DALHOUSIE UNIVERSITY

FACULTY OF SCIENCE COURSE SYLLABUS

PSYO/NESC 3237 (Drugs and Behaviour) | Section 01 | Fall 2026

Department of Psychology and Neuroscience

Dalhousie University operates in the unceded territories of the Mi'kmaw, Wolastoqey, and Peskotomuhkati Peoples. These sovereign nations hold inherent rights as the original peoples of these lands, and we each carry collective obligations under the Peace and Friendship Treaties. Section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982 recognizes and affirms Aboriginal and Treaty rights in Canada. We recognize that African Nova Scotians are a distinct people whose histories, legacies, and contributions have enriched that part of Mi'kma'ki known as Nova Scotia for over 400 years.

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STUDENT SUPPORTS AND UNIVERSITY STATEMENTS:

https://dalu.sharepoint.com/sites/learn-teach/SitePages/syllabus-appendix.aspx

DALHOUSIE UNIVERSITY

1. COURSE INSTRUCTORS

NAME JOB TITLE	WHAT TO CALL US	EMAIL	OFFICE HOURS FORMAT
Libby Myles, PhD Course Instructor	**Libby** (she/her)	libby.myles@dal.ca	Virtual via Teams; booking link here. Wednesdays 2-4 PM; book by 5 PM Tuesdays
Jennika Veinot, PhD Teaching Assistant	**Jennika** (she/her)	jennika.veinot@dal.ca	N/A

2. COURSE DESCRIPTION

2A. General Overview

This course is **in-person** (Sir James Dunn Building, Room 101) from **2:35–3:55 PM** on **Tuesdays and Thursdays**. Scheduled coursework will run from **Tuesday, Sep. 8** (syllabus class) to **Tuesday, Dec. 1** (Unit 3 review), with a final test (Test 3) during the exam period (date TBD by Registrar).

2B. Academic Calendar Description

"An introduction to behavioural psychopharmacology. The lectures involve basic anatomy, physiology, and chemistry of the nervous system. Behavioural effects and underlying mechanisms of various psychoactive drugs are discussed. Specific topics covered are alcohol, tobacco, amphetamines, cocaine, opiates, hallucinogens, tranquilizers, and antipsychotic drugs."

3. COURSE PREREQUISITES

1) PSYO/NESC 2000 (Methods in Experimental Psychology and Neuroscience)
2) PSYO/NESC 2470 (Systems Neuroscience) **or** PSYO/NESC/PHYL 2570 (Cellular Neuroscience) **or** PHYL 2041 (Human Neuropsychology)

4. COURSE EXCLUSIONS

None

5. COURSE DELIVERY AND OVERVIEW

Classes will be of one of these four types:

1) ***Lecture + Activity Classes***. The first part of class will be an overview of the textbook chapter of focus that day, with additional topic-related content as relevant. The second part will include an additional video and discussion.

2) ***Lecture + Presentation Classes***. The first part of class will be an overview of the textbook chapter and topic area. The second part will involve watching student presentation videos related to that specific course topic.

3) ***Review Session Classes***. Question and answer session with some review activities and practice questions ahead of each of the three tests.

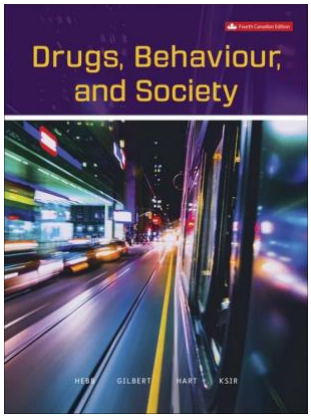
4) ***Online Test Days***. 80-minute non-cumulative test (12-hour availability: 8 AM to 7:59 PM).

