

DEPARTMENT Humanities and Social Sciences

COURSE OUTLINE - Fall 2026

PY3500(A2): Psychological Disorders of Childhood and Adolescence - 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:	Wednesdays 8:30 am – 9:30 am, or by appointment.		

CALENDAR DESCRIPTION: Students will examine the developmental, cognitive, biological, and behavioural processes involved in the development of various psychological disorders of children and adolescents with emphasis on causality, assessment, and treatment.

PREREQUISITE(S):

Complete the following:

- PY1040 Basic Psychological Processes (3)
- PY1050 Social and Individual Behaviour (3)

COREQUISITE(S):

None

REQUIRED MATERIALS:

- Israel, A.C., Malatras, J.W., & Wicks-Nelson, R. (2020). Abnormal Child and Adolescent Psychology (9th ed.). Routledge.
- Other readings as assigned.

DELIVERY MODE(S): On-Campus

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

- Identify the various research methods for studying and understanding child and adolescent psychopathology.
- Describe major concepts and theoretical perspectives in the causes of psychological disorders of children and adolescents.
- Identify and describe the symptoms associated with each disorder based on the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders – 5th Edition Text Revision (DSM-5 - TR) criteria and behavioral/research models of diagnosis.
- Summarize the process of diagnosis and associated concerns.
- Identify and describe how cognitive, social, and emotional factors impact the development and the treatment of the various disorders.
- Explain the role of the biology and the environment in the causality, sustainability, and treatment of psychological disorders.
- Explain formal and informal assessment strategies used in the psychological assessment of children and adolescents.

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.transferalberta.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:

	Content Covered	Percent
Exam 1	Textbook Chapters 1, 2, 3, 5, and in-class discussions	20%
Exam 2	Textbook Chapters 6 – 10, and in-class discussions	20%
Final Exam	Textbook Chapters 11 – 13, FASD, and in-class discussions	30%
Research Paper	Topic related to psychological disorders of childhood and adolescence.	30%

- **In-Term Exams and Final Exam:** The In-Term Exams and Final Exam will be based on material covered in **both the textbook and the lectures**. The in-term exams are worth 20% each and the final exam is worth 30%. The final exam is **not** cumulative.
- **Research Paper:** After consultation with the instructor, you shall select a particular topic related to psychological disorders of childhood and adolescence. This research paper will be based on a minimum of eight peer-reviewed articles published in psychological journals. The paper should be approximately 3000 words in length (typed and double-spaced). The word limit does not include the title page and a reference page, both of which are to be included in your submission. Papers must be submitted to the assigned drop-box in myClass by 11:59 pm November 22nd and written in current APA format (7th Edition). Please ensure that spelling, grammar, and sentence structure are correct. Plagiarism will be treated as a serious academic offence.

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 dates and discussion topics may be modified, and other topics may be added.
Please **check myClass regularly** for the most up-to-date information.

Schedule	Textbook and Assigned Readings	Exams
Sept. 4 & 11	Chapters 1 & 2: Introduction & The Developmental Psychopathology Perspective	
<i>September 7</i>	<i>Labour Day, No Classes</i>	
Sept. 14 & 18	Chapter 3: Biological and Environmental Contexts of Psychopathology	
Sept. 21 & 25	Chapter 5: Classification, Assessment, and Intervention	
Sept. 28 & Oct. 5	Chapter 10: Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder	
October 2	Exam One Chapters 1, 2, 3, & 5 and In-Class Discussions	Exam 1
October 9	Chapter 9: Conduct Problems	
<i>Oct. 12</i>	<i>Thanksgiving, No Classes</i>	
Oct. 16 & 19	Chapter 6: Anxiety and Related Disorders	
Oct. 23 & 26	Chapter 7: Trauma and Stressor-Related Disorders	
Oct. 30 & Nov. 2	Chapter 8: Mood Disorders	
Nov. 6	Exam Two Chapters 6 – 10 and In-Class Discussions	Exam 2
<i>Nov. 9 - 13</i>	<i>Reading Week, No Classes</i>	
Nov. 16 & 20	Chapter 11: Communication and Learning Disorders	
November 22	Research Paper Due	
Nov. 23 & 27	Chapter 12: Intellectual Disability (Intellectual Developmental Disorder)	
Nov. 30 & Dec. 4	Chapter 13: Autism Spectrum Disorder and (Childhood Onset) Schizophrenia	
December 7	Assigned Readings: Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD)	
Dec. 12 - 19	Final Exam Chapters 11 – 13, FASD, and In-Class Discussions: Scheduled by Registrar	Final Exam

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES:

- **Academic Performance:** The assigned readings for each class must 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 your 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.

- **In-Term and Final Exams:**
 - 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 dates of the In-Term exams are noted on the Course Schedule/Tentative Timeline on this Course Outline. The Final Exam date is to be determined by the Registrar in Student Services (note that the Final Exam period is from December 12 - 19, inclusive).
- **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(s). The advisors will inform me of your need for accommodation(s), and you will be responsible for arranging your exam sessions with Accessibility Supports at the scheduled exam times.

- **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.
- **Missed Exams:** Exam dates are included on Course Schedule/Tentative Timeline on this course outline.

According to NWP policy, deferring a missed exam is at the discretion of the instructor. In my courses, students who miss an exam because of illness, emergency, or NWP obligation (verified) may write the exam at a later date (set by me - I will choose a date that is mutually convenient for me and the student). You will be required to provide documentation regarding the reason for your absence.

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

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 regarding the reason for your absence.

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.**

All written work submitted for this course, unless otherwise noted, requires academic referencing in the most recent APA Style (7th Edition). This includes both in-text citations and a source list ("References" listed on a separate page at the end of your document).

In-text referencing (citations) additionally requires specific page references for all paginated sources (sources with page numbers or in documents with identifiable page numbers, such as pdfs). APA does not normally require this unless it is a direct quotation, **but this course requires it for all citations.**

Works not meeting these requirements will be returned to the student ungraded. Students will be permitted to revise the work subject to a 10% penalty for the first revision and a 25% penalty for the second revision. Revised work which still fails to meet the requirements after a second revision will receive a 0% grade.

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 cover topics that are **not** addressed in your textbook. It is therefore imperative that you attend every class as your **exams will include content from the lectures that are not covered in 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.