



PSYCHOL 4891E (570)
Honours Thesis
Fall/Winter 2026 - 2027

Instructor: Dr. Wendy Ellis
Email: wendy.ellis@uwo.ca

Course Information

Mode of Instruction: in-person

Calendar Description: Independent Research under the direction of a faculty member.

Prerequisite(s): [Psychology 3891F/G](#) and [Psychology 3892F/G](#) and registration in the fourth year of the Honours Specialization in Psychology at King's University College.

Antirequisite(s): [Psychology 4850E](#), [Psychology 4880E](#).

Extra Information: 4 seminar 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 4891E (570) - Honours Thesis

COURSE INFORMATION

Website: Brightspace

Instructor: Dr. Wendy Ellis, wendy.ellis@uwo.ca

Office hours: Before and after class in my office or via zoom appointment

Email: wendy.ellis@uwo.ca

How to contact me: Please email me from your Western email address and include the class course number in the subject line. I will respond within 48 business hours (Monday to Friday, 9 am to 5pm).

TEXTBOOK

Recommended:

Beins, B. & Beins, A. (2020). *Effective Writing in Psychology: Papers, Posters and Presentations*, 3rd edition. Wiley-Blackwell. (~\$59.95+)

Publication Manual of the American Psychology Association (2020, 7th Edition).
Costs \$45-65 depending on format.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

In this course you will be proposing an honors thesis, undertaking the research for it, making a research poster, and writing your thesis. In the lectures, you will receive additional information intended to help guide your thesis work and you will be making presentations about your research proposal. At the end of the academic year the final thesis will be marked by the thesis supervisor and a second reader. The second reader is selected by the course coordinator and is familiar with the general topic area of the thesis.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon successful completion of the thesis course, students will be able to carry out an original research project from beginning to end. The student is expected to play a major role in all phases of the thesis including the conceptualization of ideas, the review of relevant psychological literature and theories, preparation of the method and materials, data collection and analysis, and write-up of the thesis using APA guidelines. Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Review and synthesize relevant psychological research literature and theory to formulate an original research hypothesis.
2. Apply their understandings of research methods to design and implement a methodologically sound research project.
3. Apply knowledge and understanding of statistical techniques to appropriately analyze and interpret collected data.

4. Effectively communicate research to individuals from a variety of settings (e.g., faculty, peer colleagues, community) using a variety of presentation techniques (e.g., oral presentations, poster presentations, written presentations).
5. Implement the stylistic guidelines of the APA manual in all forms of communication.
6. Consider and apply key aspects of ethics in research to produce a research ethics protocol that meets the institutional criteria required for conducting ethical research.
7. Develop productive and collaborative networks with peer colleagues, other students, and faculty; students demonstrate this by working effectively with faculty supervisors, attending class and showing their engagement in their own and their peers' learning through meaningful, respectful, and productive discussions.

FORMAT AND EXPECTATIONS

This course follows a seminar format designed to foster active participation and collaboration. Research is most effective as a shared, cooperative process, and students are expected to support one another in developing their thesis projects. Class sessions will involve presentations and group discussions intended to be constructive and collegial.

Active engagement is essential, not only for success in this course, but also as preparation for graduate studies and future scholarly work. Participation in seminar discussions, providing and receiving feedback, and learning to articulate and defend ideas are key skills for academic and professional growth. Students are expected to attend all classes, come prepared, and contribute meaningfully to discussions. Excessive absences may result in a requirement to withdraw from the course, following appropriate warning from the instructor.

EVALUATION

Date	Assignment	Value:
On-going	Class Reflections	5%
Oct	Ethics Application	5%
Nov – Jan	Thesis Presentation	15%
December	Written Introduction	12%
February	Written Method	8%
March	Thesis Poster	15%
April	Final Thesis	40%

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

Ethics Protocol: A written ethics protocol will be reviewed and graded by the course instructor. The course coordinator will make recommendations and forward applications to the King's Research Ethics Committee. Please note that protocols can be handed in before the due date, and they will be reviewed as soon as possible by the course instructor to expedite the process. This protocol will consist of a brief description of the procedural aspects of your proposed thesis study, followed by a detailed consideration of how you will deal with ethical research concerns.

There will be a class meeting in September to discuss the format. All students are required to hand in an ethics review protocol (even if the research has been approved by other ethics review boards). **THE ETHICS PROTOCOL MUST BE APPROVED PRIOR TO ANY DATA COLLECTION.** The first draft will be graded and is worth 5% of your final grade in the course.

