PSYC 100: BASIC CONCEPTS IN PSYCHOLOGY

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Office hours: Thursdays 2pm-3pm 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.

Course Logistics

This course is completely online through Blackboard (http://mymasonportal.gmu.edu/). 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 virtual office hours 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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

Assignments Description

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

1. *Introductory Engagement: 3%* In the first week, 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 (such as this syllabus). 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: 24%.* In each module, there are two group work assignments (module 5 has one group work assignment because of Thanksgiving break) that are intended to help you learn the material. Except for Module 1, these are always in the first two weeks of the module. 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*. We will have 9 graded discussions throughout the semester. Each group member will play *a summarizer* role once during the semester, which involves writing a consensus summary of the group's thoughts. If you are a summarizer, you should fulfill only summarizer's responsibilities during the week. Please read PSYC 100 Participation in Group Work document for more information in module 1 in Bb, and be sure to sign up for the week you would like to take on the summarizer role in the class Wiki in Week 1 of Module 1.

3. *Weekly Quizzes: 20%.* There are weekly quizzes questions at the end of each week (except Week 3). These quizzes 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: 50%.* 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. 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.

5. *Research Requirement: 3%.* The psychology department believes that participation in psychological research can enhance your learning about the field. Thus, for 3% of the grade in this course, all students are required to serve for 3 hours as participants in psychological research. For students who prefer not to participate, you can also complete 3 hours' worth of alternative research article review assignments. You may fulfill the 3-hour requirement through any combination of these two options. *Please email me by Nov 20th for the alterative writing assignment option.*

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%		

Course Policies

Late Work: All group work must be turned in by due date—no late submissions will be accepted unless prior arrangements have been made. For weekly quizzes and module exams, late submissions will be subject to daily 10% penalty deductions—submissions more than 3 days late will not be accepted.

If you experience extenuating circumstances (e.g., you are hospitalized) that prohibit you from submitting your work on time, please let me know as soon as possible. I will evaluate these instances on a case-by-case basis.

Instructor-Student Communication: I will respond to your emails within 48 hours. If I will be away from email for more than 48 hours, I will post an announcement in the Blackboard course folder. Before sending an email, please check the syllabus for information unless the email is of a personal nature:

Important Dates
Last Day to Add: 8/31/2020
Last Day to Drop With 100% Tuition Refund: 9/8/2020
Final Drop Deadline with 50% Tuition Refund: 9/15/2020
Selective Withdraw Period: 9/20/2020-10/28/2020

Course Schedule

There are five modules, each with 3 weeks. The assignments and due dates are fairly similar across all modules, but **there are some differences in Module 1, around Thanksgiving, and at the end of the semester.** The final exam is optional and can be completed anytime between Wed 12/9 and Sun 12/13.

Module	Week	Topic	Submitted Assignments	Due Dates
1 INTRODUCTION & RESEARCH METHODS 08/24-09/13	1 8/24-8/30	Introduction, Overview & Subfields of Psychology	Sign up for Summarizer role in Wiki Group Work: Introductions Week 1 Quiz	Sun 8/30 Sun 8/30 Sun 8/30
	2 8/31-9/6	Empiricism & Research	Group Work: Mod 1 Discussion 1 • Posts in Group Disc Board • Summarizer post Week 2 Quiz	Fri 09/4 Sun 09/6 Sun 09/6
	3 9/8-9/13	Empiricism & Research *Labor Day 09/07*	Group Work: Mod 1 Discussion 2 • Posts in Group Disc Board • Summarizer post Module 1 Exam	Fri 09/11 Sun 09/13 Sun 09/13
2 BIOLOGICAL BASES OF BEHAVIOR 09/14-10/4	4 9/14-9/20	Biopsychology	Group Work: Mod 2 Discussion 1 • Posts in Group Disc Board • Summarizer post Week 4 Quiz	Fri 09/18 Sun 09/20 Sun 09/20
	5 9/21-9/27	Sensation & Perception	Group Work: Mod 2 Discussion 2 • Posts in Group Disc Board • Summarizer post Week 5 Quiz	Fri 09/25 Sun 09/27 Sun 09/27
	6 9/28-10/4	Consciousness	Week 6 Quiz Module 2 Exam	Fri 10/2 Sun 10/4

Module	Week	Topic	Submitted Assignments	Due Dates
3 COGNITIVE & AFFECTIVE BASES OF BEHAVIOR 10/5-10/25	7 10/5-10/11	Memory	Group Work: Mod 3 Discussion 1 • Posts in Group Disc Board • Summarizer post (Class Disc) Week 7 Quiz	Fri 10/9 Sun 10/11 Sun 10/11
	8 10/13-10/18	Cognition *Fall Break 10/12*	Group Work: Mod 3 Discussion 2 • Posts in Group Disc Board • Summarizer post (Class Disc) Week 8 Quiz	Fri 10/16 Sun 10/18 Sun 10/18
	9 10/19-10/25	Motivation & Emotion	Week 9 Quiz Module 3 Exam	Fri 10/23 Sun 10/25
4 INTERNAL & EXTERNAL INFLUENCES ON BEHAVIOR 10/26-11/15	10 10/26-11/1	Development	Group Work: Mod 4 Discussion 1 • Posts in Group Disc Board • Summarizer post (Class Disc) Week 10 Quiz	Fri 10/30 Sun 11/1 Sun 11/1
	11 11/2-11/8	Personality	Group Work: Mod 4 Discussion 2 • Posts in Group Disc Board • Summarizer post (Class Disc) Week 11 Quiz	Fri 11/06 Sun 11/8 Sun 11/8
	12 11/9-11/15	Learning	Week 12 Quiz Module 4 Exam	Fri 11/13 Sun 11/15

Module	Week	Topic	Submitted Assignments	Due Dates
5 NORMAL & ABNORMAL FUNCTIONING 11/16-12/7	13 11/16-11/22	Social Psychology	Group Work: Mod 5 Discussion 1 • Posts in Group Disc Board • Summarizer post (Class Disc) Week 13 Quiz	Fri 11/20 Sun 11/22 Sun 11/22
	14 11/23-11/29	Psychological Disorders *Thanksgiving Break 11/25 – 11/29*	Week 14 Quiz	*Mon 11/30*
	15 11/30-12/5	Psychological Therapies	Week 15 Quiz Module 5 Exam	Fri 12/4 Sat 12/5
	16	FINAL EXAM (optional)		

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 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.

d. 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.

e. 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.