

**PSYC\*1500: Foundational Skills for Psychology  
Course Outline, WINTER 2025**

**General Information**

**Course Title:** Foundational Skills for Psychology

**Course Description:**

This course is designed to help Psychology majors optimize their learning in the Psychology program and beyond. The primary focus of this course is on individual skill development with respect to academic learning, critical thinking, written communication, career planning, among other key areas related to the discipline of psychology. This course adopts a lecture and a seminar-based format to augment learning and apply course content in an experiential manner. This also includes guest lectures with key experts to facilitate student learning.

**Credit Weight:** 0.5

**Academic Department (or campus):** Psychology (main campus)

**Semester Offering:** Winter 2025

**Class Schedule and Location:**

**Lectures:** Mondays 5:30 PM - 6:50 PM ROZH 101

**Seminars:** Each student is registered in one seminar/lab. It is important that you attend the seminar for which you are registered.

**Final Exam:** None (Final Paper instead)

**Instructor Information**

Instructor Name: Lisa Fiksenbaum, PhD

Instructor Email: [lfiksenb@uoguelph.ca](mailto:lfiksenb@uoguelph.ca)

Office Hours: By appointment

**General Guidelines:**

- It is possible that some emails that are not from a university address (e.g., @hotmail.com) may be treated as spam. The university expects you to check your U of Guelph email account regularly and use it to communicate with you.
- Be sure to include your full name and student number in the body of the email.
- As a general rule, I will do my best to answer emails within 2 business days. I do not check or answer emails on Saturdays or Sundays.
- Check the course materials (e.g., the syllabus, course website), to see if the answer is already provided.
- Send your email well in advance of when a response is required. If you email me the night before the assignment is due, I will not be able to respond in a timely manner.
- Follow-up within 3-7 days if a response has not been received, but not any sooner.

**GTA Coordinators:**

Mohamed Hassan [mhasa06@uoguelph.ca](mailto:mhasa06@uoguelph.ca)  
 Adia Stone [adiia@uoguelph.ca](mailto:adiia@uoguelph.ca)

**Seminar Leaders:**

Seminar Section	Day & Time	Teaching Assistant	E-mail
SEC #1:	M 1:00 PM - 2:20 PM	Jasmine Singh	<a href="mailto:jsingh29@uoguelph.ca">jsingh29@uoguelph.ca</a>
SEC #2:	M 10:00 AM - 11:20 AM	Anita Sikic	<a href="mailto:asikic@uoguelph.ca">asikic@uoguelph.ca</a>
SEC #3:	M 11:30 AM - 12:50 PM	Anita Sikic	<a href="mailto:asikic@uoguelph.ca">asikic@uoguelph.ca</a>
SEC #4:	M 8:30 AM - 9:50 AM	Connor Hill	<a href="mailto:chill13@uoguelph.ca">chill13@uoguelph.ca</a>
SEC #5:	T 10:00 AM - 11:20 AM	Ariella Golden	<a href="mailto:ariella@uoguelph.ca">ariella@uoguelph.ca</a>
SEC #6:	T 1:00 PM - 2:20 PM	Ingrid Dusper	<a href="mailto:idusper@uoguelph.ca">idusper@uoguelph.ca</a>
SEC #7:	T 11:30 AM - 12:50 PM	Heather Collett	<a href="mailto:collett@uoguelph.ca">collett@uoguelph.ca</a>
SEC #8:	T 2:30 PM - 3:50 PM	Heather Collett	<a href="mailto:collett@uoguelph.ca">collett@uoguelph.ca</a>
SEC #9:	T 8:30 AM - 9:50 AM	Katie Frankiewicz	<a href="mailto:kfrankie@uoguelph.ca">kfrankie@uoguelph.ca</a>
SEC #10:	W 5:30 PM - 6:50 PM	Genevieve Barlow	<a href="mailto:barlowg@uoguelph.ca">barlowg@uoguelph.ca</a>

**Course Content****Specific Learning Outcomes:**

Upon successful completion of this course, students should be able to demonstrate the following learning outcomes at the introductory level (in relation to the undergraduate learning outcomes of the Department of Psychology at the University of Guelph):

1. Identify a multitude of career paths available for psychology majors.
2. Demonstrate the ability to find psychological literature in primary and secondary sources.
3. Demonstrate a basic ability to clearly and accurately write about psychological material from different sources (e.g., textbook, media, journal articles, reviews).
4. Assess and critically evaluate the accuracy and impact of media coverage of psychological research.
5. Understand how to read and critically evaluate psychological material that appears in primary and secondary sources.
6. Understand mental health, mental illness, and stigma in relation to university students.
7. Understand how stress operates and how to manage it using psychological principles and approaches.
8. Apply psychological material to one's own life and the lives of others.
9. Identify key factors relevant to professionalism within the discipline of Psychology.
10. Identify key factors for effective group work within the discipline of Psychology.
11. Identify the skills necessary for success as a psychology major.