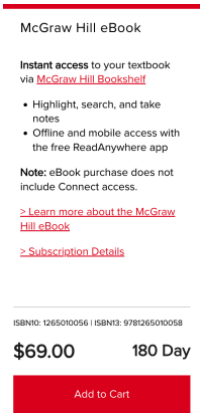
6. COURSE MATERIALS

6A. Course Textbook

The required textbook for this course is Drugs, Behaviour, and Society (4th Edition) written by Andrea Hebb, Robert Gilbert, Carl L. Hart, and Charles J. Ksir. This is available as an e-book online, and it is **$69.00 + HST**.

Purchase digital access at the following link. Scroll to bottom to 180-day e-book access (**not** "Connect"): **https://www.mheducation.ca/product/drugs-behaviour-and-society-9781265603083-can-group**





6B. Class Recordings and Slides

Class sessions will be **recorded** in case you need to miss class, but attending as many classes as possible is helpful for keeping up with the schedule. **It is always possible that a tech problem will arise, and a recording will be delayed or not available.**

Lecture slides (PDF) will be posted by **12 PM on the day of class** (i.e., on Tuesdays/Thursdays), and class recordings by **12 PM the day after class** (i.e., on Wednesdays/Fridays). I will post an announcement if there are any delays with these timelines.

In the recordings**, auto-captions** will be enabled by default and will be briefly reviewed. If you notice any errors that are interfering with your understanding of the material, please send libby.myles@dal.ca an email with the recording name and timestamp. **In cases of a discrepancy between the audio and captions, what I say in the audio is correct.**

6C. Course Information, Announcements, and Updates

Ensure you are **regularly** checking your Dalhousie email for class updates and that you have enabled Brightspace notifications for announcements (see below for assistance).

- **Brightspace notifications via email set up**: https://bit.ly/4lsjp9o
- **Brightspace notification via app (Pulse):** https://apps.brightspace.com/pulse/launch
- **Brightspace technical issues**: Contact support@dal.ca or call 902-494-HELP (4357)

6D. Other Course Requirements

- A computer (laptop or desktop for tests) and stable internet connection
- Microsoft Office programs (download for free: **https://software.library.dal.ca/index.php**)
- Software and programs to create your **presentation slides** and **presentation screen-recording** (e.g., PowerPoint, Canva, Google Slides, Keynote).

6E. Accessibility

Students are eligible for accommodations based on protected characteristics such as religion. If you have religious, cultural, or community-significant observances that conflict with course requirements, please reach out to me to discuss options. If there are aspects of this course that result in barriers to your learning or do not align with your formal academic accommodations, we can discuss a solution that meets your needs.

To request a formal academic accommodation (must be done each semester), contact the **Student Accessibility Centre**. You can also review the **Student Accommodation Policy** for information on how Dalhousie instructors and staff work collaboratively with students to create and sustain an accessible educational environment.

7. LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1) **EXPLAIN** key pharmacological concepts for various drug classes (e.g., mechanisms of action, routes of administration, tolerance, dependence, withdrawal, drug interactions).
2) **APPLY** a multidisciplinary framework to patterns of substance use, incorporating biological, psychological, social, cultural, legal, and historical perspectives.
3) **INTERPRET** Canadian drug policy and regulation, including historical shifts, legal frameworks, and current debates on harm reduction, legalization, and decriminalization.
4) **COMPARE AND CONTRAST** major drug categories (e.g., stimulants, opioids) in terms of their historical use, regulation, mechanisms of action, medical uses, and societal impacts.
5) **INTEGRATE** evidence from neuroscience and public health to explain the acute and chronic effects of various substances on the brain and body.
6) **ASSESS** current approaches to substance use prevention and treatment in Canada, including pharmacological and psychosocial interventions.
7) **ANALYZE** drug-related issues in Canadian society, including the role of stigma, public health messaging, media, and the pharmaceutical industry.
8) **DEMONSTRATE** critical thinking and awareness of how personal, cultural, and societal factors influence perspectives on substance use.

My hope is for you to learn what various drugs do, but more importantly, to think **globally** about how historical, societal, and cultural contexts **shape human use and perceptions**.

