**PSYC 301: Research Methods in Psychology – Spring 2021**

Online (Asynchronous)

**Instructor:** Tevis Tucker

**Email:** [ttucker9@gmu.edu](mailto:ttucker9@gmu.edu) (best way to reach me; include **PSYC 301** in email subject)

**Office Hours:** Virtually, by appointment

The deadlines for adding and dropping classes are as follows:

* February 1st: last day to add
* February 12th: last day to drop for 100% tuition refund
* February 16th: last day to drop for 50% tuition refund
* March 1st: last day for unrestricted withdrawal (0% refund)
* April 1st: last day for selective withdrawal (0% refund)

**Recommended Prerequisites:** PSYC 100 and either PSYC 300, STAT 250, or STAT 350 or equivalent.

**Course Description**

Welcome! This course is delivered and conducted entirely online in an asynchronous format via Blackboard. By taking this course, you will

* Learn and apply basic research methodology to topics in psychology
* Be able to critically evaluate evidence generated by psychological research and claims made in the popular press
* Develop an understanding of how to conduct research in psychology
* Be able to explain and apply a number of methodological topics, including measurement, research design, replicability, ethics, and others

**Blackboard Login Instructions**

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.

**Materials for Lecture**

Morling, B. (2018). *Research methods in psychology: Evaluating a world of information*(3rd ed.). W. W. Norton & Company. **Access to InQuizitive required.**

American Psychological Association. (2020). *Publication manual for the American Psychological Association* (7th ed.). **This manual is optional.** If you plan on pursuing a career in Psychology, or attending graduate school, this is a good book to purchase.

**Course Learning Outcomes**

By the end of the course, you should be able to:

1. Learn and apply basic research designs in psychology
2. Critically evaluate psychological research
3. Communicate research ideas in written form using APA guidelines
4. Create a research proposal on a topic of your interest

To reach these objectives, you are expected to:

1. Check gmu.edu e-mail and log in to the course site regularly
2. Read and follow all course and assignment directions
3. Request help as needed well before deadlines
4. Take responsibility for actions pertaining to the course and applicable consequences
5. Complete all exams, discussion, and assignments thoughtfully, accurately, and on time

**Course Schedule**

| **MODULE** | **DATE AVAILABLE** | **TOPICS** | **ASSIGNMENTS** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Module 1 | 1/26 | Chapter 1: Psychology as a Way of Thinking  Chapter 2: Sources of Information | 1. Class Introduction Blog 2. InQuizitive (Chapters 1 and 2) 3. Module 1 Discussion Post   Due by 2/1 at 11:59 pm EST |
| Module 2 | 2/2 | Chapter 3: Three Claims, Four Validities | 1. InQuizitive (Chapter 3) 2. Assignment #1   Due by 2/8 at 11:59 pm EST |
| Module 3 | 2/9 | Chapter 5: Measurement | 1. InQuizitive (Chapter 5) 2. Assignment #2   Due by 2/15 at 11:59 pm EST |
| Module 4 | 2/16 | Chapter 6: Surveys and Observations | 1. InQuizitive (Chapter 6) 2. Module 4 Discussion Post   Due by 2/22 at 11:59 pm EST |
| Module 5 | 2/23 | Chapter 7: Sampling  **EXAM 1** | 1. InQuizitive (Chapter 7) 2. EXAM 1   Due by 3/1 at 11:59 pm EST |
| Module 6 | 3/2 | Chapter 8: Bivariate Correlational Research | 1. InQuizitive (Chapter 8) 2. Assignment #3   Due by 3/8 at 11:59 pm EST |
| Module 7 | 3/9 | Chapter 9 (pp. 237-243): Longitudinal Research | 1. InQuizitive (Chapter 9) 2. Module 7 Discussion Post   Due by 3/15 at 11:59 pm EST |
| Module 8 | 3/16 | Chapter 10: Simple Experiments | * 1. InQuizitive (Chapter 10, Part 1)   2. Assignment #4   Due by 3/22 at 11:59 pm EST |
| Module 9 | 3/23 | Chapter 10: Simple Experiments (continued)  **EXAM 2** | 1. InQuizitive (Chapter 10, Part 2) 2. EXAM 2   Due by 3/29 at 11:59 pm EST |
| Module 10 | 3/30 | Chapter 11: Confounding and Obscuring Variables | 1. InQuizitive (Chapter 11, Part 1)   Due by 4/5 at 11:59 pm EST |
| Module 11 | 4/6 | Chapter 11: Interrogating Null Results | 1. InQuizitive (Chapter 11, Part 2)   Due by 4/12 at 11:59 pm EST |
| Module 12 | 4/13 | Chapter 13: Quasi Experiments and Small-n Designs | 1. InQuizitive (Chapter 13) 2. Assignment #5   Due by 4/19 at 11:59 pm EST |
| Module 13 | 4/20 | Chapter 4: Ethics | 1. InQuizitive (Chapter 4) 2. Module 13 Discussion Post   Due by 4/26 at 11:59 pm EST |
| Module 14 | 4/27 | Chapter 14: Replication and Generalization | 1. InQuizitive (Chapter 14) 2. Module 14 Discussion Post   Due by 5/3 at 11:59 pm EST |
| Module 15    Finals Week | 5/3 | **EXAM 3** | EXAM 3 due by **Sunday**, **5/9** at 11:59 pm EST |

**Grading**

**InQuizitive Assignments** (5 points x 13 chapters = **65 pts towards grade**): Inquizitive is an adaptive learning tool designed to improve your understanding of course concepts. You will be asked to answer a minimum number of questions for each chapter. Learn more about this tool here: <https://wwnorton.knowledgeowl.com/help/inquizitive-students>.

