The course is entirely online with no class meetings – but please come see me during Drop-in Student Office Hours (Zoom link in Blackboard) Tue 12:30-1:30 and Thurs 12:30-1pm OR by appointment (click here -evening hours available)
BOOK: free, digital, linked in Blackboard (NOBA Psychology)

**Instructional Team**
**Professor:** Alison H. Melley, Ph.D. amelley@gmu.edu (you can call me Dr. Melley, pronouns she/her)

**Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs):**
- Kristin Carpenter kcarpe@gmu.edu
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- Zihao Jia zjia2@gmu.edu
- Isabella Lalena ilalena@gmu.edu
- Tomas Lapnas tlapnas@gmu.edu
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**Learning Assistants (LAs):**
- Aaliyah S Syed asyed22@gmu.edu
- Chaturika Liyanage cliyanag@gmu.edu
- Hajrah Noor Razaq hrazaq@gmu.edu
- Morgan Kahn mkahn4@gmu.edu

**Accessibility:** I’ve worked to make this course user-friendly and flexible, so that you can learn well. GMU’s Disability Services office can identify specific learning accommodations that will help make all your learning environments equitable. If you have already met with them, be sure to send me your faculty contact sheet and feel free to talk with me about any changes that are needed. You do not need to divulge any personal information to advocate for yourself. We can work together to be sure the course meets your needs. If you do not require accommodations to learn well, please understand that some of your fellow students might, and it is important to me that you do not make assumptions about where, when, or how they learn.

**LEARNING IN A TIME OF GLOBAL CRISIS**
My goal is to facilitate your growth and success during this strange and uncertain time; I can only do that if you tell me what is happening. Please communicate with me if there are obstacles getting in the way of your success in this class.

**Wellness**
If you are experiencing feelings of anxiety, panic, depression, sadness during the semester, Student Health Services (703) 993-2831) and Counseling and Psychological Services Offices (703-993-2380) provides a range of resources to assist and support you. Students can call or walk in during open hours. If you or someone you know experiences a mental health crisis, see help immediately. Call 911, the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (1-800-273-8255) or text the Crisis Text Line (741-741) I am also available to speak with you about stresses related to your work in my course.

**Things We Will Learn and Do**

- **Psychology Content**
  - Learn basic psychological concepts and apply these to everyday life.

- **Scientific Thinking**
  - Become an informed consumer of psychological science.

- **Key Themes**
  - Retain knowledge that will guide you even after you finish this course.

- **Transferable Skills**
  - Practice skills that transfer to any profession.
Learning Objectives and Grades

What will I learn?
This course focuses on applications of psychological science that will help students navigate their lives and meets the Mason Core requirement in the Social and Behavioral Sciences category. Following are the detailed learning objectives for the course.

PSYCHOLOGY CONTENT
⇒ Identify basic concepts and interpret research findings.
⇒ Apply psychological principles to personal growth and other aspects of everyday life.

SCIENTIFIC THINKING
⇒ Solve problems using psychological methods.
⇒ Describe the advantages and limitations of research strategies.
⇒ Evaluate psychological research.
⇒ Draw logical and objective conclusions about behavior and mental processes from empirical evidence.
⇒ Examine how psychological science can be used to counter misinformation.

KEY THEMES
⇒ Provide examples of psychology’s integrative themes

TRANSFERABLE SKILLS
⇒ Critical and analytical thinking
⇒ Information Management
⇒ Communication
⇒ Collaboration
⇒ Integrity
⇒ Inclusivity
⇒ Technology

MASON CORE LEARNING OBJECTIVES
⇒ Explain how individuals, groups or institutions are influenced by contextual factors.
⇒ Demonstrate awareness of changes in social and cultural constructs.
⇒ Use appropriate methods and resources to apply social and behavioral science concepts, terminology, principles, and theories in the analysis of significant human issues, past or present.