8. COURSE ASSESSMENT

COMPONENT	DATES	SPECIFICS	WEIGHT	FORMAT
8A. Online Tests	Test 1: **Oct. 1** Test 2: **Oct. 29** Test 3: **Date TBD**	Non-cumulative 80-min time limit Can begin: 8 AM-**7:59 PM**	**75%** (25% each)	Complete on Brightspace (**Quizzes**)
8B. Presentation	Topic/date chosen by **Sep. 15, 11:59 PM** (via Brightspace): **Presentation Classes:** Oct. 6, Oct. 8, Oct. 13, Oct. 15, Oct. 20, Oct. 22, Nov. 3, Nov. 5, Nov. 17, Nov. 19	Presentation **video** (**.mp4 file**) due **24 hours BEFORE class** (i.e., by 2:35 PM)	**25%** (rubric graded out of 50 points to be provided)	Submit .mp4 (**showing slide, camera, + audio**) to Brightspace (**Assignments**)
		Presentation **script + reference list** due **24 hours BEFORE class** (i.e., by 2:35 PM)		Submit .pdf to Brightspace (**Assignments**)

9. SUMMARY OF COURSE COMPONENTS

9A. Online Tests (25% Each; Non-Cumulative; 75% of Final Grade)

Availability Window. Tests are at the end of each unit (Test 3 during exam period). All tests will be open to begin between **8 AM and 7:59 PM** (Atlantic time), and you can work on them within the time limit from there (e.g., until 9:19 PM if started at 7:59 PM, or longer with timing accommodations).

Academic Integrity. These are open-book, online tests that must be completed **individually**. You may use course materials (e.g., notes, textbook), but **internet searches, AI tools, and large language models are not permitted**. It is your responsibility to review the syllabus and Dalhousie policies surrounding academic integrity and reach out with any questions **before** starting your test.

Time Limit and Attempts. Once you click "Start Quiz!" to begin your test, you will have **80 minutes** to complete it and **(1) attempt** only. **The test will auto-submit when the time limit is up.** Any approved timing-related accommodations will be added to specific student test time limits.

Technical Difficulties. If you experience any technical difficulties, contact **libby.myles@dal.ca** immediately **with a description of the issue and the time the issue occurred.** This is critical in order to verify the issue with the testing logs and come up with a solution as soon as possible.

Email Response Window. My email response window on test days is **8 AM to 8 PM.** This time window is important to consider if you plan on starting the test after 6:40 PM and/or have timing accommodations, as emails will not be answered after 8 PM.

Internet Connection and Equipment. Before starting your test, ensure you are in a space with a stable internet connection or find an area with a stable connection. Also, be sure that you are writing the test in a location that will not close while you are working on it. Make sure to use a computer for tests, as questions may not properly format on mobile devices.

Grades and Feedback. Grades and noted correct and incorrect questions will be released **one week**

after the test (8 AM). Please reserve emails until this feedback has been properly reviewed. Tests are non-cumulative, so correct answers will not be shown, but you can email with questions.

Overview of Questions.

- Questions can be drawn from the textbook, lectures, review lectures, additional videos or activities, and student presentations (when applicable in Units 2 and 3).
- Tests will contain **35 questions**, which will primarily be **multiple-choice**, but there will be **multi-select**, **ordering**, and **matching** questions as well.
- More details about tests will be provided **the morning of the review session**.

9B. Presentation Video (25% of Final Grade)

Assignment Overview. A **3-minute individual** presentation (with **camera**) on a drug/substance selected by you from a pre-prepared list. You will make **one landscape** slide (4:3 or 16:9 aspect ratio). A rubric and other documents will be in the "**Presentations**" folder on the first day of classes (8 AM). Videos will be posted to Brightspace to watch as presentations can be asked about on a test.