**Lecture Content:**

The table below provides an overview of lecture dates and content as well as required readings.

DATE	LECTURE TOPIC	READINGS	LEARNING OUTCOMES
Jan 6	Course Overview and Career Options	Lecture slides	1,8,9,11
Jan 13	Thinking Critically in Psychology	Lecture Slides	4,5,11
Jan 20	Mental Health and Mental Illness (Guest)	Dunn: Chps. 5 & 7 Lecture Slides	2,5,11
Jan 27	Source Material, Plagiarism, & APA Formatting (Guest – Writing Services)	Lecture Slides Dunn: Chp. 2	2,9,11
Feb 3	Narrowing Down a Research Topic (Guest – Learning and Curriculum Support)	Lecture Slides Dunn: Chp. 1	2,5,11
Feb 10	Effective note-taking (Guest – learning specialist)	Lecture Slides	6,8,11
Feb 17	Reading week – no class 😊	n/a	
Feb 24	Reading Comprehension in Psychology	Dunn: Chp. 3 Krause: 7.1 & 7.2 Lecture Slides	5,11
March 3	Stress & Coping	Krause: 14.2 & 14.3 Lecture Slides	7,8,11
March 10	Professionalism & Interviewing	Krause: 13.2 Lecture Slides	9,11
March 17	Effective Group Work	Krause: 13.1, P.535-537 Lecture Slides	8,9,10,11
March 24	Emotion, Motivation and Goal Setting	Krause: 11.3 & 11.4 Lecture Slides	3,11
March 31	Looking Ahead	Dunn: Chps. 4 & 9 Lecture Slides	1-11

**Seminars:**

Each student has one seminar per week over the semester. The table below provides an overview of the dates for your seminars, along with their focus.

WEEK OF	SEMINAR	SEMINAR FOCUS
Jan 6	No seminar	No seminars during the first (full) week of classes!
Jan 13	First	Working toward a career with a Psychology Degree
Jan 20	Second	Summarizing primary and secondary sources/Academic integrity
Jan 27	Third	Critically thinking about the media (Media assignment preparation)
Feb 3	Fourth	Narrowing down a research topic in psychology (Final paper preparation)
Feb 10	Fifth	Effect note-taking (Final paper preparation)
Feb 17	No seminar this week	Reading week
Feb 24	Sixth	Learning how to make an Infographic
March 3	Seventh	Identifying mental health resources & stress management techniques
March 10	Eighth	Presenting Infographics to Seminar
March 17	Ninth	Final paper discussion. Please come prepared with specific questions or sections of your paper you want to discuss.
March 24	Tenth	Final paper discussion. Please come prepared with specific questions or sections of your paper you want to discuss. Wrap-up!

**Course Assignments and Tests:***Major Assignments*

MAJOR ASSIGNMENT	DUE DATE	HOW TO SUBMIT	100%	LEARNING OUTCOMES
1. Quiz #1: APA Style	Feb. 3	CourseLink Quiz function	5%	11
2. Media Assignment	Feb. 10, 11:59pm	Drop-box	15%	2,3,4,5,11
3. Quiz #2: Lectures/readings Jan 27, Feb 10 & 24	March 3	CourseLink Quiz function	5%	11
4. Infographic Project	March 10, 11:59pm	Drop-box and Presentation during Seminar (#8)	15%	2,3,5,6,11

5. Quiz #3: Lectures/readings March 3, 10, 17 & 24	March 28	CourseLink Quiz function	5%	11
6. Final Paper	March 28, 11:59pm	Drop-box	35%	2,3,5,8,11

### *Minor Assignments*

MINOR ASSIGNMENT	DUE DATE	HOW TO SUBMIT	100%	LEARNING OUTCOMES
1. Planning a Psychology Degree	<u>Start</u> of 1 <sup>st</sup> seminar	In person (in seminar)	1%	1,11
2. Career Planning in Psychology	48 hours after 1st seminar	Drop-box (CourseLink)	3%	1,8,11
3. Summarizing Academic Work	<u>Start</u> of 2 <sup>nd</sup> seminar	In person (in seminar)	3%	5,6,11
4. Media Assignment Plan	End of 3 <sup>rd</sup> seminar (will also be accepted at start of 4 <sup>th</sup> )	In person (in seminar)	1%	2,4
5. Narrowing down Topic Sheet	<u>Start</u> of 5 <sup>th</sup> seminar	In person (in seminar)	2%	2,3,5,11
6. Planning for the Infographic Project	<u>Start</u> of 6 <sup>th</sup> seminar	Drop-box (CourseLink)	3%	2,3,5,11
7. Mental Health Resources	48 hours after 7 <sup>th</sup> Seminar	Drop-box (CourseLink)	3%	6,7,11
8. Stress Management Plan	<u>Start</u> of 8 <sup>th</sup> seminar	Drop-box (CourseLink)	2%	7,8,11
9. Stress Management Reflection	March 24 11:59pm	Drop-box (CourseLink)	2%	3,7,8,11

