

## **PSYC SPECIAL TOPICS COURSES 2025-2026 – COURSE DESCRIPTIONS**

### **[PSYC 435 Fall 2026 \(Dr Ali\) – Stress and Fertility](#)**

The goal of this class is to develop an understanding of the biological and psychological constructs of stress, and how they relate to male and female fertility. This includes the review of scientific literature and critical evaluation of the evidence, summarizing research findings to the class, and leading critical discussions. The course will be divided into three modules: (1) Instructor-led foundational lectures and discussion, (2) Student-led presentations, and (3) Collaborative paper writing.

### **[PSYC 440 Fall 2026 \(Dr Nitschke\) – Stress, Cognition and Social Behaviours](#)**

Course description coming soon

### **[PSYC 320 Winter 2027 \(Dr Poppenk\) - Individual Differences](#)**

What makes you who you are? In this course, you'll explore the psychological and neuroscientific bases of this question. You'll trace how personality, development, cognitive style, genetics and epigenetics, neurophysiology, and more shape your unique profile. Each module covers ethics, state of research, classic discoveries and core methods, from whole-genome studies to neuroimaging volumetry, equipping you to understand current research efforts in the context of this exciting and expanding area.

### **[PSYC 420 Winter 2027 \(Dr Poppenk\) – Mind and Memory](#)**

What explains the entanglement of memory and consciousness? We harbour conscious and unconscious memories; we consolidate waking experiences in our sleep; memory shapes our awareness; and awareness unlocks otherwise inaccessible memories. In this seminar, you'll dissect foundational theories (from memory systems to state space models), analyze landmark papers, review cutting-edge methods (from machine learning of sleep neuroimaging data to gaze tracking), and synthesize your own view of the curious link between these interwoven constructs.

### **[PSYC 450 Winter 2027 \(Dr Kuhlmeier\) – Development of Prosocial Behaviour](#)**

This seminar examines the development of prosocial behaviour across infancy, childhood, and adolescence, with a focus on actions such as helping, sharing, comforting, and cooperation. Drawing on classic and contemporary empirical research, we will explore theoretical perspectives on the origins of prosociality, including evolutionary, social-cognitive, and socialization approaches. Topics include the roles of empathy, moral reasoning, parenting, and cultural context in shaping prosocial development. Students will critically engage with primary research articles and consider methodological challenges in studying prosocial behaviour. The course emphasizes developing skills in evaluating evidence and applying developmental theory to real-world social issues.