

**Faculty of Health  
Department of Psychology  
PSYC 3590 3.0 Section: A  
DRUGS AND BEHAVIOUR  
Thursdays 14:30-17:30  
Vanier College 135 (in-person)  
Fall 2025**

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**Instructor and T.A. Information**

Instructor: **Jeffrey Wardell, Ph.D.**, Associate Professor, Department of Psychology

Office Hours: By appointment (also available for quick questions before class)

Email: [jwardell@yorku.ca](mailto:jwardell@yorku.ca)\* (see “communication with Instructor/TAs” below)

<b>T.A.</b>	<b>Sophie Coelho</b>	<b>Kyra Farrelly</b>
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<b>Contact for</b>	Last name A to F	Last name G to Z
<b>Office Hours</b>	TBD	TBD

**\*Communication with Instructor/TAs**

All general questions about course materials, content, tests, assignments, class activities, etc., should be posted on the General Q&A Forum on E-Class (see Course Website, below). Please do not send these types of questions via email directly to the instructor or TAs. This will make it easier for us to track and respond to questions, and the questions and answers will be shared with all students for the benefit of the whole class. We will strive to respond to questions posted to the E-Class Q&A within 2 business days, but response times could vary based on the volume of questions. If you email a question to the instructor/TA that should be posted to the discussion board, you will receive a reply asking you to post the question to the Q&A forum.

Please **DO** use email to communicate things that are specific to you (e.g., accommodation needs, missed/late tests/assignments, scheduling a one-on-one appointment). Please send emails about accommodation needs directly to the instructor. Email your TA directly regarding missed/late tests/assignments (see Missed Exams/Late Assignments) below. All emails must include “PSYC 3590” in the subject line, and please include your student number in your email. Emails should come from your yorku email address.

**Office Hours**

To discuss course material or discuss your grade on a test or assignment, please make every effort to attend the office hour of the TA who is assigned to you based on the first letter of your last name (see table above). If you cannot attend this time, then you may attend the office hour of the other TA if that is more convenient. Due to the large size of the class, TAs will not be able to accommodate individual appointments with every student, so every effort should be made to attend the regularly scheduled office hours if you need to meet with the TA.

**Course Prerequisite(s): Course prerequisites are strictly enforced**

- HH/PSYC 1010 6.00 (Introduction to Psychology)
- Completed at least 54 earned credits

**Course Credit Exclusions**

Please refer to [York Courses Website](#) for a listing of any course credit exclusions.

**Course website: [eClass](#)**

Most course materials will be available on the course E-Class site, unless otherwise indicated by the instructor. The site will be your central access point for course materials such as the course outline, assignment instructions/submission, discussion forum, and lecture slides and recordings. You will be expected to check the E-Class website regularly for new content and updates. We recommend you subscribe to receive notifications when new content is available.

Use of materials posted in E-Class: All materials posted to E-Class (e.g., lecture recordings, lecture slides) are for your personal use for educational purposes only. Students may download a copy of lectures for their own personal use but should not distribute these outside of class or post lecture slides or recordings to external websites or social media. These acts may violate copyright, intellectual property, and/or other information privacy laws (see Course Materials Copyright Information and Information on Lecture Recordings, below).

**Course Description**

This course will provide you with an introduction to the psychological study of drug use. This exciting field cuts across several sub-disciplines of psychology including clinical psychology, social psychology, cognitive psychology, psychopharmacology, and neuroscience. The course will focus on cultivating both an understanding of drug use behaviour (e.g., how and why people use drugs) as well as an understanding of the effects that drugs have on behaviour (e.g., how drugs produce their psychoactive effects). Topics include historical and cultural perspectives on drug use, epidemiology of drug use, methods of drug administration, neurochemical actions, pharmacological effects, theories of addiction, and prevention and treatment, all viewed from a bio-psycho-social perspective. Major categories of drugs will be covered, with an in-depth focus on the most widely used substances (e.g., alcohol, cannabis). Contemporary issues related to substance use (e.g., cannabis legalization, the opioid epidemic) will be discussed.

**Program Learning Outcomes**

Upon completion of this course, students should be able to:

1. Demonstrate in-depth knowledge of the psychology of drugs and behaviour.
2. Articulate trends in the psychology of drugs and behaviour.
3. Express psychological knowledge of drugs and behaviour in written form.
4. Describe and explain limits to generalizability of research findings in drugs and behaviour.
5. Demonstrate ability to relate information in the psychology of drugs and behaviour to own and others' life experiences.