Thesis Talks: During the year, each student will give one presentation that combines your introduction and methods. These will be scheduled throughout November-January, with up to 4 per class. This presentation will be graded by the course instructor and be worth 15% of your final grade in the course. The format and information for presentations will be provided in class.

Preliminary Written Thesis Introduction and Method Section: A preliminary written version of your thesis introduction is due on the last day of class in the Fall term and will be graded by the course instructor. This paper is worth 12% of your final grade in the course. **Academic consideration for this introduction paper requires submission of formal supporting documentation.**

A class meeting will be held in October to review the expectations for the preliminary introduction. Students may revise and resubmit the introduction in January. The revised submission can improve the original introduction grade by up to 5 percentage points (e.g., 75% to 80%).

A preliminary written version of your thesis method section is due in February and will also be graded by the course instructor. This method paper is worth 8% of your final grade. Students should follow the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (7th Edition), when preparing all versions of their written thesis, including the preliminary introduction and method.

Thesis Poster Sessions: Students will present their completed thesis research in poster format. Students will be expected to give an oral summary of their poster and answer any questions about their poster during the poster session. Precise details about poster format and presentations will be given in class. The thesis second reader will evaluate the poster, which is worth 15% of the student's final course grade.

Final Thesis Submission: Final theses are worth 40% of your grade. Please submit a PDF version via Brightspace with the following title "Firstname_Lastname_2026-27". These will be distributed to your thesis supervisor and Carter Library. **Academic consideration for this final thesis requires submission of formal supporting documentation.**

SCHEDULE OF ASSIGNMENTS

All students are expected to complete written assignments and presentations by the scheduled deadlines. Extensions or rescheduling will be granted only for religious (notified during the first week of class), medical, or compassionate reasons, supported by appropriate documentation.

Formal documentation (such as a medical certificate) is required for academic consideration requests related to the Written Introduction and Final Thesis. For other assignments, students may submit one self-attested request per term without formal documentation.

It is the student's responsibility to inform the course instructor **before** the due date and to provide acceptable documentation when required. Please choose your presentation date carefully, as there is some flexibility when selecting dates. You may only change your presentation date by swapping with a willing classmate. Assignments cannot be rewritten or re-weighted after submission. Retroactive requests for grade changes due to medical or compassionate reasons will not be considered.

COURSE EXPECTATIONS

Student Participation

Students are required to attend **each** meeting and to play an active role in class discussions and student presentations. Relevant, thoughtful and supportive comments/questions during the student presentations and other discussion topics are expected. Please be respectful during student presentations and discussions, this means paying attention and not working on other things. After each class you will complete a one-page handwritten reflection. These will be graded only on a pass/fail basis and will be worth 5% of your grade.

Technology Requirements

Access to the following Technology is required: Stable high-speed internet connection, microphone and webcam, and a quiet place to take part in zoom meetings and/or office hours. Office hours will be held online.

In Person and Online behaviour and intellectual property statement

- No recording of lectures or tutorials in person or online without the explicit consent of the Professor is grounds for academic discipline. This includes AI transcription, note-taking, or lecture-summary applications.
- 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.
- 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 in person or online are expected to be done by the student registered in this course, following the instructions outlined by the Assignment.
- Any remote learning sessions for this course will be recorded. The data captured during these recordings may include your image, voice recordings, chat logs and personal identifiers (name displayed on the screen). The recordings will be used for educational purposes related to this course, including evaluations. The recordings may be disclosed to other individuals participating in the course for their private or group study purposes. Students are not permitted to record any on-line meetings or classes.

TENATIVE CLASS SCHEDULE

DATE	TOPIC	READING
September 10	Introduction and Overview	
September 17	Research Ethics and Writing the Ethics Protocol <i>*Download and review the ethics application</i>	Chapter 19
September 24	Thesis Resources Library to present <i>*Bring research question</i>	Chapters 3, 4, 5
October 1	Writing and Presenting your Introduction and Method <i>*Review two papers published by your supervisor. Be prepared to discuss the introduction and method structure.</i>	Chapters 1, 2, 6, 7, 11, 12, 17
October 8	<i>Ethics Due *no class*</i>	
October 15	<i>Fall Reading Week</i>	
October 22	Grad School Panel Presentation, Q&A	
October 29	Applying for Funding Panel Presentation, Q&A	
November 5	Thesis Proposal Presentations 1	
November 12	Thesis Proposal Presentations 2	<i>Draft introduction to advisor</i>
November 19	Thesis Proposal Presentations 3	
November 26	Introduction Work <i>*no class*</i>	
December 3	<i>Introduction Due *no class*</i>	
January 7	Introduction feedback, class reminders	
January 14	Thesis Proposal Presentations 4	
January 21	Thesis Proposal Presentations 5	
January 28	Thesis Proposal Presentations 6	<i>Draft methods to advisor</i>
February 4	Thesis Proposal Presentations 7 (only if needed)	
February 11	<i>Method Due *no class*</i>	

