

# George Mason University

# Basic Concepts in Psychology

**READINGS:** You do not need to purchase any textbooks. The readings come from a free open access educational resource, NOBA Psychology. A collection of chapters has been customized for this course and is available to you through the course Blackboard site, linked to a tool called Perusall.

FALL 2022 | PSYC 100  
Asynchronous Distance  
Learning



## Office Hours Online:

Make an Appointment by sending an email



**Instructor:** Noushin Jamaatlou

(My pronouns are she/her).

**Email:** njamaatl@gmu.edu.

## What will I learn in this course?

This course focuses on applications of psychological science that will help students navigate their lives. We will explore basic concepts and research findings, practice scientific thinking using psychological methods, and learn key themes in psychology that are enduring lessons to take away from the course. The course is entirely online with **no class meetings**. This course meets the Mason Core requirement in the Social and Behavioral Sciences category.

### ✓ **Psychology Content:**

We will define and explain basic psychological concepts, interpret research findings, and apply psychological principles to personal growth and everyday life.



✓ **Scientific Thinking:** We will learn about advantages and limitations of research strategies which will inform the evaluation of psychological research. You will practice drawing logical and objective conclusions about behavior and mental processes from research results and examine how psychological science can be utilized in becoming an informed consumer of science.

✓ **Key Themes:** These are the “takeaways” that will guide you in thinking about psychological concepts even after you are finished this course.



## How will I learn about these things?

1. You will **read** about psychology, **watch** videos, and **explore** other materials to help you learn, including practice quizzes.
2. Then you will work to solve problems that require you to **apply** the information. Next you will **discuss** these problems with classmates and ask questions of the instructor. You will then **revise** the solutions to the problems and get feedback.
3. You will participate in psychology department **research studies**.
4. There is an optional **semester project** to apply higher level concepts if you want to earn an A.

## Mason Core Learning Objectives

1. Explain how individuals, groups or institutions are influenced by contextual factors.
2. Demonstrate awareness of changes in social and cultural constructs.
3. **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.**

# Grading Specifications



## Demonstrating Mastery

I use nontraditional grading techniques based on concepts of “ungrading” and “specifications grading.” I do this because research shows that when grades are prioritized over learning, less learning happens. At GMU, I must assign grades - but I want them to have meaning: that you have *mastered the content*. You decide what grade you want, and you work towards it based on the table below. There is no partial credit, you either meet expectations (credit) or not (no credit) but you will have an opportunity to revise and resubmit as many times as you need. You may feel apprehensive about this approach – that is completely normal. I will ask you to give it time before you make a judgement. More details are on the next page.

**Deadlines, Late Work, Extra Credit** I build flexibility and choice into this course, balanced with structure. The design of the Apply-Discuss-Revise sequence (see “How will I learn about these things” on pg. 1) makes it necessary to submit them *before a deadline*. We are all human however, and “life happens” - so I do allow two chances to turn in late for full credit. Former students will tell you that I have been exceptionally accommodating of personal situations preventing them from completing work on time. Please reach out to me if this happens for you. That said, students who wait until the last minute, or wait to do all the revisions until the last week, do not do as well in my courses. Start early and keep a schedule to stay organized. There is no extra credit, but you can re-do any activity you did not earn credit for.

**Choose your grade: During the first week, 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. Each grade level requires a different “bundle” of activities. For example, for a B you can earn 12 credits for Apply & Revise, complete 6 research credits, you will earn at least 80% on 5 quizzes, and at least 70% on the final exam, but you will not complete the project.**

## Grade Bundles: choose the goal grade on the left and follow to the right to see how to earn it.

	Read/Discuss	Quiz (80%)	+	Apply	+	Revise	+	Research	+	Project	+	Final Exam
<b>A =</b>	At least 24: (for example, 18 readings, 6 discussions)	5	+	6	+	6	+	7	+	1	+	70%
<b>B =</b>	At least 24: (for example, 18 readings, 6 discussions)	5	+	6	+	6	+	<7	+	0	+	70%
<b>C =</b>	At least 18 (for example, 13 readings, 5 discussions)	4	+	5	+	5	+	<7	+	0	+	70%
<b>D =</b>	At least 16 (for example, 12 readings, 4 discussions)	4	+	4	+	4	+	<7	+	0	+	70%
Available	45 total: 38 readings, 7 discussions	6		7		7		7		1		1

# DETAILS: Tasks



## Introductions and Onboarding

The first week of the course is dedicated to building a learning community, becoming familiar with the course design and grading, 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. There are a few activities to orient you to the course, including practicing in Perusall (where you read and discuss) and practice uploading APPLY & REVISE. I strongly encourage you to engage in these activities to set yourself up for success in this course!

