

**Department of Physiology and Pharmacology**  
**Phys/Pharm 4440B: Animal and Cell Modelling of Development and Disease**

Course Syllabus for Winter 2025



Western University is committed to a **thriving campus**; therefore, your health and wellness matter to us! The following link provides information about the resources available on and off campus to support students: <https://www.uwo.ca/health/> Your course coordinator can also **guide you** to resources and/or services should you need them.

**1. Technical Requirements:**



Stable internet connection



Laptop or computer

This course examines the use of established and emerging cell and animal models to study developmental and disease processes. From transgenic mice, to CRISPR-Cas9, to rapid screening of drugs for pharmaceutical testing, the understanding of how model systems can be utilized to evaluate normal development and physiology as well as pathologies.

**2. Important Dates:**



Classes Begin	Reading Week	Classes End	Study day(s)	Exam Period
January 6	February 15–23	April 4	April 5–6	April 7–30

March 31, 2025: Last day to withdraw from second-term half course without academic penalty

**3. Contact Information**

Course Coordinator	Contact Information
Christopher Pin	<a href="mailto:cpin@uwo.ca">cpin@uwo.ca</a>

Instructor(s) or Teaching Assistant(s)	Contact Information
Dean Betts	<a href="mailto:dean.betts@schulich.uwo.ca">dean.betts@schulich.uwo.ca</a>
Tom Drysdale	<a href="mailto:tadrylda@uwo.ca">tadrylda@uwo.ca</a>

#### 4. Course Description and Design

**Delivery Mode:** in-person

**Course Description:** This course examines the use of traditional and emerging models to study developmental and disease processes. From transgenic mice, to CRISPR-Cas9, to rapid screening of drugs for pharmaceutical testing, the understanding of how model systems can be utilized in the sciences to evaluate developmental and environmental disorders will be explored.

Pre-requisites: Physiology 3140A

Anti-requisites: the former Physiology 4640A/B

Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

The main objective of this course is to introduce students to the development and characterization of preclinical models used in physiology and disease-based research. Sessions will focus on improving the ability of students to read, understand, and discuss primary scientific literature, and provide students with an opportunity to conceptually translate their knowledge on model development to solve problems/answer questions related to physiology and, pharmacology. The course material will include pre-recorded videos, didactic lecturing, analysis of primary research journal articles and class presentations/discussions. ***Students are expected to come prepared to work in groups and discuss, in class, the content of pre-recorded videos and journal articles provided. This will require independent work outside of the lectures.*** The lectures will focus mainly on how preclinical models are developed and used for understanding fundamental developmental, physiological, and pathological processes (see schedule).

##### Timetabled Sessions

Component	Date(s)	Time
In class	Thursday; 12:30-2:20 pm	2 hours
Virtual asynchronous information will be provided	weekly	15 minutes

- Asynchronous pre-work must be completed prior to sessions
- Attendance at sessions is required
- Missed work should be completed within 24 hours

All course material will be posted to OWL: <https://westernu.brightspace.com/d2l/login>. Any changes will be indicated on the OWL site and discussed with the class.

If students need assistance, they can seek support on the [OWL Brightspace Help](#). Alternatively, they can contact the [Western Technology Services Helpdesk](#). They can be contacted by phone at 519-661-3800 or ext. 83800.

Current versions of all popular browsers (e.g., Safari, Chrome, Edge, Firefox) are supported with OWL Brightspace; what is most important is that you update your browser frequently to ensure it is current. All JavaScript and cookies should be enabled.

