contemporary research approaches to understanding individual differences in personality.

Upon successful completion of this course, students should be able to:

- Explain the challenges faced by personality psychologists in the attempt to understand the human mind
- (This outcome will be assessed by multiple choice exams.)
- Describe the methods that personality psychologists use to understand the mind (This outcome will be assessed by multiple choice exams.)
- Demonstrate knowledge of the vocabulary, research, theories, and concepts in personality psychology.
- (This outcome will be assessed by multiple choice exams.)
- Think critically about the theories, methods, and findings in personality psychology
- (This outcome will be encouraged and developed via online discussion posts.)
- Apply findings from personality psychology to better understand themselves and others.
- (This outcome will be encouraged and developed via online discussion posts.)

5.0 MODE OF INSTRUCTION

Delivery Method: On-line (asynchronous)

This is an online course that will use Western University's learning platform, Brightspace, and other educational resources based on the needs of the course. As such, all students must have a reliable internet connection and computer that are compatible with online learning system requirements. Supplementary online Powerpoint slideshows (which correspond with the assigned weekly chapter readings) will be posted on Brightspace every Monday morning and will remain available for the rest of the course. This class is designed to be asynchronous, meaning we will not have a regular, mandatory time when the entire class must be online. However, there may be some synchronous activities that you will sign up for based on your own schedule, including office hour appointments with the professor.

Email is the best way to contact me, and if need be, I can be available to meet with you in person on campus, or over Zoom.

When sending me an email, please make sure to use proper email etiquette (e.g., start with a greeting), and include the following information: your name, the course you are in (I'm teaching several different courses this semester), and your question.

Sample email:

Hi Prof. Haynes,

This is [insert name here] from your Psychology 2550 class. After reading the textbook chapter on [insert topic here], I was wondering if you could explain [insert concept here] in greater detail?

Sincerely,

[Name]

If you adhere to these guidelines, I promise to reply to all emails within 24 hours.

6.0 EVALUATION FORMAT AND TEST SCHEDULE

Grades will be based on the scale presented below.

	Date	Material covered	Value
Chapter quizzes	Weekly, to be completed no later than Sundays at 11:59 PM		10%

Midterm exam	Sat. May 23, 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM	Chapters 1, 3-8*	35%
Final exam	specific date & time TBA	Chapters 9-14*	40%
Discussion questions	Due [Sun.] May 10, 17, 24, 31, June 7, 14 (all at 11:59 PM Eastern Time)		15%

*and all related supplementary lecture material

a) Online chapter quizzes (10%)

For each odd chapter (1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, and 13) in the Burger & Reeve textbook, there is a short quiz (approx. 5 multiple choice questions) at the end of the chapter. These quizzes are open book and may be completed collaboratively with other students in the course. The quizzes are timed (10 minutes to answer the 5 questions), and need to be completed by the date specified on Brightspace. Quizzes will be active for the week that corresponds with the chapter(s) being covered in a module (see Schedule in Section 7.0), until the Sunday at 11:59 PM. It is your responsibility to stay up to date with the chapter readings and complete the quizzes by the dates specified.

b) Exams (35% and 40%)

All exams will take place **synchronously on-line**, and will be proctored remotely with Proctortrack. By taking this course, you are consenting to the use of this software and acknowledge that you will be required to provide personal information (including some biometric data) and the session will be recorded. Completion of this course will require you to have a reliable internet connection and a device that meets the technical requirements for this service. More information about this remote proctoring service, including technical requirements, is available on Western's Remote Proctoring website at: <https://remoteproctoring.uwo.ca>

Exams are closed-book, and it is expected that all students will complete the exams independently with no communication between classmates. The use of programs that translate from English to another language are not permitted. **You will have 120 minutes to complete the exams from start to finish** (plus additional time for students who have documented accommodations which allow for extra time). The exams will be non-linear, meaning you will be able to return to earlier questions. Once you start, you cannot stop or pause. You will access this exam and submit your answers through the Proctortrack tab on our Brightspace site.

Each exam is non-cumulative, and will consist of multiple choice and true / false questions. For each exam, you are responsible for material assigned in the textbook, as well as

material covered in supplementary online lectures.