**Exams** (50 points x 3 = **150 pts towards grade**): Three exams will be given. They will be made up of multiple-choice questions on material covered in assigned readings and lecture videos. All exams count toward your final grade. Exams will be open note, open book. They will be timed.

**Module Assignments** (10 points x 5 assignments = **50 pts towards grade**): Throughout the course, give assignments will be given to check your understanding and apply the material that you have learned.

**Discussion Posts** (10 points x 5 discussions **= 50 pts towards grade**)

**Research Participation** (**15 pts towards grade**):All students are required to serve for 3 hours as participants in psychological research though Sona Systems. For students who choose not to participate or are under 18 years of age, alternative options are available. You can participate in any number of research projects, but the hours must total at least 3. For every 30 minutes that a student participates in an experiment, students will receive 0.5 research credits (e.g., an experiment that takes one and a half hours to complete should issue students a total of 1.5 credits for completing the experiment).

Student research participation is coordinated through the GMU Psychology Research Participation website – Sona Systems – at <http://gmu.sona-systems.com/>.

**Lab** (40% of your final grade in this course): The laboratory section is taught separately from the lecture section of this course. However, your work through the lab contributes to the final grade that I will assign for the course. Your lab instructor will provide me with your grades for lab assignments and papers. The lab for Psychology 301 fulfills the Writing Intensive requirement in the psychology major that is a university requirement. It does so through a written research proposal completed in the context of the lab sections and through other written assignments. Each assignment is completed through a draft/feedback/revision process. The schedule of due dates will be on the lab syllabus. It is required that students successfully complete written assignments. The final written proposal is mandatory. Drafts will be essential and if a student fails to turn in drafts it is unlikely the final written proposal will receive a passing grade. This written work is required for students to successfully fulfill the university writing intensive requirement. Students who fail to meet the writing intensive requirement will not receive a passing grade in Psychology 301! Please note that the above requirement is mandated by the University.

**Grading Scale**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Assignments** | **Maximum Points** |
| Exams | 150 |
| Lab | 220\* |
| Module Assignments | 50 |
| SONA Research | 15 |
| InQuizitive | 65 |
| Discussion | 50 |
|  |  |
| Total | 550 |

\*points calculated from the percentage received in lab

**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% |  |  |  |  |

**Learning in a Global Pandemic**

Listed below are my usual course policies. However, this is not a “usual” time. I fully understand that many of us are facing new obstacles during this time. Please communicate with me if such things are getting in the way of this course. My goal is to facilitate your growth and success; I can only do that if you tell me what is happening and give me the proper time to assist as needed.

**Course Policies**

**Attendance:** This is an online class and attendance is treated differently from traditional classrooms. You will be presented with multiple avenues for accessing instructional materials and interaction, from completing individual small projects to participating in different peer interaction activities. You should strive to keep up with the assignments, small projects, and several research project tasks that show that you are “attending” and participating. There is no separate attendance grade, but not “attending” class will jeopardize your grade via missing announcements, assignments, and course materials.

**Reading and Participation:** You will be involved in the learning process through active class participation and application of material to research topics of interest. You are expected to contribute to a collegiate atmosphere by offering your own ideas and encouraging ideas of others on topics relevant to this course.

**Late Work and Make-Up Policy:** Make-up exams will only be given in special circumstances. Prior approval should be obtained if circumstances allow. Please see me as soon as possible if you are unable to take the exam at its scheduled time. Late work will be penalized at a rate of 5% per day, unless you have communicated with me about an extension.

**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, and notices about academic standing, financial aid information, class materials, assignments, questions, and instructor feedback. You are responsible for the content of university communication sent to you Mason e-mail account and are required to activate that account and check it regularly.

**Instructor-Student Communication:** Email is the best and fastest way to get in touch with me. I check email daily during the week and at least once on weekends. Communicating with you is an essential part of my success as an instructor. Do not ever feel like you are “bothering me” by emailing with a question or concern about the course. It is your responsibility to ask questions when needed and my responsibility to provide you with guidance. Please include **PSYC 301** in the subject line.

**Pronoun Use:** Please feel free to share your name and gender pronouns with me and how best to address you via email, if necessary. I use he/him pronouns for myself, but you may address me as “Tevis” in emails or office hour appointments.

