

Psychology 301 Research Methods

Section 004

Fall 2022

1:30 pm - 2:45 pm Tuesday & Thursday

Planetary Hall 124

[Course Website](#)

[Course BlackBoard](#)

[Slack](#)

Lecture Instructor: Shea Fyffe(He/Him)

Email: sfyffe@gmu.edu

Office Hours: Monday 2–4 pm¹

Office Location: David King Hall 2036

Lab Section(s)

Section	PSYC 301-207	PSYC 301-208
Meeting Time; Location	8:30 am - 10:20 am, Monday; Innovation Hall 317	10:30 am - 12:20 pm, Monday; Innovation Hall 317
Lab Instructor (pronouns)	Patricia Carreño (She/They)	Lamin Fatty
Lab Instructor Email	pcarreno@gmu.edu	lfatty@gmu.edu
Lab Instructor Office Hours	Monday 11:50 am - 12:50 pm David King Hall or via Zoom	Wednesday 1:30 pm - 2:30 pm David King Hall: 1032

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 knowledge of research methodology is a practical skill
- Integrate the Scientific Method into their everyday lives
- Identify and apply basic research design principles
- 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:

Morling, B. (2018). *Research Methods in Psychology: Evaluating a World of Information* (4th edition).² New York: W. W. Norton & Company. (Recommended; **note: the access code is not required.**

Feel free to purchase or rent a used copy of the text.) ISBN: 9780393617542

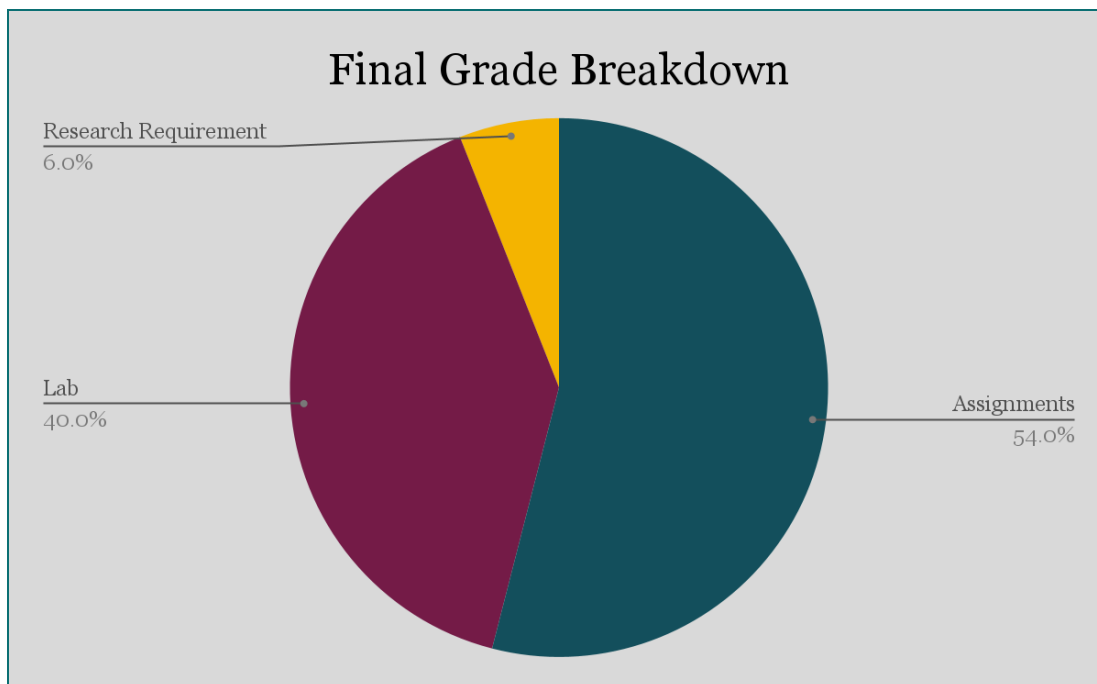
Dunn, D. (2011). *A Short Guide to Writing About Psychology* (3rd edition). Boston: Longman. [Please contact ask your Lab Instructor \(see above\) about the requirement for this text](#)

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

¹ You may also request to meet me at a time that is convenient to you given appropriate notice

² If you want to purchase the book, I’d recommend the 3rd edition (save your money)

Grading Policy



Dropped grades: I will drop **3 lowest** in-class assignment grades. This means you can skip 3 classes, but there is a catch—see [attendance policy](#) below. For those students that miss less than **3** courses, I will take the difference and drop their lowest in-class assignment grades equal to that difference. For example, if you miss 1 class, I will drop your 2 lowest in-class assignment grades; if you miss 2 classes, I will drop your 1 lowest in-class assignment grades; and so forth.

