



DEPARTMENT OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

COURSE OUTLINE – FALL 2026

PY1040 (A2): 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. Renée Matte (she/her/elle)	PHONE: (780) 539 2994
OFFICE:	C403	E-MAIL: RMatte@nwpolytech.ca
OFFICE HOURS:	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.

DELIVERY MODE: In-Person (On-Campus)

PREREQUISITE(S)/COREQUISITE:	None
REQUIRED TEXT/RESOURCE MATERIALS:	This course will use an open textbook. Relevant readings will be posted on the course myClass page.
OPTIONAL TEXT/RESOURCE MATERIALS:	If you are interested in additional readings, any good introductory psychology textbook will suffice

Possible questions the course could answer for you include:

Does the way we
ask a question
change the
answer we get?

Are we born
with our traits or
do we learn
them?

Why do we
sometimes see
things that
aren't there?

Why can we
forget what we
walked into a
room to do?

LEARNING OUTCOMES: By the end of this course, you should (among other things) be able to:

- demonstrate fundamental knowledge and comprehension of major concepts, theoretical perspectives, and empirical findings in the areas of evolutionary psychology, brain and behaviour, sensation and perception, consciousness, learning, memory, and cognition.
- discuss how principles in these areas enable the understanding of psychological phenomena.
- demonstrate an understanding of various research methods used in scientific investigations of psychological phenomena.
- apply your knowledge of research methodology to critically evaluate psychological research.
- give practical examples from your own life as to how these concepts and principles have been at work to develop the persons you are now.

TRANSFERABILITY: Please consult the Alberta Transfer Guide for more information. You may check to ensure the transferability of this course at Alberta Transfer Guide at:

<https://transferalberta.alberta.ca/transfer-alberta-search/#/searchTypeStep>

** 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.**

GRADING CRITERIA:

Alpha Grade	4-point Equivalent	Percentage Guidelines	Alpha Grade	4-point Equivalent	Percentage Guidelines
A+	4.0	95-100	C+	2.3	66-69
A	4.0	90-94	C	2.0	63-65
A-	3.7	85-89	C-	1.7	60-62
B+	3.3	80-84	D+	1.3	55-59
B	3.0	75-79	D	1.0	50-54
B-	2.7	70-74	F	0.0	00-49

Note: *This grading criterion is specific to this course and differs from the general criteria.

EVALUATION OPTIONS:

OPTION A Midterms & Exam		OPTION B Assignments & Reflection	
Midterm 1	20%	Assignment 1	30%
Midterm 2	20%	Assignment 2	30%
Midterm 3	20%	Reflections	10%
Quizzes	8%	Take-home final exam	30%
Question creation	12%		
Final Exam	20%		

EVALUATION OPTIONS EXPLAINED:

OPTION A
Midterms (Sept. 28; Oct. 26; Nov. 18)
There will be three midterm examinations through the semester. Each midterm will focus specifically on two chapters and will feature multiple sections (i.e., multiple choice, fill in the blanks, short answer). You will be permitted to bring in 1 page of notes on a standard letter-sized paper (can be double sided). However, access to the internet and electronic devices (e.g., phones, laptops, tablets) will not be allowed. Additional details and specifics will be provided closer to each midterm date.
Quizzes (Throughout)
Almost every lecture will end with some quiz questions. To receive a point for the quiz you must answer 1 question correctly. Your course notes may be consulted before submitting your answers, but you are encouraged to think of a preliminary answer on your own. You can earn a maximum of 1 point per quiz. Answers to quiz questions can be submitted electronically (by email) until the end of the class day (11:59pm). The instructor will let you know once you have completed 8 quizzes.
Question Creation (due by Sept. 23; Oct. 21; Nov. 16; Dec. 9)
You will be asked to create your own multiple choice question on any of the material covered in the upcoming midterm. Question creations should include 1) the multiple choice question itself, 2) four possible choices, 3) the identification of the correct answer, and 4) a brief paragraph about how and why you created the question and selected your possible answer choices. Each submission will be worth 2%.
Final examination (Date TBD – Scheduled by the Registrar’s Office)
The final examination for this course will be in person and will take place during the designated exam period. The exam will be structured similarly to the midterms (i.e., multiple choice, fill in the blanks, short answer) and will also pertain only to two chapters. Similarly, you will be permitted to bring 1 page of notes. Additional details and specifics will be provided closer to the final examination date.

