​​**Facilitator/Instructor:** Dr. Jennifer Brielmaier **E-mail address:** jbrielma@gmu.edu

**Class time:** F 12:00-1:15 pm  **Office phone #:** 703-993-1469

**Class location:** Krug Hall 209  **Office location:** DK 2045

**Office hours:** Fri. 1:30-2:30 pm & by appt.

**Appointment scheduling:** [**https://brielmaiersontag.youcanbook.me/**](https://brielmaiersontag.youcanbook.me/)

**Teaching assistant:** Joanna Zakzewski jzakzews@gmu.edu

Last day to add: Jan 30

Last day to drop (100% tuition refund): Feb 6

Last day to drop (50% tuition refund): Feb 13

Unrestricted withdrawal period (100% tuition liability): Feb 14-27

Selective withdrawal period (100% tuition liability): Feb 28 – Apr 3

# **Course Description:**

Psychology 492 (Honors III) is part of a Research and Scholarship Intensive Course sequence as approved by OSCAR. This course is taken in sequence after Psychology 491 (Honors II) and Psychology 491 (Honors II). This designation recognizes that you are generating, completing and communicating original psychological science. **All students are encouraged to take advantage of the scholarly opportunities provided by the Students as Scholars initiative.** This includes Mason Impact MINI grants and the spring Celebration of Student Scholarship. See <https://oscar.gmu.edu/> and the Resources folder on Blackboard for more information.

**Course Objectives:**

* Complete Honors thesis project including all data collection, analyses, and write-up of findings in APA manuscript format.
* Formally present an oral defense and written manuscript to the faculty committee.
* Create a professional-quality poster presentation for the Psychology Honors Showcase and the Undergraduate Research Symposium in late April (TBD)
* Give and obtain feedback throughout development of thesis draft, poster, and presentation
* Submit final, approved electronic copy of thesis to program director by **Friday, May 12, 2022** (preferred deadline; 5/16 is absolute deadline).

# **Course Format:**

Several class meetings will be held throughout the semester for you to meet with me and with each other. Class meetings will be used to share progress, troubleshoot difficulties, and plan for the CHSS research symposium/departmental showcase/thesis defense. We may also use the time for write-ins and/or practice presentations (e.g. defenses, conference presentations). You are responsible for all information presented in the syllabus and in the group meetings. If you are unable to attend a group meeting please let me know in advance and make arrangements to meet with me at another time.

Because we will not be meeting every week, it will be important to keep the lines of communication open. You are expected to keep me apprised of your progress, including any difficulties that may arise. Regular emails and/or individual appointments (in person or on Zoom) are expected throughout the semester.

# **Breakdown of Points:**

* **Project Planning/Timeline – 5 points**

At the beginning of the semester, each student will create a timeline/schedule that contains the tasks needed to complete their specific project. A Google doc will be used so that updates can be made and shared. Either a forward or backward planning format can be used. It is expected that students will revisit and add to/adjust this timeline frequently. The timeline must contain a list of tasks by month at minimum; a weekly or biweekly schedule may be preferred. The initial timeline must be submitted to Blackboard no later than the end of the second week of the semester (**Friday Feb 3rd**). Students will be expected to update the timeline throughout the semester. A final grade on the timeline will be determined based on updates/additions made throughout the semester.

* **Presentation of Honors Project at GMU Psychology Honors Showcase and Undergraduate Research Symposium – 20 points**

**Honors Showcase:** This event is held in the hallway on the second floor of David King, near the vending machine. The showcase will be scheduled for late April (date TBD). Each student is expected to create a professional poster presentation describing his or her research project. Guidelines are posted on Blackboard and are intended to follow the general, established guidelines for professional conference poster presentations. We will discuss poster formatting and presentation in class. Grading will be based on the quality, clarity, accuracy, appropriateness, and completeness of presented information, in addition to the style of the poster.

