



PSYCHOLOGY 3410G (570)
Cognitive Development
Winter 2026

Instructor: Dr. Ruby Malik (she/her)
Email: rmalik42@uwo.ca

Course Information

Calendar Description:

A review of theories and data related to how cognition develops in children. Topics may include the development of memory, perception, language, strategies, spatial cognition, and problem solving.

Prerequisite(s): Registration in third or fourth year of a Major, Specialization or Honours Specialization in Psychology, Honours Specialization in Applied Psychology, or permission of the department.

Antirequisite(s):

Extra Information: 3 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.

Psychology 3410G: Cognitive Development
King's University College at The University of Western Ontario
Winter 2025

1. Instructor Information

Professor: Dr. Ruby Malik (she/her)

Office Hours: Posted on OWL

Office Location: Posted on OWL

Email: rmalik42@uwo.ca

Teaching Assistant: Sarah Al-Saoud, PhD Candidate

TA email: sabuals@uwo.ca

How to contact me:

Please email me from your UWO email address and include the class course number in the subject line. I will do my best to respond within 48 business hours (Monday to Friday, 9 am to 5 pm). If you don't hear from me within this window, please feel free to reach out to me again to ensure the email didn't get lost (or put into spam!).

If you would like to meet with me outside of my student hours, please email me to set up an appointment.

2. Land Acknowledgement

We acknowledge that our campus at King's University College is situated on the traditional territories of the Anishinaabek, Haudenosaunee, Lūnaapéewak, and Chonnonton peoples, on lands connected with the London Township and Sombra Treaties of 1796 and the Dish with One Spoon Covenant Wampum.

With this, we respect the longstanding relationships that Indigenous Nations have to this land, as they are the original caretakers. We acknowledge historical and ongoing injustices that Indigenous Peoples (First Nations, Métis and Inuit) endure in Canada, and we accept responsibility as a public institution to contribute toward revealing and correcting miseducation, as well as renewing respectful relationships with Indigenous communities through our teaching, research, and community service.

3. Course Information

Course Name: Cognitive Development

Course Number: Psychology 2410G

Course website: <https://owl.uwo.ca/portal>

Mode of instruction: in-person

Course description: A review of theories and data related to how cognition develops in children. Topics may include the development of memory, perception, language, strategies, spatial cognition, and problem solving.

Learning Outcomes

Students who successfully complete this course will be able to:

- Demonstrate knowledge of concepts, research methods, and past and current issues in cognitive developmental science.
- Describe, evaluate, and communicate theories of cognitive development.
- Critically read peer-reviewed scholarly papers.
- Apply findings in cognitive development to real world settings, including education and public policy.
- Communicate scientific knowledge in clear, coherent, and concise written and oral form.
- Collaborate as part of a team.

4. Course Materials

Course Readings: Weekly readings will be posted on OWL. There is no textbook for this course. To be successful in this course, students should complete the readings prior to the start of class.

OWL: Course related announcements and additional material will be posted on the course OWL site, found here: <https://owl.uwo.ca/portal>

5. Course Expectations

To be successful in this course, I encourage students to:

- Complete the assigned readings *prior* to class.
- Attend all classes, if possible.
- Actively participate in class discussions.
- Check OWL site regularly for updates.

6. Course Schedule

*Subject to change with notice given on OWL.

	Topic	Date	Readings	Deliverables
Week 1	Introduction to cognitive development	7-Jan-26		
Week 2	No class	14-Jan-26		
Week 3	Theories in cognitive development	21-Jan-26	Article 1 & 2	
Week 4	The developing brain and cognition	28-Jan-26	Book chapter: The brain and cognitive development (on OWL)	
Week 5	Processes of change; Presenting scientific articles	04-Feb-26	Article 3 & 4	Proposal due
Week 6	The role of the environment in cognitive development	11-Feb-26	Article 5 & 6	
Week 7	Reading Week	18-Feb-26		
Week 8	Midterm	25-Feb-26		
Week 9	Presentations: Language & Memory	04-Mar-26	Article 7 & 8	Group 1 & 2 presentations
Week 10	Presentations: Executive functions	11-Mar-26	Article 9 & 10	Group 3 & 4 presentations
Week 11	Presentations: Social Cognitive Development	18-Mar-26	Article 11 & 12	Group 5 & 6 presentations
Week 12	Presentations: Academic skills	25-Mar-26	Article 13 & 14	Group 7 & 8 presentations
Week 13	Presentations: Cognitive Development in Adolescence & Emerging Adulthood	01-Apr-26	Article 15 & 16	Group 9 presentations; Project draft due
Week 14	Linking developmental research to educational practices and policy	08-Apr-26	Article 17	Final paper due

7. Methods of Evaluation

Questions based on readings	10%
Participation in class discussions	15%
Midterm	20%
Journal club presentation	20%
Final project	
Proposal	5%
Draft/outline	5%
Final project	25%

7.1 Questions based on readings (10%)

Each week, you will be asked to submit two questions you had about the assigned readings prior to class. The purpose of this is to have you reflect on the assigned readings before class, and to spark conversation and debate during class.

Questions will be due each week on the Thursday at 11:59 PM. Questions will be graded pass or fail.

7.2 Participation in class discussion (15%)

This course is primarily discussion-based. You are expected to come prepared and actively participate in the discussions. Active participation includes sharing in the discussion, responding to questions, asking questions, moderating the discussion, etc. You can miss up to two classes without penalty.

7.3 Midterm (20%)

There will be a midterm for this course. The midterm will be based on content from Week 1 to Week 5 and will include short answer questions. The midterm will take place in class on **February 11th**.

7.4 Journal presentation (20%)

Students (in groups of 2 to 3) will be asked to present an assigned peer reviewed journal article to the class, and then lead a class discussion based on the article. Students will be assigned to a group and presentation day between Week 7 and 11 based on interests.