## READ/WATCH: Articles and Videos

There are seven units in the course. For each, you will have a choice of readings and videos that you can use to help you complete the APPLY practice. You can read and annotate socially in Perusall, which is a tool to ask questions and discuss the readings with your fellow students. Lecture videos and other content in Blackboard supplement these readings to enhance your understanding.



## TAKE: Practice Quizzes

Many students want to test their knowledge in a more traditional format to prepare for the MCAT or other exam. There is strong research evidence that quizzing is a high-impact study skill, so quizzes are provided that are based on the content in the readings. There are also concept checks after some of the videos.



## DISCUSS: Apply questions

This is an opportunity to discuss and get help with the APPLY practice \*after\* you complete the questions on your own. You will be able to ask questions here that can be answered by peers, teaching assistants, or the instructor.



## CREATE: Projects

This is an opportunity to make connections across concepts and to big questions. You must meet expectations to earn credit. Not required if you choose the "B" path or lower (but can boost you from a C to a B).



**APPLY:** practice (on your own)

At the beginning of each of the seven units, you will answer several problem-solving short essay questions on your own. To earn credit, you need to make a "good faith effort" and completely answer each question.



**REVISE:** After the DISCUSS period ends, you will **revise the APPLY questions** and resubmit to "show what you

know." These are scored based on credit/no credit. If you do not meet expectations for credit, you can revise and resubmit again.



**RESEARCH:** The Psychology Department requires all PSYC100 students to participate in 7 credit hours

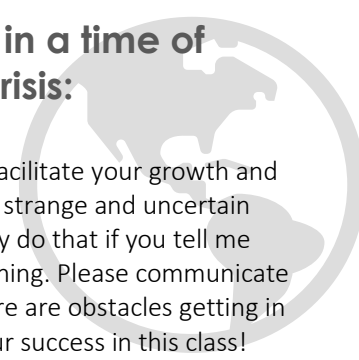
of research studies conducted by faculty and graduate students, as 7% of your final grade. See Blackboard for details.



**EXAM:** There is one cumulative, online exam at the end of the semester. Earn 70% for full credit and to pass the class.

## Learning in a time of Global Crisis:

My goal is to facilitate your growth and success in 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!





# POLICIES & EXPECTATIONS

The following describe various policies that will be in place this semester.

## Technology

Use of Blackboard and Perusall are required for this course. All assignments, quizzes, and the exam must be completed online, preferably on a computer rather than a phone or tablet. If your wifi connection is weak or you will be away from the internet, it is your responsibility to plan ahead and complete work before the deadlines.

## 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 class discussions. It is expected that the class will respect the privacy of classmates whether in person or online. The personal information disclosed in this class should not be repeated outside of the course.

## Accommodations

Disability Services at George Mason University is committed to providing equitable access to learning opportunities for all students. If you are seeking accommodations, please visit <http://ds.gmu.edu/> for detailed information about the Disability Services registration process. Then discuss your approved accommodations with me. Disability Services is in The Student Union Building I (SUB I). Email: [ods@gmu.edu](mailto:ods@gmu.edu) | Phone: (703) 993-2474.

## 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 himself or herself with the honor code. [The honor code is available HERE](#). In the event that 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 privileges 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 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](#) 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](mailto: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:

<https://ulife.gmu.edu/religious-holiday-calendar/>.

You are expected to submit before a due date that falls on a holiday that you observe.