## Specific Learning Objectives

1. Students will learn about the effects of major classes of drugs from a bio-psycho-social perspective, including how each type of drug acts on the brain; how each drug affects cognition, affect, and behaviour; how social and contextual factors influence the experience of a drug; and how drugs impact mental and physical health as well as social functioning. Students should be able to compare and contrast the effects of different classes of drugs by the end of the course.
2. Students will learn about the bio-psycho-social factors that predict drug use behaviour (including demographic, genetic, psychological, and sociocultural correlates of drug use) and will gain knowledge of trends in drug use over time.
3. Students will apply critical thinking skills to examine and discuss controversial issues related to drug use.
4. Students will be able to articulate the strengths and limitations of various research methods commonly used to study drug use.
5. Students will cultivate an empathic understanding of people who use drugs by considering how drug use and addiction affects people's lives.

## Required Text

Hart, C. L., Ksir, C., Hebb, A. L. O., Gilbert, R. W., & Black, S. C. (2023). *Drugs, behaviour, and society*, 4<sup>th</sup> Canadian Edition. McGraw Hill.

\*NOTE: An electronic version of the textbook can be purchased at a special discount directly through the eClass page for the course as part of the "Day 1 Digital Program." You will not be charged a fee for the e-book unless you choose to "Opt-In" using the link on the eClass page. Information about this program and how to "opt-in" to purchase your e-book through eClass can be found at the following link: [https://www.bookstore.yorku.ca/site\\_Day1Digital.asp](https://www.bookstore.yorku.ca/site_Day1Digital.asp)

For students who prefer a print copy of the textbook, print copies will be available in the York Bookstore.

*Note on overlap between textbook and lectures:* The lectures will not overlap entirely with the textbook. The textbook provides comprehensive background info and the lectures will often dive more deeply into selected topics while skipping other content that is covered in the book. Thus, you are responsible for learning the content in both the textbook and the lectures as you will be tested on both, although content from the lectures and content that appears in both the lectures and textbook will be much more heavily emphasized on tests than content that appears only in the textbook.

## Course Requirements and Assessment:

Assessment	Date of Evaluation (if known)	Weighting
Midterm	October 10th (6th week)	30%
Short Paper	Due: November 14th (10th week)	25%
Final Exam	Exam period	40%
Reflection Posts	Throughout term	5%
<b>Total</b>		<b>100%</b>

## Tests and Final Exam

There will be one midterm and one final exam. The midterm and final exam will include multiple choice and short answer questions. The final exam will be non-cumulative, covering material that comes after the midterm. The format, number of questions, time limits, and topics covered on the midterm and final exam will be discussed in advance and exam information will be posted to eClass. The mid-term and final exams must be completed in-person during the scheduled time. Students who require an accommodation for an exam are required to schedule an Alternate Exam through Student Accessibility Services (see “Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities” section below). It is recommended that you do this as early as possible in the term.

## Description of Assignments

Short Paper: The purpose of this paper is to demonstrate your ability to integrate the information from the course and apply it to describe a single day in the life of a person who is a heavy user of a specific drug. You must choose one of the following drugs covered in-depth in the course: alcohol, cannabis, cocaine, tobacco, or caffeine. The goal of this assignment is to both demonstrate your knowledge of the course content and to provide you with an opportunity to develop an empathic understanding of how drug use affects people. This paper should be written in the first person (i.e., using the pronoun “I”), and should describe accurately and in detail: (1) how the psychoactive effects (e.g., cognitive, behavioural, emotional) of using the drug would play out in a typical day; (2) how specific psychological, biological, and social factors might play a role in motivating and/or reinforcing drug use; (3) what happens when attempting to cut down or stop using the drug (e.g., withdrawal symptoms, craving, etc.); and 4) how chronic use of the drug has affected the person physically, mentally, and interpersonally/socially. You will be annotating your own paper by labelling where each of the required components appears in the paper (specific instructions for doing this will be provided). You will be graded on the accuracy with which you describe the required components and the degree to which you integrate information from the course.

