

Department of Physiology and Pharmacology
Physiology 4700B: Fetal Physiology

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

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
Dr. Timothy Regnault	Tim.regnault@uwo.ca

Instructor(s) or Teaching Assistant(s)	Contact Information
Dr. Stephen Renaud	stephen.Renaud@schulich.uwo.ca
Dr. Emma Duerden	eduerden@uwo.ca
Dr. Daniel Hardy	daniel.Hardy@schulich.uwo.ca
Dr. David Hill	david.hill@lawsonresearch.com
Andrea Kocsis (TA)	akocsis2@uwo.ca
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4. Course Description and Design

The early life cycle, focusing on fetal development and growth, from blastocyst implantation including the establishment of the placenta, maternal adaptations to pregnancy and regulation of fetal development and growth through to parturition are covered. Other areas detailed as it relates to fetal physiology, include discussion of the periconceptional and postnatal exposomes and their impacts upon fetal development as well as offspring development. All these areas are critically important in determining later life health and wellness. Specific areas of study include placental development, endocrine and nutrient and drug transport properties over gestation, fetal cardiovascular and CNS development and function, fetal metabolism as it relates to pancreatic muscle, adipose and liver development and function as well as fetal respiratory development. The role of the placenta and the fetus in parturition and other fetomaternal relationships are also described. All these areas are discussed with particular attention to the preconception and early life cycle periods being critically important in setting one's later life health, wellness and disease risk. Adverse environments (eg. hypoxia, mental stress, malnutrition, excess nutrition and maternal infection) during these periods, can alter fetal development in such a way that offspring are predisposed to increased susceptibility to communicable disease, a range of non-communicable diseases (eg: asthma, insulin resistance, cardiovascular disease, type II diabetes, obesity and altered neurobehavioral patterns) and altered capacity (eg; reproductive capacity) outcomes. Understanding these environments, their impacts and interventions to modulate their impacts will help ensure local, nation and global achievements in alignment with specifically Goal 3 of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) - Ensuring healthy life and promoting well-being for all at all ages, but also the interrelationships with other SDGs such as SDGs 1 (End poverty in all its forms everywhere), 2 (Zero hunger) and 10 (Reduce inequality within and among countries). The interactions between basic and applied physiology are stressed as well as the critical importance the early life cycle, with a fetal focus, plays in promoting healthy life and well-being for all at all ages from a national and also global perspective.

Delivery Mode: Blended

The design of the course uses both asynchronous and face to face lecture (synchronous) modes.

The asynchronous component is of pre lecture readings and prerecorded lecture material that will be posted for viewing a week prior to the lecture session. It is expected that students will have watched the prerecorded lecture material and completed assigned readings in the week prior to the lecture session. It is expected this work will take between 1-2 hours.

The face-to-face lecture component will commence at 2:30 pm each week. During this synchronous time, activities will include, reinforcing key points from the associated session's posted readings and pre-recorded lecture material with additional lecture material and case studies presentations. Additionally, in class work group work sessions will occur as well as three in class quizzes. The full time period for synchronous teaching may not always be used.

The course evaluation will be made up of three in class quizzes (24%), a Midterm examination (26%) and a five-minute, policy elevator pitch audiovisual presentation (15%). There will also be a Final Examination (3 hours - 35%).

Prerequisite: Physiology 3120

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.

Timetabled Sessions

Component	Date(s)	Time
In person sessions	Thursday	2:30-4:30PM
Virtual asynchronous sessions	Completed before class	

- Asynchronous pre-work must be completed prior to sessions
- Attendance at sessions is required
- Missed work should be completed within 72 hours
- A recording will be provided of the sessions

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:

- Analyze primary research in fetal physiology to evaluate the critical roles of the placenta and fetal organ development in determining long-term health outcomes.
- Predict the impacts of adverse in utero environments on fetal development and propose interventions to mitigate health complications in offspring.
- Integrate knowledge of early life cycle physiology to develop strategies that promote health and well-being across the lifespan, aligning with relevant United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.
- Communicate issues of health and well-being, including sexual and reproductive health, and design preventive strategies for disease and mental health as individuals progress through the life cycle.
- Assess maternal-fetal interactions throughout gestation to enhance healthy pregnancy outcomes and long-term wellness.