The midterm exam, covering material from the weeks of May 4th, May 11th, and May 18th, will take place on **Saturday, May 23rd, from 10:00 A.M. – 12:00 P.M.**

The makeup exam for the midterm will take place on **Saturday, May 30th from 10:00 A.M – 12:00 P.M.**

The final examination, covering material from the weeks of May 25th, June 1st, and June 8th, will take place during the Intersession exam period (**specific day & time TBA**).

c) Discussion Forum posts (15%)

Each weekly lesson will have a discussion question (see Student Evaluation table above for due dates), which you will access on OWL Brightspace via the Discussions tab (found by clicking on Communications tab). You only need to complete five of the six discussions (meaning you can skip one week and not lose any marks). You may also choose to do all six discussion posts, in which case your lowest grade of the six will be dropped. For each discussion you complete, you will be required to submit a post of a minimum of 200 words by **Sunday at 11:59 P.M.** of the week in which a discussion occurs (there is no maximum word limit, but try to be concise in your posts). The rubric below is meant to act as a general guideline, illustrating expectations for both the quantity and quality of participation. If, at any point in the term, you have questions about how you are doing in terms of your participation, please feel free to ask the professor via email. Each post is worth 3% of your final course grade (3% x 5 discussions = 15%). Late discussions will not be graded, so make sure that you give yourself time to construct your post and submit it in a timely fashion (i.e., don't leave it until 11:47 P.M. on the day that it's due.)

Discussion rubric:

Activity	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory	Points
Discussion Post	The post displays little or no understanding of the course material, or is off topic	The post displays excellent understanding of the course material, connects the course material to personal experiences, current events in the media, other literature (and in the case of media or literature, provides references, web links, etc.)	<u> </u> / 1

Quality of writing, proof-reading, and sufficient length	The post is unorganized or contains inappropriate content or is filled with spelling errors, poor sentence structure, etc.	The post is very well written. The post is clear, concise, comments are easy to read and understand, free of grammatical or spelling errors.	— / 1
---	--	--	--------------

To ensure fairness, please be aware that final grades in this course are based exclusively on students' performance on the chapter quizzes, two exams and discussion forum posts. Exams may not be rewritten, nor will any course component be reweighted in calculating final grades. Grades will not be adjusted on the basis of need or a subjective evaluation of effort, and students will not be able to improve their marks by completing additional assignments.

7.0 CLASS SCHEDULE

Week of:	Topic	Read
May 4	Introduction	Chapter 1
May 11	The Psychoanalytic Approach	Chapter 3, 4, & 5
May 19	The Trait Approach	Chapter 7 & 8
Sat. May 23	Midterm	
May 25	The Biological Approach	Chapter 9 & 10
June 1	The Humanistic Approach	Chapter 11 & 12
June 8	The Behavioural Approach	Chapter 13 & 14
	FINAL EXAM	

8.0: OTHER COURSE POLICIES

All university policies apply to this course (see attached). Please note in addition:

Intellectual property: Course content created by the course instructor is the instructor's intellectual property. It must not be distributed, shared in any public domain, or sold by a student or other third party without prior written consent of the faculty member.

Use of generative AI tools: The Department of Psychology expects that students will submit work that is truly their own, completed without external assistance (human or artificial). The use of generative AI tools (such as ChatGPT), is not permitted for any submitted course work. Students should not have AI tools write any part of their

assignments or papers, either by copying and pasting or by paraphrasing the output. Unauthorized use of AI constitutes an academic offence and will be subject to academic discipline.

Students may use AI tools to clarify questions they have about course content (e.g., you can ask chat GPT about a course concept to help with your understanding), but students should be aware that the response may be inaccurate or inconsistent with the course content. Asking your instructor is a more effective strategy. Students should note that information provided by AI tools such as ChatGPT can include mistakes, inaccuracies, biases, and out-dated information. Whenever these tools are used, students should cross-verify the information provided to them. This means verifying that the sources used by AI exist and have been accurately summarized, consulting multiple original and reputable up-to-date sources to verify information, and being cautious of bias that could be present in the information provided.

Department of Psychology Policies Related to AI Tools

1. Policy on the Use of Generative AI Tools

The Department of Psychology expects that students will submit work that is truly their own, completed without external assistance (human or artificial).

The use of generative AI tools (such as ChatGPT) is not permitted for any submitted coursework unless express permission has been granted by your instructor.

Students **should not have AI tools write any part of their assignments or papers, either by copying and pasting or by paraphrasing the output.** Unauthorized use of AI constitutes an academic offence and will be subject to academic discipline.