*Papers must be a work of fiction.* The goal is to “put yourself in someone else’s shoes” to develop an empathic understanding of what it is like to be someone who uses a specific drug. Thus, papers should not describe your own experiences with a drug or the experiences of someone close to you. It is possible that you have had your own negative experiences with a drug or a substance use disorder. In this case, you should choose a different drug, and if necessary, choose a drug that is likely not to be “triggering” to you (e.g., caffeine). Please do not describe your own experiences with problem drug use as this is not the goal of the assignment. If you need to talk to someone about your own drug use, please contact the student counselling centre (416-736-5297, <https://counselling.students.yorku.ca/contact-scd>). If you are uncomfortable completing this assignment for whatever reason (after considering the alternative options like picking a less triggering drug like caffeine), please contact the instructor (at least 4 weeks before the deadline) to discuss possible alternatives.

Papers should be 4-5 pages, double-spaced, with 1-inch (2.54 cm) margins on all sides and using Times New Roman font (size 12pt). Additional instructions for this paper, along with grading criteria, will be available on eClass within the first couple of weeks of class. Papers will be due by **November 14 at 11:59 pm** and must be submitted through Turnitin. Papers must be

completed *independently* and the work you submit should be your own and not copied from another source. Instructions on how to submit your papers will be included in the detailed assignment outline posted to eClass.

**Reflection Posts:** After several of the lectures, you will be provided with a reflection question related to the content of the lecture, and you will submit a brief response to this reflection question for credit. You will be required to submit your reflection to the discussion forum in eClass, and can either do so immediately at the end of the class period (if you bring a laptop) or at a later time. The specific instructions for what to submit for each reflection will be specified in the instructions posted for each forum. Each reflection will not be due until the start of the next class (i.e., the following Thursday at 2:30pm) to give you adequate time to submit the reflection. You will receive 1 point for submitting each reflection to a maximum of 5 (out of a possible 7) reflections. Thus, each reflection post is worth 1% of your total grade (up to a maximum of 5%). Since you have lots of time to submit reflections each week and you only need to submit 5 out of 7 reflection posts, there will be no late submissions accepted for any reason. If you miss the deadline to submit a reflection post due to illness or other extenuating circumstances, then this can be one of the posts you “drop” as you only need to submit 5 out of 7. For students who were not able to attend lecture, they can still submit a response to the reflection question based on their review of lecture slides and lecture recording.

**\*NOTE:** There are no opportunities for “extra credit” assignments in this course. The class is too large to accommodate additional assignments above those that are already part of the course. If you are having difficulty with the material or otherwise are not achieving the marks you would like, please come to TA office hours for extra help and/or speak with the instructor for guidance as early as possible to try to find ways to improve your performance while there is still time.

### **Class Format and Attendance Policy**

This is an in-person course that will require you to attend lectures and in-person exams. Lectures will also be audio recorded and posted along with lecture slides on e-class so that students who are ill or need to miss a class can get caught up (see Information on Lecture Recordings, below). However, the lectures will be optimized for the in-person experience, and the quality of recordings cannot not be guaranteed (as I often move around when I lecture!). Also, certain interactive components of lectures (e.g., class discussions) will not be captured on the recording. Further, recordings may not always be available in the event of an unforeseen technical issue that I may not even be aware of until after the fact. In other words, this is not designed as a hybrid course where the online experience is equivalent to the in-person experience.

In-person lectures provide an opportunity to connect with your classmates, TAs, and the instructor and to engage in interactive and/or experiential learning activities. As a student invested in your own learning, you should be *intrinsically motivated* to attend and participate. Thus, no points will be awarded for mere attendance, and attendance at lectures is not tracked.

### **Grading as per Senate Policy**

The grading scheme for the course conforms to the 9-point grading system used in undergraduate programs at York (e.g., A+ = 9, A = 8, B+ = 7, C+ = 5, etc.). Assignments and tests\* will bear either a letter grade designation or a corresponding number grade (e.g. A+ = 90 to 100, A = 80 to 89, B+ = 75 to 79, etc.)

For a full description of York grading system see the York University Undergraduate Calendar – [Grading Scheme for 2024-25](#)

### Missed Exams/Late Assignments

For any missed exams (mid-term or final) or late paper assignments, students **MUST** complete the following online form which will be received and reviewed in the Psychology undergraduate office [HH PSYC: Missed Tests/Exams Form](#). In addition to completing the above form, students **must also send an email to their TA outlining the reason for the missed exam or late paper**. At this time, due to COVID-19 an Attending Physician’s Statement (APS) is not required; however, a reason for missing an evaluated component in the course must be provided.