OPTION B
Assignment 1 (October 21)
In this first assignment, you will be tasked with designing your own hypothetical study. You will choose a research topic (in any area covered in this course), perform a brief literature review, formulate a research question, identify your variables, state a hypothesis, and outline your method. There will be a maximum length of 5 pages (double-spaced) but no minimum. Additional details are provided on our myClass page.
Assignment 2 (December 2)
In this assignment you will be tasked with finding a popular source of content (TED talk, podcast, new item, etc.) related to psychology and compare/contrast how the information presented in this format differs from how it is presented in an academic paper. Your assignment should be no more than 5 pages (double-spaced). Grading criteria and additional assignment details will be available on our myClass page.
Reflections (Throughout)
Throughout the course you will be presented with a variety of reflection questions to consider. Your write-ups should be a brief (1 page, single-spaced) exploration of your personal thoughts, opinions, key takeaways, or connections with the material. Each reflection is worth 2% (total of 5 for the semester) and can be submitted at any point until the last day of classes. Maximum of 1 reflection per chapter.
Final examination (TBD)
The take-home exam will be emailed to students and will be due on the same day as the course’s in-person final examination (date TBD). The final exam will be open book, however, neither collaborative work nor consultation of the internet is permitted . The exam will be cumulative and will feature short-answer and long-answer questions. More details will be discussed closer to the exam date.

TENTATIVE COURSE OUTLINE

Week	Topic	Reading
Sept. 2	Course Overview	Syllabus
Sept. 9	Introduction to Psychology	Chapter 1
Sept. 14	Introduction to Psychology (Cont.)	Chapter 1
Sept. 16	Research Methods in Psychology	Chapter 2
Sept. 21	Research Methods in Psychology (Cont.)	Chapter 2
Sept. 23	Biological Psychology	Chapter 3
Sept. 28	Midterm 1	Chapters 1 & 2
September 30: No Class, National Day for Truth and Reconciliation		
Oct. 5	Biological Psychology (Cont.)	Chapter 3
Oct. 7	States of Consciousness	Chapter 4
October 12: No Class, Thanksgiving		
Oct. 14	States of Consciousness (Cont.)	Chapter 4
Oct. 19	States of Consciousness (Cont.)	Chapter 4
Oct. 21	Assignment 1	N/A
Oct. 21	Sensation & Perception	Chapter 5
Oct. 26	Midterm 2	Chapters 3 & 4
Oct. 28	Sensation & Perception (Cont.)	Chapter 5
Nov. 2 & 4	Learning & Behaviour	Chapter 6
November 9 – 13: Fall Break, No Classes		
Nov. 16	Learning & Behaviour (Cont.)	
Nov. 18	Midterm 3	Chapters 5 & 6
Nov. 23 & 25	Memory	Chapter 7
Nov. 30	Memory (Cont.)	Chapter 7
Dec. 2	Assignment 2	N/A
Dec. 2	Thinking & Intelligence	Chapter 8
Dec. 7 & 9	Thinking & Intelligence (Cont.)	Chapter 8
In-Person Final Exam (Chapters 7-8) Take-Home Final Exam (Cumulative) To be Scheduled by the Registrar's Office - Dec. 13-19		

*Notes: Last day to add and/or drop Fall courses is September 14.

Please inform the instructor of your choice by Friday, September 18. A form is available on myClass. Once completed the form can be emailed to the instructor: RMatte@nwpolytech.ca

The last day to withdraw is November 27.

If you are aware of scheduling conflicts between any of the dates and your other commitments, make accommodations with the instructor as soon as possible.

If you find that you are having trouble completing the course requirements for any reason, please contact the instructor.

Do not wait until the end of the semester to ask for help, as by then it will then be too late.

COURSE POLICIES

CLASS ATTENDANCE: Lectures will be conducted in person, but attendance and participation will not be tracked. It is your responsibility to stay up to date with the course content and to make arrangements if you have to miss a class. Note that some course material, as well as the chapter quizzes, and the reflection questions/activities will only be presented in class.

EXTENSIONS AND MISSED EXAM: Extensions on the assignments will only be given with the instructor's advance permission. Opportunities to defer or postpone midterms or the final exam will require advance permission as well. Any extended absences should be supported by documented medical or compassionate reasons. If you find yourself unable to meet course requirements due to illness or compassionate reasons, please advise the instructor. If possible, this should be done in advance of the missed assignment, midterm, or exam. If this is not possible, then notification should be made as close to the due date and no longer than 3 days after.

GENERATIVE AI: NWP welcomes innovative and reliable uses of generative AI that respect human rights and democratic values. While the institution adopts technologies that support our operations, we understand that there are risks and limitations of generative AI and want to ensure responsible use.

It is essential to have human oversight when AI generates content, as AI results may include inaccuracies or biases from the data they were trained on. Generative AI outputs should not be assumed true, reliable, or ethical. They should not be used verbatim, treated as the sole source, or solely relied on for making final decisions.