In-class Assignments: Typically during class, you will complete an in-class assignment. These will be timed and open-book assignments. These will be either: a multiple-choice quiz or short-answer question(s). The assignments can be completed online (via Blackboard) or with paper and pencil. For those of you using a laptop, you will be asked to enter a password that will appear randomly during the lecture. If you forget to note the password, let's hope a classmate tells you—because I will *not*. 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.
- **In-Class Activity:** There will be several classes where we do an activity as a class. These will basically be free points (but you have to show up).

All assignments will cover material presented during the lecture, so it would be ideal to pay attention.

Lab: 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. In other words, you will only receive **one** final grade—which is a combination of your lab and lecture grade. 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 the assignments and research reports completed in the lab sections. The schedule of due dates will be on the lab syllabus. To meet the writing intensive requirement students must complete 3500 words (~14 double-spaced pages) across their relevant lab assignments—most of these words will come from research reports. Thus, you should try your best to finish your research reports in their entirety. **If a student fails to meet the writing intensive requirement, they will fail the course (i.e., receive an F)—regardless of their final percentage grade. Please note that the above requirement is mandated by the University.**

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 2% points added to your final grade.

Optional Cumulative Final Exam: If you are not happy with your final 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 replace the grade you receive on your final with up to your **three** lowest quiz grades (only if the grade is higher). For example, after dropping your 3 lowest in-class assignment grades (because of the attendance policy), let’s say you still have 4 low in-class assignment grades (i.e., lower than 40%). The rest of your in-class assignment grades are pretty good (i.e., higher than 75%). If you decide to take the final—you get 55%. 3 of the 4 lowest in-class assignment grades will be replaced with 55%. Put simply, you should take the final if you have more than three low (or failing) in-class assignment grades. Taking the final will **not** hurt your grade.

Final Grade Conversion Table*

A+	97-100%	A	93-96%	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%				

Note:* All final percentages will be truncated. In other words, I will **ignore the decimals when determining your grade (e.g., 91.5 => 91%; 96.9 => 96%; 68.3 => 68%).

Attendance Policy

Attendance: Class attendance is reflected in your grade and is 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 **3** of your **in-class assignments**, **I do not accept excused absences.**³

In regards to the Attendance Policy, 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. This means that if you have car trouble, a conflict at work, or something that would require you to miss class, you can simply just miss class—no need to tell me why. I have yet to have a situation where a student fails a class for reasons beyond their control.

Late arrival to class: You will be considered late to class if you arrive after I begin lecturing. In-class assignment content will be covered in the lecture, so being late causes you to miss this content and may lead to a poor in-class 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), and not engaging in academic 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 the 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. **Tip:** When it comes to your research reports, most of your citations should be within the introduction and discussion. You may use citations in the methods section if you are using a survey or instrument developed by another researcher. I will go over this with you in 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.

³ The two exceptions to this rule: when Student Health Services have notified me that you have COVID, OR an official representative of the Provost’s office reaches out.

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: 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 they 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. Students should attempt to socially distance and be respectful of others, but I 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.

Masks: The current mask policy, which can be [viewed online](#). I will do my best to bring masks, but if you forget your mask and I don't have masks available, I will allow you to go get a mask at the SUB I Information Desk, HUB Suite 2300, or Fenwick Library A Wing (formerly MIX).

Mason COVID Health ✓ : University policy requires students to complete their status checks 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. The current policy states:

The following Spring 2022 guidance is for faculty

1) who have tested positive and cannot safely come to campus or

2) are otherwise severely impacted by COVID conditions in their home or classroom.

Those teaching undergraduate courses may switch to remote synchronous or asynchronous teaching for up to 3 classes for a TR or MWF class. For a once-per-week class, only one class may be switched to remote teaching. If conditions persist after these classes, the faculty member must work in consultation with the department chair and/or the Dean’s Office as appropriate to seek the next steps.

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 a 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 (e.g., laptops, cell phones), be respectful of your peers and your instructor. Do not engage in activities that disrupt the learning of others. 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. **Additionally, if you are taking notes on a laptop and missed the password for the in-class assignment; then, ask me for a paper copy, and I will penalize you (-1) for doing so. This ensures fairness to your peers that were paying attention.**

Scheduling Policies

Enrollment: Students are responsible for verifying their enrollment in this class AND its respective lab. 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 the Course Schedule](#)