

PSYC 301.004 - Research Methods in Psychology - Spring 2023

Instructor: Amie Mackay
Email: amackay4@gmu.edu (best way to reach me; include **PSYC 301** in email subject)
Office: David King - CENTEC 1014 D
Hours: In person: Tuesday 2:00pm - 4:00pm
 Zoom meetings by appointment

Lecture: Section 004 - Tuesday 7:20 PM- 10:00 PM - Horizon Hall Room 4008
Schedule: Check the [Tentative Schedule](#) for updates!

Week	Date	Lecture Topics	Readings	Assignments
1	01/24	Course Introduction	Syllabus	Assignment 1
		Ch 1: Psychology Is a Way of Thinking	Chapter 1	
2	01/31	Ch 2: Sources of Information: Why Research is Best and How to Find It	Chapter 2	Assignment 2
		Ch 4: Ethical Guidelines for Psychology Research	Chapter 4	
3	02/07	Ch 3: Three Claims, Four Validities: Interrogation Tools for Consumers of Research	Chapter 3	Assignment 3
4	02/14	Ch 5: Identifying Good Measurement	Chapter 5	Assignment 4
5	02/21	Ch 6: Surveys and Observations: Describing What People Do	Chapter 6	Assignment 5
6	02/28	Ch 7: Sampling: Estimating the Frequency of Behaviors and Beliefs	Chapter 7	Assignment 6
7	03/07	Ch 8: Bivariate Correlational Research.	Chapter 8	Assignment 7
**	03/14	- SPRING BREAK -	(no class)	-
8	03/21	Ch 9: Multivariate Correlational Research	Chapter 9	Assignment 8
9	03/28	Ch 10: Introduction to Simple Experiments	Chapter 10	Assignment 9
10	04/04	Ch 11: More on Experiments: Confounding and Obscuring Variables	Chapters 11	Assignment 10
11	04/11	Ch 12: Experiments with Multiple Independent Variables	Chapter 12	Assignment 11
12	04/18	Ch 13: Quasi-Experiments and Small-N Designs	Chapter 13	Assignment 12
13	04/25	Ch 14: Replication, Generalization, and the Real World	Chapter 14	Assignment 13
14	05/02	Comprehensive Review of the Class	-	Assignment 14
Finals	05/16	Optional Comprehensive Final Exam (Virtual) 7:20 pm – 10:00 pm EST		

Note. Your instructor reserves the right to make edits to this schedule based on several factors, including the progression of the lecture. Any changes will be announced in class. For important dates and deadlines related to tuition see here: <https://registrar.gmu.edu/calendars/>

Course Description:

This course aims to give students a broad understanding of research methodology applied to psychological phenomena. Understanding research methodology requires familiarity with several topics—including theories of science, qualitative & quantitative methods, experimental design, and statistical analysis. This course will break down each step of the research process throughout the formulation of hypotheses, development of testable objectives, experimental design, subject selection, data collection, data analysis, and report preparation.

Learning Outcomes:

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

- Identify quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods research design principles.
- Critically evaluate psychological research
- Be aware of ethical considerations involving research with human subjects
- Communicate research ideas in written form using APA guidelines
- Understand why knowledge of research methodology is a practical skill
- Integrate the Scientific Method into their everyday lives

Specialized Designation: Writing Intensive in the Major.

Textbook:

Morling, B. (2021). *Research methods in psychology: Evaluating a world of information* (4th ed.). New York: W. W. Norton & Company.

- The access code is not required. You may purchase the Ebook or the 3rd edition of the text.
- The GMU Library will have a copy available for 2-hour checkout through TextSelect.

Criteria for evaluation:

Grades in this course are based on the following components:

Assignments	% of final score
Lecture Assignments	50%
Lab	40%*
Research via SONA Systems	10%
Total Points	100%

1. LECTURE ASSIGNMENTS

Throughout the semester, you will complete several small assignments during class time.

These assignments are equally weighted and account for 50% of your final grade. I will drop

your **2** lowest assignment grades before calculating your final grade. 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.

During every class, you will complete an in-class assignment. These will be either multiple-choice quizzes, short-answer questions, or in-class activities.

- **Multiple-Choice Quizzes:** This will be a short, 10-item multiple-choice quiz related to the lecture for that day.
- **Short-Answer Questions:** 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 on the course.
- **In-Class Activity:** There will be several classes where we do an activity as a class or within groups.

