

COURSE OUTLINE – Winter 2026

PY1040(A3): Basic Psychological Processes – 3 (3-0-0) 45 Hours for 15 Weeks

Northwestern Polytechnic acknowledges that our campuses are located on Treaty 8 territory, the ancestral and present-day home to many diverse First Nations, Metis, and Inuit people. We are grateful to work, live and learn on the traditional territory of Duncan's First Nation, Horse Lake First Nation and Sturgeon Lake Cree Nation, who are the original caretakers of this land.

We acknowledge the history of this land, and we are thankful for the opportunity to walk together in friendship, where we will encourage and promote positive change for present and future generations.

INSTRUCTOR:	Dr. Denise Nowicki	PHONE:	780-539-2792
OFFICE:	C401	E-MAIL:	dnowicki@nwpolytech.ca
OFFICE HOURS:	Monday and Wednesday, 11:40 am – 12:40 pm, or by appointment		

CALENDAR DESCRIPTION: This first introductory course in psychology gives students an understanding of themselves and other people through the study of basic concepts, principles, theories, and methods used in the scientific study of behaviour. The course covers research methods in psychology, the biological bases of behaviour, neurophysiology, sensation, perception, learning, states of consciousness, memory and cognition.

PREREQUISITE(S):

None

COREQUISITE(S):

None

REQUIRED MATERIALS:

- Openstax textbook titled Psychology (2nd Edition) by Spielman, R. M., Jenkins, W. J., and Lovett, M. D (2021). (<http://cnx.org/content/col31502/1.4>)

DELIVERY MODE(S): On-Campus

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

As a result of taking this course, students will be able to

- demonstrate fundamental knowledge and comprehension of major concepts, theoretical perspectives and empirical findings in the areas of evolutionary psychology, brain and behavior, sensation and perception, consciousness, learning, memory, and cognition
- discuss how principles discussed in these areas enable the understanding of psychological phenomena
- incorporate sociocultural factors in their explanations of psychological phenomena
- demonstrate basic level understanding of various research methods used in scientific investigations of psychological phenomena
- apply their knowledge of basic research methodology to critically evaluate psychological research.

TRANSFERABILITY:

Please consult the Alberta Transfer Guide for more information. You may check to ensure the transferability of this course at the Alberta Transfer Guide main page <http://www.transferralberta.alberta.ca>

** For courses with alpha (letter) grading, a grade of D or D+ may not be acceptable for transfer to other post-secondary institutions. **Students are cautioned that it is their responsibility to contact the receiving institutions to ensure transferability**

EVALUATIONS:

- Midterm Exam – 38%
 - Chapter Quizzes – Course total of 24%
 - Final Exam – 38% (not cumulative)
1. **Midterm and Final Exams:** The midterm and final exam will be based on material covered in both the textbook and the lectures. The midterm is worth 38% and the final exam is also worth 38%. **The final exam will not be cumulative.**

Note on Midterm and Final Exam:

- During exams, you are not allowed to access course materials (i.e., no access to notes/books, whether in paper format or on devices). Accessing such materials will be considered cheating and will result in an automatic “0%” on the exam.

- Activities such as holidays or employment are not considered excusable reasons for missing any exam. Students who choose to miss an exam for employment, holiday, or other unexcused reasons may receive a “0%” on the exam.
- The date of the Midterm is noted on the Course Schedule/Tentative Timeline on this course outline. The Final Exam date is to be determined by the Registrar (note that the Final Exam period is from April 16 - 23, 2026 inclusive).

2. **Chapter Quizzes:** There will be 8 multiple-choice Chapter Quizzes, each comprised of questions taken from the textbook material. These are open-book quizzes to be completed **out of class**. Your Chapter Quizzes are worth 24% of your overall grade (3% per quiz). You will answer the questions of each Chapter Quiz by clicking the relevant link. These links are found under the “Quizzes” widget on the myClass page. **Note: you get 2 attempts for each Chapter Quiz. The system automatically keeps the highest grade.**

Deadlines for each Chapter Quiz are noted in 2 ways:

- this course outline (Course Schedule/Tentative Timeline)
- on the Quizzes link found on myClass.

Please write these deadlines on your calendar and set up myClass to send you reminders of upcoming deadlines. The links will **close at 11:59 (1 minute before midnight)** on the dates listed on the Course Schedule/Tentative Timeline (on this course outline) and **will not be reopened past the deadline. It is your responsibility to know the deadline of each quiz.** Do not ask for an extension if you miss a deadline.

NOTE: The Chapter Quizzes are generally due before I cover the material in class as they are designed to help prepare you for the lectures.

GRADING CRITERIA:

Please note that most institutions will not accept your course for transfer credit IF your grade is **less than C-**.

Grading Chart

Alpha Grade	4-point Equivalent	Percentage Guidelines	Alpha Grade	4-point Equivalent	Percentage Guidelines
A+	4.0	95-100	C+	2.3	67-69
A	4.0	85-94	C	2.0	63-66
A-	3.7	80-84	C-	1.7	60-62
B+	3.3	77-79	D+	1.3	55-59
B	3.0	73-76	D	1.0	50-54
B-	2.7	70-72	F	0.0	00-49

COURSE SCHEDULE/TENTATIVE TIMELINE:

Important Note: These **discussion topics may be modified and/or other topics may be added.**
Please always check myClass for the most up-to-date information.