## 5. Learning Outcomes

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

- understand various pre-clinical models used in research and therapeutics
- identify the various techniques/technologies utilized to study tissue/organ development and correctly apply these techniques to address specific hypotheses
- identify research goals and hypotheses within a scientific publication
- create testable models and hypotheses and design appropriate, controlled experiments to test these hypotheses
- work in a small group to critically discuss primary research publications

## 6. Course Content and Schedule

Week	Dates	Topic*	Instructor
1	January 9 <sup>th</sup>	Introduction to course and animal/cell models	C. Pin
2	January 16 <sup>th</sup>	Non-mammalian animal models	T. Drysdale
3	January 23 <sup>rd</sup>	Mouse knockouts	C. Pin
4	January 30 <sup>th</sup>	Maternal knockout models in mice	D. Betts
5	February 6 <sup>th</sup>	Genetic manipulation and experimental methods in non-mammalian models	T. Drysdale
6	February 13 <sup>th</sup>	Development of stem cell/organoid models	D. Betts
7	February 20 <sup>th</sup>	Reading Week (starts February 15 <sup>th</sup> )	N/A
8	February 27 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Midterm</b>	In class
9	March 6 <sup>th</sup>	iPS cell modelling to understand disease The use of iPS cells for rapid drug screening	D. Betts
10	March 13 <sup>th</sup>	Presentations	All
11	March 20 <sup>th</sup>	Feedback and Discussion	All
12	March 27 <sup>th</sup>	Systems biology in non-mammalian models	T. Drysdale
13	April 3 <sup>rd</sup>	Organoids as a model for personalized medicine	C. Pin
	April 4 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Written assignment due*</b>	
	April 14 <sup>th</sup>	Feedback on assignments provided	

## 7. Participation and Engagement

- Students are expected to participate and engage with content as much as possible
- Students can participate during in class sessions or post on BRIGHTSPACE after watching pre-lecture material
- Students can also participate by interacting in the forums with their peers and instructors

## 8. Assessment and Evaluation

Below is the evaluation breakdown for the course. Any deviations will be communicated.

Assessment	Format	Weighting	Due Date	Flexibility
Midterm exam (covers weeks 1-5)	In class	20%	February 27 <sup>th</sup>	None
Model development	20 minutes in class presentation	10%	March 13 <sup>th</sup>	None
Provide the “next experiment” based on provided manuscripts	Two-page written assignment	25%	April 4 <sup>th</sup>	5 days no late penalty
Final exam (Cumulative)	Essay/short answers	40%	During April exam period	None
Participation	Online reflections and in-class feedback and discussions	5%	Ongoing	None

**Designated Assessment:** For this course, all assessments have been designated as requiring supporting documentation EXCEPT the midterm exam.

### General information about assessments

- Written assignment is due at 11:59 pm EST unless otherwise specified. You will have a five day grace period for submission before marks are reduced.
- Written assignment will be submitted to Turnitin (statement in policies below)
- Students will have unlimited submissions to Turnitin
- Rubrics will be used to evaluate assessments and will be posted with the instructions
- After an assessment is returned, students should wait 24 hours to digest feedback before contacting their evaluator; to ensure a timely response, reach out within 7 days
- Any grade appeals on assignments, quizzes, or midterms must be received within 3 weeks of the grade being posted.
- 15% of your course grade will be evaluated and returned 3 days prior to the drop deadline (statement in policies below).

### Short description of evaluations

Midterm exam: Held in class and will cover material presented in the first five lectures describing animal/cell-based models. The exam will consist of short answer questions that will test knowledge from these lectures as well as applicability to animal/cell modeling.

Assignment #1 – Model Development: Students will work in small groups to develop a novel cell/animal model that will be used to answer a specific research question stemming from a provided manuscript. The PowerPoint presentation will be 15 minutes and describe (1) the key findings from the paper, (2) the next question to be asked, (3) the hypothesis to be tested and (4) the model to be developed. There will be 5-10 minutes of feedback provided from students and faculty. The following week, we will have each group of students provide feedback regarding the model and experiment to another group of students.

