



PSYCHOL 4694E (570)
Psychology for the Common Good: Creating Research-Based Applications
Fall/Winter 2026 - 2027

Instructor: Dr. Marcie Penner
Email: mpennerw@uwo.ca

Course Information

Mode of Instruction: in-person

Calendar Description: In this experiential learning course, students will apply findings from basic psychological research to solve real-world problems. Working in teams, students will partner with local community groups to select and complete a research-based project. Final projects will be presented to a panel of researchers and community members.

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

Antirequisite(s): None.

Extra Information: 3 hours.

Course Weight: 1.00

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 4694E (570)
**Psychology for the Common Good:
Designing Research-Based Applications**
King's University College at The University of Western Ontario
Fall/Winter 2026-2027

Calendar description

In this experiential learning course, students will apply findings from basic psychological research to solve real-world problems. Working in teams, students will partner with local community groups to select and complete a research-based project. Final projects will be presented to a panel of researchers and community members.

Professor

Dr. Marcie Penner (she/her)

How to contact me: **Email:** mpennerw@uwo.ca (please include the course number in the subject line). I will try to respond within 2 business days (Monday to Friday, 9 am - 5 pm).

Office hours: Posted on Brightspace

Course Information

Class time: Consult your schedule or the course Brightspace site.

Location: Consult your schedule or the course Brightspace site.

Mode of instruction: In-person

A bit about this course

Psychology for the Common Good is a senior capstone course where you will integrate and apply what you have learned over the course of your psychology degree. The guiding framework for the course is George Miller's call to "give psychology away" (1969, p. 1071) to the people who can use it. To that end, you will be challenged to use the knowledge and skills that you have gained in psychology to benefit others. Each team of students selects a real-world issue that they want to address and collaborates to develop a research-based solution. Throughout the course, you will gain marketable skills in project development, project management, and science communication/knowledge mobilization. Attendance and full participation throughout the course are mandatory.

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 (e.g. 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.

Required textbook

- Baron, N. (2010). *Escape from the Ivory Tower: A Guide to Making your Science Matter*. Washington, DC: Island Press.
 - An eBook is available from the campus bookstore for \$44.
 - Physical copies can be purchased at online and brick and mortar bookstores (e.g., Indigo, Amazon, etc.) for about \$50.
 - The textbook is also available in the library as both an [eBook](#) and physical copy (FREE!).
- Additional readings are provided on the course Brightspace site.

Learning outcomes

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

- Differentiate between *applied* psychology and *applications* of psychology
- Locate, critically evaluate, and synthesize research from multiple disciplines
- Apply psychological findings to solve real-world problems in diverse areas (e.g., health, law, public policy, human factors)
- Facilitate discussions with stakeholders to identify problems
- Develop a project plan and timeline
- Apply an asset-based framework to evaluate and recommend research-based solutions
- Collaborate with team members to produce a tangible outcome for stakeholders
- Effectively communicate research methods and findings to scientific and non-scientific audiences across multiple forms (e.g., presentation, blog, policy brief, best-practices document, op-ed, executive summary)

Expectations

This is a professional course, and you are expected to act accordingly by

- Completing the assigned readings prior to class
- Attending all classes and project meetings
- Actively participating in both in-class discussions and activities
- Working collaboratively with team members, and
- Acting professionally and respectfully in all interactions with fellow students, the professor, community partners, and members of the community panel.

Note: Attendance and full participation throughout the course are mandatory.

Course evaluation

Individual components

Annotated bibliography	10%
Writing assignments (2-3)	10%
Reflection journal	10%
Collaboration	10%

Group project components

Project aims	5%
Project proposal & plan	10%
Progress reports (12)	5%
Panel presentation	15%
Application	25%

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

Annotated bibliography

You will be asked to turn in an annotated bibliography, consisting of

- A one-paragraph summary of the proposed project, with a description of the problem of interest and its importance in the real world (group), and
- TEN relevant citations (per group member) from the literature consisting of the bibliographic information in APA format, a short **critical summary** of the reading, **analysis** of the reading, followed by **reflections** on the material, and how it applies to your project (approximately 150-200 words per citation).