### **Important about assignment and tests:**

- “Dropbox” means that you submit the assignment online through a function in CourseLink.
- If it states “Start” of a particular seminar that means you work on it before the seminar and upload it to “Dropbox” at the start of seminar. If it states “End” of seminar, that means you work on it during seminar and upload it to “Dropbox” at the end of the seminar.
- Detailed information about each assignment is provided during lecture and/or seminar and in the content area of Course Link.

### **Policy on the Use of AI Tools**

- The use of AI tools, including but not limited to OpenAI’s ChatGPT, is strictly prohibited in this course. All work submitted must be your own original work. Using AI tools to generate content, assist with assignments, or complete tasks will be considered academic dishonesty and will be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the university's academic integrity policy.

### **Final paper weighting:**

The final paper, worth 35% of your grade. **Students are encouraged to start working on this paper early in the term.** If you would like feedback on your topic or proposed outline, please feel free to reach out to your seminar leader.

## **Course Resources**

### **Required Texts:**

Dunn, D. S. (2011). A short guide to writing about psychology, 3rd Edition. Boston: Pearson.

Krause, M., Corts, D., Smith, S. & Dolderman, D. (2015). An introduction to psychological science, Canadian Edition. Toronto: Pearson. (This is the text used in Psychology 1000). We will only be reading a few chapters, so if you do not already have this textbook, I recommend photocopying the few modules that you will need. This book is on reserve at our library.

### **Required Reading for Seminar 2**

Karatekin C. (2017). Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), Stress and Mental Health in College Students. *Stress and Health*. [doi.org/10.1002/smi.2761](https://doi.org/10.1002/smi.2761)

### **Other Resources:**

In addition to our required texts, content will be posted on CourseLink. This will occur throughout the term and in advance of important dates (e.g., seminars, assignment deadlines). Please be sure to check CourseLink regularly to ensure you do not miss this important material.

## **Course Policies**

### **Grading Policies**

Instructions and grading rubrics for all coursework outlined above will be posted prior to each component being assigned. Please check the syllabus for important dates and CourseLink regularly for updates.

### **Re-Grading of Assignments Policy**

Where a student is of the belief that an assignment has not been accurately graded, they are to pursue a 2-step course policy: 1) as soon as possible, meet with the original TA that graded the assignment, and if a student remains dissatisfied, 2) they can request from the instructor that another TA re-grade the assignment. Note that the student will be required to accept the re-grade, whether it be higher or lower.

### **Course Updates and Announcements**

As noted above, updates and announcements will be posted on CourseLink; please check regularly.

### **Lectures, Midterms, & Final Exams**

Classes follow a lecture format with discussion questions. They are designed to review, complement, and augment text material. Some material presented in lectures will NOT be covered in the textbook and vice versa.

**Students are responsible for text AND lecture material.**

To achieve the course learning outcomes, it is recommended that you keep pace with the assigned readings.

**Missed Assignments**

Students who miss an assignment must provide an original copy of appropriate documentation. Reasons for missed work can be found through the link on the next page (under Academic Consideration, Appeals, and Petitions). With appropriate documentation, reasonable extensions will be permitted, commensurate with the nature of the missed assignment and the extenuating circumstances. If you know you will miss an assignment ahead of time, please contact me in advance. I am usually understanding of extenuating circumstances. However, in line with our course's learning outcomes regarding professionalism and stress management, it is important to maintain a balanced and organized approach to completing all coursework (both now and over the duration of your degree). Thus, having several assignments due (in this course or others) and/or having other commitments does not constitute a reason for being granted an extension.

**Late Policy for Assignments**

Late submissions for all assignments worth 3% or less results in a grade of 0% for that assignment (unless there are extenuating circumstances as noted above). Late submissions for assignments worth 5% or more will receive a reduction of 5% per calendar day (note 1 minute late = 1 calendar day). After 10 calendar days, the grade will be 0% for that assignment. This does not apply to the online APA Quiz, which must be completed within the time frame noted above. If it is not, it will receive a zero.

