Psychology 301 Research Methods
Section 006
Fall 2021
7:20 pm - 10:00 pm Mon
Art and Design Building L008

Lecture Instructor: Shea Fyffe
Email: sfyffe@gmu.edu

Office Hours: Monday 6–7pm or by appointment (Location TBD)

Lab Instructor: Anna Nottingham (anottin@gmu.edu)
Office Hours: Friday, 10:00 am - 12:10 pm (Location TBD)

Course Description: Students will learn and apply research methodology to psychological phenomena. This course will break down each step of the research process—starting with the definition of science. Understanding research methods requires familiarity with several methodological topics, including measurement, research design, and statistical analysis. Along the way, students will develop a “healthy skepticism,” while actively applying what they’ve learned in class to their lives.

Learning Outcomes: By the end of the course, students should be able to:
● Understand why a knowledge of research methodology is a practical skill
● Integrate the Scientific Method into their everyday lives
● Identify and apply basic research design principals
● Critically evaluate psychological research
● Communicate research ideas in written form using APA guidelines

Specialized Designation: Writing Intensive in the Major.

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

Texts:


Publication Manual for the American Psychological Association (7th edition). (Recommended)

a4th edition is available (don’t waste your money).
Grading Policy

Dropped grades: I will drop 4 lowest in-class assignment grades. This means you can skip two classes, but there is a catch—see attendance policy below.

In-class Assignments (60%): Typically during class you will complete 2 in-class assignments. These will be timed assignments. These will be either: a multiple-choice quiz or short-answer question(s). The assignments can be completed online (via Blackboard) or with a paper and pencil. For those of you using a laptop, you will be asked to enter a password which will appear randomly during the lecture. These should take no longer than 10 minutes to complete. I am not an instructor that enjoys giving assignments that require memorization. Much of the assessment content will evaluate high-order thinking—so be prepared. Specifically, your in-class assignments will fall into one of the three categories:

- **Multiple-Choice Quiz**: This will be a short, 10-item multiple choice quiz related to the lecture for that day.
- **Short-Answer**: These will be questions that will: ask your opinion of a particular topic, assess a deeper understanding of a topic, require you to compare and contrast things, or merely request your feedback related to the course.

All assignments will cover material presented during the lecture, so it would be ideal to pay attention.
Lab (37%): The laboratory section is taught separately from the lecture section of this course. However, your work through the lab accounts for a portion 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. The schedule of due dates will be on the lab syllabus. The final research 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. Please note that the above requirement is mandated by the University.

Research Participation (3%): 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 2% points added to your final grade (15 raw pts)

Optional Cumulative Final Exam (40%): If you are not happy with your final quiz or writing assignment grade, you may take an optional Final Exam. The Final Exam will be cumulative and will include material from the text as well as material from class. If you choose to take the optional Final Exam, I will calculate your Final Grade two ways: based on the grade you aren’t happy with and also based on the Final Exam. I will assign as your Final Grade the higher of the two.

Grade Breakdown*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>97-100%</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87-89%</td>
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<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77-79%</td>
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<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>67-69%</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>below 60%</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93-96%</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>83-86%</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>73-76%</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>63-66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>below 60%</td>
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</tbody>
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A- 90-92%
B- 80-82%
C- 70-72%
D- 60-62%

*Note: All final percentages will be truncated (e.g., 91.5 => 91%)

Attendance Policy

Attendance: Class attendance is reflected in your grade, and one of the most influential factors in passing this class. If you must miss one class, no worries. If you repeatedly miss classes, there will be inevitable holes in your experience, which will be reflected in your final grade. You will jeopardize your course grade if you regularly miss out on in-class assignment points. Since I drop 4 of your in-class assignments, I do not accept excused absences. You may be thinking, “how harsh!” but this is to ensure a fair experience for all of you. It is hard to distinguish a valid excuse from an invalid excuse. Additionally, I don’t want you to bear the burden of collecting all the evidence to convince me.
Late arrival to class: You will be considered late to class if you arrive after I begin lecturing. Quiz and writing assignment content will be covered in the lecture, so being late causes you to miss this content and may lead to a poor quiz or writing assignment grade. I’ll know who is in class and who isn’t. If you’re chronically late, we may have to meet to discuss how you can manage your time, so it doesn’t keep recurring.

