

**PSYC 100**  
**Intro to Psychology**  
**Fall 2020**

Time: Monday/Wednesday 17:00 PM – 18:15 PM

Location G306

Instructor: Vias C. Nicolaides, Ph.D.

Instructor E-mail: [vnicolai@gmu.edu](mailto:vnicolai@gmu.edu)

Instructor Office hours: G669

Thursdays 3:00 PM - 4:00 PM

and by appointment

**Course Overview:**

This class will provide an overview of the major areas in the field of Psychology. The purpose of this course is to introduce the student to a variety of concepts and issues in general psychology, to help the student to apply that knowledge to everyday life, and to help the student to develop skills in analytical thinking and communication using the concepts of psychology. Among others, the topics covered this semester will include the history of psychology, methodology, brain and behavior, social and cognitive psychology, human development, motivation, emotion, interpersonal attraction, personality, culture, and psychological disorders.

**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.

**Recommended Text:** Myers, Psychology, 12<sup>th</sup> edition

**Grading:** The final grade will consist of the following weighted components:

Exams (best of 3 out of 4; 100 points each)	300 points
Class Project	200 points
Class Presentation of a Psychological Topic	64 points
Class Attendance	50 points
<b>Total:</b>	<b>614 points</b>

**Exams (300 points):** There will be 4 exams administered throughout the semester. Exam material will include concepts covered in class (lecture, discussion, and activities). You will be responsible for basic definitions, research findings, theory, and applications of social psychology to everyday life. The class exam grade will be based on only 3 of the 4 exams (i.e., the lowest grade of the 4 exams will be dropped). Because I will drop the lowest exam grade, it means that there are absolutely **NO make-up exams!** Exam dates are posted in the tentative schedule further below, but may change depending on our progression, events, and other unforeseen circumstances.

**Student Research Project Paper (200 points):** Students will develop a research proposal on a topic of their choice. In doing so, students will have to collect observational data, analyze it, and present their findings in writing.

The paper should be structured in four parts and have the below information: Intro, Methodology, Results, and Discussion.

**Intro:** Description of the topic and explanation of why it is important, define your main variables, a description of prior research on the topic, elaboration of the theory used and the expected hypotheses.

**Methodology:** Description of the sample and the procedure you followed so as to collect the data. A description of how you operationalized the main variables in your study.

**Results:** A summary of the results including the presentation of tables and figures/graphs.

**Discussion:** A summary of your study and your findings, personal comments and reflections of your study, a discussion of the contribution of your study and its implications, the limitations of your study and what things would you have done differently, future research directions of your research.

Finally, the paper should have at least six scientific references, be at least four pages long (double spaced), and be written in APA format. More information regarding the project paper will be covered in class and posted online.

**Class Presentation of a Psychological Topic (64 points):** Students will present to class a psychological topic of their choice. More details about this will be given in class.

**Attendance (50 points) and decorum:** Class attendance is recorded and it is important for students who want to do well to be in class, prepared, and attentive. In addition to other important information, extra credit opportunities may be announced in class and may often consist of in-class participation. Preparation for class includes completing readings and coming to class ready to discuss interesting topics. Lectures and debates will be more interesting and more meaningful for students who have done the reading in advance. In order to be attentive, you should not engage in any multi-tasking activities during class – that means no texting, e-mail, web surfing, doing homework for other classes, etc. Please turn off all cell phones and other potential sources of disruption at the start of class. During class, laptops may only be used for taking notes. If you must arrive late or leave early, please do so as quietly as possible and be considerate of your classmates by sitting near an exit.

**Technology expectations:** All students are expected to maintain and regularly access their Mason e-mail and Blackboard accounts. If you are having your Mason mail forwarded to another account, please ensure that your Mason account doesn't exceed the assigned limit, causing mail to bounce back to the sender.

**Disability accommodations:** If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me early in the semester. If you have not already done so, contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS) at 703-993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office. Please keep in mind that it might not be possible to grant last-minute requests for accommodations, so it is important to make all arrangements well before the date when the accommodation is needed.

**Honor code:** All students are expected to be familiar with, and abide by, the University Honor Code. As required by the Honor Code, all suspected violations will be reported. The instructor for this course reserves the right to enter a failing grade to any student found guilty of an honor code violation.

**Important dates:** Last day to add class – September 7  
Final Drop Deadline – September 14

**Enrollment:** Every student is responsible for verifying correct enrollment. Graded work will not be returned to students who are not officially enrolled.