**Course Technology Use**:Several Internet-related materials are required for access to and success in this course, including the following:

1. **A hard-wired, high-speed Internet connection**: Non-stable or slow Internet connections will not excuse failures to complete any assignments or exams by dates due.
2. **A functioning gmu.edu e-mail account**: Personal e-mail accounts will not suffice for correspondence for this course, as you will only be contacted via your GMU-affiliated e-mail address.
3. **Downloading capability:** You must have regular access to a computer onto which you can download assignment files.
4. **Microsoft Office:** Word access: You must have regular access to a computer onto which you can create, save, and submit written assignments in (.doc) or (.docx) format.
5. **Blackboard familiarity:** This course is delivered and conducted entirely online via the GMU Blackboard. As registrants in this course, you can (a) access [the Student Tutorial](http://coursessupport.gmu.edu/Students/) or (b) contact [the Help Desk](https://itservices.gmu.edu/help.cfm) or (c) refer to the [Tech Support tab](https://mymasonportal.gmu.edu/webapps/portal/execute/tabs/tabAction?tab_tab_group_id=_253_1) in the upper-right-hand corner of the course site for more information. You can find the following on BB:
   1. **Course materials:** Various course materials (syllabus, reading materials, notes, guidelines/grading criteria for assignments, projects, and proposal) are/will be available from this site.
   2. **Online discussion:** Discussion of and reflection on course content, inside and outside of class.
   3. **Grades/Progress updates:** Your lecture points will be updated regularly.

**Writing Intensive Nature of Class:** This class fulfills GMU undergraduate requirements for a writing intensive course. You will be expected to exercise writing skills through written research assignments, culminating in a formal independent empirical research report. All written work will be graded not only on its content, but also on how well it is written (e.g., adherence to spelling, grammar, sentence structure, word choice, formatting). For writing assistance, see [The George Mason University Writing Center](http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/), which offers free writing consultation to all students who are registered for at least one credit hour. For information, please contact the writing center at Robinson Hall Room A114, 703-993-1200.

**Class Cancellation Policy:** Please check Blackboard and your email regularly. As this is an asynchronous online course, there should not be a situation of class being cancelled. But if such a situation does occur, I will notify you by email/Blackboard.

**Syllabus Changes:** I reserve the right to change the syllabus and its content, if necessary. I will always notify the class of any changes in advance via email/Blackboard.

**University Policies and Resources**

1. **Academic Integrity:** Academic integrity refers to honest and ethical behavior in all aspects of academic activity. This includes: not cheating on exams or homework assignments (e.g., copying the work of others or using crib notes), 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.
2. **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. See honorcode.gmu.edu for detailed information. You in this course are expected to behave at all times in a manner consistent with [the GMU Honor Code](https://oai.gmu.edu/). Violations of the Honor Code will not be tolerated in this course and will be reported according to GMU procedures. The instructor reserves the right to use software to determine the extent to which the work is the student’s own creation.
3. **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 courses -- papers, examinations, homework exercises, laboratory reports, 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.
4. Students must follow the university policy for [Responsible Use of Computing](http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/responsible-use-of-computing/)
5. **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.
6. [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. Website [here](http://www.gmu.edu/departments/csdc/).
7. If you have any specific needs (e.g., related to vision, hearing, learning, or medical conditions) or any religious or cultural practices, please let me know by the second week of class so that I can make the appropriate arrangements. Disabilities must be documented by the Disability Resources Center (703-993-2474) for reasonable accommodations to be provided. Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with the [George Mason University Office of Disability Services (ODS)](http://ods.gmu.edu/) and inform their instructor, in writing, at the beginning of the semester.
8. [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.
9. [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. George Mason University promotes a living and learning environment for outstanding growth and productivity among its students, faculty, and staff. An emphasis upon diversity and inclusion throughout the campus community is essential to achieve these goals. Diversity is broadly defined to include such characteristics as but not limited to, race, ethnicity, gender, religion, age, disability, and sexual orientation. Diversity also entails different viewpoints, philosophies, and perspectives. Attention to these aspects of diversity will help promote a culture of inclusion and belonging, and an environment where diverse opinions, backgrounds, and practices have the opportunity to be voiced, heard, and respected.
10. Notice of a mandatory reporting of sexual assault, interpersonal violence, and stalking: As a faculty member, I am designated as a “Responsible Employee”, and must report all disclosures of sexual assault, interpersonal violence, and stalking to Mason’s Title IX Coordinator per University Policy 1412. If you wish to speak with someone confidentially, please contact one of Mason’s confidential resources, such as Student Support and Advocacy Center (SSAC) at 703-380-1434 or Counseling & Psychology Services (CAPS) at 703-993-2380. You may also seek assistance from Mason’s Title IX Coordinator by calling 703-993-8730 or emailing cde@gmu.edu.
11. Religious Holidays: A list of religious holidays is available on the University Life Calendar page. See the [Religious Holiday Calendar](http://ulife.gmu.edu/calendar/religious-holiday-calendar/). Any student whose religious observance conflicts with a scheduled course activity must contact the Instructor at least 2 weeks in advance of the conflict date in order to make alternative arrangements.