# PSYC 399: College to Career

# Spring 2020 (3 credits)

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**Office** **hours**: Please contact me to schedule an appointment

Last day to add course: January 28 Last day to drop course without tuition penalty: February 5

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# Course Description

Welcome! This is an online course. All content is provided online via the course webpage on Blackboard. The purpose of this course is to provide Psychology majors with information that will help them to select and pursue a career based on personal interests, abilities, and skills. We will discuss career options in Psychology and what students can do to increase their chances of success in their chosen career path. Students will be asked to engage in a number of activities throughout the semester that are designed to help them prepare for a career in the social sciences. Given the unique topics that we will be covering, this course is designed to be a resource- and knowledge-acquisition workshop in which students will be directed to various tools that may be of use to them in pursuing their professional goals. The aim of this course is not to store up facts, names, or dates, but rather to develop career readiness in the social sciences.

**Blackboard Login Instructions**

Online materials for this class can be accessed through Blackboard. You must check our course webpage frequently for course content, assignments, and discussions. This course is 100% online. Access to [MyMason](http://mymason.gmu.edu) and GMU email are required to participate successfully in this course. Please make sure to update your computer and prepare yourself to begin using the online format BEFORE the first day of class. Check [the IT Support Center](http://itservices.gmu.edu/) website. Navigate to [the Student Support page](https://coursessupport.gmu.edu/Students/) for help and information about Blackboard. In the menu bar to the left you will find all the tools you need to become familiar with for this course. Take time to learn each. Make sure you run a system check a few days before class. Become familiar with the attributes of Blackboard and online learning.

# Course Reading

*Career Readiness Guide*. A paper copy of this guide is available at no charge in Career Services on the Fairfax Campus. An online version is available at <https://careers.gmu.edu/sites/career_svcs/files/careerReadinessGuide.pdf>

# Course Learning Outcomes

Upon completing this course, students will develop meaningful professional direction for life after graduation. Students will:

1. Formulate a career plan based on self-assessment of abilities, achievement, motivation, and work habits.
2. Assemble evidence of skill sets desired by psychology-related employers.
3. Evaluate characteristics of potential work settings or graduate school programs to optimize career direction and satisfaction.
4. Demonstrate career preparation through creation of a curriculum vitae or resume, a cover letter, a list of professional references, and a professional LinkedIn profile.

The course learning outcomes are based on the American Psychological Association’s Guidelines for the Undergraduate Psychology Major, Goal 5.5. A full description of the APA’s Guidelines can be found at: <http://www.apa.org/ed/precollege/about/psymajor-guidelines.pdf>

# Technology Requirements

**Hardware:** You will need access to a Windows or Macintosh computer with at least 2 GB of RAM and access to a fast and reliable broadband internet connection (e.g., cable, DSL). A larger screen is recommended for better visibility of course material. You will need speakers or headphones to hear recorded content and a headset with a microphone is recommended for the best experience. For the amount of Hard Disk Space required taking a distance education course, consider and allow for:

1. the storage amount needed to install any additional software and
2. space to store work that you will do for the course.

If you consider the purchase of a new computer, please go to [Technology Buying Guide](http://compstore.gmu.edu/pdfs/TechGuide.pdf) to see recommendations.

**Software:** Many courses use Blackboard as the learning management system. You will need a browser and operating system that are listed compatible or certified with the Blackboard version available on the [myMason Portal](http://mymason.gmu.edu). See [supported browsers and operating systems](https://help.blackboard.com/en-us/Learn/9.1_SP_10_and_SP_11/Student/002_Browser_Support_SP_11). Log in to [myMason](http://mymasonportal.gmu.edu/) to access your registered courses. Some courses may use other learning management systems. Check the syllabus or contact the instructor for details. Online courses typically use [Acrobat Reader](http://get.adobe.com/reader/), [Flash](http://get.adobe.com/flashplayer/), [Java](http://www.java.com/en/download/), and [Windows Media Player](http://windows.microsoft.com/en-US/windows/products/windows-media-player), [QuickTime](http://support.apple.com/downloads/#quicktime) and/or [Real Media Player](http://www.real.com/realplayer/search). Your computer should be capable of running current versions of those applications. Also, make sure your computer is protected from viruses by downloading the latest version of Symantec Endpoint Protection/Anti-Virus software for free [here](http://antivirus.gmu.edu/).

Students owning Macs or Linux should be aware that some courses may use software that only runs on Windows. You can set up a Mac computer with Boot Camp or virtualization software so Windows will also run on it. Watch [this video](http://support.apple.com/kb/VI54?viewlocale=en_US) about using Windows on a Mac. Computers running Linux can also be configured with virtualization software or configured to dual boot with Windows.

