



PSYCHOL 3992F (570)
Special Topics in Psychology
Fall/Winter 2026 - 2027

Instructor: Dr. Loretta Norton
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Course Information

Mode of Instruction: in-person

Calendar Description: Selected topics of current interest in Psychology. Topic available in Department.

Prerequisite(s): [Psychology 2840F/G](#) (or Psychology 2800E, Psychology 2820E, [Psychology 2830A/B](#), [Psychology 2855F/G](#) or [Psychology 2856F/G](#)) and registration in the third or fourth year of Honours Specialization, Honours Double Major, Major or Specialization in Psychology, Honours Specialization in Applied Psychology, or permission of the Department.

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.

King's University College

[Psychology 3992F – Special Topics: Psychology of Aging /Fall 2026]

Course information:

Course Name, Number, Section: Special Topics: Psychology of Aging, Psychology 3992F, 570
Course Time and Location: please refer to Student Centre website or OWL course site
Instructor: Dr. Loretta Norton, PhD
Contact Information: lnorton5@uwo.ca
Office Hours and Location: held in-person, please refer to OWL course site
OWL course site: <https://westernu.brightspace.com/d2l/login>

Course Description: Psychology of Aging will explore one of the most important and growing areas in the field of psychology. As populations are aging faster than ever before, it is essential to understand the psychological aspects that shape aging. This course will explore psychological theories of aging, cognition and memory, relationships, mental health, and neurodegenerative diseases among other topics. Students will gain a deeper understanding of the challenges and opportunities of the aging process through interactive in-class activities, real-world experiences, and discussion of current research in the field.

Course Learning Outcomes:

- Describe the major biological, cognitive, social, and emotional changes associated with normal aging and how these differ from pathological aging processes
- Evaluate research methods and designs used in aging research, including their strengths and limitations
- Apply psychological theories of aging to real-world contexts
- Analyze how ageism, stereotypes, and sociocultural context shape the experience of aging
- Evaluate interventions and policies related to healthy aging, retirement, and end-of-life care

Mode of Instruction: This course will be taught in-person.

Course textbooks/materials:

Whitbourne & Whitbourne (2025). Adult Development and Aging. (8th edition) Wiley.

The bookstore (<https://bookstore.uwo.ca/textbook-search>) has both a print book and an e-book option. Either option is acceptable for the course. The E-book permanent access is \$95.00. Students are welcome to purchase second-hand or earlier editions of this textbook.

Method of Evaluation:

Component	Course Weight	Date
In-class participation/assignments	20	Throughout the course due during class time
Midterm	25	October 28 during class (Academic consideration for

		midterm test requires submission of formal supporting documentation)
Life Story Interview Project	20	Nov 16 th (plus 72-hour window if needed)
Life Story Oral Reflection	5	Dec 2
Final Exam	30	TBD scheduled by the registrar

In-Class Participation: Students are expected to contribute meaningfully to the course. In addition to attendance, students should actively participate in in-class activities including group work, debate, oral presentations, reflections, and class discussions. See OWL for more information.

Midterm and Final Exam: The tests will be mixed format (may include multiple-choice, T/F, short-answer and essay questions). Tests will occur in person and will be paper based. Please bring a pencil and eraser to your test as well as your student card. The tests are **closed book** which means you are **NOT** permitted to consult any external resources for any reason while writing the tests. No external devices may be used. You may not consult with any other person while taking the exam. You should sit apart from any person that you studied with. Scholastic offences during term tests will result in a grade of zero and I will refer the matter to the Chair of the Psychology Department to address any additional penalties. A make-up exam will be offered Friday, November 6th, unless otherwise announced. Please note, the Friday Make-Up Exam is not yet approved and may only be written with the instructor's consent.

Life Story Interview Project: Students should meet with an older adult of their choosing (65+) and conduct a series of semi-structured interviews over the course of term. This person can be a relative or anyone of your choosing. The goal is to understand aging through lived experience while applying key psychological concepts covered in the course. Students will explore life narratives and aging-related changes and connect personal stories to psychological theories and empirical research to produce a 2500 word (or greater) written paper that contributes to a class anthology of aging stories. More details about the assignment and grading rubric can be found on OWL.

Academic Considerations:

There will be 1 make up midterm and exam for those who missed the exam due to illness or otherwise. The makeup midterm and makeup final exam requires formal supporting documentation, and approval must be sought through the academic dean's office. The date of such make up tests is yet to be determined and will be announced to approved students.

The life story final paper has a flexibility timeline-built in. No late penalty will be imposed for the first 72 hours after the deadline, in case of extenuating circumstances. Students should plan to submit by the deadline. Because the submission deadline for the assessment already includes flexibility, the instructor will deny academic consideration for these assignments

submitted past the 72-hour window. Late submissions will be penalized 10% per day and will not be accepted after 7 days.

Academic Integrity / Remote Proctoring: Within this course, use of generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools (such as ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini, co-pilot, translation tools, and grammar-checking tools) is not permitted for written work submitted for evaluation. Unauthorized use of AI will be subject to academic discipline.

Schedule of Classes, Readings, Assessments:

Subject to change with notice given on OWL

	Date	Topic	Readings
Week 1	Sept 9	Introduction to the Psychology of Aging	Chapter 1
Week 2	Sept 16	Biological Bases of Aging and Research Methods	Chapters 2 & 3
Week 3	Sept 23	Memory and Aging	Chapter 6
Week 4	Sept 30	<i>National Day for Truth and Reconciliation – No class</i>	
Week 5	Oct 7	Higher Cognitive Functions and Aging	Chapter 7
Week 6	Oct 14	<i>Reading Week</i>	
Week 7	Oct 21	Mental Health and Psychopathology in later life	Chapter 11
Week 8	Oct 28	Midterm	
Week 9	Nov 4	Relationships & Personality	Chapter 8 & 9
Week 10	Nov 11	Work, retirement, and leisure	Chapter 10
Week 11	Nov 18	Neurocognitive disorders and dementia	Chapter 5 pgs. 101-108
Week 12	Nov 25	Death, Dying, and Grief	Chapter 13
Week 13	Dec 2	Well-being and successful aging	Chapter 14
Week 14	Dec 9	Review	

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.