PSYCHOLOGY 100-A02: BASIC CONCEPTS IN PSYCHOLOGY
Summer 2017

Instructor: Keith Renshaw
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Office Hours: Tue 9:00-10:00, **or by appt**

   NOTE: This course is entirely online. There are no scheduled meeting times. Please read this syllabus very carefully to be sure you understand all aspects and requirements of the course.

Required Materials: Ciccarrelli & White – *Psychology: An Exploration (3rd edition)*
                                       MyPsychLab Access Card

Course Logistics
This course is completely online, which means a great deal of responsibility rests on each student's shoulders. Also, because it is a summer course, the semester is approximately one-third as long as usual, but we still cover the same amount of material. *To succeed in this class, you will need to work hard to keep yourself on a timeline that allows you to complete material in a timely fashion.* Almost all assignments and exams will be available at the beginning of the semester, so students who want to work ahead can do so. On the other hand, assignments and exams will have due dates, and assignments/exams that are completed late will be penalized in scoring (see below). Thus, if you fall behind, it will be hard to do well in the class.

You will need to familiarize yourself with the online content associated with this course. Part of this will require reading *all* of the handouts and instructions provided. The instructor, ITU at George Mason, and online support at Pearson are available for assistance, but if you have difficulty with any of the resources, please be sure to read the associated instructions and handouts prior to requesting assistance.

The instructor is available by email or phone throughout the entire session. You may email or call with questions, comments, concerns, etc. Throughout the semester, all emails or voice mails will be answered within 2 business (i.e., M-F) days – although responses will usually come within 1 business day, please allow 2 business days. **During the first week, the instructor will be online and checking email and voice mail even more frequently, and will endeavor to answer all questions within several hours.**

Course Overview
This course will provide a general overview of the field of psychology, which at its core, focuses on explaining people's thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. Psychology covers all kinds of human experience: how the brain works, why we dream, psychological disorders and how to treat them, why we forget some things (like a birthday or anniversary) but remember others (the name of our 2nd grade teacher), why we get into (and out of) relationships… All of this information deals with how and why people think, feel, and act the way they do. The class will involve learning this basic information *and* learning to apply it.

Psychology is very broad; therefore, this course will cover a great deal of information. Thus, it is *very important* to keep up with the readings, assignments, etc. Although all assignments and exams are completed online, there are deadlines, and late assignments are penalized.

Course Goals
1.   Students will understand the focus of each of the primary areas within the field of psychology (e.g., developmental psychology, clinical psychology), and the similarities and differences among them.

2.   Students will know and understand fundamental concepts and terminology within each area of psychology, and be able to apply these concepts and terminology to basic novel situations.

3.   Students will know and understand fundamental concepts of research in the behavioral sciences, and be able to apply these concepts to basic novel situations.

Assignments, Exams, and Grade
Your grade in this course is based on 5 separate components:

1. *Syllabus and Course Logistics Quiz: 5%.* Your first assignment in the course will be to answer a series of questions about the syllabus and logistics of the course. This is due within the FIRST FIVE DAYS of the course (recommended within the FIRST TWO DAYS), and is designed to ensure that all students have fully read over the material necessary to proceed in the course. YOU ARE ALLOWED TO USE ALL COURSE MATERIALS WHILE TAKING THIS QUIZ. The purpose is not to test your memorization of the information, but rather to ensure that you have read everything over. YOU ONLY HAVE ONE CHANCE TO TAKE THIS QUIZ, SO DOUBLE-CHECK YOUR ANSWERS.

2. *Chapter Assignments: 15%.* For each chapter, there are various graded assignments that must be completed and submitted in MyPsychLab or in Blackboard. Credit is assigned based on (a) timely completion of assignments, (b) receiving a minimum of 50% correct on the first attempt, and (c) receiving a minimum of 75% correct on the 'best attempt.' There are two types of assignments.

   Assignments are brief quizzes/worksheets (in Blackboard) and chapter exams (in MyPsychLab). Assignments are worth 5 points each. Assignments that are submitted without receiving 50% correct on the first attempt are penalized 2 points. Assignments that are submitted without receiving 75% correct on the 'best attempt' are penalized 2 points. Late assignments are penalized 1 point per day.

3. *Discussion Posts: 15%.* You will be responsible for posting 1 original comment, and replying to 2 comments posted by your classmates, in 3 modules of the course (you post 1 original comment and 2 replies in each module – a total of 3 original posts and 6 replies). Original posts are worth 4 points, and replies to others' posts are worth 2 points each. Postings must be original, thoughtful, and respectful. Original posts will be graded based on amount of thought demonstrated and relevance to the subject matter. Original posts that are both thoughtful and relevant will receive full credit, whereas original posts that are lacking in both of these will be scored a 0. Replies to other posts must extend the thoughts expressed in the original post – they *cannot* be simple restatements, or statements of agreement or disagreement (such replies will result in 0 points for that post). At the same time, there is no need to be overly lengthy. Most original posts will be between 500 and 1500 characters. Most replies will be between 250 and 750 characters (*these are not requirements, just guidelines – some perfectly acceptable posts may be longer or shorter)*. The instructor will provide examples of original posts and replies in the Discussion forum on Blackboard, to give more guidance.

4. *Module Exams: 60%.* There will be one exam per module of the course – 6 exams total. Each exam will count for 10% of the final grade in the class. Students should not use any materials (textbook, notes, flashcards, etc.) during the exam. To ensure that students adhere to this, exams will be timed – once an exam is opened, **it must be completed within 1 hour** (if you need accommodations for extra time, please see the section below regarding disabilities). Also, exam questions will be randomly selected **for each student**, so no student will take the same exam. Questions are taken from a pool of over 1,000 questions and matched for difficulty and content.