Choosing Your Topic. There are **10** presentation days (see **Section 8B**), which align with content from that class. Using Brightspace's "Groups tool" (see homepage, upper right), you will choose your topic (and date) **between Wednesday, Sep. 9 (8 AM)** and **Tuesday, Sep. 15 (11:59 PM).** After this time, topics will be auto-assigned by Brightspace and rubric component 6.1 will be scored as 0/1. **Even though Brightspace calls this tool the "Groups tool", these are individual presentations.**

Academic Integrity and Artificial Intelligence Use. You may use AI tools for brainstorming and organizing your ideas, along with those tools available with the design program used (e.g., AI-generated icons in Canva). However, you **must** verify all information against valid research sources and acknowledge any AI-assisted design in your reference list. **Using AI to create unverifiable citations, slide sections, or script sections is prohibited and may be referred to the Academic Integrity Office as suspected academic misconduct.**

Associated Items and Deadlines. In order to prepare presentation videos to be available by class time, certain files are due **24 hours before** your presentation. For this assignment, you will submit the following to Brightspace:

1) ***Video (.mp4 file with slide, audio, and camera).*** Due **24 hours before** your presentation day (i.e., 2:35 PM the day before).
    - **Ensure you review the instruction guide on Brightspace for specific requirements (e.g., trimming your video, using your camera) and for assistance with recording.**
2) ***Script + Reference List (2+-page PDF).*** Due **24 hours before** your presentation day (i.e., 2:35 PM the day before). Other than referencing (see rubric Section 6), there is no specific format required for this document.
    - **Your script should match your presentation as much as possible, but deviations that occur while recording your video are okay, so long as the meaning is the same.**

Grading. Presentations will be graded with a rubric, in agreement with the course instructor and the TA. **Please email both the TA and instructor with any presentation grading questions.**

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10. COURSE POLICIES

10A. Missed or Late Academic Requirements

Short-Term Illnesses and Personal Issues. Short-term illnesses or personal issues are described as situations that may require students to miss 3 or fewer school days (e.g., minor illness, illness/death of a distant relative, minor injuries). For such issues, a **student declaration of absence (SDA)** can be submitted to **Brightspace**. In this course, a maximum of **one SDA** can be used for a **72-hour** extension on **one** of the following:

Test. If you use your SDA for a test, you must do so **before the test closes** (i.e., by 7:59 PM). **Any make-up test or other options will be at the instructor's discretion.**

Presentation Files. If you use your SDA for your presentation, you must submit the form **by the file submission deadline** (i.e., 24 hours before your presentation session). With an SDA, **you will prepare your video for the instructor and TA only. All** items (i.e., video, script/ref list) will be due within **72 hours of the original deadline** or deductions will apply (see **Section 10B**).

Long-Term Illnesses and Personal Issues. Long-term illnesses or personal issues are described as situations that may require a student to miss more than 3 consecutive days of school (e.g., due to major illness, chronic illness, surgery, illness/death of a close relative, significant injury). For long-term illnesses, or if you have already used one SDA, please contact **Patricia Laws** (Student Affairs; scieasst@dal.ca) to discuss case-by-case arrangements.

10B. Deductions for Unexcused Late Academic Requirements

Tests. If no test (or make-up test) is submitted after the availability window closes, a score of 0 will be assigned, except if there are extenuating circumstances.

- **Once test feedback is released, no arrangements can be made and a 0 will be assigned.**

Presentation Video + Script and Reference List. To give us time to compile videos and address any potential file issues, these are due **24 hours before (i.e., by 2:35 PM)** your presentation session.

- If both files are not submitted by this deadline, a **2/50-point rubric deduction** will apply (i.e., 0/1 for rubric components 6.2 and 6.3).
- If you submit late **between 2:35 PM and 11:59 PM,** you will not receive the two rubric points mentioned above, but no further late deduction will apply as long as you email **both** the instructor and TA **BY 5 PM** to let us know it will be submitted by 11:59 PM.
- If both files are not received **by 11:59 PM or you do not email us with an update by 5 PM**, a **10-percentage point deduction** for every 24 hours late will begin to be applied **starting from 2:35 PM** (except with extenuating circumstances or an SDA, see **Section 10A**).
    - **In this case, your video will not be put on Brightspace with the other presentations.**
- If both files are not submitted and no arrangements have been made with the instructor within **120 hours** (5 days) of the original deadline (starting from the 2:35 PM submission deadline day), **a score of 0 will be assigned.**