# PSYC 100 Course Schedule

Week	To Do List	DUE DATES (all Monday midnight)		
		APPLY	DISCUSS & REVISE	Quiz
1 (8/22-8/28)	<p><b>Introductions and Onboarding</b></p> <p><b>READ:</b> Start with the “Begin Here and Syllabus” tab in Blackboard. Read instructions and practice using Perusall with the Syllabus Q &amp; A. Spend time thoroughly orienting to the course before you jump in!</p> <p><b>DO:</b> Introduce yourself (Padlet link in Blackboard)</p> <p><b>WATCH:</b> Introduction Videos, Learning Online Video (Blackboard)</p> <p><b>APPLY:</b> practice uploading a document and choose your grade goal (Blackboard)</p> <p><b>DISCUSS:</b> practice discussing the APPLY practice (Perusall)</p>	8/29	8/29 (only DISCUSS in Perusall, no REVISE this week)	N/A
2 & 3 (8/29-9/11)	<p><b>Unit 1: Empiricism &amp; Research</b></p> <p><b>READ:</b> Why Science, Research Designs, choice readings (Perusall)</p> <p><b>WATCH:</b> Why Empiricism, Study Design, Identifying Study Design, Internal/External Validity (Blackboard)</p> <p><b>APPLY:</b> ONE - (by 9/6, Blackboard)</p> <p><b>DISCUSS:</b> APPLY ONE - (between 9/7 and 9/12, Perusall)</p> <p><b>REVISE:</b> Apply ONE - (by 9/12, Blackboard)</p> <p><b>TAKE:</b> Quiz 1 - Why Science, Research Designs (by 9/12, Blackboard)</p>	9/6 (Tuesday due to Labor Day)	9/12	9/12
4 & 5 (9/12-9/25)	<p><b>Unit 2: Biological</b></p> <p><b>READ:</b> Brain &amp; Nervous System, Sensation and Perception, and choice readings (Perusall)</p> <p><b>WATCH:</b> Synaptic Transmission, The Human Brain: Major Structures and Functions, Information Processing in the Brain, and more (Blackboard)</p> <p><b>APPLY:</b> TWO - (by 9/19, Blackboard)</p> <p><b>DISCUSS:</b> Apply TWO - (between 9/20 and 9/26, Perusall)</p> <p><b>REVISE:</b> Apply TWO - (by 9/26, Blackboard)</p> <p><b>TAKE:</b> Quiz 2 – Brain &amp; Nervous System, Sensation &amp; Perception (by 9/26, Blackboard)</p>	9/19	9/26	9/26
6 & 7 (9/26-10/9)	<p><b>Unit 3: Cognitive</b></p> <p><b>READ:</b> Memory (Encoding Storage and Retrieval), choice readings (Perusall)</p> <p><b>WATCH:</b> How Reliable is your Memory, Eyewitness ID, and optional videos (Blackboard)</p> <p><b>EXPLORE:</b> Brain Exercises (Blackboard)</p> <p><b>APPLY:</b> THREE - (by 10/3, Blackboard)</p> <p><b>DISCUSS:</b> Apply THREE - (between 10/4 and 10/10, Perusall)</p> <p><b>REVISE:</b> Apply THREE - (by 10/10, Blackboard)</p> <p><b>TAKE:</b> Quiz 3 – Memory (by 10/10, Blackboard)</p>	10/3	10/10	10/10
8 & 9 (10/10-10/23)	<p><b>Unit 4: Developmental Influences on Behavior</b></p> <p><b>READ:</b> Conditioning and Learning, choice readings (Perusall)</p> <p><b>WATCH:</b> The Difference Between Classical and Operant Conditioning, optional videos (Blackboard)</p> <p><b>APPLY:</b> FOUR - (by 10/17, Blackboard)</p>	10/17	10/24	10/24

	<p><b>DISCUSS:</b> Apply FOUR - (between 10/18 and 10/24, Perusall)</p> <p><b>REVISE:</b> Apply FOUR - (by 10/24, Blackboard)</p> <p><b>TAKE:</b> Quiz 4 - Conditioning and Learning (by 10/24, Blackboard)</p>			
	<p><b>Project</b></p> <p><b>READ:</b> Project Instructions (Perusall, Blackboard), Ask questions in Perusall -not graded but we will answer questions here.</p>	Part 1 Due 10/24 if you want feedback.		
10 & 11 (10/24-11/6)	<p><b>Unit 5: Personality and Social Influences on Behavior</b></p> <p><b>READ:</b> Personality Traits and choice readings (Perusall)</p> <p><b>WATCH:</b> Personality Traits - the Big 5 + more (Blackboard)</p> <p><b>APPLY:</b> FIVE - (by 10/31, Blackboard)</p> <p><b>DISCUSS:</b> Apply FIVE - (between 11/1 and 11/7, Perusall)</p> <p><b>REVISE:</b> Apply FIVE - (by 11/7, Blackboard)</p> <p><b>TAKE:</b> Quiz 5 - Personality Traits (by 11/7, Blackboard)</p>	10/31	11/7	11/7
12 & 13 (11/7-11/20)	<p><b>Unit 6: Mental and Physical Health</b></p> <p><b>READ:</b> THREE Choice Readings (Perusall)</p> <p><b>WATCH:</b> Mental Health/Disorders (required) and others (Blackboard)</p> <p><b>APPLY:</b> SIX - (by 11/14, Blackboard)</p> <p><b>DISCUSS:</b> Apply SIX - (between 11/15 and 11/21, Perusall)</p> <p><b>REVISE:</b> Apply SIX - (by 11/21, Blackboard)</p> <p><b>TAKE:</b> Quiz 6 – based on required video in Blackboard (by 11/21, Blackboard)</p>	11/14	11/21	11/21
14 & 15 (11/21-12/4)	<p><b>Unit 7: Careers/Projects</b></p> <p><b>READ:</b> Careers in Psychology (Perusall)</p> <p><b>APPLY:</b> no assignment</p> <p><b>DISCUSS:</b> Apply SEVEN - (by 11/30, Perusall)</p> <p><b>REVISE:</b> Apply SEVEN - (by 11/30, Blackboard)</p> <p>No quiz this week.</p>	N/A	11/30	N/A
		<p><b>Final Exam</b> due 12/4 – complete at any time during 11/21-12/4. One hour, three attempts.</p> <p><b>Semester project</b> due 12/4</p>		

