# **PSYC 301: Research Methods in Psychology (4 credits)**

# **Fall 2021**

***Lecturer:*** Dr. Erin Quinlivan Murdoch

***Office:*** Room 2047 David King Hall

***Email:*** emurdoch@gmu.edu

***Office Hours:*** Virtually: Tuesdays 11:30am-1:30pm

In person: By appointment

***Phone:*** 703-993-6046

Lecture: Mondays and Wednesdays

Section 001: 10:30am – 11:45am, Engineering 1107

Section 002: 12:00pm – 1:15pm, Engineering 1110

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| **Week** | **Class Date** | **Lecture Number - Topic** | **Readings** |
| 1 | 8/23 | Course Introduction |  |
| 8/25 | Psychology is a Way of Thinking | Chapter 1 |
| 2 | 8/30 | Sources of Information | Chapter 2 |
| 9/1 | Three Claims, Four Validities | Chapter 3 |
| 3 | 9/6 | NO CLASS |  |
| 9/8 | Three Claims, Four Validities |  |
| 4 | 9/13 | Measurement | Chapter 5 |
| 9/15 | Review |  |
| 5 | 9/20 | **EXAM 1** |  |
| 9/22 | Surveys and Observation | Chapter 6 |
| 6 | 9/27 | Sampling | Chapter 7 |
| 9/29 | Correlational Research | Chapter 8 |
| 7 | 10/4 | Longitudinal Research | Chapter 9, pp. 235-241 |
| 10/6 | Review |  |
| 8 | 10/12 | **EXAM 2** |  |
| 10/13 | Simple Experiments | Chapter 10 |
| 9 | 10/18 | Simple Experiments |  |
| 10/20 | Threats to Internal Validity | Chapter 11, pp. 307-323 |
| 10 | 10/25 | Interrogating Null Effects | Chapter 11, pp. 323-338 |
| 10/27 | Factorial Designs | Chapter 12 |
| 11 | 11/1 | Factorial Designs |  |
| 11/3 | Review |  |
| 12 | 11/8 | **EXAM 3** |  |
| 11/10 | Proposal Workshop |  |
| 13 | 11/15 | Quasi-Experiments | Chapter 13, pp. 381-397 |
| 11/17 | Small N Designs | Chapter 13, 398-407 |
| 14 | 11/22 | Ethics | Chapter 4 |
| 11/24 | NO CLASS |  |
| 15 | 11/29 | Replication & Generalization | Chapter 14 |
| 12/1 | Review |  |
| 16 |  | **Section 001: Dec 8, 10:30am**  **Section 002: Dec 13, 10:30am** | Exam 4 |

Course description:

Learn and apply basic research methodology to topics in psychology. Understanding and conducting research in psychology requires familiarity with a number of methodological topics, including measurement, research design, and statistical analysis.

**Learning Outcomes:**

By the end of the course, students should be able to

* Identify basic research designs in psychology
* Critically evaluate psychological research
* Communicate research ideas in written form using APA guidelines

Textbook:

Morling, B. (2021). *Research Methods in Psychology: Evaluating a World of Information* (4th edition). New York: W. W. Norton & Company.

* The access code is not required, so feel free to rent or purchase a used copy of the text.
* An Ebook is available and about half the cost of a hard copy.
* Can you use the third edition to save money? Yes. I will post a list of differences between editions.
* The GMU Library will have a copy available for 2-hour checkout through TextSelect.

**Criteria for evaluation:**

Grades in this course will be based on the following components:

1. EXAMS

Four exams will be given, each worth 50 points. Students are responsible for all material covered in assigned readings, lectures, and laboratory sections. Material not covered in the text is often discussed in lecture. All exams count toward your final grade.

1. LECTURE ASSIGNMENTS

Throughout the semester, a number of small assignments will be given, totaling 85 points. These assignments will be completed in class.

1. LAB

The laboratory section is taught separately from the lecture section of this course. However, your work through the lab accounts for 40% of your final grade in this 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 in order 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.

1. RESEARCH PARTICIPATION

Each student is required to complete three credits as a participant in psychology experiments. Alternate experiences may be substituted. You can sign up for a Sona Systems account by using this link: <http://gmu.sona-systems.com/> and then clicking on the “Request an account here” link under New Participant. Each completed credit will count as 5 points toward your grade. (15 pts)

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| Assignments | Maximum Points |
| Exams | 200 |
| Lab | 200\* |
| Lecture Assignments | 85 |
| Research via Sona Systems | 15 |
| Total Points | 500 |

\*I will take your lab percentage and multiple it by 200 to get your points for this component. For example, if your lab instructor tells me that you got a 90% in lab, then I will multiple .90\*200 for a lab point total of 180 points.

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| Grade Breakdown |  |  |
| A+ 98-100% | A 93-97% | A- 90-92% |
| B+ 87-89% | B 83-86% | B- 80-82% |
| C+ 77-79% | C 73-76% | C- 70-72% |
| D+ 67-69% | D 63-66% | D- 60-62% |
| F below 60% |  |  |

General Policies

1. Attendance: Although I will not take attendance in lecture, coming to class is important. Material will be presented in lecture that is not covered in the book and you are responsible for knowing that information. Additionally, you will jeopardize your course grade if you regularly miss out on in-class assignment points. Opportunities to make up class activities will be available for students with valid medical reasons and family emergencies. Missing class will also mean missing important information about writing assignments, as well as discussion of difficult material. You are responsible for all announcements made in lecture and lab regardless of whether or not you attend class.
2. Late work: In-class exercises will not be accepted late (i.e., will receive a zero). Non-penalty extensions will be considered in the case of family or health issues or other circumstances outside of your control.
3. 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.
4. Academic Integrity: Academic integrity refers to honest and ethical behavior in all aspects of academic activity. This includes: not cheating on exams or assignments (e.g., copying the work of others), 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.
   1. **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 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. 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.
   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](http://honorcode.gmu.edu/) for detailed information.
5. **Classroom needs**: Disability Services at George Mason University is committed to providing equitable access to learning opportunities for all students by upholding the laws that ensure equal treatment of people with disabilities. If you are seeking accommodations for this class, please first visit <http://ds.gmu.edu/> for detailed information about the Disability Services registration process. Then please discuss your approved accommodations with me. Disability Services is located in Student Union Building I (SUB I), Suite 2500. Email: [ods@gmu.edu](mailto:ods@gmu.edu) | Phone: (703) 993-2474
6. **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 class is canceled, I will notify you via email; this email will include information about making up the missed class.
7. **Technology:** Please check Blackboard and your email regularly. Regarding electronic devices in class (such as laptops, cell phones, etc.), please be respectful of your peers and your instructor and do not engage in activities that are unrelated to class. Such disruptions show a lack of professionalism and may affect your grade. Students must follow the university policy for [Responsible Use of Computing](http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/responsible-use-of-computing/).
8. 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.). Last Day to Add: August 30. Last Day to Drop without tuition penalty: September 7. Drop period with 50% tuition refund: September 8-14. Drop period with no refund: September 15-27. Selective withdrawal period: September 28-October 27. 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. Please see the following webpage for more details about the new Add/Drop policy: <https://registrar.gmu.edu/drop-withdrawal-deadlines-faqs/> .
9. [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/).
10. [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.
11. [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.
12. 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.
13. 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 should let me know in advance of the conflict date so that we can make alternative arrangements.