

# Drugs and Behaviour Syllabus

## Department of Psychology and Neuroscience

### PSYO/NESC 3237 Fall 2023

*Dalhousie University acknowledges that we are in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq People and pays respect to the Indigenous knowledges held by the Mi'kmaq People, and to the wisdom of their Elders past and present. The Mi'kmaq People signed Peace and Friendship Treaties with the Crown, and section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982, recognizes and affirms Aboriginal and Treaty rights. We are all Treaty people.*

*Dalhousie University also acknowledges the histories, contributions, and legacies of African Nova Scotians, who have been here for over 400 years.*

#### Course Instructors

	Name	Email	Office Hours
<b>Instructor</b>	Aaron Shephard	acshephard@dal.ca	Fri, 11am - 1pm, LSC 4222
<b>TA</b>	William Gendron	william.gendron@dal.ca	By appointment

#### Times and Location

<b>Dates</b>	Tuesdays and Thursdays, September 5th - November 30th, 2023
<b>Time</b>	1:05pm - 2:25pm
<b>Location</b>	Sir James Dunn Building, Room 135

#### Course 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.

#### Course Prerequisites

NESC/PSYO 2000, and NESC/PSYO 2470 or NESC/PSYO 2570

## Student Resources

The Brightspace page has a discussion board where you can post questions about course material. The instructor holds weekly office hours for in-person one-on-one assistance. If the office hours do not fit your schedule, you can email the instructor or TA to set up a meeting outside of these hours.

## Course Structure and Delivery

The course mainly follows a lecture/conference format: there will be an instructor-led lecture on a drug/drug class, followed by a student-led conference the next class. All course components and assessment will occur in-person during the scheduled course time, with the potential for one asynchronous pre-recorded lecture. All other lectures and conferences will not be recorded, but course slides and readings will be made available on Brightspace.

## Course Materials

### **Textbook**

Hancock, S. D., & McKim, W. A. (2018). *Drugs and Behavior: An Introduction to Behavioral Pharmacology, 8th Edition*. Pearson.

This textbook is not required but is strongly recommended to get the most out of the course. It is available in electronic format on the Dalhousie Bookstore website.

### **Additional Readings**

Readings (scientific articles) for the conferences will be posted on Brightspace and should be read before conferences to help facilitate discussion.

## Assessment

Component	Weight (% of final grade)	Date(s)
Conference presentation or Two thought papers	15%	See calendar
Test 1	25%	September 28
Test 2	25%	October 31
Test 3	25%	Exam period
Participation	10%	See calendar

***Conference presentations (15%)***

Conferences will be held throughout the term, beginning September 26th. During conferences, articles examining topics in drugs and behaviour will be presented and discussed by the students. Each student will have the option to present and lead the discussion on one article. Presentations are to be **10 -12 minutes long**, leaving 3-5 minutes for discussion. Articles will be posted on Brightspace at least 2 weeks prior to each conference. Articles are also available through Dalhousie at: <http://www.library.dal.ca/ejournals/ejournals.htm>. A separate handout will be provided on Brightspace with a grading scheme for the presentations.

***Thought papers (7.5% each)***

Students electing not to present a conference presentation must submit **two** thought papers on articles to be presented in class. Each paper must be 500-1000 words in length. Students are free to select any conference articles for their thought papers but cannot select more than one article per conference. Thought papers will be due at the **beginning** of the class the day the article is to be presented.

All students are required to complete either a conference presentation or two thought papers. Students must decide which format they wish to complete by September 8th at 5pm (late additions to the course will have an extended deadline). Selections will be made by signing your name to a shared document (available on Brightspace) on a first come, first served basis.

***Tests (25% each)***

There will be three tests held throughout the semester, consisting of multiple-choice and short answer questions. Tests 1 and 2 will be held during regular class time on **September 28th** and **October 31st**. Test 3 will be held during the final exam period; the date will be announced when it is scheduled. Tests are non-cumulative: Test 1 will consist of all the material covered in the course up to the day of the test (i.e., all material covered in September), Test 2 will consist of all the material covered in the course following Test 1 up to the day of Test 2 (i.e., all material covered in October), and Test 3 will consist of all the material covered in the course following Test 2 up to the final day of class (i.e., all material covered in November).

***Participation (combined maximum of 10%)***

Students are expected to attend and participate in the lectures and conferences. For the conferences, students are expected to complete the assigned readings. Upon completion of the assigned readings, students should make at least one post on the discussion board **before the beginning** of the conferences (1% per conference, up to a maximum of 5%). Following conferences, students will fill out presentation feedback forms, in order to provide broader feedback to their peers. Students must provide feedback on at least two presentations per conference (1% per conference, up to a maximum of 8%). Presentation feedback forms will be completed online (e.g., via smartphone or computer), and will be available **until 5pm** on the day of the conference.