These objectives aim to equip students with the ability to analyze primary research in fetal physiology, understand the critical roles of the placenta and fetal organ development, and evaluate how adverse in utero environments impact fetal development and long-term health. Students will learn to assess interventions to mitigate negative prenatal impacts, integrate knowledge to promote health and well-being in alignment with the UN Sustainable Development Goals, and communicate health issues while designing preventive strategies.

6. Course Content and Schedule

Week	Dates	Topic	Instructor
1	Jan 6–12	Adaptations to pregnancy and fetal circulatory development	Regnault/Renaud
2	Jan 13–19	Immunity and implantation and placental hormones	Renaud
3	Jan 20–26	Placental development and substrate transport and utilization	Regnault
4	Jan 27–Feb 2	Fetal neurophysiology	Duerden
5	Feb 3–9	Fetal lung development	Hardy
6	Feb 10–16	Fetal metabolic axis (muscle, fat, liver and pancreas) I	Hill
7	Feb 17–23	Reading Week (starts February 15 th)	N/A
8	Feb 24–Mar 2	Fetal metabolic axis (muscle, fat, liver and pancreas) II	Hill
9	Mar 3–9	Molecular mechanisms of parturition	Hardy
10	Mar 10–16	Fetoplacental development and metabolic outcomes of placental insufficiency	Regnault
11	Mar 17–23	Fetoplacental development and metabolic outcomes for excessive maternal nutrition	Regnault
12	Mar 24–30	Altered fetal brain development: association with outcomes	Duerden
13	Mar 31–Apr 4	The impact of DOHaD and indicators for the future	Hill

7. Participation and Engagement

- Students are expected to participate and engage with content as much as possible
- 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. All assessments are individual tasks. Any deviations will be communicated.

Assessment	Format	Weighting	Due Date	Flexibility
In class quizzes (3), 1 st quiz, lecture 1-3 inclusive; 2 nd quiz, lecture 4-9 inclusive; 3 rd quiz, lectures 10-12 inclusive	MCQ/short answer	24% (8% each)	30 th Jan 13 th March 3 rd April	None
Midterm examination – covers lectures 1-6 inclusive - 2 hrs	Mixed format	26%	1 st March (evening)	None-designated assessment
Five-minute, policy elevator pitch	Audiovisual presentation	15%	31 st March (8 am)	72-hour no late penalty
Final Exam - covers all lectures - 3 hrs	Mixed format	35%	April Exam Period	Not applicable

Designated Assessment:

For this course, the following assessment has been designated as requiring supporting documentation:

- **Midterm exam**

Information about flexibility in assessment

- Flexibility in assessment has been applied to this course; therefore, academic consideration requests may be denied on the assessments where flexibility is included
- This course has three (3) in class quizzes. If unable to attend, requests for academic consideration must be submitted within 48 hours of the original deadline

General information about assessments

- All assignments are due at 8am EST unless otherwise specified
- Students are responsible for ensuring that the correct file version is uploaded; incorrect submissions including corrupt files could be subject to late penalties (see below) or a 0
- Written assignments will be submitted to Turnitin (statement in policies below)
- 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.

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 academic consideration will be subject to a late penalty **10%/day**
- An assessment cannot be submitted after it has been returned to the class; the weight will be transferred to the final grade
- The weight of missed quizzes with approved academic consideration will be transferred to final exam
- There will be one makeup exam offered for the midterm as well as the final exam. NB the format of the makeup exams is at the discretion of the Course manager
- A pass in the final exam must be achieved to pass the course. If the final examination and makeup is missed, an SPC will be recorded, and student will be able to complete the course the next time 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 email.
- Emails will be monitored daily; students will receive a response in 24–48 hours during week days.
- This course will use Brightspace.
- Students should post all course-related queries on the discussion forum so that everyone can access the questions and responses

10. Office Hours

- Office hours will be held upon email request with individual lecturers or TA

11. Resources

- All resources will be posted in OWL Brightspace
- Your inquisitive mind

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. 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.

Statement on the use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) Platforms

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.
- 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.