Then, as a group, you will participate in a literature consultation with the course instructor and psychology librarian following submission. Note: Each group member must annotate 10 different sources, so coordination will be required!

Writing assignments

In this course, we will talk about giving psychology away (and taking psychology back). Towards these goals, you will learn to communicate research findings to non-scientific audiences in a variety of written forms. Each student will write one **general-audience blog entry** on a recent psychology journal article (see previous class articles on <http://therorshack.blogspot.com>), and one **policy brief or best-practices document** on a relevant issue. Each writing assignment will include multiple components to scaffold your success. You will have the option to complete a **third writing assignment of your own choosing** (e.g., blog article/policy one-pager/op-ed/info graphic/social media campaign/etc.); format to be mutually agreed upon by student and professor. The top two assignments will count towards your grade.

Reflection journal

You will be asked to write (approximately) bi-weekly reflections on your experience in this class. The bi-weekly due day/time will be determined collaboratively in the first class period. You will be given questions to reflect upon and integrate based on your experience in the course. Throughout the term, reflections will be submitted on Brightspace. A final reflection grade, considering all entries, will be assigned at the end of the course.

Collaboration

You will be asked to critically evaluate your contribution and the contribution of your collaborators to the final project. Collaboration will be gauged through both the progress reports and peer evaluation.

Project aims

As a group, you will prepare a brief document that outlines the key project aims and provides a description of how the team proposes to achieve each aim.

Project proposal and plan

As a group, you will prepare a project proposal and project plan. The form of the proposal depends on whether your group will be collecting and/or analyzing data. The project plan includes a detailed project workload, timeline, and potential roadblocks.

Progress reports

During the second term, each team will be asked to submit weekly progress reports. The reports must use the provided template. Progress reports are marked as complete or incomplete. Late reports will receive a grade of zero.

Community panel presentation

You will present your final project to a panel of community members **on March 23rd**. The community panel members will also award the Agnes Penner Prize to the project with the greatest potential to benefit society.

Application

The form of the research-based application will be different across groups and must be created with the appropriate audience in mind (i.e., your community partner). A copy will be provided to your community partner. Your application must have a title page and a one-page executive summary. Citations and references must be in APA format, but the application need not be.

Academic consideration and policy on late assignments

Requests for academic consideration for the group project will be denied by the course instructor. In absence of academic consideration, individual assignments submitted after the due date and time will be penalized 10%/day to a maximum of five days. After five days the assignment will receive a grade of zero. Note: Late group project components will not be accepted.

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, at the following Web site: http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

Course policy on the use of generative artificial intelligence (AI)

Generative AI tools may not be used for any deliverables in this course. Community-based work requires strict data privacy, local cultural nuance, high-stakes accuracy, and a genuine focus on equity that AI cannot provide. Using AI to generate any portion of the deliverables in this course risks sharing confidential data, spreading disinformation/misinformation, and damaging community trust. *All deliverables in this course must be 100% student authored.*

Preserving academic integrity in this course may occasionally require active verification; I therefore reserve the right to mandate a direct meeting to discuss any submitted deliverable at my discretion. The use of generative AI in this course will be considered plagiarism, a scholastic offence, and will be reported. This course policy is consistent with the departmental policy (attached).

Notice of Turnitin analysis

Annotated bibliographies, writing assignments, aims, proposals, and applications will be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. The goal of this policy is to avoid having you or your team inadvertently submit work that is not fully your own. *You will have the opportunity to, and are strongly encouraged to, view the Turnitin report and make any needed changes so long as you submit the final, revised version, by the assigned deadline.* Note: The ability to resubmit may not be true for extensions, due to software constraints in Brightspace. All assignments submitted for such checking may be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>).