Note: If you are using an employer-provided computer or corporate office for class attendance, please verify with your systems administrators that you will be able to install the necessary applications and that system or corporate firewalls do not block access to any sites or media types.

# Course Schedule

This course is organized into 15 modules, each representing a topic related to career readiness. Modules will become available each Tuesday at 12:00am. Assignments should be completed by the following Monday at 11:59pm, unless otherwise noted. In Week 1, Module 1 will be available. In Week 2, Module 2 will be available, and so on. Below is the course schedule, showing the topic, content, objectives, and assignments for each module.

| **MODULES** | **DATE** | **TOPIC** | **CONTENT** | **OBJECTIVES** | **ASSIGNMENTS** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Module 1** | **Jan 20 MLK Day: No Classes**  **Jan 21-Jan 27** | Course Overview | **READ:** Articles on Majoring in Psychology  **EXPLORE:** Psychology Employable Skills  **APPLY:** Mason Psychological Skills | * Review course structure and expectations * Examine skills acquired through majoring in Psychology * Identify specific skills developed at Mason | * Syllabus Quiz * Blog: Introductions   Due January 27 by 11:59 pm EST |
| **Module 2** | **Jan 28-Feb 3** | Self-Assessments | **APPLY**: Holland Interest Inventory, Values, and StrengthsFinder | * Recognize the value of career-related self-assessments in guiding your professional choices * Examine the results of your own completed self-assessments | * Self-Assessments   Due February 3 by 11:59 pm EST |
| **Module 3** | **Feb 4-Feb 10** | Careers in Psychology | **READ**: What can I do with a Psychology degree?  **EXPLORE**: Online Career-Exploration Resource for Psychology Majors  **APPLY**: Handshake | * Recognize that there are many career possibilities for Psychology majors * Explore potential careers in the field * Examine the resources offered by Career Services at Mason, including the Handshake platform | * Blog: Psych Careers * Handshake   Due February 10 by 11:59 pm EST |
| **Module 4** | **Feb 11-Feb 17** | Choosing your Career Path | **READ**: Matching your Interest with Potential Careers and Career Goals  **WATCH**: Videos | * Identify jobs that match your Holland Code * Create short-term and long-term professional goals | * Job Analysis * Goals Statement   Due February 17 by 11:59 pm EST |
| **Module 5** | **Feb 18-Feb 24** | Closing the Gap | **READ**: What kind of attributes do employers look for when evaluating job candidates?  How does my Psychology degree help me to gain the skills desired by employers?  Closing the Gap | * Recognize employer-desired skills * List evidence for your current skills * Identify ways to gain additional skills * Create academic plan for remaining time at Mason | * Gap Analysis * Blog: Action Step   Due February 24 by 11:59 pm EST |
| **Module 6** | **Feb 25-Mar 2** | Creating a Resume | **READ**: Career Guide (Resumes)  **WATCH**: Video  **EXPLORE**: Additional Resources by GMU Career Services  **APPLY**: Polish Resume | * Identify strong and weak elements in sample résumés * Create a draft of your own résumé | * Resume First Draft   Due March 2 by 11:59 pm EST |
| **Module 7** | **Mar 3-Mar 9** | Cover letters and References | **READ**: Career Guide (Cover Letters and References)  **WATCH**: Videos  **EXPLORE**: OWL at Purdue  **APPLY**: Using Career Guide | * Create a professional cover letter that is tailored toward a job of interest * Identify references | * Discussion: Peer Review of Resumes * Cover Letter First Draft * References List   Due March 9 by 11:59 pm EST |
| **Spring Recess: No Classes Mar 9-Mar 15** | | | | | |
| **Module 8** | **Mar 16-Mar 23** | Strategies for Interviewing | **READ**: Career Guide (Interviewing)  **WATCH**: Video  **EXPLORE**: Interview Questions  **APPLY**: InterviewStream | * Recognize effective interview strategies * Create and deliver a polished personal pitch | * Personal Pitch * Discussion: Peer Review of Cover Letters   Due March 23 by 11:59 pm EST |
| **Module 9** | **Mar 24-Mar 30** | Networking | **NETWORKING**  **READ**: Career Guide (Networking)  **WATCH**: Networking Tips  **EXPLORE**: Networking by GMU Career Services  **LINKEDIN**  **WATCH**: LinkedIn for Students Videos  **EXPLORE**: Student Samples  **APPLY**: LinkedIn Profile  **INFORMATIONAL** **INTERVIEWS**  **READ**: Career Guide (Informational Interviews)  **WATCH**: Career Minute Video  **APPLY**: Plan your Informational Interview | * Recognize the value of creating a professional network * Develop (or update) your LinkedIn profile * Identify and contact a George Mason University graduate working in your desired field to set up an informational interview session * Develop a plan for your informational interview | * Discussion: Informational Interview Plan   + Submit by **Friday** March 27 by 11:59 pm EST   + Respond by **Monday** March 30 by 11:59 pm EST * Linkedin Profile   + Due March 30 by 11:59 pm EST |
| **Module 10** | **Mar 31-Apr 6** | Preparing for Graduate School | **READ**: Preparing for Graduate School in Psychology  **EXPLORE**: Web pages on Preparing for Graduate School | * Review preparation strategies for graduate school * Identify components of graduate school applications * Examine ways to strengthen applications for graduate school | * None |
| **Module 11** | **Apr 7-Apr 13** | Job Search Strategies | **READ**: Career Guide (Job Search)  **WATCH**: Videos  **EXPLORE**: Websites on Job Areas, Employers, and Strategies  **APPLY**: Career Guide | * Explore effective strategies for researching employers * Identify sources for job searching | * Resume Final Draft * Blog: Researching Employers   Due April 13 by 11:59 pm EST |
| **Module 12** | **Apr 14-Apr 20** | Salary: Budgeting and Negotiating | **READ**: Career Guide: Offers and Negotiations (Negotiating)  **WATCH**: Videos  **EXPLORE**: Career Guide  **APPLY**: Budgeting Resources | * Explore typical salary levels for desired career * Consider strategies for salary negotiation * Examine tools used for budgeting | * Cover Letter Final Draft   Due April 20 by 11:59 pm EST |
| **Module 13** | **Apr 21-Apr 27** | Informational Interviews | No additional content for this module. | * Share key points from informational interviews with peer * Reflect on interview experience | * Blog: Informational Interviews * Informational Interviews Reflection   Due April 27 by 11:59 pm EST |
| **Module 14** | **Apr 28-May 4** | Transitioning from College to Career | **READ**: Web pages on the transition from college to career  **WATCH**: The Entitlement Creed Video  **EXPLORE**: Examine and Clean Up Your Online Image Resources  **APPLY**: Analyze Options Ideal for You | * Recognize differences in expectations between college and the workplace * Analyze preferences for workplace environment | * Workplace Expectations   Due May 4 by 11:59 pm EST |
| **Module 15** | **May 5-May 11** | Course Wrap-up | No additional content for this module. | * Create a professional portfolio that is focused on a career of interest | * Professional Portfolio   Due **Saturday** May 9 by 11:59 pm EST |

