

**PSYCHOLOGY 100-A01: BASIC CONCEPTS IN PSYCHOLOGY**  
**Summer 2021**

**Instructor:** [Keith Renshaw](#)

**Email:** [krenshaw@gmu.edu](mailto:krenshaw@gmu.edu)

**Office Hours:** by appointment

***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.***

**Required Materials:**

Noba Customized Textbook Chapters (available free on the class Blackboard site)

Open Stax Textbook Chapters (available free on the class Blackboard site)

**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 work 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 couple of 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!

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

**Course Overview**

This course will provide a general overview of the field of psychology, which at its core, focuses on explaining people's thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. Psychology covers all kinds of human experience: how the brain works, why we dream, psychological disorders and how to treat them, why we forget some things (like a birthday or anniversary) but remember others (like the name of our 2<sup>nd</sup> grade teacher), why we get into (and out of) relationships... 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.

**Course Goals**

1. Students will know and understand 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. 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.
3. 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.

## Assignments, Exams, and Grade

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

1. Introductory Engagement: 5%. In the first two days, you are asked to familiarize yourself with the course, to post an introduction of yourself to the other members of your group, and to view the postings of your other group members. 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 lay the foundation for your successful engagement in the class. Completing this work as described is worth 5% of your grade.
2. Group Work: 20%. In every module except the final one, there are two 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 Quizzes and Module Exams.
3. Quizzes: 20%. Quizzes are 10-20 questions. These quizzes will (a) test your knowledge of the material that was covered in small units 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. 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. First, if you miss an exam during the semester, this will be your option for making it up. In such cases, your score on the final will replace the '0' you received for the missed exam. Second, if you had an exam on which you did poorly, you can take this exam to replace that score.

5. Research Requirement: 5%. The psychology department believes that participation in psychological research can enhance your learning about the field. Thus, for 5% of the grade in this course, all students are required to either serve for 5 hours as participants in psychological research (note that there are online studies available), and/or complete 5 hours' worth of alternative research article review assignments. You may fulfill the 5-hour requirement through any combination of these options – handouts with detailed information are posted on Blackboard (see Research Requirement tab). See handouts for more details.

## Late Work Penalty

Late work on all assignments is penalized 1 point per day. This hurts you most on assignments that are worth relatively fewer points (e.g., group work).

## Final Grade

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%		

## **Honor Code**

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.

## **Technology Usage**

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 must be completed online* within Blackboard (see below). You may need to download various free programs (e.g., Adobe Shockwave) to view some of the resources. In addition, you must sign up for required experiments/alternatives through the [Sona Systems website](#) or complete online alternatives via Blackboard (see Research Requirement Handout).

## **Online Course Resources**

The course will be run through Blackboard, which you access as follows:

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"
5. Click on the link for Psyc 100-A01 (Summer 2020)

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.

*E-Book.* 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.

## **Disabilities**

If you are a student with disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at 703-993-2474. 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.

## **Important Administrative Dates:**

5/19	Last day to add/drop classes
5/25	Last day to drop classes with 50% refund
5/31	Memorial Day
5/26-6/1	Unrestricted withdrawal period
6/2-6/9	Selective withdrawal period

### Course Schedule

There are five modules, each 1 week long. There are assignments due most days, so please follow the schedule carefully. You can work ahead – late work, however, is penalized (see page 3). Note that due dates around Memorial Day (end Module 2, beginning Module 3) change a bit. Also, please pay close attention to the due dates in Module 5 – these are quite different because classes end on that date. The final exam is optional and can be completed anytime between Thu 6/17 and Sat 6/19.

Module	Sub-Unit	Topic	Submitted Assignments	Due Date
<b>1</b>  INTRODUCTION & RESEARCH METHODS	<b>A</b>	Introduction, Overview & Subfields of Psychology	Group Work: Introductions Quiz 1a	Tue 05/18 Wed 05/19
	<b>B</b>	Empiricism & Research	Group Work: Mod 1 Discussion 1 Quiz 1b	Thu 05/20 Fri 05/21
	<b>C</b>	Empiricism & Research	Group Work: Mod 1 Discussion 2 Module 1 Exam	Mon 05/24 Mon 05/24
<b>2</b>  BIOLOGICAL BASES OF BEHAVIOR	<b>A</b>	Biopsychology	Group Work: Mod 2 Discussion 1 Quiz 2a	Tue 05/25 Wed 05/26
	<b>B</b>	Sensation & Perception	Group Work: Mod 2 Discussion 2 Quiz 2b	Thu 05/27 Fri 05/28
	<b>C</b>	Consciousness <i>Memorial Day 05/31</i>	Quiz 2c Module Exam 2	Tue 06/01 Tue 06/01
<b>3</b>  COGNITIVE & AFFECTIVE BASES OF BEHAVIOR	<b>A</b>	Memory	Group Work: Mod 3 Discussion 1 Quiz 3a	Wed 06/02 Wed 06/02
	<b>B</b>	Cognition	Group Work: Mod 3 Discussion 2 Quiz 3b	Thu 06/03 Fri 06/04
	<b>C</b>	Motivation & Emotion	Quiz 3c Module Exam 3	Mon 06/07 Mon 06/07
<b>4</b>  INTERNAL & EXTERNAL INFLUENCES ON BEHAVIOR	<b>A</b>	Development	Group Work: Mod 4 Discussion 1 Quiz 4a	Tue 06/08 Wed 06/09
	<b>B</b>	Personality	Group Work: Mod 4 Discussion 2 Quiz 4b	Thu 06/10 Fri 06/11
	<b>C</b>	Learning	Quiz 4c Module Exam 4	Mon 06/14 Mon 06/14
<b>5</b>  NORMAL & ABNORMAL FUNCTIONING	<b>A</b>	Social Psychology	Quiz 5a	Mon 06/14
	<b>B</b>	Psychological Disorders	Quiz 5b	Tue 06/15
	<b>C</b>	Psychological Therapies	Quiz 5c Module Exam 5	Wed 06/16 Wed 06/16
	FINAL EXAM (optional)			Sat 06/19

