

FYSM 1310 H : PSYCHOLOGICAL DISORDERS AND MENTAL HEALTH

Instructor	Dr. Ashley Thompson
Term	Fall 2026/Winter 2027
Course Delivery	In-Person
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Office Location	MacOdrum Library 474
Office Hours	Vary weekly and by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION/INSTRUCTOR'S STATEMENT

How do stress, resilience, and life experiences influence mental health across the lifespan? What happens in the brain when we experience depression, anxiety, trauma, or other psychological disorders? How do we prioritize and advocate for our own mental health, especially in high-stress situations? This first-year seminar explores the intersection of psychology and neuroscience, examining mental health through the lens of the brain.

Using case studies, current research, and interactive discussions, students will explore the biological, psychological, and social factors that contribute to mental health and psychological disorders. Topics may include stress and resilience, mood and anxiety disorders, addiction, schizophrenia, ADHD, autism spectrum disorders, and emerging approaches to prevention and treatment. Throughout the course, students will examine how advances in research inform our understanding of the brain and mental health while considering the ethical, social, and cultural issues surrounding diagnosis, stigma, and care.

In this seminar, students will practice and receive feedback on skills that contribute to a successful undergraduate journey, including organization, critical thinking, and thoughtful discussion. Students will have opportunities to build relationships with the instructor, their peers, and the course topics as they explore scientific evidence, communicate complex ideas, and develop a deeper curiosity for the relationship between brain function, behaviour, environment, and mental health.

EVALUATION (SUBJECT TO CHANGE)

Assessments will include projects, assignments, discussion and engagement.

TEXT

N/A.