Dates/Weeks	Topics	Required Readings	On-Line Chapter Quizzes Due 11:59 P.M.
First Day of Class	Course Overview and Introduction		
Week 2	Introduction to Psychology	Chapter 1	January 11
Week 3	Research Methods in Psychology	Chapter 2	January 18
Week 4 & 5	Biopsychology	Chapter 3	January 25
Week 6 & 8	States of Consciousness	Chapter 4	February 8

Week 7 February 16	Family Day – No Classes		
Week 7 February 17 - 20	Winter Break – No Classes		
March 2	MIDTERM	Chapters 1 - 4 and In-Class Discussions	
Week 9 & 10	Sensation and Perception	Chapter 5	March 1
Week 11 & 12	Learning	Chapter 6	March 15
Week 12 & 13	Thinking & Intelligence	Chapter 7	March 22
Week 14 & 15	Memory	Chapter 8	April 6
	Final Exam Scheduled by Registrar's Office	Chapters 5 - 8 and In-Class Discussions	

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES:

1. **Academic Performance:** The assigned readings and exercises for each class should be completed before attending that class, except for the first class. As this course depends heavily on in-class discussion, attendance at all sessions is required and is critical to the student's success in the course. In case of illness or emergency, notify me as soon as possible.

If you find yourself having difficulty in this course, please contact me immediately for assistance. If you simply want more discussion with me about any aspect of the course, please visit my office during office hours or at a more convenient pre-arranged time.

2. **Exam Accommodations:** Exam accommodations are used by any number of students who struggle with processing and comprehending printed material, learning, and/or concentration (either due to the condition itself, or the effects of the medication which is used to treat the condition). Accommodations can also be sought by students with conditions that include but are not limited to: mental health conditions, chronic illness, neurological disorders, visual disabilities, and motor disabilities.

If you require exam accommodations due to a disorder or condition, you must contact Accessibility Supports (in the Learning Commons (aka Library)). More information is available at

<https://libguides.nwpolytech.ca/learningcommons/AccessibilityServices>

Please note that when you contact an advisor, you will be asked to provide them with documentation supporting your request for accommodation. The advisors will inform me of your need for accommodation, and you will be responsible for arranging your exam session with Accessibility Supports at the scheduled exam time.

3. **Respectful Behavior:** It is expected that all students will display a professional attitude and behavior in the classroom. This includes reliability (e.g., arriving on time), respect for and cooperation with your fellow students and me, attention to questions and responses, determination to achieve first-class work while meeting deadlines, and constructive response to criticism.
4. **Missed Exams:** The date for midterm is included on the Course Schedule/Tentative Timeline on this course outline.

According to NWP policy, deferring a missed Midterm Exam is at the discretion of the instructor. In my courses, students who miss a midterm because of illness, emergency, or NWP obligation (verified) may write the midterm at a later date (set by me: I will choose a date that is mutually convenient for me and you). You will be required to provide documentation for your illness/emergency/NWP obligation.

When students miss the midterm for reasons that do not include verified illness, emergency, or NWP obligations, a "0%" is assigned to that midterm. Students who miss the midterm without explanation will receive a "0%" on the midterm.

Absences from a registrar-scheduled Final Exam fall under the NWP Examination Policy. It is the responsibility of the student to be informed about these policies prior to the final examination period:

If you miss the final exam due to illness, emergency or NWP obligation, you will be required to submit an application to the Registrar's office for permission to write a deferred exam and must do so within 48 hours of the scheduled exam time. You may defer the final exam for up to 20 days from the end of the examination period. You will be required to provide documentation for your illness.

STATEMENT ON ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT:

Academic Misconduct will not be tolerated. For a more precise definition of academic misconduct and its consequences, refer to the Student Rights and Responsibilities policy available at <https://www.nwpolytech.ca/about/polytechnic-leadership/policies-directory>.

**Note: all Academic and Administrative policies are available on the same page.

- Instructors reserve the right to use electronic plagiarism detection services on written assignments. **Instructors also reserve the right to ban the use of any form of electronics (cell phones, iPods, tablets, scanning pens, electronic dictionaries, etc.) during class and during exams.**
- Machine learning systems, commonly referred to as "AI," are useful tools, but must be used appropriately and with caution. Students are developing knowledge and skills and should not outsource these to machines. In this course, you are encouraged to consider how these systems can help you find information and refine the presentation of your thoughts, but you will also be required to demonstrate that you have verified this information and are responsible for what you present.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

- The format of each exam will be discussed in class.
- It is your responsibility to read each assigned chapter and assigned reading(s) (if any) before each class.
- Lectures will not always cover material in your chapters. Lectures will cover topics and include materials that are not covered by your textbook. It is therefore imperative that you attend every class as your exams will include materials from the lectures that are not covered by your textbook.
- It is expected that students will display a professional attitude and behaviour. These attitudes and behaviours are many and will be discussed in class. Any violation or misconduct may result in dismissal from the class.
- Please come and talk with me if you have concerns or you are experiencing difficulties that may have a negative impact on your academic performance. **I am here to support you towards the successful completion of this course.**