**Conversion of numerical grades to final letter grades follows the  
Dalhousie Grade Scale**

A+ (90-100)	B+ (77-79)	C+ (65-69)	D (50-54)
A (85-89)	B (73-76)	C (60-64)	F (0-49)
A- (80-84)	B- (70-72)	C- (55-59)	

## **Course Policies on Missed or Late Academic Requirements**

### ***Missed lectures***

Students will be responsible for getting copies of notes for the class they miss from their classmates, not the instructor; presentation slides will be posted on Brightspace following lectures.

### ***Missed conferences***

Presenters: Conference presentations will only be presented during scheduled times, except for in extenuating circumstances. Requests to complete these on alternate dates will be considered only with a valid excuse **and** if the instructor is contacted at least **4 hours prior** to the start of class.

Audience: Students are required to submit presentation feedback during conferences. As students also get participation grades via discussion posts, this allows for some leeway regarding conference attendance for students participating as audience members.

### ***Late thought papers***

To make the thought papers comparable to the presentations in terms of restrictions, there will be no extensions on thought papers except with a valid excuse **and** if the instructor is contacted at least **4 hours prior** to the start of class. As students opting to complete thought papers instead of presentations are required to complete papers for 2 of the 8 conferences, if a student misses the submission deadline, they can complete a thought paper for a later conference instead.

### ***Missed tests***

Tests may only be completed during scheduled times, except for in extenuating circumstances. Requests to complete these on alternate dates will be considered only with a valid excuse **and** if the instructor is contacted at least **4 hours prior** to the start of class. There will be less room for accommodation with respect to the timing of Test 3, so if there is any issue with the date, students should inform the instructor as soon as possible.

## Course Policies related to Academic Integrity

Students should be familiar with Dalhousie's policies on Academic Integrity, as noted on page 7 of this syllabus. Cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated: if you are caught cheating, you will receive a 0. Due to the nature of the assignments and the skills/knowledge they are assessing, the use of generative AI and large language models (e.g., ChatGPT) in this course is strictly prohibited. If the use of these tools is suspected, we will investigate that possibility and, if necessary, further steps in line with academic integrity policies may be taken.

## Other Course Policies

**Accommodations:** If you are eligible for formal accommodations, ensure that you submit your accommodation request as soon as possible at the beginning of the semester. At Dalhousie, accommodations don't automatically renew, so you will need to re-submit requests each year. If you have not already done so, click [here](#) to begin your request.

**Final grade rounding:** If your final grade is within 0.5% of a grade boundary, your grade will automatically be rounded up to the next letter grade (e.g., 79.5% will be rounded to an A-). If your final grade is between 0.5% and 1% away from the next letter grade (e.g., 79.4%), your class participation will be taken into consideration. In this case, if you have completed more presentation feedback and discussion posts than required for a full participation grade (e.g., 7 feedback forms and 5 discussion posts), your final grade will be rounded up to the next letter grade (e.g., 79.4% becomes an A-); otherwise, your final grade will stay as it (e.g., 79.4% remains a B+).

## Learning Objectives

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

- Demonstrate a broad understanding of basic pharmacology.
- Describe the different brain regions implicated in the use of substances.
- Identify and define key processes related to addiction.
- Describe several methodologies for researching substance use and addiction.

For each specific drug/drug class covered in the course, students should be able to:

- Identify the substance's mechanisms of action.
- Describe the pharmacokinetic and pharmacodynamic properties associated with its use through various routes of administration.
- Explain its subjective, behavioural, and performance-related effects.
- Describe its potentially harmful effects as well as its therapeutic uses.

## Course Content

Week	Date	Topic/Assessment	Reading(s)
1	September 5	Introduction	None
1	September 7	Basic Pharmacology	Chapter 1
2	September 12	Neuropsychopharmacology	Chapter 4
2	September 14	Addictive Processes	Chapters 3, 5
3	September 19	Research Problems and Design	Chapter 2
3	September 21	Alcohol	Chapter 6
4	September 26	<b>Alcohol Conference</b>	Articles on Brightspace
4	September 28	<b>TEST 1</b>	
5	October 3	Nicotine/Tobacco ( <i>Guest lecture</i> )	Chapter 8
5	October 5	<b>Nicotine/Tobacco Conference</b>	Articles on Brightspace
6	October 10	Cannabis	Chapter 14
6	October 12	<b>Cannabis Conference</b>	Articles on Brightspace
7	October 17	Hallucinogens/Club Drugs	Chapter 15
7	October 19	<b>Hallucinogens/Club Drugs Conference</b>	Articles on Brightspace
8	October 24	Psychostimulants	Chapter 10
8	October 26	<b>Psychostimulants Conference</b>	Articles on Brightspace
9	October 31	<b>TEST 2</b>	
9	November 2	Opioids	Chapter 11
10	November 7	<b>Opioids Conference</b>	Articles on Brightspace
10	November 9	Caffeine	Chapter 9
11	November 14	No class - Fall break	
11	November 16		
12	November 21	<b>Caffeine Conference</b>	Articles on Brightspace
12	November 23	Psychotherapeutics	Chapters 7, 12, 13
13	November 28	<b>Psychotherapeutics Conference</b>	Articles on Brightspace
13	November 30	Current Research / Student Requests	