Students are responsible for any materials needed to display their posters (e.g. thumbtacks) and are expected to set up their posters ***before* 10:00 am** on the day of the showcase. Between 10:00 am and 2:00 pm, students are required to be available to spend a minimum of one hour in the poster session area. Students should dress professionally and be prepared to answer questions and discuss different aspects of the project such as the design and analyses with faculty members, students or other visitors who stop by.

**Undergraduate Research Symposium:** The date has not yet been announced, but in the past it has been held in mid to late April. Further details will be announced as soon as I receive them. Submissions are typically due near the end of March. All Honors students are expected to present their posters.

* **Honors Thesis and Oral Defense – 65 points**

Each student will complete a written thesis in APA manuscript style that contains the following sections: Abstract, Introduction, Materials/Methods, Results, Discussion. We will go over the specific guidelines for the Results and Discussion sections this semester. Upon completion of the written thesis, each student will give an oral presentation (defense) to the faculty committee. **The oral defense cannot take place without approval to proceed by the advisor and committee.**

The oral defense must take place by **Friday, May 5th** (preferred deadline; absolute deadline is Tuesday, May 9th). The final written thesis, *with potential revisions addressed*, must be submitted by **Friday May 12th** (preferred deadline; absolute deadline is Tuesday, May 16th).

Upon successful completion of the thesis, the student will obtain committee signatures (electronic signatures ok) on the thesis signature page. Please see Blackboard for the signature/cover page template. Some students may obtain signatures at or shortly after the oral defense; others may be asked to make revisions before the committee members and/or advisor provide signatures.

The following criteria will be considered when grading the written thesis:

* Explanation of the topic/significance of the research
* Depth/relevance of the literature review
* Clarity and accuracy of methods, data analysis, and results
* Use of graphs/figures/tables to depict research findings
* Depth of the discussion (implications, placement in context of the literature)
* Overall quality and clarity of the writing

The following criteria will be considered when grading the oral defense:

* Understanding of the research topic/significance and previous research
* Understanding of the methodology, research findings, and data analyses
* Ability to discuss findings (implications, how they fit in the literature)
* Use of visual aids
* Communication/presentation style and organization
* Ability to respond to questions

The general breakdown is 40 points for the written thesis and 25 for the oral defense. These estimated weights may be adjusted when the full committee considers the student’s overall performance in the Honors thesis process. For example, exceptional performance in one area may override weaker performance in another area.

**Participation, Progress, and Professionalism – 10 points**

Attendance and participation in the group meetings as well as overall professionalism/progress will also count towards the final grade. In order to earn the full 10 points, students must attend and be an engaged participant in all group meetings, attend individual progress/check in meetings, and provide peer feedback when requested. Students will lose a point for any unexplained absence from the group meetings**.** Lateness and/or lack of engagement in the meetings can also affect this portion of the grade. If there are circumstances that may cause you to miss class, please discuss with me ahead of time.

Students' progress and professionalism throughout the semester will also be taken into consideration in determining this portion of the grade. Progress and professionalism are demonstrated by the following behaviors:

* Regular communication/updates to advisor/committee
* Communicating when a significant deviation from the timeline is expected to occur
* Engaging in troubleshooting with the advisor/committee if issues arise at any point in the process (data collection, analysis, writing)
* Asking for help when needed
* Seeking feedback and incorporating suggestions
* Timeliness of submitting drafts (leaving enough time to obtain feedback and respecting faculty schedules).

# **Thesis Progress Timeline:**

Ideal timeline for completion:

* Jan-Feb: Final IRB/IACUC approval (if needed)
* Jan-mid/late March: recruiting and data collection (if needed)
* Mid/late-March-early April: data cleaning/analysis and Results section writing
* Early-mid April: Discussion section writing
* Mid-April: final thesis draft to advisor
* Late April: final written thesis sent to full committee; oral defense scheduled
* Early May: oral defense revisions completed if requested by committee

**Thesis defense deadline:** Preferred **Friday May 5** / Absolute Tuesday May 9

**Final written thesis deadline:** Preferred **Friday May 12** / Absolute Tuesday May 16

***Please keep the 5-7 day rule in mind*** for submitting the draft thesis to your advisor for feedback and to the full committee prior to the defense. A penalty may be applied if preferred deadlines are not met due to student's lack of readiness.