How am I graded?
Research shows that when grades are prioritized, less learning happens – so I use nontraditional grading techniques based on concepts of “ungrading” and “specifications grading.” You need a grade and I want them to represent both the work you have done and the amount you have learned. You decide what grade you need or want, and you work towards it.

Each unit contains a checklist to track your learning activities and guidance on grades. At the end of each unit, you will evaluate your learning (in the process letter) before you begin the next unit. If the instructional team agrees with your evaluation, then you move on. If we believe you could do more, then you can continue to work on that unit until you get where you want to be.

You may feel apprehensive about this approach – that is completely normal. I ask you to give it time before you make a judgment.

A 90-100%
B+ 87 to 89%
B 80 to 86%
C+ 77 to 79%
C 70 to 76%
B 60 to 69%
F less than 60%

Choose your grade:
During the onboarding process, you will choose the grade that you want to work towards. This is not binding, but it helps both of us to set a goal.

There are several ways to get to your goal. For example, out of 8 Units (7 plus “Onboarding”) – if you earn an A in 5 units and a B in 3 units, you will reach an A in the course.
Learning Activities

Wait, What?
I know, that page was a lot. Go back and read it every now and then and it will sink in! This course is designed to maximize what we know about how people learn best. These four principles are used:

1. **Elaborative Processing** (the first time you learn about something, you remember best if you do something with the info)
   - You will actively READ and make process comments.
   - You will WATCH videos and answer questions about the content.
   - You will CREATE, DISCUSS & SHARE work where you apply the information.

2. **Retrieval Practice** (the mere act of trying to remember things, helps to strengthen memory!)
   - You will TAKE mini quizzes to consolidate the information in your memory.

3. **Distributed Practice** (spreading out the learning over time is best for long term memory)
   - You will use and apply the major concepts and themes several times throughout the course.
   - You will participate in RESEARCH studies and see the concepts in action, then communicate about it to your peers.
   - You will communicate your learning with your peers and review what they have learned.

4. **Metacognition** (thinking about what you know and don’t know is a skill benefits everyone!)
   - You will evaluate your own learning in a PROCESS letter.
   - You will read the feedback on the process report and use it to enhance your learning in the next unit.

Onboarding
Before we begin learning, we spend time building a learning community, becoming familiar with the course design and learning activities, and setting you up for success. My goal is to get us started with a positive atmosphere of collaboration and inclusivity that will be maintained throughout the course so that everyone can learn to the best of their ability. You will practice each of the above activities and set your goal for the course.
Technology
Use of Blackboard and Perusall are required for this course. All learning activities must be completed online, preferably on a computer rather than a phone or tablet. If your Wi-Fi connection is weak or you will be away from the internet, it is your responsibility to plan ahead to complete your work.

Withdrawal and Refund Dates
It is the student’s responsibility to drop a course. Non-participation or failure to pay does not constitute official withdrawal. To view specific deadlines, log into your MyMason account: 1) Click on “My Class Schedule” under Student Quick Links 2) Select the current term 3) Click on “View Drop Deadline Dates” at the bottom of the page. You can find the academic calendar with these dates here: https://registrar.gmu.edu/calendars/

Student Privacy Statement
At times, students may disclose personal information in online class discussions. It is expected that you will respect the privacy of classmates. The personal information disclosed in this class should not be repeated outside of the course.

Academic Misconduct
George Mason’s honor code requires all community members to maintain the highest standards of academic honesty and integrity. Cheating, plagiarism, lying, and stealing are prohibited. It is every student’s responsibility to familiarize themselves with the honor code. The honor code is available HERE. If a student cheats by plagiarizing, the instructor may assign an F grade for the assignment, and/or for the course.

Civility (Non-Academic Misconduct)
Please remember that we are members of a larger learning community where excellence is achieved through civility. Our actions affect everyone in our community. Please be respectful of others regardless of gender, age, race, culture, religion, or sexual orientation. It is expected that all students will follow general “netiquette” in online work. For example: http://www.albion.com/netiquette/corerules.html. Individuals who engage in disruptive online behaviors such as posting disrespectful or hostile comments, posting inappropriate comments, or shouting (using all capitals) may have their online access revoked and/or may receive an F for the class.