**Note:** I reserve the right to make edits to this schedule. Any changes will be announced on blackboard.

#### Important Dates:

Deadlines each semester are published in the Schedule of Classes available from the Registrar's Website registrar.gmu.edu.  
[https://registrar.gmu.edu/calendars/fall\\_2022/](https://registrar.gmu.edu/calendars/fall_2022/)

- Last day to Add: Monday, Aug 29, 2022
- Last day to Drop classes with no tuition penalty: Tuesday, Sep 6, 2022
- Last Day to Drop (50% tuition penalty): Tuesday, Sep 13, 2022
- Unrestricted withdrawal Period: Sep 14- Sep 27, 2022
- Selective Withdrawal period: Sep 28- Oct 24, 2022

See next page for TIPS FOR SUCCESS!

# TIPS FOR SUCCESS

You *can* expect to earn an A in this class. Do the following and you will succeed!

## Readings/Videos/Links

Do the readings, ask questions in Perusall while you read, watch the videos, and take notes as you go. After you read or watch, try to summarize (out loud or writing). This helps you remember what you just learned.

## Predictions and Retrieval Practice

Research on learning tells us that previewing and frequent retrieval practice (quizzing) helps you learn concepts better. Knowing the concepts well helps you with understanding and applying at a higher level. Read and answer the practice quizzes in Blackboard *\*before\** you read. You have three attempts so you can take it again after you read. This can all make classes more enjoyable too!

## Managing your Time

You are expected to spend 8-10 hours per week on this course. PRINT the schedule and mark off each item as you complete it. If you begin to fall behind talk to me about how best to get back on track. *If a crisis emerges, contact me \*immediately\** - I cannot accommodate your emergency if you wait until afterwards to talk to me.

## Research Participation

Try to complete some of your hours in the beginning of the semester. Most students find this interesting! You are responsible for keeping track of the appointment time, location, and experimenter information.

## Feedback/Grades

You will see general feedback in Blackboard after the DISCUSS & REVISE period, and specific feedback after they are scored. If you do not earn full credit on your first try, you are welcome to do another revision. If you have a question or concern, please contact me immediately.

## Collegiate Compassion

I believe we learn best when we can show up as whole and healthy people. To learn effectively we need to have basic security: a roof over our head, a safe place to sleep, a stable place to live, and enough food to eat. If you are struggling to meet any of these basic needs please talk to me, visit [our campus food pantry](#) or other [Mason resources](#). Asking for assistance and advocating for yourself is an important part of your collegiate experience. You are not alone!

## Email/Announcements

Announcements/reminders are posted in Blackboard and sent to your GMU email. Read these.

Check 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.

## Come see me!

Attend Drop-in Student Office Hours or make an appointment for 1:1 conversation. E-mail me and I will try to respond within a day or two.

## 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 or emergency, seek help immediately. Call 911 for local emergency services, the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (1-800-273-8255), or text the Crisis Text Line (741-741) anytime.



## Personal Success!!!

Please utilize me as a resource to help you succeed, both in class and outside class. I want you to earn the grade that you want and enjoy this class, do well in college, and still have a life with your friends, family, job, and hobbies. If one or more of those things are not happening, please talk to me so we can work together to figure out a plan to improve your situation.