

PSYC 100: BASIC CONCEPTS IN PSYCHOLOGY (3 credits)
Summer 2020

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Email: cwong17@gmu.edu
Office hours: Online 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.

Course Logistics

This course is completely online. It will require just as much time and effort as a face-to-face course, but in a different format. Even though we don't meet in person, we will have substantial interaction with each other, and you will engage in group projects and discussions throughout the course. Because the course is entirely online, it is extremely important to become familiar with the online format right away. The first few days will involve getting to know the format of the class and getting to know a bit about each other, before we jump into the material. This time is essential for the class, and does involve graded assignments!

Of note, I will be available through email or in person throughout the entire session. We will also have a Q&A forum in Discussion Board that runs throughout the semester. There will be multiple ways for you to contact me with questions – I will do my best to respond as quickly as possible.

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Course Description

This asynchronous online course will provide a general overview of the field of psychology, which focuses on explaining people's thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. Psychology covers all kinds of human experience: how the brain works, why we dream, mental illnesses and how to treat them, why we forget some things (like a birthday or anniversary) but remember others (like the name of our 2nd grade teacher) ... 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.

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

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Course Learning Outcomes

You will develop the following skills:

1. Identify and explain fundamental concepts of research (e.g., research design, internal and external validity) in the behavioral sciences, and be able to apply these concepts to basic novel situations.
2. Define the focus of each of the primary areas within psychology (e.g., developmental psychology, clinical psychology), and the similarities and differences among them.
3. Explain and discuss fundamental concepts and terminology within each area of psychology and apply these concepts and terminology to basic novel situations.

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Blackboard Login Instructions

Access to [MyMason](#) 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](#) website. Navigate to [the Student Support page](#) 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. ***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-DL1

The class website in Blackboard will contain access to videos, assignments, Blackboard Collaborate (method for videoconference), the discussion board, exams, and other course resources. All course activities will take place in Blackboard, so it is important to login and begin to explore the various components in the first days of the semester.

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Required Readings

E-Readings. The readings for the course come from two open access educational resources, coordinated through the Noba Collection and Open Stax. Both are the results of efforts to collect textbook material written by experts in various fields, and make that content freely available online. A collection of chapters has been customized for use in this course and is available to you through the course site on Blackboard.

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Technology Requirements

All primary contact in the course will be via email and Blackboard; thus, you are *required* 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 are completed online* within Blackboard (see below). You may need to download various free programs to view some resources (see below).

Software: This course uses 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](#). See [supported browsers and operating systems](#). Log in to [myMason](#) to access your registered courses. Online courses typically use [Acrobat Reader](#), [Flash](#), [Java](#), and [Windows Media Player](#) and/or [Real Media Player](#). 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](#). Finally, you may need to video record your introduction, which you can do with a smartphone or other video camera, such as [Kaltura CaptureSpace](#) in Blackboard. Other tools you may need to record your introduction: [Audacity](#) free audio recording software; [Jing](#) or [ScreenCast-o-Matic](#) free video recording software.

Note: If you are using an employer-provided computer or corporate office for class attendance, please verify 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.

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Assignments Description

Your grade in this course is based on 5 separate components:

1. *Introductory Engagement: 3%* For the first class, you are asked to familiarize yourself with the course and to post an introduction of yourself to the other members of your group. This requires you to read over various pieces of information (like this syllabus), watch the orientation video and group work video, and access the readings. This introductory work will help lay the foundation for your successful engagement in the class, and simply completing this work as described is worth 3% of your grade.
2. *Group Work: 20%*. In each module, there are group work assignments that are intended to help you learn the material. These assignments are graded on rubrics that are presented with the assignment. The majority of the grade on these assignments reflect the *effort* you put in, not the specific outcome. The goal is for these assignments to help you work through material to learn it well, and to prepare for Weekly Quizzes and Module Exams. During the discussions, you will work in a group with other students, and each group will have its own, *private group discussion board*.
3. *Quizzes: 22%*. There are chapter quizzes, which will (a) test your knowledge of the material that was covered that week and (b) help prepare you for the Module Exams. Questions on these quizzes will be similar to those presented on Module Exams. You have up to 3 chances to take each quiz, and your highest grade is counted in your quiz average.

4. **Module Exams: 55%.** There will be one exam per module of the course – 5 exams total. Each exam will count equally. Most exams are 40 questions each. 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 45 minutes** (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: (1) if you miss an exam during the semester, this will be your option for making it up (your score on the final will replace the '0' you received for the missed exam), and (2) to replace a score on an exam on which you did poorly.

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Grading Scale

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, anything 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%		

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Course Policies

Late Assignments: All assignments must be turned in on the due date given on the assignment sheet. Assignments are penalized when late, according to grading rubrics.

Instructor-Student Communication: I will respond to your emails within 48 hours. If I will be away from email for more than one day, I will post an announcement in the Blackboard course folder. 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 Professor
3. On-demand Blackboard videos on how to use Blackboard features, and Technical Requirements.

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

Course Schedule

Module	Topic	Submitted Assignments
1 INTRODUCTION & RESEARCH METHODS 7/6-7/12	Introduction, Overview & Subfields of Psychology	Group Work: Introductions Quiz
	Empiricism & Research	Group Work: Mod 1 Discussion 1 Quiz
	Empiricism & Research	Group Work: Mod 1 Discussion 2 Module 1 Exam
2 BIOLOGICAL BASES OF BEHAVIOR 7/13-7/19	Biopsychology	Group Work: Mod 2 Discussion 1 Quiz
	Sensation & Perception	Group Work: Mod 2 Discussion 2 Quiz
	Consciousness	Quiz Module 2 Exam
3 COGNITIVE & AFFECTIVE BASES OF BEHAVIOR 7/20-7/26	Memory	Group Work: Mod 3 Discussion 1 Quiz
	Cognition	Group Work: Mod 3 Discussion 2 Quiz
	Motivation & Emotion	Quiz Module 3 Exam
4 INTERNAL & EXTERNAL INFLUENCES ON BEHAVIOR 7/27-8/2	Development	Group Work: Mod 4 Discussion 1 Quiz
	Personality	Group Work: Mod 4 Discussion 2 Quiz
	Learning	Quiz Module 4 Exam

Module	Topic	Submitted Assignments
5 NORMAL & ABNORMAL FUNCTIONING 8/3-8/5	Social Psychology	Group Work: Mod 5 Discussion 1 Quiz
	Psychological Disorders and Psychological Therapies	Quiz Module 5 Exam
FINAL EXAM (optional)		

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University Policies and Resources

- a. Honor Code: You are expected to be familiar with and abide by the University's Honor Code. The Code can be found [here](#). It is your responsibility to see me if you have questions about these policies. 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.

- b. 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.
- c. Students must follow the university policy for [Responsible Use of Computing](#)
- d. 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).
- e. Students are responsible for the content of university communications sent to their George Mason University email account and are required to activate their account and check it regularly. All communication from the university, college, school, and program will be sent to students solely through their Mason email account.
- f. [The George Mason University Counseling and Psychological Services \(CAPS\)](#) 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](#).
- g. Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with the [George Mason University Office of Disability Services \(ODS\)](#) and inform their instructor, in writing, at the beginning of the semester. 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.

- h. Students must follow the university policy stating that all sound emitting devices shall be turned off during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.
- i. [The George Mason University Writing Center](#) 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.
- j. [Diversity](#): 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.

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