Title IX: George Mason University is committed to providing a learning, living, and working environment that is free from discrimination and a campus free of sexual misconduct and other acts of interpersonal violence 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 details Mason’s process, the resources, and the options available to students. Any faculty or staff member is required to report all disclosures of sexual assault, interpersonal violence, and stalking to Mason’s Title IX Coordinator, but please know that this 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. 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 those offices are not required to report disclosures. You may also seek assistance from Mason’s Title IX Coordinator (703-993-8730; titleix@gmu.edu).

Holidays/College Closures
In general, online classes continue in the event of weather-related or other closures. Please check the calendar for any holidays that may affect your work and let me know if there are major conflicts I should be aware of: https://ulife.gmu.edu/religious-holiday-calendar/.

Tips
Managing your Time
You are expected to spend 8-10 hours per week on this course. PRINT the schedule and unit checklists, and mark off each item as you complete it. These are designed to help you steadily progress in the course. If you begin to fall behind talk to me about how best to get back on track. Students who wait until the last minute before each deadline, or until the end of the course do not do as well in my courses. Start early and keep a schedule to stay organized.

Email/Announcements
Announcements/reminders are posted in Blackboard and sent to your GMU email. Read these. Use Course Messages or email to contact Dr. Melley.

Check course messages and email regularly. I will make every effort to respond to emails within 48 hours. I expect you will extend the same courtesy if I send you a private message.

Revisions
There is no extra credit, but you can re-do any process letter where you did not reach your goal. Go back to the learning activities and do them again, then resubmit your letter. Do this soon after getting the feedback!

Come see me!
Attend Drop-in Student Office Hours or make an appointment for 1:1 conversation.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Tasks (all instructions are in Blackboard)</th>
<th>Due Dates</th>
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| **Week 1**            | **Introductions and Onboarding**  
> Semester Start Survey  
> Videos  
> Syllabus Annotation  
> Syllabus Quiz  
> Group Introduction Padlet  
> Join the LA GroupMe  
> Onboarding Process Letter  | Jan 31              |
| **Weeks 2-3**         | **Unit 1: Cognitive Bases of Behavior**  
> Readings, videos, quizzes, collaborative learning  
> Process Letter #1  | Feb 14              |
| **Weeks 4-5**         | **Unit 2: Empiricism & Research**  
> Readings, videos, podcast quizzes, collaborative learning  
> Process Letter #2  | Feb 28              |
| **Weeks 6-7**         | **Unit 3: Biological Bases of Behavior**  
> Readings, videos, quizzes, collaborative learning  
> Mid-semester course enhancement survey  
> Process Letter #3  | March 13 Sunday     |
| **SPRING BREAK**      | **March 14-20**                                                                                           |                    |
| **Weeks 8-9**         | **Unit 4: Developmental Influences on Behavior**  
> Readings, videos, quizzes, collaborative learning  
> Process Letter #4  | April 4             |
| **Weeks 10-11**       | **Unit 5: Personality and Social Influences on Behavior**  
> Readings, videos, quizzes, collaborative learning  
> Process Letter #5  | April 18            |
| **Weeks 12-13**       | **Unit 6: Mental and Physical Health**  
> Readings, videos, quizzes, collaborative learning  
> Process Letter #6  | May 2               |
| **Week 14-15**        | **Unit 7: Careers/Projects**  
> Reading, explore in Blackboard, video, Final Quiz  
> Final Process Letter #7  
> All Research Requirements due, no exceptions  
> Anything turned in after May 9 is not given the opportunity to revise (we must stop working sometime!).  | May 9               |

*Finals Week – any late work must be submitted by May 16 – no revisions, no feedback, no exceptions.*