Student Policies

Academic Integrity: Academic integrity refers to honest and ethical behavior in all aspects of academic activity. This includes not cheating on in-class assignments (e.g., copying the work of others or using), not passing off someone else's ideas as your own (plagiarism), not engaging in dishonesty of any kind regarding your class participation and assignments.

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, 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. 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.

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.

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 the Student Union Building I (SUB I), Suite 2500. Email: ods@gmu.edu | Phone: (703) 993-2474

Diversity and Psychological Services: George Mason University is committed to providing a learning, living and working environment that is free from discrimination and a campus that is free of sexual misconduct and other acts of interpersonal violence in order to promote community well-being and student success. We encourage students who believe that they have been sexually harassed, assaulted or subjected to sexual misconduct to seek assistance and support. University Policy 1202: Sexual Harassment and Misconduct speaks to the specifics of Mason’s process, the resources, and the options available to students. Any faculty or staff member at Mason is required to report all disclosures of sexual assault, interpersonal violence, and stalking to Mason’s Title IX Coordinator, but please know that such reports will result only in someone reaching out to you directly to let you know about available services and to determine if you wish to take any action. That said, you can also contact the Student Support and
Advocacy Center (703-380-1434) or Counseling and Psychological Services (703-993-2380) to speak to someone confidentially, as individuals who work in those offices are not required to report disclosures. You may also seek assistance directly from Mason’s Title IX Coordinator (703-993-8730; titleix@gmu.edu).

Class Etiquette: Thought this class is online, this course is a “safe space”, which means we commit to: (1) Making our class a welcoming, open space for everyone; (2) Being aware of our prejudices and insecurities and how our words affect others; (3) Providing room for each of us to explore our own identities; (4) Allowing others to define their own identities and to speak for themselves; (5) Respecting the privacy of others by maintaining confidentiality. Please see policies relating to COVID-19 below.

COVID-19 Policies

Accommodations: Students with concerns about attending classes in-person should consider whether you need to seek formal accommodations. Information about formal COVID-related accommodations for students is here: https://ds.gmu.edu/response-to-covid-19/.

If you do not obtain formal accommodations but have concerns, I encourage you to speak with me about your options. Please recognize, however, that I have to operate within the boundaries of the university’s regulations. It may not be possible for instructors of classes to put into place individualized accommodations for students who do not receive formal approval for accommodations from the University.

Masks and Social Distancing: We will follow policies outlined by the university regarding mask requirements. The current mask policy, which can be viewed online. I encourage students to space out, but understand options may be limited given space restrictions. Given current requirements, I also encourage students to use our course slack to ask questions during class.

Mason COVID Health✓: University policy requires students to complete their status check every day. You can complete your Mason COVID Health✓™ here: https://www2.gmu.edu/mason-covid-health-check. I reserve the right to ask you to show me a GREEN health check.

Moving Online: Please note that there is a formal process for converting any existing in-person classes to an online modality for the fall – and that process requires approval all the way up through the Provost’s Office. Instructors cannot make the decision to switch the modality of a class unilaterally. Thus, university policy will determine if we have to move online.

I will close by adding a reminder that people have different levels of medical risk (that you may or may not know about), as well as different levels of risk tolerance. I urge us all to be respectful of each other, and not cast judgment on those who may differ from you in either direction. I hope we can all maintain flexibility and do our best to work with others who may have different comfort levels for a variety of reasons.

Technology Policies
Official Communications via GMU Email: 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 email account and are required to activate that account and check it regularly. If class is canceled, I will notify you via email; this email will include information about making up the missed class.

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. I reserve the right to modify seating if laptops and/or cellphones become distracting. If a problem reoccurs, I may prohibit the use of laptops, tablets, or mobile devices during class-time. I strongly encourage students to use the course slack to ask questions (in and out of class). However, these communications should be class-related. No trolling please.

Scheduling Policies

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).

Changes to Syllabus & Course Schedule: The instructor reserves the right to make necessary changes to the syllabus & course schedule with reasonable advance notice. Any changes will be announced in class.

Click here for Course Schedule