



PSYCHOL 2550A (570)
Introduction to Personality Theory and Research
Fall/Winter 2026 - 2027

Instructor: Dr. Graeme Haynes

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Course Information

Mode of Instruction: in-person

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): None.

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.

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

1.0 CONTACT INFORMATION

Professor: Dr. Graeme Haynes

Email: ghaynes@uwo.ca

Office Hours: TBD (I will post these on OWL Brightspace at the beginning of the semester)

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., & Reevy G. (2026). *Personality*, 12th ed. Cengage Learning.

Cost: ebook with MindTap, \$119.00 (access to MindTap is required to complete chapter quizzes)

I always recommend that students use the assigned edition of the course textbook, as content from each chapter is updated from one version to the next. If you choose to use an older edition (e.g., a physical copy of the 10th), you run the risk that some exam questions may cover content not found in older editions.

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 / short answer exams.)
- Describe the methods that personality psychologists use to understand the mind (This outcome will be assessed by multiple choice / short answer exams.)
- Demonstrate knowledge of the vocabulary, research, theories, and concepts in personality psychology.

- (This outcome will be assessed by multiple choice / short answer 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: In person

Lectures are intended to complement the textbook. Thus, I will present some material that is not in the book, and will be tested on the exams. Class attendance will significantly increase how much you get out of this course. I post the lecture slides in advance with blanks that you are expected to fill in during class, and then post the completed slides within a few days following a lecture. Participation in class discussions is both a welcome and essential element of a positive group learning environment. Please come to class prepared and ready to engage! We will strive to create a welcoming, equitable, inclusive, and respectful environment in which we support one another's learning.

During class, you are encouraged to ask questions about concepts that are unclear; I'm also happy to answer questions during the 10-minute break or at the end of the lecture. Outside of class, I encourage you to set an appointment to meet with me during office hours to discuss any questions or concerns.

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 48 hours.

6.0 EVALUATION FORMAT AND TEST SCHEDULE

Grades will be based on the scale presented below.

	Date	Material covered	Value
MindTap chapter quizzes	Weekly, to be completed no later than Sundays at 11:59 PM		10%
Midterm exam	Thurs. Oct. 22, 11:30 AM – 1:30 PM	Chapters 1, 3-8*	35%
Final exam	Dec. 11-22 (specific date & time TBA)	Chapters 9-16*	40%
In-class reflection papers	Completed in class on the dates noted in Section 7.0		15%

*and all related supplementary lecture material

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

a) Online chapter quizzes (10%)

For each chapter in the Burger E-textbook (with the exception of Chapter 2), 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 MindTap. Chapter quizzes will be active for the week that we cover the topic in class (see Class Schedule in Section 7.0), closing on Sundays 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%)

For the exams, you are responsible for material assigned in the textbook, as well as material covered in lectures. The exams will consist of a combination of multiple choice questions and short answer questions.

The midterm exam, covering material from Chapter 1 and Chapters 3-8, will take place in class on **Thursday, Oct. 22nd, from 11:30 A.M. – 1:30 P.M.**

The makeup exam for the midterm will take place during the following week's King's Friday makeup session (Oct. 30th, 2:30 – 4:30 P.M.) Please note, Friday Make-Up Exams may only be written with the instructor's consent.

The final examination, covering material from Chapters 9-16, will take place during the December exam period (**Dec. 11-22, specific day & time TBA**).

c) In class reflection papers (15%)

Six of the units we cover will have an in-class reflection question (as noted by a * in Class Schedule below), which you will complete in writing (on booklets provided) during the last hour of class. You only need to complete **five** of the six reflections (meaning you can skip one week and not lose any marks). You may also choose to do all six reflections, in which case your lowest grade of the six will be dropped. Each reflection needs to be a minimum of 200 words (there is no maximum word limit, but try to be concise). The rubric below is meant to act as a general guideline, illustrating expectations for both the quantity and quality of reflections. 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 reflection is worth 3% of your final course grade (3% x 5 reflections = 15%). Students may not complete reflections in advance of or after the class has taken place. Late reflections will not be accepted.