# **Grading:**

Grades will be assigned based on the following scale:

A+ 97% or above B+ 87-89% C+ 77-79% D 60-69%

A 93-96% B 83-86% C 73-76% F 59% & below

A- 90-92% B- 80-82% C- 70-72%

Incomplete (IN) grades will be assigned only in cases of compelling and documented need, in accordance with policies set forth in the University Catalog.

# **Additional Grading Considerations:**

Presentation or submission of the Honors research at *additional* professional meetings/conferences (e.g. NCUR, OSCAR Celebration of Student Scholarship, regional conferences) will be considered favorably when the final grade is determined. Conversely, missed deadlines will likely result in grade penalties to be determined by the committee if you had previously agreed to a submission or presentation (barring extenuating circumstances).

Students who obtain permission for an Incomplete for any reason other than a university-approved withdrawal will be assessed an automatic 8-point deduction from the final grade. Failure to complete the Honors project by the university’s incomplete work deadline will result in loss of eligibility for graduation with honors in the major. This is a rare occurrence and any reason for an Incomplete must be serious in nature.

# **Requirements for Graduating with Honors in Psychology:**

To graduate with honors, the following requirements must be completed by **Friday, May 12** (preferred deadline; absolute deadline May 16)

* Successful completion of written thesis and oral thesis defense
* Completion of any revisions required by the committee (revisions may be requested at the defense)
* Final approval of the written thesis by the advisor (and committee, if they asked for revisions and want to see the final version)
* A final electronic copy of the Honors thesis document, including the signed signature page as your cover sheet, submitted to me via email at jbrielma@gmu.edu. A final electronic or hard copy should also be submitted to the committee – ask them their preference.
* At least a 3.5 grade point average (GPA) across all three Honors courses
* Overall GPA of at least 3.25 and a psychology GPA of at least 3.4

# **Awards:**

* Three peer-determined awards will be voted on at the Psychology Honors Showcase: Best Honors Researcher, Best Honors Project, and Best Honors Poster.
* A faculty committee will select one recipient for the Outstanding Honors Thesis Award at the end of the semester.
* All Honors students will be recognized at the end of year Psychology Department awards ceremony (usually early May).

# **Tentative ClassSchedule:**

We will not meet every Friday, but **please keep the class meeting time open for now.** The frequency of class meetings will be determined based on your needs, to some extent. The planned meeting dates listed below may change as I get more information about the CHSS symposium and based on progress. This document will be updated as the schedule changes.

**\*\*Check back frequently as the schedule is subject to change!\*\***

| **Date** | **Topic** | **Assignment(s) Due** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Jan 27 | Catching Up/Semester Overview |  |
| Feb 3 |  | **Initial Timeline** (share link via email) |
| Feb 10 |  | Schedule first check-in meeting (Feb 13-24) |
| Feb 17 | Updates/Making Progress |  |
| Feb 24 |  |  |
| Mar 3 | Writing an Abstract  Writing the Results Section |  |
| Mar 10 | Making a Poster | Schedule second check-in meeting (Mar 20-31) |
| Mar 17 | **SPRING BREAK** |  |
| Mar 24 |  |  |
| Mar 31 | Practice Poster Presentation/Feedback |  |
| Apr 7 | Practice Poster Presentation/Feedback |  |
| Apr 14 | Writing the Discussion Section | Schedule final check-in meeting (Apr 17-28) |
| Apr 21 | The Thesis Defense  Showcase Logistics |  |
| Apr 28 |  |  |
| May 5 |  | **Last Day to Defend Thesis** |
| May 12 |  | **Last Day to Submit Written Thesis** |