Assignment #2 – Next Experiment: Based on feedback from Assignment #1, students will use the novel animal/cell models to answer the next question that stems from a recent manuscript. Students will choose from a series of papers provided by the faculty that identify genetic mutations found within humans. These mutations may be linked to a genetic disorder or disease and the student will be asked to design a cell or animal model that can be used to determine the functional relevance of the gene as it relates to specific physiological or pathological outcomes.

Final Exam: Short and long style essay questions that will test the student's ability to expand upon the information given in the lectures. Exam questions will typically ask students to suggest experiments and provide results that pertain to models or hypotheses discussed in the lectures.

Participation: Students will be required to participate in the course through asking/answering questions in the context of student presentations or during lectures and will also be given marks for the feedback provided on other presentations. They may also be required to contribute to online forums provided on the OWL Brightspace website.

Click [here](#) for a detailed and comprehensive set of policies and regulations concerning examinations and grading. The table below outlines the University-wide grade descriptors.

A+	90-100	One could scarcely expect better from a student at this level
A	80-89	Superior work which is clearly above average
B	70-79	Good work, meeting all requirements, and eminently satisfactory
C	60-69	Competent work, meeting requirements
D	50-59	Fair work, minimally acceptable
F	below 50	Fail

#### **Information about late or missed assessments:**

- Late assessments without approved academic consideration will be subject to a late penalty **10%/day** (three day grace period for Assignment 2)
- An assessment cannot be submitted after it has been returned to the class; In this instance, the weight will be transferred to the final grade
- One scheduled make-up exam will be offered
- If the make-up assessment is missed, the student will receive an INC and complete the task the next time the course is offered

**INC (Incomplete Standing):** If a student has been approved by the Academic Advising Office (in consultation with the instructor/department) to complete term work at a later date, an INC will be assigned. Students with INC will have their course load in subsequent terms reduced to allow them to complete outstanding course work. Students may request permission from Academic Advising to carry a full course load for the term the incomplete course work is scheduled.

**SPC (Special examination):** If a student has been approved by the Academic Advising Office to write a Special Examination and the final exam is the only outstanding course component, an SPC will be assigned. If the class has a makeup exam, the student is expected to write the makeup exam. If the class doesn't have a makeup exam or the student misses the makeup exam for reasons approved by the Academic Advising Office, the student will write the exam the next time the course is offered. Outstanding SPCs will reduce the course load for the term the exam is deferred as outlined in [Types of Examinations](#) policy.

#### **9. Communication**

- Students should check the OWL Brightspace site every 24–48 hours
- Students should email their instructor(s) and teaching assistant(s) using emails provided
- Emails will be monitored daily; students will receive a response in 24–48 hours

- This course will use discussions on Brightspace
- Students should post all course-related queries on the discussion forum so that everyone can access the questions and responses

## 10. Office Hours

- There are traditionally no office hours offered. However, students should contact professors directly to book an appointment which can occur via zoom or in person.

## 11. Resources

- All resources will be posted in OWL Brightspace
- No required textbook

## 12. Professionalism & Privacy

Western students are expected to follow the [Student Code of Conduct](#). Additionally, the following expectations and professional conduct apply to this course:

- All course materials created by the instructor(s) are copyrighted and cannot be sold/shared (e.g., Must Knows Facebook group, Course Hero, Chegg, etc.)
- Recordings are not permitted (audio or video) without explicit permission
- Permitted recordings are not to be distributed
- Students will be expected to take an academic integrity pledge before some assessments

Western is committed to providing a learning and working environment that is free of harassment and discrimination. All **students**, staff, and faculty have a role in this commitment and have a responsibility to ensure and promote a safe and respectful learning and working environment. Relevant policies include Western's [Non-Discrimination/Harassment Policy \(M.A.P.P. 1.35\)](#) and [Non-Discrimination/Harassment Policy – Administrative Procedures \(M.A.P.P. 1.35\)](#). Any **student**, staff, or faculty member who experiences or witnesses' behaviour that may be harassment or discrimination **must report the behaviour** to the Western's [Human Rights Office](#). Harassment and discrimination can be human rights-based, which is also known as EDI-based, (sexism, racism, transphobia, homophobia, islamophobia, xenophobia, antisemitism, and ableism) or non-human rights-based (personal harassment or workplace harassment).