Discussion rubric:

Activity	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory	Points
Reflection on questions	The reflection displays little or no understanding of the course material, or is off topic / doesn't address all of the questions asked.	The reflection displays excellent understanding of the course material, connects the course material to personal experiences.	<u> </u> / 2
Quality of writing, proof-reading, and sufficient length	The reflection is unorganized or contains inappropriate content or is filled with spelling errors, poor sentence structure, etc.	The reflection is very well written; it is clear, concise, easy to read and understand, free of grammatical or spelling errors.	<u> </u> / 1

To ensure fairness, please be aware that final grades in this course are based exclusively on students' performance on the chapter quizzes, exams and reflection

papers. 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

Date:	Topic	Read
Sept. 10	Introduction	Chapter 1
Sept. 17	The Psychoanalytic Approach: Part 1	Chapter 3 & 4
Sept. 24*	The Psychoanalytic Approach: Part 2	Chapter 5 & 6
Oct. 1	The Trait Approach	Chapter 7 & 8
Oct. 8*	The Trait Approach, continued	
Oct. 15	No class – Fall Reading Week	
Oct. 22	Midterm (in class)	Chapter 1, 3-8
Oct. 29*	The Biological Approach	Chapter 9 & 10
Nov. 5	The Humanistic Approach	Chapter 11 & 12
Nov. 12*	The Humanistic Approach, continued	
Nov. 19*	The Behavioural Approach	Chapter 13 & 14
Nov. 26	The Cognitive Approach	Chapter 15 & 16
Dec. 3*	Personality Disorders	
Dec. 10	Study Day	
Dec. 11-22	FINAL EXAM	Chapter 9-16

*indicates in-class reflection is taking place

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
2026-27**

1. Academic Accommodations (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 at [Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities](#). Information on Accessibility Services at King's can be found [here](#).

2. Academic Consideration for Student Absences

Students must be approved to write a makeup exam or for an extension of the assignment deadline. If you need to miss an exam or the deadline for the assignment, please follow these instructions.

There are two ways to seek academic consideration:

(i) Academic consideration based on medical or compassionate grounds

If a student is unable to meet a course requirement due to substantial but temporary extenuating circumstances (medical or compassionate grounds), they should contact the Academic Advising Office. As a rule, documentation is required for academic consideration.

For academic consideration requests on medical grounds, the Student Medical Certificate (SMC) is the appropriate documentation. The SMC is available at <https://registrar.uwo.ca/academics/pdfs/student-medical-certificate.pdf>

- King's students: The Academic Advising Office website is located in DLH 104. The Academic Advising website is <https://mykings.ca/intranet/app/#/academics/academic-advising>.
- If your home faculty is Huron or at Western, please submit your documentation to your faculty's academic counselling office.
- Requests must be made as soon as possible, and no later than 48 hours after the missed assessment.

You may submit requests for academic consideration through the **Student Absence Portal**, linked on this website: <https://mykings.ca/intranet/app/#/academics/academic-advising/academic-consideration-requests-and-student-absence-portal>.

(ii) Academic consideration through an undocumented absence

Students are permitted one academic consideration request without supporting documentation per term per half-course (0.5) weight.

- Note that instructors may designate one assessment per half-course weight as requiring supporting documentation. Please refer to the course outline to confirm this which assessment has been designated as requiring documentation for consideration (that is, exempt from undocumented absences).
- Undocumented absences can not be used as the basis for academic consideration for December or April exams.

If an instructor has built flexibility into their assessments (e.g., “complete 8 of 10 quizzes”), this flexibility will already address consideration needs and thus academic consideration may be denied.

For further information on the academic consideration policy, please see https://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/academic_consideration_Sep24.pdf

c) Absences from Final Exams

If you miss the Final Exam, **contact your Academic Advising Office** 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 (i.e., you are scheduled to write 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](#)).

d) Religious Accommodations

Students should consult the University’s list of recognized religious holidays, and should give notice in writing to the instructor and their 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.

3. Support Services

Accessibility, Counselling and Student Development at King’s University College:
<https://mykings.ca/intranet/app/#/student-supports-and-services/accessibility-services>

Students experiencing emotional or mental health distress can access services at King’s University College:
<https://kings.uwo.ca/campus-life/student-supports/>

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

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

Academic Support Services at King's University College: <https://kings.uwo.ca/academics/academic-supports/>

4. Statement on Gender-Based Sexual Violence

King's and Western are committed to reducing incidents of gender-based sexual violence (GBSV) and providing compassionate support to anyone who is going through or has gone through these traumatic events. If you are experiencing or have experienced GBSV (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at the following website: [Mental Health and Wellness at King's](#).

You can reach supports at King's 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 (health@uwo.ca) or by calling 519-661-3568. Additional support services can be found <https://www.uwo.ca/health/gbsv/support/index.html>

5. 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://kings.uwo.ca/sites/2025/assets/files/campus/Kings_Code_of_Student_Conduct.pdf

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.

6. 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 https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_offences.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 you instructor to check which tools, including generative AI (ChatGPT, translation tools, grammar-checking tools) are permitted in each course.** Note that although some courses may permit the use of such tools, it does not mean use of such tools 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/Originality Reports - 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.

7. 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.

8. 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.

9. 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.