   There is an *optional* cumulative final exam at the end of the semester. If you take the final, it will replace your lowest exam score of the semester (unless it is lower than your lowest score, in which case, the final will not count against you). There are two primary reasons you might choose to take this exam. First, if you miss an exam during the semester, this will be your option for making it up. In such cases, your score on the final will replace the '0' you received for the missed exam. Second, if you had an exam on which you did poorly, you can take this exam to replace that score.

5. *Research Requirement: 5%.* The psychology department believes that participation in psychological research can enhance your learning about the field. Thus, for 5% of the grade in this course, all students are required to serve for 5 hours as participants in psychological research. For students who prefer not to participate, you can also complete 5 hours worth of online alternative options that you can do through the course website. You may fulfill the 5 hour requirement through any combination of these two options – handouts with detailed information are posted on Blackboard (see Research Requirement tab). See handouts for more details.

Final Grade

The final grade will be calculated using the percentages above, with 100% as the highest possible total grade. Letter grades will be assigned based on the standard format (scores of .5 and above are rounded up, <u>anything</u> below .5 is rounded down):

A+	97%-100%	B+	87%-89%	C+	77%-79%	D	60%-69%
A	93%-96%	B	83%-86%	C	73%-76%	F	< 60%
A-	90%-92%	B-	80%-82%	C-	70%-72%		

Honor Code

George Mason University has an honor code that states the following:

> To promote a stronger sense of mutual responsibility, respect, trust, and fairness among all members of the George Mason University community and with the desire for greater academic and personal achievement, we, the student members of the University Community have set forth this:

> Student members of the George Mason University community pledge not to cheat, plagiarize, steal, or lie in matters related to academic work.

I encourage you to learn the material taught in this course in any and all ways that best fit your learning style. However, your performance on graded assignments and exams, and in the research requirement portion of the course, MUST BE YOUR OWN, INDEPENDENT WORK. You are not to use any unauthorized aids while completing such tasks (e.g., using your E-book while completing an exam). Any violations such as these will be reported to the Honor Code Committee, and the instructor for this course reserves the right to enter a failing grade to any student found guilty of an honor code violation.

Technology Usage

All primary contact in the course will be via email and Blackboard; thus, you are <u>required</u> to check your Mason email account regularly and to keep your mailbox maintained so that messages will not be rejected for being over quota. You may forward GMU emails to other accounts, but emails to the instructor should come from your GMU account, to allow verification of your identity. For this course, *all assignments must be completed online* within Blackboard (see below). You may need to download various free programs (e.g., Adobe Shockwave) to view some of the resources. In addition, you must sign up for required experiments/alternatives through the Sona Systems website or complete online alternatives via Blackboard (see Research Requirement Handout).

Online Course Resources

The course will be run through Blackboard 9.1. ***It is extremely important to access Blackboard 9.1 through the MyMason Portal – please follow these instructions:***

1. Go to http://mymasonportal.gmu.edu/
2. Login using your Mason ID and password (the same one you use for your GMU email account)
3. Click on the 'Courses' tab (toward the top right of the screen)
4. Go to the list of courses entitled "Course List" (in the **middle** of the screen)
5. Click on the link for Psyc 100-C01

The class website in Blackboard will contain access to videos, assignments, *MyPsychLab*, the discussion board, exams, and other course resources. Nearly all course activities will take place in Blackboard and MyPsychLab, so it is important to login and begin to explore the various components in the first days of the semester.

E-Book. You can purchase access to the electronic version of the textbook through the customized version of MyPsychLab. The E-Book has the exact same content in the exact same layout as the printed textbook, as well as direct links from the text to most of the resources in MyPsychLab. You can highlight, make notes, and bookmark pages with the E-book. If you prefer, however, you can also purchase a loose-leaf or standard hard copy of the book, along with the access card for MyPsychLab.

Disabilities
If you are a student with disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at 703-993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office. Please note that accommodations MUST BE MADE BEFORE assignments or exams are due. I cannot adjust your grade after the fact.

Important Administrative Dates:
5/26   Last day to add classes
5/26   Last day to drop classes without penalty
6/1   Last day to drop (50% tuition penalty)
6/5-6/7   Selective withdrawal period

General Course Schedule
As the course is self-paced, there are both recommended due dates (which will allow for evenly-paced progression through the material) and final due dates (after which, points are taken off for lateness).

Module	Topic	Recommended Due Date	Final Due Date
1	Introduction and Overview Psychology as a Science ***MODULE EXAM***	5/24 5/25 ***5/26***	5/26 6/2 ***6/2***
2	Biological Perspective Sensation and Perception ***MODULE EXAM***	5/30 5/31 ***6/1***	6/8 6/8 ***6/9***
3	Memory Consciousness ***DISCUSSION POSTING*** ***MODULE EXAM***	6/2 6/5 ***6/6*** ***6/6***	6/13 6/13 ***6/14*** ***6/14***
4	Cognition Learning ***DISCUSSION POSTING*** ***MODULE EXAM***	6/7 6/8 ***6/9*** ***6/9***	6/15 6/15 ***6/16*** ***6/16***
5	Development Personality Social Psychology ***DISCUSSION POSTING*** ***MODULE EXAM***	6/12 6/13 6/14 ***6/15*** ***6/15***	6/17 6/17 6/17 ***6/18*** ***6/18***
6	Motivation, Stress, and Emotion Psychological Disorders Psychological Therapies ***DISCUSSION POSTING*** ***MODULE EXAM***	6/16 6/19 6/20 ***6/21*** ***6/21***	6/19 6/20 6/21 ***6/22*** ***6/22***
	OPTIONAL FINAL EXAM	***6/23***	***6/24***