

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

### [PSYC 420 Fall 2025 \(Dr Tusche\) – \(Ir\)rational decision-making: principles & applications](#)

This course explores how people make decisions and why our choices often differ from what would be considered fully “rational.” We will look at research from psychology, economics, and biology to understand common patterns and biases in human decision-making. Topics include the role of emotion, social influences, and how small changes (or “nudges”) can affect our choices. We’ll also examine how these ideas are used in real-life settings like health, education, and marketing. By the end of the course, you’ll better understand your own decision-making and how to improve it.

### [PSYC 320 Winter 2026 \(Dr Poppenk\) - 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 2026 \(Dr Pereira\) – Cognition in the Digital Age](#)

From the initial advent of the internet to the increased availability of smartphones to the recent explosion of artificial intelligence, technology has become embedded into every aspect of our lives. Although these technologies are widely embraced as a means of improving, augmenting, and streamlining day-to-day behaviour, they raise intriguing questions about how our cognitive system resolves information in this new digital age. This course will draw links between different cognition processes (e.g., attention, memory, decision-making) and various technological innovations (e.g., video games, social media, fake news, LLM) to explore the symbiotic relationship that exists between the two. These links will allow us to meaningfully understand how our cognitive processes make sense of the digital age and how the digital age evolves to capitalize on our cognitive capabilities.

### [PSYC 420 Winter 2026 \(Dr Poppenk\) – 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 435 Winter 2026 - Advanced Topics in Clinical Psychology](#)

This seminar is combined with a seminar in Black Studies under the title of ‘Psychology of Women and Gender’

**Objectives:** The objective of this course is to promote critical thinking related to gender-based issues from an intersectional and psychological lens. As part of the course, students will be introduced to empirical research and challenged to examine their own attitudes and assumptions related to women,

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gender, and gender identity. Students will be able to recognize and understand the psychological aspects of gender, sociocultural influences, societal expectations, and its impact on individual well-being and experiences.