**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."

**Academic Resource Center:** The Academic Resource Center, GMUK is in the business of looking at your papers, projects and problems to improve your academic achievement in the area of Writing, Communication, Mathematics, Accounting, Statistics, and Economics. You are invited to utilize the faculty and student tutor services at a variety of stages in your academic activities, checking to see that your project specifically meets the directions specified by your instructor. While tutors are helping you in your writing or projects, they do help you become conscious of particular error patterns that emerge in your work. For more information, please contact Professor Eunmee Lee, Director of Academic Resource Center ([elee45@gmu.edu](mailto:elee45@gmu.edu), office #638)

**Disclaimer:** The instructor reserves the right to change the syllabus and its content.

**COVID 19 Considerations:** In the interest of everyone's safety, students and faculty must follow these guidelines during the Fall 2020 semester.

1. Use the basement entrance to enter and exit Mason's building. Your temperature will be screened each time you enter the building. Allow additional time before class to complete the entrance screening procedure. Carry your student ID card with you at all times and be ready to show it when you enter and exit the building. Do not prop doors or let others enter the building through doors on the ground floor.
2. Wear a face mask at all times. Remain 6 feet apart from others. Clean your seat and desk space with disinfectant wipes before you begin class. Use hand sanitizer regularly, and avoid shaking hands or other forms of physical contact. Do not share pens, pencils or other personal items. Limit your use of the elevators, and use stairs to travel between floors of the building. Students are expected to purchase their own masks for personal use. Disinfectant wipes and hand sanitizer will be available in each classroom.
3. Classrooms are marked to indicate appropriate seating to allow for social distancing. Only sit in allowable seats, and maintain current set-up of classroom furniture. If you are asked to re-arrange classroom furniture by your professor for in-class exercises, return furniture to its original position when you are finished.
4. Observe these rules at all times during the class period and while in Mason's building or other public areas of the campus. This includes during class breaks, in small group work (in or out of class), meetings with your professors during office hours, tutoring sessions at the Academic Resource Center, socializing in common areas, or any other activities on campus.

5. Make sure windows and doors remain open during the class period to promote circulation of outside air. Classrooms without windows have mechanical systems that vent air, but doors should be kept open at all times.
6. The safest option for studying is to study alone in your dorm room or at home. If you must study in the building, alone or in groups, observe these rules at all times.
7. All faculty and students must abide by these rules in the classroom. If you see others who are not observing the rules outside the classroom, you may report this to your instructor, student affairs or academic affairs.
8. Do not enter the Mason building or come to class if you have symptoms such as fever, chills, sore throat, persistent cough, shortness of breath or other respiratory difficulties. If you must miss class for this reason, send an email immediately to the professor prior to the beginning of class. You will not be penalized for missing class for this reason, but you may be asked to provide documentation that you sought medical diagnosis or treatment. You are responsible for making up any missed assignments or tests as a result of your absence.
9. Students who come to class with visible signs of illness will be asked to leave the classroom immediately and seek assistance from the IGC Health Clinic. Faculty will report your name and symptoms to the Office of Student Affairs ([mksa@gmu.edu](mailto:mksa@gmu.edu)) to confirm that you have sought medical assistance.
10. Failure to comply with any of these guidelines may result in disciplinary action through the Student Code of Conduct.

### **Tentative Topics & Tentative Class Schedule**

Introduction to Psychology  
 Research Methods in Psychology  
 Cognitive Psychology  
 Developmental Psychology  
 The Biology of the Mind  
 Motivation  
 Personality  
 Social Psychology  
 Industrial/Organizational Psychology  
 Interpersonal Attraction  
 Emotion, Stress, and Help  
 Psychological Disorders

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>
24/8	Syllabus Overview
26/8	Intro to Psychology
31/8	Intro to Psychology
2/9	Research Methods in Psychology
7/9	Research Methods in Psychology
9/9	The Neuron & Nervous System
14/9	The Brain
<b>16/9</b>	<b>Exam 1</b>
21/9	Developmental Psychology – Newborns/Piaget & Cognitive Development
23/9	Developmental Psychology – Attachment, Moral & Psychosocial Development
<b>28/9</b>	<b>No Class – Fall Recess</b>
<b>30/9</b>	<b>No Class – Harvest Moon Festival</b>
5/10	Learning – Part 1

7/10	Learning – Part 2
12/10	Motivation
14/10	Motivation
19/10	Cognitive Psychology
<b>21/10</b>	<b>Exam 2</b>
26/10	Personality Psychology
<b>28/10</b>	Personality Psychology
2/11	Social Psychology
4/11	Social Psychology
9/11	Stress & Health
11/11	Interpersonal Attraction
<b>16/11</b>	<b>Exam 3</b>
18/11	Psychological Disorders
23/11	Psychological Disorders
25/11	Special Topics in Psychology
30/11	Special Topics in Psychology
2/12	Presentation
7/12	Presentations
<b>TBA</b>	<b>Final Exam – Cumulative (TBA)</b>