**Missed Final Examinations**

According to University policy, final exams are rescheduled via Academic Counselling. Hence, you should contact them directly should you not be able to write the final exam. Please be sure to review your exam schedule prior to making travel arrangements for the end of term; this does not constitute a reason for missing a final exam according to University Policy.

**Course Policy regarding use of electronic devices and recording of lectures**

Recordings are solely for the use of the authorized student and may not be reproduced, or transmitted to others, without the express written consent of the instructor.

**Course Policy on Group Work:**

All exams are closed-book and are to be completed independently. All assignments (with the exception of the infographic project – see below) are also to be completed independently.

Infographic Project is completed in small groups (of approximately four students each). Although only one member of the group must submit the 'Infographic' and accessible Word document through CourseLink, every member of the group is responsible for ensuring that the assignment is submitted

on time, and everyone will be penalized if it is not. If more than one assignment is submitted, the most recent version that was submitted on time will be graded.

## **University Policies**

### **Academic Consideration**

When you find yourself unable to meet an in-course requirement because of illness or compassionate reasons, please advise the course instructor in writing, with your name, id#, and e-mail contact. See the academic calendar for information on regulations and procedures

Academic Consideration:

[Undergraduate Degree Regulations and Procedures < University of Guelph \(uoguelph.ca\)](http://uoguelph.ca)

### **Illness**

Medical notes will not normally be required for singular instances of academic consideration, although students may be required to provide supporting documentation for multiple missed assessments or when involving a large part of a course (e.g.. final exam or major assignment).

**Academic Consideration:**

[Academic Consideration, Appeals and Petitions](#)

### **Academic Misconduct**

The University of Guelph is committed to upholding the highest standards of academic integrity and it is the responsibility of all members of the University community, faculty, staff, and students to be aware of what constitutes academic misconduct and to do as much as possible to prevent academic offences from occurring.

University of Guelph students have the responsibility of abiding by the University's policy on academic misconduct regardless of their location of study; faculty, staff and students have the responsibility of supporting an environment that discourages misconduct. Students need to remain aware that instructors have access to and the right to use electronic and other means of detection. Please note: Whether or not a student intended to commit academic misconduct is not relevant for a finding of guilt. Hurried or careless submission of assignments does not excuse students from responsibility for verifying the academic integrity of their work before submitting it. Students who are in any doubt as to whether an action on their part could be construed as an academic offence should consult with a faculty member or faculty advisor.

The Academic Misconduct Policy is detailed in the Undergraduate Calendar:

[Academic Misconduct Policy](#)

### **Accessibility**

The University of Guelph is committed to creating a barrier-free environment. Providing services for students is a shared responsibility among students, faculty and administrators. This relationship is based on respect of individual rights, the dignity of the individual and the University community's shared commitment to an open and supportive learning environment. Students requiring service or



accommodation, whether due to an identified, ongoing disability or a short-term disability should contact Student Accessibility Services as soon as possible.

For more information, contact SAS at 519-824-4120 ext. 54335 or email [accessibility@uoguelph.ca](mailto:accessibility@uoguelph.ca) or the Student Accessibility Services Website

### **Course Evaluation Information**

Please refer to the Course and Instructor Evaluation Website .

### **Drop date**

For regulations and procedures for Dropping Courses, see the Schedule of Dates in the Academic Calendar.

Instructors must provide meaningful and constructive feedback, at minimum 20% of the final course grade, prior to the 40th class day. For courses which are of shorter duration, 20% of the final grade must be provided two-thirds of the way through the course.

Current Undergraduate Calendar

### **Additional Course Information**

Course instructors are allowed to use software to help in detecting plagiarism or unauthorized copying of student assignments. Plagiarism is one of the most common types of academic misconduct on our campus. Plagiarism involves students using the work, ideas and/or the exact wording of other people or sources without giving proper credit to others for the work, ideas and/or words in their papers. Students can unintentionally commit misconduct because they do not know how to reference outside sources properly or because they don't check their work carefully enough before handing it in. Whether or not a student intended to commit academic misconduct is not relevant for a finding of guilt. Hurried or careless submission of assignments does not excuse students from responsibility for verifying the academic integrity of their work before submitting it. Students who are in any doubt as to whether an action on their part could be construed as an academic offence should consult with a faculty member or faculty advisor.

*In this course, your instructor will be using Turnitin.com to detect possible plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration or copying as part of the ongoing efforts to prevent plagiarism in the College of Social and Applied Human Sciences.*

*A major benefit of using Turnitin is that students will be able to educate and empower themselves in preventing misconduct. In this course, you may screen your own assignments through Turnitin as many times as you wish before the due date. You will be able to see and print reports that show you exactly where you have properly and improperly referenced the outside sources and materials in your assignment.*