2. **LAB**

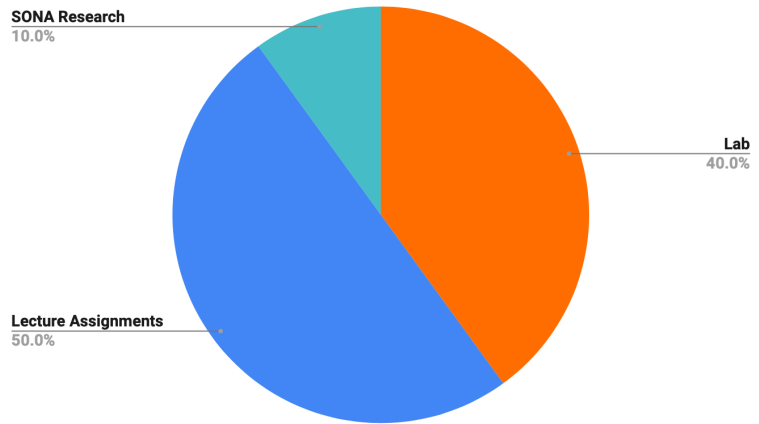
The laboratory section is taught separately from the lecture section of this course. However, your work through the **lab accounts for 40% of your final grade in this course**. In other words, you will only receive one final grade—which is a combination of your lab and lecture grade. Your lab instructor will provide me with your grades for lab assignments and papers. **Your lab instructor is your best resource for any questions regarding the lab.**

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. **Students who fail to meet the writing intensive requirement will not receive a passing grade in Psychology 301.** Please note that the University mandates the above requirement.

3. **RESEARCH PARTICIPATION**

Each student must complete **3** credits as a participant in psychology experiments. Alternative options are available for students who do not participate or are under 18 years of age (reach out to me so I can set that up for you). Students need to sign up for Sona Systems accounts using this link: <http://gmu.sona-systems.com/>. Students who register for an account can schedule appointments for research experiments, track participation credits, and assign which credits they want to allot to the courses in which they are enrolled. Each completed credit/hour will count toward your grade (with 3 credits accounting for 10% of your total grade). The last day you can participate in a study in Sona Systems is May 1st (do not wait until the last minute, as it is not guaranteed that research opportunities will be available at that time).

Final Grade Breakdown	
A	90-100%
B	80-89%
C	70-79%
D	60-69%



***Optional Cumulative Final Exam:** If you are unhappy with your final assignment grade, you may take an *optional* Final Exam. The Final Exam will be cumulative and include material from the textbook and material from class. Taking the final will not hurt your grade. If you choose to take the optional Final Exam, I will replace the 3 lowest assignment grades with the score you receive on your final exam (only if the grade is higher). For example, after dropping your 2 lowest in-class assignment grades (because of the attendance policy), let's say you still have 4 low in-class assignment grades. If you decide to take the final, 3 of the 4 lowest in-class assignment grades will be replaced.

General Policies

1. Attendance:

Class attendance is reflected in your grade and is one of the most influential factors in passing this class. You will jeopardize your course grade if you regularly miss out on in-class assignment points. Since I will drop **2** of your in-class assignments, **I do not accept excused absences**. There will be no additional opportunities to make up missed assignments. 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).

3. **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 with regard to 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 in class, all work done for courses is expected to be the student's individual effort to present 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. 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.

Honor Code:

<https://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/honor-code-system/#text>

<https://oai.gmu.edu/full-honor-code-document/>

4. Disability Services:

<http://ds.gmu.edu/>

5. Official Communications via GMU Email: Mason uses electronic mail to provide official information to students. Students are responsible for the content of university communication sent to their Mason Email account. If a class needs to be canceled, I will notify you via email; this email will likely include information about making up for the missed class.

6. Instructor-Student Communication: Email is the best way to contact me. I check my email regularly throughout the week. Communicating with you is an essential part of my role as an instructor. Feel free to email me with questions or concerns about the course. **Please include PSYC 301 in the subject line**, or your email might get lost in my inbox.

*My email address is **AMackay4@gmu.edu**

7. Technology: 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.

Please see the following webpage for more details about the new Add/Drop policy:

https://registrar.gmu.edu/calendars/spring_2023/

9. Counseling: The GMU Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)

<http://caps.gmu.edu/>

10. The Writing Center:

<https://writingcenter.gmu.edu>

11. Mason Diversity Statement:

<https://stearnscenter.gmu.edu/purpose-and-mission/mason-diversity-statement/>

Note: This syllabus has been adapted from previous syllabi contributed by instructors S. Fyffe (Fall 2022) and T. Tucker (Fall 2021).