Tentative fall schedule

Date	In-class activities	Readings	Deliverables (graded components in bold)
Sept. 15	Introduction to course, science communication, project management, implementation science		
Sept. 22	Conversation with course alums Applications of psychological science	Leibowitz (1996), Miller (1969), Zimbardo (2004)	Begin bi-weekly reflections (individual) due date/time determined in class
Sept. 29	Pitch topics, choose teams	Self determined (3+)	Two-Minute Pitch (individual)
Oct. 6	Workshop: How to read a journal article Workshop: Evaluating interventions, designing efficacy studies	Roediger & Gallo (2004), Kisely & Kendall (2011), Penner, Buckland & Moes (2019)	Article report worksheet (individual; completed in class) Group contract (group)
Oct. 13	READING WEEK		
Oct. 20	Workshop: Advanced literature search (Emma Swiatek) Workshop: Asset-based approach to problem solving	Kretzmann & McKnight (1993), Chapter 15	Search plan (group; completed in class) Student Agreement on Use of Artificial Intelligence (individual; completed in class)
Oct. 27	Workshop: Writing science for a general audience (blogs and op-eds)	Text chapters 8 & 11, Sucharov (2019), 2025 peer-reviewed journal article (self-determined) for writing assignment #1	Message box for writing assignment #1 (individual; completed in class)
Nov. 3	Workshop: Proposals and aims	Sternberg (2004), Steinberg (2004)	Annotated bibliography (individual) due Friday at 5:30 pm
Nov. 10	Literature consultation (group) & group meetings		Aims (group) due Friday at 5:30 pm
Nov. 17	Workshop: Preparing a project plan and timeline		Draft proposal (group) due Friday at 5:30 pm
Nov. 24	Group meetings		Writing assignment #1: Blog (individual) due date/time determined in class
Dec. 1	Workshop: Revising & editing I		
Dec. 8	Term wrap-up		Full proposal & project plan (group) Peer review form (individual) All due Wednesday , December 9th at 5:30 pm (end of term)

Tentative winter schedule

Date	In-class activities	Readings	Deliverables (graded components in bold)
Jan. 5	Introduction to term 2 Workshop: Copyright issues (Emma Swiatek)		
Jan. 12	Workshop: Writing for stakeholders (policy briefs and best-practices)	Text chapters 6, 7 & 13	Begin weekly progress reports (group) due Fridays at 5:30 pm
Jan. 19	Group meetings		Proposal for writing assignment #2 (individual) due Friday at 5:30 pm
Jan. 26	Group meetings		Draft application (group) due Friday at 5:30 pm
Feb. 2	Workshop: Presentation skills Workshop: Writing executive summaries		Message box for presentation & executive summary (group; completed in class)
Feb. 9	Group meetings		Writing assignment #2: Policy brief/Best practices (individual) due Friday at 5:30 pm
Feb. 16	Reading Week		
Feb. 23	Workshop: Revising & editing II		Revised application (group) Draft executive summary (group) Both due Friday at 5:30 pm
Mar. 2	Practice presentations		Presentation (group; due at start of class)
Mar. 9	Practice presentations with course alums in Vitali Lounge		Penultimate version of application (group) Executive summary (group) Both due Friday at 5:30 pm
Mar. 16	Dress rehearsal in Vitali Lounge		
Mar. 23	Community panel in Vitali Lounge		Final presentation (group)
Mar. 30	Applied career panel	Brunson, Gilmer & Loomis (2019)	Final reflection (individual) due Friday at 5:30 pm
Apr. 6	Course wrap up		Ultimate version of application (group) Final weekly progress report (group) Peer review (individual) Optional: Writing assignment #3 (individual) All due Friday, April 9th at 5:30 pm (end of term)

Disclaimer: The schedule, policies, procedures, and assignments in this course are subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances, by mutual agreement, and/or to better ensure student learning. Changes to in-class activities will be discussed in class. Students will be notified of other changes on the Brightspace site for this course and are responsible for attending to such changes.

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.