## University Policies and Statements

### Recognition of Mi'kmaq Territory

Dalhousie University would like to acknowledge that the University is on Traditional Mi'kmaq Territory. The Elders in Residence program provides students with access to First Nations elders for guidance, counsel, and support. Visit or e-mail the Indigenous Student Centre at 1321 Edward St or [elders@dal.ca](mailto:elders@dal.ca). Additional information regarding the Indigenous Student Centre can be found at: [https://www.dal.ca/campus\\_life/communities/indigenous.html](https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/communities/indigenous.html)

### Internationalization

At Dalhousie, 'thinking and acting globally' enhances the quality and impact of education, supporting learning that is "interdisciplinary, cross-cultural, global in reach, and orientated toward solving problems that extend across national borders." Additional internationalization information can be found at: <https://www.dal.ca/about-dal/internationalization.html>

### Academic Integrity

At Dalhousie University, we are guided in all our work by the values of academic integrity: honesty, trust, fairness, responsibility, and respect. As a student, you are required to demonstrate these values in all the work you do. The University provides policies and procedures that every member of the university community is required to follow to ensure academic integrity. Additional academic integrity information can be found at: [https://www.dal.ca/dept/university\\_secretariat/academic-integrity.html](https://www.dal.ca/dept/university_secretariat/academic-integrity.html)

### Accessibility

The Student Accessibility Centre is Dalhousie's centre of expertise for matters related to student accessibility and accommodation. If there are aspects of the design, instruction, and/or experiences within this course (online or in-person) that result in barriers to your inclusion, please contact the Student Accessibility Centre ([https://www.dal.ca/campus\\_life/academic-support/accessibility.html](https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/academic-support/accessibility.html)) for all courses offered by Dalhousie with the exception of Truro. For courses offered by the Faculty of Agriculture, please contact the Student Success Centre in Truro (<https://www.dal.ca/about-dal/agricultural-campus/student-success-centre.html>)

### Conduct in the Classroom – Culture of Respect

Substantial and constructive dialogue on challenging issues is an important part of academic inquiry and exchange. It requires willingness to listen and tolerance of opposing points of view. Consideration of individual differences and alternative viewpoints is required of all class members, towards each other, towards instructors, and towards guest speakers. While expressions of differing perspectives are welcome and encouraged, the words and language used should remain within acceptable bounds of civility and respect.

### **Diversity and Inclusion – Culture of Respect**

Every person at Dalhousie has a right to be respected and safe. We believe inclusiveness is fundamental to education. We stand for equality. Dalhousie is strengthened in our diversity. We are a respectful and inclusive community. We are committed to being a place where everyone feels welcome and supported, which is why our Strategic Direction prioritizes fostering a culture of diversity and inclusiveness (Strategic Priority 5.2). Additional diversity and inclusion information can be found at: <http://www.dal.ca/cultureofrespect.html>

### **Student Code of Conduct**

Everyone at Dalhousie is expected to treat others with dignity and respect. The Code of Student Conduct allows Dalhousie to take disciplinary action if students don't follow this community expectation. When appropriate, violations of the code can be resolved in a reasonable and informal manner - perhaps through a restorative justice process. If an informal resolution can't be reached, or would be inappropriate, procedures exist for formal dispute resolution. The full Code of Student Conduct can be found at:

[https://www.dal.ca/dept/university\\_secretariat/policies/student-life/code-of-student-conduct.html](https://www.dal.ca/dept/university_secretariat/policies/student-life/code-of-student-conduct.html)

### **Fair Dealing Policy**

The Dalhousie University Fair Dealing Policy provides guidance for the limited use of copyright protected material without the risk of infringement and without having to seek the permission of copyright owners. It is intended to provide a balance between the rights of creators and the rights of users at Dalhousie. Additional information regarding the Fair Dealing Policy can be found at: [https://www.dal.ca/dept/university\\_secretariat/policies/academic/fair-dealing-policy-.html](https://www.dal.ca/dept/university_secretariat/policies/academic/fair-dealing-policy-.html)

### **Originality Checking Software**



The course instructor may use Dalhousie's approved originality checking software and Google to check the originality of any work submitted for credit, in accordance with the Student Submission of Assignments and Use of Originality Checking Software Policy. Students are free, without penalty of grade, to choose an alternative method of attesting to the authenticity of their work and must inform the instructor no later than the last day to add/drop classes of their intent to choose an alternate method. Additional information regarding Originality Checking Software can be found at:

[https://www.dal.ca/dept/university\\_secretariat/policies/academic/student-submission-of-assignments-and-use-of-originality-checking-software-policy-.html](https://www.dal.ca/dept/university_secretariat/policies/academic/student-submission-of-assignments-and-use-of-originality-checking-software-policy-.html)

### **Student Use of Course Materials**

Course materials are designed for use as part of this course at Dalhousie University and are the property of the instructor unless otherwise stated. Third party copyrighted materials (such as books, 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 course material for distribution (e.g. uploading to a commercial third-party website) may lead to a violation of Copyright law.