**\* Additional readings and videos may be added throughout the course.**

# Course Policies

Late Assignments: All assignments should be turned in by the due date. A late penalty of 5% per day will be applied to assignments submitted after the due date.

**Instructor-Student Communication:** I will respond to your emails as soon as I can. Before sending an email, please check the following (available on your Blackboard course menu) unless the email is of a personal nature:

1. Syllabus
2. Ask the Professor (Discussion Board)
3. On-demand Blackboard videos on how to use Blackboard features, and Technical Requirements.

Feel free to respond to other students in the Ask the Professor forum if you know the answer.

# Grading Scale & Assignment Descriptions

Your grade in this course will be determined by the following distribution of points. Detailed instructions for assignments will be provided within the corresponding module.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Points** | **Assignment** |
| 5 | **Syllabus Quiz** |
| 5 | **Introductions** – write a paragraph or more to describe yourself to your classmates |
| 15 | **Self-Assessments** – results and analysis of self-assessments (including: StrengthsFinder, Holland Code, Values) |
| 5 | **Psych Careers** – write an entry about an observation from your search of careers in psychology |
| 10 | **Handshake** – create or update your Hire Mason account and report on three relevant job listings |
| 15 | **Job Analysis** – descriptions of jobs that align with self-assessment results |
| 15 | **Goals Statement** – description of short- and long-term professional goals |
| 15 | **Gap Analysis** – current skills vs. needed skills; academic plan |
| 5 | **Action Step** – post one action that you can take to further your career preparation |
| 10 | **Resume First Draft** – initial draft of resume |
| 10 | **Peer Review of Resumes** – provide feedback to classmates |
| 10 | **Cover Letter First Draft** – initial draft of cover letter |
| 5 | **References List** – three possible references |
| 15 | **Personal Pitch** – one-minute presentation to answer the prompt “tell me about yourself” |
| 10 | **Peer Review of Cover Letters** – provide feedback to classmates |
| 5 | **Informational Interview Plan** – list of contacts, email, and questions for interview |
| 10 | **Linked In Profile** – create or update your Linked In profile |
| 10 | **Resume Final Draft** – use feedback from draft to create a resume free of errors |
| 10 | **Researching Employers**– practice strategies for researching a company/organization |
| 10 | **Cover Letter Final Draft** – use feedback from draft to create a cover letter free of errors |
| 5 | **Informational Interview** – share details from informational interview |
| 10 | **Informational Interview Reflection** – analyze the knowledge gained from your interview |
| 10 | **Workplace Expectations** – analyze your expectations for workplace environment |
| 10 | **Professional Portfolio** – compilation of course assignments |