10C. Grading Policies

Test grades will be released **1 week** after the test. Presentation grades and rubrics will be provided within **10 days** of your submission. If you think a grade has been posted with an error, contact libby.myles@dal.ca within **3 days** of receipt. Final grades are calculated with the Dalhousie University Common Grade Scale (below). Grades will be rounded up at .50 (e.g., an 89.50 is an A+, an 89.49 is an A). **No other rounding will occur; grades cannot be adjusted with extra work.**

LETTER	A+	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D	F
%	90-100	85-89	80-84	77-79	73-76	70-72	65-69	60-64	55-59	50-54	<50

10D. Academic Integrity

Dalhousie expects all students to be responsible learners, demonstrating the values of intellectual honesty, trust, fairness, and respect in your work. Refer to the **Statement on Intellectual Honesty** for definitions of various academic offences. Failure to meet Dalhousie's academic integrity standards will result in appropriate **disciplinary and/or corrective measures**. There are guidelines about use of artificial intelligence (AI) platforms in this course (see **Sections 9A** and **9B**) that **you are responsible for reviewing and adhering to**. If you have **any** questions, email **libby.myles@dal.ca**.

10E. Class Cancellations

1) ***Lecture + Activity Classes***. The lecture will be recorded, and the recording with any activities will be posted to Brightspace as soon as possible before the next scheduled class.
2) ***Lecture + Presentation Classes***. The lecture will be recorded and posted to Brightspace as soon as possible before the next class. Presentation videos will still be posted to Brightspace as planned, with a possible delay depending on the nature and timing of the cancellation.
3) ***Review Session Classes***. The review lecture and any activities will be recorded and posted to Brightspace as soon as possible before the test day.
4) ***Online Test Days***. The test will be moved to the next class day and that class (i.e., a Lecture + Presentation Class for both Test 1 and Test 2) will be reworked as per the above. Test 3 would be rescheduled by the Registrar only if needed due to a cancellation.

10F. Email Correspondence Regulations

Please check the syllabus, announcements, and Brightspace before sending any email, and **only send emails via your Dalhousie provided email address with 3237 in the subject line.** My email response time is within **48 hours** (not including weekends or holidays). **I do not receive emails to my phone beyond 5 PM**, so unless there is a test, I will not see your email until the next working day.

10G. Use of Course Materials

Course materials shared via Brightspace or otherwise are for your personal educational use only. Copying and distributing (e.g., uploading to third-party websites, sharing with people not in this specific course) is a violation of Copyright law. If you have questions regarding copyright, you can contact Dalhousie's Copyright Office at **copyright.office@dal.ca**.

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11. TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE

WEEK	TOPIC	DATE	TEXTBOOK (PAGES TO READ*)	CLASS TYPE
1	Course Overview	Tues., Sep. 8	–	Syllabus Class
	1.1. Drug Use: An Overview	Thurs., Sep. 10	Ch. 1 (pp. 3-24; LO1-LO7)	Lecture + Activity
2	1.2. Drug Use as a Social Problem	Tues., Sep. 15	Ch. 2 (pp. 28-45; LO1-LO9)	Lecture + Activity
	1.3. Drug Policy	Thurs., Sep. 17	Ch. 3 (pp. 48-65; LO1-LO8)	Lecture + Activity
3	1.4. The Nervous System	Tues., Sep. 22	Ch. 4 (pp. 69-85; LO1-LO6, ***skip LO7-LO9***)	Lecture + Activity
	1.5. The Action of Drugs	Thurs., Sep. 24	Ch. 5 (pp. 98-116; LO1-LO7, ***skip LO8-LO11***)	Lecture + Activity
4	TEST 1 REVIEW	Tues., Sep. 29	**LECTURES 1.1-1.5; CHAPTERS 1-5**	Review Session
	TEST 1 (Thurs., Oct. 1) – Completed online; open between 8 AM and 7:59 PM			**Online Test Day**
5	2.1. Stimulants	Tues., Oct. 6	Ch. 6 (pp. 133-140 + 144-153, ***read specified parts of LO1-LO7***)	Lecture + Presentation
	2.2. Depressants and Inhalants	Thurs., Oct. 8	Ch. 7 (pp. 167-181 + 187-190; LO1-LO5 + LO7, LO8, ***skip LO6 + LO9***)	Lecture + Presentation
6	2.3. Psychotherapeutic Drugs: Medication for Mental Disorders	Tues., Oct. 13	Ch. 8 (pp. 214-235; LO5-LO12, ***skip LO1-LO4***)	Lecture + Presentation
	2.4. Alcohol	Thurs., Oct. 15	Ch. 9 (pp. 239-256; LO1-LO4, ***skip LO5-LO8***)	Lecture + Presentation
7	2.5. Tobacco	Tues., Oct. 20	Ch. 10 (pp. 280-284 + 301-308; LO1, LO2, LO8, ***skip LO3-LO7 + LO9***)	Lecture + Presentation
	2.6. Caffeine	Thurs., Oct. 22	Ch. 11 (pp. 314-326 + 333-337; LO1, LO2 + LO4-LO7, ***skip LO3 + LO8***)	Lecture + Presentation
8	TEST 2 REVIEW	Tues., Oct. 27	**LECTURES 2.1-2.6; CHAPTERS 6-11**	Review Session
	TEST 2 (Thurs., Oct. 29) – Completed online; open between 8 AM and 7:59 PM			**Online Test Day**
9	3.1. Natural Health Products and Over-the-Counter Drugs	Tues., Nov. 3	Ch. 12 (pp. 343-357; LO1-LO6, ***skip LO7 + LO8***)	Lecture + Presentation
	3.2. Cannabis	Thurs., Nov. 5	Ch. 13 (pp. 364-374; LO1-LO6, ***skip LO7 + LO8***)	Lecture + Presentation
–	**Fall Break Week: November 9-13**			**No Classes**
10	3.3. Opioids	Tues., Nov. 17	Ch. 14 (pp. 393-408; LO1-LO5, ***skip LO6 + LO7***)	Lecture + Presentation
	3.4. Hallucinogens (*Guest Lecture*) **FORMAT TBD (ASYNCHRONOUS ONLINE OR IN-PERSON)**	Thurs., Nov. 19	Ch. 15 (pp. 426-430 + 437-446; LO1-LO6, ***skip pages 431-437 on LSD and LO7-LO9)***	Lecture + Presentation
11	3.5. Preventing Substance Abuse	Tues., Nov. 24	**Ch. 17** (pp. 486-503; LO1-LO7)	Lecture + Activity
	3.6. Treating Substance-Related Disorders	Thurs., Nov. 26	Ch. 18 (pp. 516-525; LO3-LO6, ***skip LO1 + LO2***)	Lecture + Activity
12	TEST 3 REVIEW	Tues., Dec. 1	**LECTURES 3.1-3.6; CHAPTERS 12-15,17,18**	Review Session
	FLEX DAY	**Thurs., Dec. 3**	**Additional day if needed during the term**	–
–	**TEST 3 (Date TBD during exam period) – Completed online; open between 8 AM and 7:59 PM** *This test will occur on a day scheduled by the Registrar for the usual 12-hour opening window*			**Online Test Day**

*Reading list documents will be posted to Brightspace for each unit. Feel free to use this document to stay on track or as a template for adding notes to. With these textbook readings, you are **not** responsible for any of the **Focus Boxes** (i.e., "Drugs in the Media", "Taking Sides", "Mind/Body Connection", "Targeting Prevention", "Drugs in Depth", "DSM-5"), **unless** it is information covered during a lecture, which I will clearly specify in class. You do not need to follow a specific schedule for textbook readings, but **I recommend completing readings weekly, or at least by the review session, to stay on track.**