In this course, students may use AI tools within specified boundaries. It is important to follow these guidelines to ensure responsible use and to avoid any academic misconduct. The following is a list of acceptable and unacceptable uses of AI in this course.

ACCEPTABLE USES OF AI include: to assist in gathering and organizing research materials for assignments; for improving grammar, spelling, and overall writing clarity; To translate text to aid in understanding for students who feel more comfortable with learning material in different languages.

UNACCEPTABLE USES OF AI include: to generate the main content of assignments or submitted written work; to generate questions and practice tests; to complete assignments or the take-home exam; to write personal reflections, activity summaries, or opinion pieces.

AI REFERENCING: To ensure transparency and academic integrity, students must include an AI Reference List in any submitted work where AI was used.

This list should detail the following: the name of the AI tool used; the specific functions the AI tool assisted with; any relevant parameters or settings used; the exact prompts or queries used in the AI tool; a brief explanation of how the AI tool contributed to the assignment.

STATEMENT ON ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

Northwestern Polytechnic (“NWP” or “the Polytechnic”) believes that all students have certain rights that protect and support them through their education. Additionally, students are expected to take responsibility for their conduct during their period of study at NWP, including abiding by the rules, policies, and regulations of the Polytechnic.

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/leadership/policies/display?ID=69>

Other Academic and Administrative policies are available here:
<https://www.nwpolytech.ca/leadership/policies>

STUDENTS’ RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Manage, schedule, and prioritize your learning! Be prepared to learn by regularly attending and being present in class, completing required readings, taking adequate notes, making arrangements for missed classes, and checking myClass regularly for deadlines and important announcements, updates, etc.
2. Contact Accessibility Supports (in the Learning commons) to set up academic accommodations when required. More information is available at: <https://libguides.nwpolytech.ca/learningcommons/AccessibilityServices>
 - a. Please note that when you contact an advisor, you will be asked to provide them with documentation supporting your request for accommodation.
 - b. You will be responsible for arranging your exam session with Accessibility Supports at the scheduled exam time.
3. Promptly communicate with the instructor if any problems arise that compromise your effective completion of the course.
4. Complete course requirements with honesty and integrity.
5. Prepare to learn with an open mind. Display a professional attitude and behaviour in the class. Be respectful of differing ideas. Use a non-judgmental stance when engaging with course material, yourself, other students, and the instructor.

INSTRUCTOR’S RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Provide a curriculum that exposes students to foundational, current, and topical issues in the areas of evolutionary psychology, brain and behaviour, sensation and perception, consciousness, learning, memory, and cognition.
2. Create a safe, inclusive, open, and judgment-free environment where individuals feel comfortable being themselves and sharing or expressing their opinions and points of view.
3. Be prepared for lectures, class discussions, midterms, and student meetings and available to communicate about course content, evaluations, or course questions.
4. Provide details regarding how evaluations will be determined and prompt feedback on evaluative components of the course.
5. Respond to student emails promptly and provide information/support if problems arise.

STUDENT RESOURCES

- Seeking support sooner rather than later is often beneficial. There are many helpful resources available on campus for you to access, below is a list of some of those options.

Accessibility & accommodations	Student accessibility	https://libguides.nwpolytech.ca/learningcommons/AccessibilityServices
	Available supports	https://libguides.nwpolytech.ca/learningcommons/AccessibilityServices/supports
	Accessible study spaces	https://libguides.nwpolytech.ca/learningcommons/AccessibilityServices/studyspaces
Academic support	Academic advising	https://www.nwpolytech.ca/student-life/academic-advising
	Learning commons	https://www.nwpolytech.ca/student-life/learning-commons
	Read & Write program	https://libguides.nwpolytech.ca/learning_online/readandwrite
Technical support	Information Technology (IT)	https://www.nwpolytech.ca/departments/information-technology
	Financial services	https://www.nwpolytech.ca/financial-services
Personal wellness	NWP mental health services	https://www.nwpolytech.ca/mental-health-services
	Indigenous services	https://www.nwpolytech.ca/student-life/indigenous-services
	Alberta health services	https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/findhealth/facility.aspx?id=1000583
	Community matters	https://www.nwpolytech.ca/community

- For a more comprehensive list of the services available to students on the Northwestern Polytechnic campus please visit <https://www.nwpolytech.ca/student-life>
- If you become concerned about (or would simply like to improve) your performance in this class at any point, please reach out to the course instructor as soon as you can.
- Finally, make sure you are prioritizing your own health and well-being throughout the semester and utilizing the supports at your disposal in a preventative manner when possible.