**Total points: 230**

Course grades will be calculated by dividing your earned points by 230 and then multiplying this result by 100. For example, a student receiving 187 points would have a course grade of 81%. Letter grades will be assigned as follows:

| **Grade Breakdown** | | |
| --- | --- | --- |
| A+ 99-100% | A 93-98% | A- 90-92% |
| B+ 87-89% | B 83-86% | B- 80-82% |
| C+ 77-79% | C 73-76% | C- 70-72% |
| D 60-69% | | |
| F below 60% | | |

# University Policies and Resources

1. Honor Code: George Mason University has an Honor Code, which requires all members of this community to maintain the highest standards of academic honesty and integrity. Cheating, plagiarism, lying, and stealing are all prohibited. All violations of the Honor Code will be reported to the Honor Committee. The Code can be found [here](http://oai.gmu.edu/the-mason-honor-code/). It is your responsibility to see me if you have questions about these policies.
2. Academic Integrity: Academic integrity refers to honest and ethical behavior in all aspects of academic activity. This includes: not cheating on homework assignments (e.g., copying the work of others), not passing off someone else's ideas as your own (plagiarism), not engaging in dishonesty of any kind with regard to your class participation and assignments.

Plagiarism: Plagiarism is the unacknowledged use of another person's labor, another person's ideas, another person's words, or another person's assistance. Unless otherwise stated in class, all work done for class – writing assignments, homework exercises, oral presentations -- is expected to be the individual effort of the student presenting the work. Any assistance must be reported to the instructor. If the work has entailed consulting other resources -- journals, books, or other media -- these resources must be cited in a manner appropriate to the course. Everything used from other sources -- suggestions for organization of ideas, ideas themselves, or actual language -- must be cited. Failure to cite borrowed material constitutes plagiarism. Undocumented use of materials from the World Wide Web is plagiarism. If you are caught plagiarizing or cheating, you will fail the assignment, and, depending upon the severity of the violation, you may fail the class.

1. Official Communications via GMU E-mail: Mason uses electronic mail to provide official information to students. Examples include communications from course instructors, notices from the library, notices about academic standing, financial aid information, class materials, assignments, questions, and instructor feedback. Students are responsible for the content of university communication sent to their Mason e-mail account and are required to activate that account and check it regularly. In the event that Mason cancels classes, I will notify you via email regarding any changes to scheduled assignments.
2. Enrollment: Students are responsible for verifying their enrollment in this class. Schedule adjustments should be made by the deadlines published in the Schedule of Classes (available from the Registrar's Website: registrar.gmu.edu.). After the last day to drop a class, withdrawing from this class requires the approval of the dean and is only allowed for nonacademic reasons. Undergraduate students may choose to exercise a selective withdrawal. See the Schedule of Classes for selective withdrawal procedures.
3. Students must follow the university policy for [Responsible Use of Computing](http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/responsible-use-of-computing/)
4. Student services: The University provides range of services to help you succeed academically and you should make use of these if you think they could benefit you. I also invite you to speak to me (the earlier the better).
5. [The George Mason University Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)](http://caps.gmu.edu/) staff consists of professional counseling and clinical psychologists, social workers, and counselors who offer a wide range of services (e.g., individual and group counseling, workshops and outreach programs) to enhance students’ personal experience and academic performance. Counseling Center: Student Union I, Room 364, 703-993-2380. Web-site [here](http://www.gmu.edu/departments/csdc/).
6. Disability Services at George Mason University is committed to providing equitable access to learning opportunities for all students by upholding the laws that ensure equal treatment of people with disabilities. If you are seeking accommodations for this class, please first visit <http://ds.gmu.edu/> for detailed information about the Disability Services registration process. Then please discuss your approved accommodations with me. Disability Services is located in Student Union Building I (SUB I), Suite 2500. Email: [ods@gmu.edu](mailto:ods@gmu.edu) | Phone: (703) 993-2474
7. [The George Mason University Writing Center](http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/) staff provides a variety of resources and services (e.g., tutoring, workshops, writing guides, handbooks) intended to support students as they work to construct and share knowledge through writing. University Writing Center: Robinson Hall Room A114, 703-993-1200. The writing center includes assistance for students for whom English is a second language.
8. [Diversity](http://ctfe.gmu.edu/professional-development/mason-diversity-statement/): George Mason University promotes a living and learning environment for outstanding growth and productivity among its students, faculty and staff. Through its curriculum, programs, policies, procedures, services and resources, Mason strives to maintain a quality environment for work, study and personal growth.