## 13. How to Be Successful in this Class

Students enrolled in this class should understand the level of autonomy and self-discipline required to be successful.

1. Invest in a planner or application to keep track of your courses. Populate all your deadlines at the start of the term and schedule your time throughout the course.
2. Make it a daily habit to log onto OWL Brightspace to ensure you have seen everything posted to help you succeed in this class.
3. Follow checklists created on OWL Brightspace or create your own to help you stay on track.
4. Take notes as you go through the lesson material. Keeping handwritten notes or even notes on a regular Word document will help you learn more effectively than just reading or watching the videos.
5. Connect with others. Try forming an online study group and try meeting on a weekly basis for study and peer support.
6. Do not be afraid to ask questions. If you are struggling with a topic, check the online discussion boards or contact your instructor(s) and or teaching assistant(s).
7. Reward yourself for successes. It seems easier to motivate ourselves knowing that there is something waiting for us at the end of the task.

## 14. Western Academic Policies and Statements

### A. Absence from Course Commitments

Students must familiarize themselves with the Policy on [Academic Consideration – Undergraduate Students in First Entry Programs](#)

Students missing course work for medical, compassionate, or extenuating circumstances can request academic consideration by completing a request at the [central academic consideration portal](#). Students are permitted one academic consideration request per course per term **without** supporting documentation. Note that supporting documentation is **always** required for academic consideration requests for examinations scheduled by the office of the registrar (e.g., December and April exams) and for practical laboratory and performance tests (typically scheduled during the last week of the term).

Students should also note that the instructor may **designate** one assessment per course per term that requires supporting documentation. This designated assessment is described elsewhere in this document. Academic consideration requests may be denied when flexibility in assessment has already been included. Examples of flexibility in assessment include when there are assessments not required for calculation of the final grade (e.g. 8 out of 10 quizzes) or there is flexibility in the submission timeframe (e.g. 72 hour no late penalty period).

Please note that any academic considerations granted in this course will be determined by the instructor of this course, in consultation with the academic advisors in your Faculty of Registration, in accordance with information presented in this course syllabus. Supporting documentation for academic considerations for absences due to illness should use the [Student Medical Certificate](#) or, where that is not possible, equivalent documentation by a health care practitioner.

#### Accommodation for Religious Holidays

Students should review the policy for [Accommodation for Religious Holidays](#). Where a student will be unable to write examinations and term tests due to a conflicting religious holiday, they should inform their instructors as soon as possible but not later than two weeks prior to writing the examination/term test. In the case of conflict with a midterm test, students should inform their instructor as soon as possible but not later than one week prior to the midterm.

#### Special Examinations

A Special Examination is any examination other than the regular examination, and it may be offered only with the permission of the Dean of the Faculty in which the student is registered, in consultation with the instructor and Department Chair. Permission to write a Special Examination may be given on the basis of compassionate or medical grounds with appropriate supporting documents. To provide an opportunity for students to recover from the circumstances resulting in a Special Examination, the University has implemented Special Examinations dates. These dates as well as other important information about examinations and academic standing can be found [here](#).

### B. Academic Offenses

Scholastic offences are taken seriously, and students are directed [here](#) to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence.

Computer-marked multiple-choice tests and/or exams may be subject to submission for similarity review by software that will check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns that may indicate cheating.



### **C. Accessibility Statement**

Please contact the course instructor if you require material in an alternate format or if you require any other arrangements to make this course more accessible to you. You may also wish to contact Accessible Education (AE) at 661-2111 x 82147 for any specific question regarding an accommodation or review [The policy on Accommodation for Students with Disabilities](#)

### **D. Correspondence Statement**

The centrally administered **e-mail account** provided to students will be considered the individual's official university e-mail address. It is the responsibility of the account holder to ensure that e-mail received from the University at his/her official university address is attended to in a timely manner. You can read about the privacy and security of the UWO email accounts [here](#).