Additional information: Students can use AI tools to clarify questions they have about course content (e.g., you can ask ChatGPT about a course concept to help with your understanding), but students should be aware that the response may be inaccurate or inconsistent with the course content. Asking your instructor is a more effective strategy. Students should note that information provided by AI tools such as ChatGPT can include mistakes, inaccuracies, biases, and outdated information. Whenever these tools are used, students should cross-verify the information provided to them. This means verifying that the sources used by AI exist and have been accurately summarized, consulting multiple original and reputable up-to-date sources to verify information, and being cautious of bias that could be present in the information provided.

2. Policy on Use of Translation Tools*

The Department of Psychology views the unapproved use of translation or language applications as an academic offence.

Any usage of translation applications or language generation by students to complete specific assigned work for this course **must be approved** by the instructor **prior** to submitting the work **and noted by the student in the submitted work** itself.

Writing text and then feeding it into a computer application to improve or translate your own words, changing a few words, and then submitting this text as if it was your own **constitutes plagiarism.** You must compose text, choose words, construct logic flow, structure sentences and paragraphs to organize, synthesize, interpret information with your own mind. When you borrow language or ideas from another person or from a machine this must be acknowledged with quotation marks and/or citations.

Why do we have this policy?

- Translation is intellectual work and produces intellectual property, thus any text which is translated must cite the translator.
- Psychology endeavors to advance students' linguistic, analytic, and reasoning competencies – this can not happen outside of specific language competencies.
- Earning a university degree signals that an individual has advanced literacy and communicative skill in the language of instruction at the university; this is English at King's University College at Western University. If translation machines are used by students without regulation, we will have no way of certifying whether these competencies exist and fewer mechanism for encouraging students to do the hard work to develop them.

** Based on the policy developed by the Department of Child and Youth Studies*

King's University College

General Course Policies

2025-2026

1. Academic Accommodations, Consideration for Absences

Academic Accommodation (Accessibility)

Accessibility Services works to ensure that academic programs are accessible to all students, and supports students who may have a condition related to, but not limited to, vision, hearing, mobility, different ways of learning, mental health, chronic illnesses, chronic pain, autism spectrum disorder, ADD/ADHD, and temporary conditions (beyond short-term academic consideration). Accessibility Services provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive assessment. The accommodation policy can be found here [Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities](#). Information on Accessibility Services at King's can be found [here](#).

Academic Consideration for Student Absence

If a student is unable to meet a course requirement due to substantial but temporary extenuating circumstances (medical or compassionate), they should follow the procedures below.

In some cases, where instructors have built flexibility into their assessments, this flexibility will already address consideration needs.

Requests for academic consideration should be directed to the Academic Advising Office of your faculty/college of registration. Requests must be made as soon as possible and no later than 48 hours after the missed assessment.

As a rule, documentation is required for academic consideration. For academic consideration requests on medical grounds, the Student Medical Certificate is available at [here](#).

Students are permitted one academic consideration request without supporting documentation per term per course. Instructors may designate one assessment per half-course weight as requiring formal supporting documentation. Please refer to the course outline for each course. For further information, please see:

<https://mykings.ca/intranet/app/#/academics/academic-advising/academic-consideration-requests-and-student-absence-portal>

Absences from Final Examinations

If you miss the Final Exam, contact the Academic Advising Office of your faculty/college of registration as soon as you are able to do so. They will assess your eligibility to write the Special Examination (the name given by the University to a makeup Final Exam).

You may also be eligible to write the Special Exam if you are in a "Multiple Exam Situation" (e.g., more than 2 exams in 23-hour period, or more than 3 exams in a 47-hour period).

If a student fails to write a scheduled Special Examination, the date of the next Special Examination (if granted) normally will be the scheduled date for the final exam the next time this course is offered. The maximum course load for that term will be reduced by the credit of the course(s) for which the final examination has been deferred. See the Academic Calendar for details https://academicsupport.uwo.ca/accessible_education/exams/index.html.

Please note, Friday Make-Up Exams may only be written with the instructor's consent.

Religious Accommodation

Students should consult the University's list of recognized religious holidays, and should give notice in writing to the instructor and Academic Advising Office if a course requirement will be affected by a religious holiday/observance. Notice must be given as early as possible, and no later than two weeks prior to an examination, and one week prior to a midterm test date. It is the responsibility of such students to inform themselves concerning the work done in classes from which they are absent and to take appropriate action.