Failure to complete the Missed Tests/Exams Form above within 48 hours of the original test/exam date will result in a grade of zero for the missed test/exam. For late assignments, failure to complete the form within 48 hours of the original deadline will result in late penalties applied to the assignment grade for each day that the assignment is late as specified in the assignment instructions.

Students with valid reasons for missing an exam or assignment deadline will have the opportunity to complete a make-up exam or hand in their assignment at a later date specified by the instructor (note: this does not apply to Reflection Posts, as late reflection posts will not be accepted for any reason). Failure to complete the make-up exam on the specified date will result in a grade of zero for the exam. Make-up exams may have a different format and content than the regularly scheduled exam. Assignments submitted past the new deadline will be penalized a percentage for each day it is late according to the late penalties specified in the assignment instructions.

### Add/Drop Deadlines

For a list of all important dates please refer to: [Undergraduate Fall/Winter 2024-2025 Important Dates](#)

	Fall (Term F)	Year (Term Y)	Winter (Term W)
Last date to add a course <b>without permission</b> of instructor (also see Financial Deadlines)	September 18	September 18	January 20
Last date to add a course <b>with permission</b> of instructor (also see Financial Deadlines)	October 2	October 16	January 31
Drop deadline: Last date to drop a course without receiving a grade (also see Financial Deadlines)	November 8	February 7	March 14
Course Withdrawal Period (withdraw from a course and receive a grade of “W” on transcript – see note below)	November 9 – December 3	February 8- April 4	March 15- April 4

## **Add and Drop Deadline Information**

There are deadlines for adding and dropping courses, both academic and financial. Since, for the most part, the dates are **different**, be sure to read the information carefully so that you understand the differences between the sessional dates below and the [Refund Tables](#).

You are strongly advised to pay close attention to the "Last date to enrol without permission of course instructor" deadlines. These deadlines represent the last date students have unrestricted access to the registration and enrolment system.

After that date, you must contact the professor/department offering the course to arrange permission.

You can drop courses using the registration and enrolment system up until the last date to drop a course without receiving a grade (drop deadline).

You may [withdraw from a course](#) using the registration and enrolment system after the drop deadline until the last day of class for the term associated with the course. When you withdraw from a course, the course remains on your transcript without a grade and is notated as 'W'. The withdrawal will not affect your grade point average or count towards the credits required for your degree.

## **Electronic Device Policy**

Electronic devices (e.g., tablets, laptops) are permitted during class time for course-related purposes (taking notes, working on reflection posts), except during tests/exams. Students are expected to refrain from using devices for purposes unrelated to the course (e.g., watching videos, social media) as this could be distracting to oneself and other students. Students should ensure that all devices are switched to silent and all audio output is disabled while in the lecture hall.

## **Communication Etiquette**

In this course you will be communicating with the instructor, TAs, and fellow students using both written (email, discussion forum posts), and oral (class discussions) modalities. It is expected that students will communicate with others in the course in a way that is professional, respectful, and supportive of a safe and inclusive environment. Inappropriate language, offensive or derogatory statements, and belligerent communication styles will not be tolerated. Below are some specific guidelines for communication etiquette we expect you to follow:

1. Be respectful to others in all communications. Recognize that other people have valid opinions and feelings, even if they differ from your own, and communicate with others using validating, supportive, and inclusive language. Be sensitive to the diverse backgrounds and experiences of other members of the class.
2. Proofread all written communications before posting/sending. Avoid strong language, all caps, excessive exclamation points, slang, emoticons, and shorthand. Use proper English for all written communications.
3. Do not communicate private or confidential information about yourself or others in class or online public spaces (e.g., eClass discussion forum).

4. Don't post or share, publicly or privately, inappropriate or offensive material. Posting or sharing material that violates the university code of conduct may result in disciplinary actions.

### **Academic Integrity for Students**

York University takes academic integrity very seriously; please familiarize yourself with [Information about the Senate Policy on Academic Honesty](#).

It is recommended that you review Academic Integrity by completing the [Academic Integrity Tutorial](#) and [Academic Honesty Quiz](#)

### **Test Banks**

The offering for sale of, buying of, and attempting to sell or buy test banks (banks of test questions and/or answers), or any course specific test questions/answers is not permitted in the Faculty of Health. Any student found to be doing this may be considered to have breached the Senate Policy on Academic Honesty. In particular, buying and attempting to sell banks of test questions and/or answers may be considered as "Cheating in an attempt to gain an improper advantage in an academic evaluation" (article 2.1.1 from the Senate Policy) and/or "encouraging, enabling or causing others" (article 2.1.10 from the Senate Policy) to cheat.