### **E. Discovery Credit Statement**

Students are permitted to designate up to 1.0 Discovery Credit course (or equivalent) for pass/fail grading that can be counted toward the overall course credits required for their degree program. The details of this policy and the deadlines can be found [here](#).

### **F. Turnitin and other similarity review software**

All assignments will be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. Students will be able to view their results before the final submission. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between Western University and [Turnitin.com](#).

## **15. BMSUE Academic Policies and Statements**

### **Cell Phone and Electronic Device Policy (for in-person tests and exams)**

The Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry is committed to ensuring that testing and evaluation are undertaken fairly across all our departments and programs. For all tests and exams, it is the policy of the School that any electronic devices, e.g., cell phones, tablets, cameras, smart glasses, smart watch or iPod are strictly prohibited. These devices **MUST** be left either at home or with the student's bag/jacket at the front of the room and **MUST NOT** be at the test/exam desk or in the individual's pocket. Any student found with one of these prohibited devices will receive a grade of zero on the test or exam. Non-programmable calculators are only allowed when indicated by the instructor. The program is not responsible for stolen/lost or broken devices.

### **Copyright and Audio/Video Recording Statement**

Course material produced by faculty is copyrighted and to reproduce this material for any purposes other than your own educational use contravenes Canadian Copyright Laws. You must always ask permission to record another individual and you should never share or distribute recordings.

### **Rounding of Marks Statement**

Across the Basic Medical Sciences Undergraduate Education programs, we strive to maintain high standards that reflect the effort that both students and faculty put into the teaching and learning experience during this course. All students will be treated equally and evaluated based only on their actual achievement. **Final grades** on this course, irrespective of the number of decimal places used in marking individual assignments and tests, will be calculated to one decimal place and rounded to the nearest



integer, e.g., 74.45 becomes 74, and 74.50 becomes 75. Marks WILL NOT be bumped to the next grade or GPA, e.g., a 79 will NOT be bumped up to an 80, an 84 WILL NOT be bumped up to an 85, etc. The mark attained is the mark you achieved, and the mark assigned; requests for mark “bumping” will be denied.

### **Use of ChatGPT and other Artificial Intelligence (AI) Platforms Statement**

Within this course, students are permitted to use AI tools exclusively for information gathering and preliminary research purposes. These tools are intended to enhance the learning experience by providing access to diverse information sources. However, it is essential that students critically evaluate the obtained information, exercise independent thinking, and engage in original research to synthesize and develop their own ideas, arguments, and perspectives. The use of AI tools can serve as a starting point for exploration, with students expected to uphold academic integrity by appropriately attributing all sources and avoiding plagiarism. Assignments and/or lab reports should reflect the students' own thoughts and independent written work. By adhering to these guidelines, students contribute to a responsible and ethical learning environment that promotes critical thinking, independent inquiry and allows them to produce original written contributions.

## **16. Support Services**

- Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health @Western Health <https://www.uwo.ca/health/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.
- To connect with a case manager or set up an appointment, please contact [support@uwo.ca](mailto:support@uwo.ca).
- Other important links:
  - [Academic Advising \(Science and Basic Medical Sciences\)](#)
  - [Appeal Procedures](#)
  - [Registrarial Services](#)
  - [Student Development Services](#)
  - [Student Health Services](#)

### **Statement on Gender-Based and Sexual Violence**

Western is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence and providing compassionate support to anyone who has gone through these traumatic events. If you have experienced sexual or gender-based violence (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at:

[https://www.uwo.ca/health/student\\_support/survivor\\_support/get-help.html](https://www.uwo.ca/health/student_support/survivor_support/get-help.html).