# **Commitment to an inclusive learning environment:**

Your experience in this class is important to me. It is my intent that students from all diverse backgrounds, perspectives and circumstances be well served by this course/program and that students’ learning needs are addressed. If there are aspects of the design, instruction, and/or experiences within this course that result in barriers to your inclusion or accurate assessment of your achievement, please notify me as soon as possible and/or contact the Office of Disability Services. 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 Student Union Building I (SUB I), Suite 2500. Email: ods@gmu.edu | Phone: (703) 993-2474

# **Class Cancellation Policy:**

In the event that a class meeting needs to be cancelled due to illness or personal/family emergency, class meetings *may* be held online via Zoom. Any announcements pertaining to class cancellation/format change will be posted on Blackboard and emailed to students.

# **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.

# **Technology Statement:**

Required knowledge of technology for this course includes ability to retrieve additional materials sent via email to your GMU address and/or posted on Blackboard. Please be sure you have access to Blackboard and your GMU email account, and that you check them both regularly. I will post relevant information and documents via the latest version of Microsoft Office, so make sure to have the latest version of Office or download the converter in order to read all important documents. You will continue to use online resources such as the GMU Libraries website and databases to obtain journal articles and book chapters. You will also continue using specific technology/software/equipment for your research. *Policy on technology in the classroom:* Laptops and tablets are permitted for class related activities. The use of cell phones is discouraged. Multitasking during class meetings will negatively affect the professionalism part of your grade.

# **Academic integrity:**

This course will be conducted in accordance with the GMU Honor Code, and all students are expected to abide by it. The GMU Honor Code, as found in the University Catalog, is as follows: To promote a stronger sense of mutual responsibility, respect, trust, and fairness among all members of the George Mason University community and with the desire for greater academic and personal achievement, we, the student members of the university community, have set forth this honor code: Student members of the George Mason University community pledge not to cheat, plagiarize, steal, or lie in matters related to academic work ([http://catalog.gmu.edu/content.php?catoid=15&navoid= 1039&returnto=search#Honor](http://catalog.gmu.edu/content.php?catoid=15&navoid=)). Details concerning the university’s Honor System and Code can be found in the University Catalog (accessible online at the above link). If you have questions about when the contributions of others to your work must be acknowledged and appropriate ways to cite those contributions, please talk with the professor or utilize the GMU writing center. Here is an online quiz that you can take to check your knowledge about what is and is not plagiarism:<http://www.easybib.com/guides/quiz-is-it-plagiarism/>

# **ChatGPT:**

I am aware of the existence of ChatGPT and the various detectors that have been developed. My thinking right now is that there are ethical and unethical uses for this tool, and that we can discuss and explore these together. Two very important things to keep in mind are that 1) ChatGPT does not always produce accurate citations and 2) text written by ChatGPT does not reflect your own scholarly thinking and understanding. Both of these things have implications for your development as a researcher and for the dissemination and publication of your research. Using text created by ChatGPT and representing it as your own work may also represent a violation of the University Honor Code.

# **Resources for Students:**

Safe Return to Campus <https://www2.gmu.edu/Safe-Return-Campus>

University Writing Center <http://masononline.gmu.edu/student-resources/writingcenter>

University Libraries <http://library.gmu.edu/>

Counseling & Psych Services <http://caps.gmu.edu/>

University Career Services <http://careers.gmu.edu/>

Student Health Services <http://shs.gmu.edu/>

Student Support and Advocacy <https://ssac.gmu.edu/>

# **Religious holidays:**

Please refer to George Mason University’s calendar of religious holidays and observations (<http://ulife.gmu.edu/calendar/religious-holiday-calendar/>). It is the student's responsibility to speak to the instructor in advance should their religious observances impact their participation in class activities and assignments.

# **Student privacy:**

George Mason University strives to fully comply with FERPA by protecting the privacy of student records and judiciously evaluating requests for release of information from those records. Please see George Mason University’s student privacy policy<https://registrar.gmu.edu/students/privacy/>