February 18	<i>Winter Reading Week</i>	
February 25	Results, Discussion and Poster Presentations	Chapter 13, 14, 16
March 4	Career Workshop	
March 11	Thesis Work - <i>*no class meeting*</i>	
March 18	Thesis Work - <i>*no class meeting*</i>	
March 25	<i>Poster Day Presentations</i>	
April 8	<i>Final Thesis Due</i>	

FURTHER COURSE INFORMATION

1. Working with your Thesis Supervisor

It is strongly recommended that you schedule regular, weekly meetings with your supervisor (e.g., after thesis class each week). Weekly meetings, especially in the Fall, will help ensure the timely completion of all phases of your thesis. Your thesis supervisor is there to support you and provide guidance on all stages of your project (e.g., ethical issues, design considerations, data analysis, and written sections).

Supervisors often have many demands on their time. In order to ensure you receive timely feedback on your written work, you must submit drafts well in advance. For example, your ethics protocol, written introduction, method section, and poster should be provided to your supervisor ***at least two weeks*** before they are due to the course instructor.

It is your responsibility to ensure that your supervisor has an opportunity to give feedback. At the beginning of the year, it is helpful to work with your supervisor to create a timeline for each assignment. Part of your final grade will include an assessment of your ability to meet supervisor deadlines. If you encounter challenges scheduling regular meetings or receiving feedback, please consult the course instructor.

2. Completion of Assignments and Late Penalties

All assignments in this course must be submitted by their due dates to successfully pass. If you need an extension or academic consideration, formal supporting documentation, such as a medical certificate, is required for the Written Introduction and the Final Thesis.

For other assignments, you are allowed one request per term without formal documentation by submitting a self-attestation. You must request academic consideration as soon as possible and no later than 48 hours after the missed or late assignment.

If you do not have an approved extension, late assignments will receive a penalty of 5% per day, including weekends and holidays.

Failing to complete assignments or meet deadlines without approved academic consideration may result in not passing the course. If you need help or want to request academic consideration, please contact the Academic Advising office in your Faculty.

3. Academic Integrity: Plagiarism & Generative AI

Plagiarism is a major academic offense. All work submitted must be your own and must follow appropriate citation and referencing standards.

Students are **not permitted** to use generative AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT, paraphrasing software, or translation tools) to **write, paraphrase, revise, or edit** any part of their thesis assignments. This includes using AI to generate or reword paragraphs, restructure drafts, or create summaries. Submitting AI-generated or AI-assisted writing is considered an academic offense and is subject to academic discipline.

However, students **may use AI tools for early-stage brainstorming or to generate high-level outlines** to support their thinking, for example, to explore possible research questions or understand the structure of an introduction. Any content generated must be critically evaluated and **not copied or paraphrased** into written assignments. Students may also use AI to check for APA formatting in references or statistics. Students may also use spelling and grammar check tools (e.g., Word Editor, Grammarly) to identify and correct typographical errors. Students who use AI tools for idea generation must ensure that all final written work reflects their own critical thinking and original writing.

For more information, please refer to *Scholastic Discipline* under the Senate Policy on Academic Rights and Responsibilities:

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

For all major written assignments in this course (including the ethics protocol, introduction, method, and final thesis), students are required to confirm the following:

“I confirm that the work submitted is entirely my own and was completed without the assistance of generative AI or paraphrasing tools. I understand that unauthorized use of AI tools is an academic offense.”

4. Use of Psychology Labs (TBA)

Psychology labs are located in SA050, SA052, SA054, and in the modular building. Students may use these spaces for data collection, interviews, and thesis-related meetings. To request access or book a space, please contact the course instructor.

5. Honors Thesis Library

Copies of all Honours Theses submitted from 2020-current are all on our Brightspace page. Prior to 2019 are available for borrowing. Students may sign out a thesis for short-term use and must return it promptly. Please contact the course instructor for access and borrowing procedures.

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.