As part of this group project, you will also be asked to complete a group evaluation where you will reflect on your group members and your own contribution to the group. This will be worth 2% (1% for reflection on their own contribution, 1% for reflection on group members contribution), and will be due a week after the presentation. The group mark will be scaled by individual contribution to determine individual grades, where discrepancies are reported.

7.5 Final Project (35%)

You will be asked to complete a final project on a topic within cognitive developmental science that interests you. This project can take multiple forms, including a research proposal, a blog article, or an educational video, pamphlet, or podcast, whichever best fits with your interest and goals. The final project is broken into multiple components (proposal, draft/outline, and final project). Project components are due by that start of class on the assigned date (see schedule), with the exception of the final project, which will be due **April 1st, 2026**.

8. Grade Descriptions

Grades are based on Western's university-wide grade descriptors, included below:

A+	90–100	One could scarcely expect better from a student at this level
A	80–89	Superior work which is clearly above average
B	70–79	Good work, meeting all requirements, and eminently satisfactory
C	60–69	Competent work, meeting requirements
D	50–59	Fair work, minimally acceptable F below 50 Fail

9. Policy on Late Work and Absences

All students in this course are expected to attend class regularly and complete their work on time. However, situations may arise that are unexpected and prohibit you from submitting your work on time.

The final project proposal and draft will be penalized 10% per day and will not be accepted after 7 days unless academic consideration has been granted. However, you have a total of **two flex days** across the entire semester that you may use for the project proposal and/or draft. Using a flex day allows you to hand in the component up to 24 hours late without penalty. After you have used all your flex days, late components will be penalized 10% per day and not accepted after 7 days from the deadline without academic consideration.

The **final project** will be due on the last day of classes and will not be accepted late unless academic consideration has been granted.

The reading questions and participation grades are low-stakes components and cannot be made up, but the two lowest grades will be dropped to account for illness and unexpected events. If you are required to miss more than two classes, you can write a 2-page reflection paper on the readings for each week that was missed to make up lost participation grades.

Students who are unable to attend their **Journal Club Presentation** date who have received Academic Consideration will have two options, depending on their group members' preference.

- **Option 1:** Your group may request to be assigned a new presentation date either in Week 11 or Week 12 of this course. *Note: only one new presentation date will be offered per group.*
- **Option 2:** Your group may present without you on the scheduled day. For your portion, you will submit a video recording of your presentation with two additional questions discussed.

Students who miss their Journal Club Presentation without academic consideration will receive zero on this component.

Please refer to the Policy of Academic Accommodations and Academic Considerations attached to this syllabus.

10. Course Policy on AI (e.g., Chat GPT)

Within this course AI tools such as Chat GPT are permitted exclusively for information-gathering and preliminary research purposes. If AI tools are used, students must acknowledge use and state how the tool was used. **Unauthorized use of AI constitutes an academic offense and will be subject to academic discipline.**

Here is how to acknowledge use of AI in APA format: <https://apastyle.apa.org/blog/how-to-cite-chatgpt>

Students can 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 be aware that the response may be inaccurate or inconsistent with the course content. Asking your instructor will likely be more useful.

Students should not:

- Have AI tools write any part of your assignments/papers, either by copying and pasting or by paraphrasing the output.
- Have AI tools generate ideas or any part of your final project.

Students should note that information provided by AI tools such as Chat GPT can include mistakes, inaccuracies, biases, and out-dated information. Whenever these tools are used, students should cross-verify the information provided to them. This includes: 1) verifying that the sources used by AI exist and have been accurately summarized, 2) consulting multiple original and reputable up-to-date sources to verify information, and 3) being cautious of bias that could be present in the information provided.

11. Academic Integrity, Online Behavior, and Intellectual Property Statement

- Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site:
http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf (See also Appendix A below)
- Within this course AI tools such as Chat GPT are permitted exclusively for information-gathering and preliminary research purposes. See policy above.
- All students are expected to engage online in a professional and respectful manner. This includes all interactions with peers, as well as communication between TAs or your Professor. Failure to do so will result in academic discipline.
- Recording of lectures or tutorials without the explicit consent of the Professor or TA is grounds for academic discipline.
- Course content created by a faculty member is considered the faculty member's intellectual property; it should 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.
- All assessment or examinations done online or in-person are expected to be done by the student registered in this course.

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 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.

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.

Rationale:

- 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

General Course Policies

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 Considerations for Absence/Missed Assessments

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.

Requests for academic consideration should be directed to the Academic Advising Office of your faculty/college of registration using the extranet portal (www.extranet.uwo.ca). 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 http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf.

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.

In some cases, where instructors have built flexibility into their assessments, this flexibility will already address consideration needs and further consideration may be denied. Please refer to the course outline for each course.

Academic consideration for examinations scheduled by the Office of the Registrar always requires documentation.

The policy on academic consideration is found here:

https://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/academic_consideration_Sep24.pdf

Absences from Final Examinations

If you miss the final examination, 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 examination).

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 (under [Special Examinations](#)).

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.

For policy on accommodation for religious holidays, see:

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_religious.pdf

2. Support Services

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

<https://www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/student-services/>

Students experiencing emotional or mental health distress can access services at King's

University College: <http://www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/campus-services/student-support-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/mental_wellbeing/

Academic Support Services at King's University College:

<https://www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/academic-resources/>

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://www.kings.uwo.ca/about-kings/safe-campus/gender-and-sexual-violence/>

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://www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/student-affairs/code-of-student-conduct1/>

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

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

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 your instructor on what tools are permitted in the course, including generative AI (e.g. ChatGPT, translation tools, grammar-checking tools). 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/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 of 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.