2. Support Services

Accessibility, Counselling and Student Development at King's University College:

<https://mykings.ca/intranet/app/#/student-supports-and-services>

Students experiencing emotional or mental health distress can access services at King's University College: <https://mykings.ca/intranet/app/#/student-supports-and-services/personal-counselling>

Good2talk is a good online and phone 24/7 resource for students and is available in English, Mandarin, and French: <https://good2talk.ca>, 1-866-925-5454

MentalHealth@Western provides a complete list of options about how to obtain help: <https://www.uwo.ca/health/psych/index.html>

Academic Support Services at King's University College:

<https://mykings.ca/intranet/app/#/academics/academic-advising>

GBSV Support:

King's is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence and providing compassionate support to anyone who has gone through these traumatic events. If you have experienced sexual or gender-based violence (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at: <https://mykings.ca/intranet/app/#/student-supports-and-services/campus-safety-and-reporting/gender-and-sexual-violence>

You can reach someone supports at Kings by emailing Care@kings.uwo.ca or calling 519-930-4640 to reach a social worker who can offer help.

You can also reach Western's Gender-Based Violence & Survivor Support Case Manager by [email](#) or by calling 519-661-3568.

See also https://www.uwo.ca/health/student_support/survivor_support/get-help.html

University Students' Council offers many valuable support services for students, including the health insurance plan: <http://westernusc.ca/services/>

3. Statement on Use of Electronic Devices

Use of Electronic Devices: Unless explicitly stated otherwise, you are not allowed to have a cell phone, or any other electronic device, with you during tests or examinations. Unauthorized possession of such a device during a test or examination constitutes an academic offence.

Use of Laptops, Tablets, and Smartphones in the Classroom: King's University College at Western University acknowledges the integration of new technologies and learning methods into the curriculum. The use of electronic devices such as laptop computers, tablets, or smartphones can contribute to student engagement and effective learning. At the same time, King's recognizes that instructors and students share jointly the responsibility to establish and maintain a respectful classroom environment conducive to learning.

The use of electronic devices by students during lectures, seminars, labs, etc., shall be for matters related to the course at hand only. Students found to be using electronic devices for purposes not directly related to the class may be subject to sanctions under the Student Code of Conduct; see <https://mykings.ca/intranet/app/#/student-supports-and-services/campus-safety-and-reporting/student-code-of-conduct>

Inappropriate use of electronics (e.g., laptops, tablets, smartphones) during lectures, seminars, labs, etc., creates a significant disruption. As a consequence, instructors may choose to limit the use of electronic devices in these settings. In addition, in order to provide a safe classroom environment, students attending in-person class sessions are strongly advised to operate laptops with batteries rather than power cords.

4. Statement on Academic Offences

King's is committed to academic integrity. Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, is posted at [here](#).

It is expected that students will submit work that is truly their own, completed without external assistance (human or artificial) except as explicitly permitted by the course instructor. Check with you instructor on what tools, including generative AI (ChatGPT, translation tools, grammar-checking tools) are permitted in the course. Because a tool is permitted in one course, that does not mean it is permitted in other courses.

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system; see <https://elearningtoolkit.uwo.ca/tools/OriginalityReports - TurnItIn.html>.

Computer-marked multiple-choice tests and/or exams may be subject to submission for similarity review by software that will check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns that may indicate cheating.

5. Copyright of Course Material

Lectures and course materials, including PowerPoint presentations, tests, outlines, and similar materials are protected by copyright. Faculty members are the exclusive owner of copyright in those materials they create. Students may take notes and make copies for their own use. Students may not allow others to reproduce or distribute lecture notes and course materials publicly (whether or not a fee is charged) without the express written consent of a faculty member.

Unauthorized sharing of class content is subject to academic discipline.

Similarly, students own copyright in their own original papers and exam essays. If a faculty member wishes to post a student's answers or papers on the course website, they should ask for the student's written permission.

6. Use of Recordings

Participants in this course are not permitted to record the sessions, except where recording is an approved accommodation and/or the participant has the prior written permission of the instructor. Unauthorized recording and/or sharing of class content is subject to academic discipline.

7. Policy on Attendance

Any student who, in the opinion of the instructor, is absent too frequently from class or laboratory periods in any course, will be reported to the Dean of the Faculty offering the course, after due warning has been given. On the recommendation of the department concerned, and with the permission of the Dean of that Faculty, the student will be debarred from taking the regular examination in the course.