### **Information on Plagiarism Detection**

To promote academic integrity in this course, students will be required to submit their Short Paper assignment to Turnitin (via the course eClass) for a review of textual similarity and the detection of possible plagiarism. In so doing, students will allow their material to be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database, where they will be used only for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University's use of the Turnitin service are described on the Turnitin.com website. The Short Paper assignment must be completed independently and the work you submit should be your own and not copied from another source. See Academic Integrity for Students above for more information.

### **Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities**

While all individuals are expected to satisfy the requirements of their program of study and to aspire to do so at a level of excellence, the university recognizes that persons with disabilities may require reasonable accommodation to enable them to do so. The university encourages students with disabilities to register with Student Accessibility Services (SAS) to discuss their accommodation needs as early as possible in the term to establish the recommended academic accommodations that will be communicated to Course Directors as necessary. Please let me know as early as possible in the term if you anticipate requiring academic accommodation so that we can discuss how to consider your accommodation needs within the context of this course.

<https://accessibility.students.yorku.ca/>

Excerpt from Senate Policy on Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities

1. Pursuant to its commitment to sustaining an inclusive, equitable community in which all members are treated with respect and dignity, and consistent with applicable accessibility legislation, York University shall make reasonable and appropriate accommodations in



order to promote the ability of students with disabilities to fulfill the academic requirements of their programs. This policy aims to eliminate systemic barriers to participation in academic activities by students with disabilities.

All students are expected to satisfy the essential learning outcomes of courses. Accommodations shall be consistent with, support and preserve the academic integrity of the curriculum and the academic standards of courses and programs. For further information please refer to: [York University Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities Policy](#)

### **Course Materials Copyright Information**

These course materials are designed for use as part of the PSYC 3590 course at York University and are the property of the instructor unless otherwise stated. Third party copyrighted materials (such as book chapters, journal articles, music, videos, etc.) have either been licensed for use in this course or fall under an exception or limitation in Canadian Copyright law.

Copying this material for distribution (e.g. uploading material to a commercial third-party website) may lead to a violation of Copyright law. [Intellectual Property Rights Statement.](#)

### **Information on Lecture Recordings**

Activities for this course involve recording of audio/voices during class, which are made available by the University to students enrolled in the course and those supporting the course for the purposes of materials review, assessment, etc. Recordings will be managed according to the University's Common Record Schedule and will be securely destroyed when no longer needed by the University. Your personal information is protected in accordance with York University's [Guidelines on Access of Information and Protection of Privacy](#) and the [Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act](#). Access to online materials, including recordings, is subject to [York University's Senate Policy on Computing and Information Technology Facilities](#). The University will use reasonable means to protect the security and confidentiality of the recorded information but cannot provide a guarantee of such due to factors beyond the University's control, such as recordings being forwarded, copied, intercepted, circulated, disclosed, or stored without the University's knowledge or permission, or the introduction of malware into computer system which could potentially damage or disrupt the computer, networks, and security settings. The University is not responsible for connectivity/technical difficulties or loss of data associated with your hardware, software, or Internet connection.

By engaging in in-class activities that involve audio recording, you are consenting to the use of your voice in the manner and under the conditions specified here. You are not permitted to disclose the link to/URL of a recording posted on eClass or copies of recording to anyone, for any reason. Recordings are available only to authorized individuals who have been directly provided these instructions and the recording for their use. Recordings for personal use, required to facilitate your learning and preparation of personal course/lecture notes, may not be shared with others without the permission of the instructor or designate, and may not be published, posted, linked to, or otherwise made available online, including on social media feeds, even if those feeds are private.

As mentioned above, recordings of lectures may have limitations such as poor audio quality that are difficult to control in the context of recording a live lecture. These recordings are not intended to replace attending lectures and are meant to help students catch up if they need to miss a lecture for illness or other reasons. Students who require audio recordings for accessibility reasons (as explicitly stated in their accommodation letter from Student Accessibility Services) may wish to bring their own recording devices to the lecture as a backup. Students are not permitted to audio record lectures without a documented need for accommodation and students who have documented permission to record lectures are not permitted to share the recordings with others (per York University policies).

### **Course Schedule**

See “Course Schedule” section on e-Class for most up-to-date information on the course schedule, which may be amended from time to time.