

PSYC 399: College to Career

Fall 2023 (3 credits)

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Office hours: Please contact me to schedule an appointment. I am happy to meet with you in person or via Zoom.

Last day to add course: August 28 Last day to drop course without tuition penalty: September 5



Course Description

Welcome! This is an online course. All content is provided online via the course webpage on Blackboard. The purpose of this course is to provide Psychology majors with information that will help them to select and pursue a career based on personal interests, abilities, and skills. We will discuss career options in Psychology and what students can do to increase their chances of success in their chosen career path. Students will be asked to engage in a number of activities throughout the semester that are designed to help them prepare for a career in the social sciences. Given the unique topics that we will be covering, this course is designed to be a resource- and knowledge-acquisition workshop in which students will be directed to various tools that may be of use to them in pursuing their professional goals. The aim of this course is not to store up facts, names, or dates, but rather to develop career readiness in the social sciences.

Blackboard: Online materials for this class can be accessed through Blackboard. You must check our course webpage frequently for course content, assignments, and discussions. Access to [MyMason](#) and GMU email are required to participate successfully in this course. Consult with [the IT Support Center](#) if you are experiencing technology issues. Navigate to [the Student Support page](#) for help and information about Blackboard. Make sure you run a system check a few days before class. Become familiar with the attributes of Blackboard and online learning.

Course Materials

All course materials will be available online at no cost. Links to the materials will be provided within the course.

Course Learning Outcomes

Upon completing this course, students will develop meaningful professional direction for life after graduation. Students will:

1. Formulate a career plan based on self-assessment of abilities, achievement, motivation, and work habits.
2. Assemble evidence of skill sets desired by psychology-related employers.
3. Evaluate characteristics of potential work settings or graduate school programs to optimize career direction and satisfaction.
4. Demonstrate career preparation through creation of a curriculum vitae or resume, a cover letter, a list of professional references, and a professional LinkedIn profile.

The course learning outcomes are based on the American Psychological Association's Guidelines for the Undergraduate Psychology Major, Goal 5.5. A full description of the APA's Guidelines can be found at: <http://www.apa.org/ed/precollege/about/psymajor-guidelines.pdf>

Course Schedule

This course is organized into 15 modules, each representing a topic related to career readiness. Modules will become available as scheduled below. Below is the course schedule, showing the topic, content, objectives, assignments, and due dates for each module.

MODULES	DATE AVAILABLE	TOPICS	OBJECTIVES	ASSIGNMENTS AND DUE DATES
Module 1	Aug 22	Course Overview Majoring in Psychology Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review course structure and expectations• Examine skills acquired through majoring in Psychology• Identify specific skills developed at Mason	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Syllabus Quiz• Blog: Introductions <p>Due Aug 28 by 11:59 pm EST</p>
Module 2	Aug 29	Interests, Values, and Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recognize the value of career-related self-assessments in guiding your professional choices• Examine the results of your completed self-assessments	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Self-Assessments <p>Due Sept 4 by 11:59 pm EST</p>
Module 3	Sept 5	Careers in Psychology	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recognize career possibilities for Psychology majors• Explore potential careers in the field	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Blog: Psych Careers <p>Due Sept 11 by 11:59 pm EST</p>

MODULES	DATE AVAILABLE	TOPICS	OBJECTIVES	ASSIGNMENTS AND DUE DATES
Module 4	Sept 12	Choosing your Career Path	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify jobs that match your Holland Code Create short-term and long-term professional goals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Job Analysis Goals Statement <p>Due Sept 18 by 11:59 pm EST</p>
Module 5	Sept 19	Closing the Gap	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognize employer-desired skills List evidence for your current skills Identify ways to gain additional skills Develop academic plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gap Analysis Blog: Action Step <p>Due Sept 25 by 11:59 pm EST</p>
Module 6	Sept 26	Job Search Strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore effective strategies for researching employers Identify sources for job searching 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Handshake Blog: Researching Employers <p>Due Oct 2 by 11:59 pm EST</p>
Module 7	Oct 3	Creating a Resume	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify strong and weak elements in sample résumés Polish a draft of your own résumé 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resume First Draft <p>Due Oct 9 by 11:59 pm EST</p>
Module 8	Oct 10	Cover Letters and References	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a professional cover letter that is tailored toward a job of interest Identify references 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cover Letter First Draft References List <p>Due Oct 16 by 11:59 pm EST</p>
Module 9	Oct 17	Strategies for Interviewing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognize effective interview strategies Create and deliver a polished personal pitch Develop a plan for your informational interview 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Personal Pitch Informational Interview Plan <p>Due Oct 23 by 11:59 pm EST</p>
Module 10	Oct 24	Networking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognize the value of creating a professional network Develop (or update) your LinkedIn profile 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LinkedIn Profile <p>Due Oct 30 by 11:59 pm EST</p>

MODULES	DATE AVAILABLE	TOPICS	OBJECTIVES	ASSIGNMENTS AND DUE DATES
Module 11	Oct 31	Job Application Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Peer review of job-aligned resume and cover letter 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Peer Review <p>Due Nov 6 by 11:59 pm EST</p>
Module 12	Nov 7	Salary: Budgeting and Negotiating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore typical salary levels for desired career Consider strategies for salary negotiation Examine tools used for budgeting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None
Module 13	Nov 14	Informational Interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share key points from informational interviews with peers Reflect on interview experience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Blog: Informational Interviews Informational Interviews Reflection <p>Due Dec 4 by 11:59 pm EST</p>
Module 14	Nov 21	Transitioning from College to Career	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognize differences in expectations between college and the workplace Analyze preferences for workplace environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workplace Expectations <p>Due Dec 4 by 11:59 pm EST</p>
Module 15	Nov 28	Final	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a professional portfolio that is focused on a career of interest 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Professional Portfolio <p>Due Dec 11 by 11:59 pm EST</p>
Extra Module for those interested		Preparing for Graduate School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review preparation strategies for graduate school Identify components of graduate school applications Examine ways to strengthen applications for graduate school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None

Course Policies

Late Assignments: All assignments should be turned in by the due date. A late penalty of 5% per day may be applied to assignments submitted after the due date, unless you have contacted me and arranged approval for late submission.

Instructor-Student Communication: I will respond to your emails as soon as I can, typically within 24 hours on weekdays. Please do not hesitate to reach out with questions or concerns about the course material and assignments. Do not delay letting me know that you need help. Putting PSYC 399 in the subject line of your email will be helpful in getting a timely response.

Grading Scale & Assignment Descriptions

Your grade in this course will be determined by the following distribution of points. Detailed instructions for assignments will be provided within the corresponding module.

Points	Assignment
5	Syllabus Quiz – assessment to check for understanding of syllabus content
5	Introductions – write a paragraph or more to describe yourself to your classmates
15	Self-Assessments – results and analysis of self-assessments (including: StrengthsFinder, Holland Code, Values)
5	Psych Careers – write an entry about an observation from your search of careers in psychology
15	Job Analysis – descriptions of jobs that align with self-assessment results
15	Goals Statement – description of short- and long-term professional goals
10	Handshake – create or update your account and report on three relevant job listings
10	Resume First Draft – initial draft of resume
10	Cover Letter First Draft – initial draft of cover letter
5	References List – three possible references

15	Final Resume and Cover Letter + Peer Reviews of Job Application – provide feedback to two classmates
15	Gap Analysis – current skills vs. needed skills; academic plan
5	Action Step – post one specific action that you can take to further your career preparation
10	Personal Pitch – one-minute presentation to answer the prompt “tell me about yourself”
5	Informational Interview Plan – list of contacts, email, and questions for interview
10	Linked In Profile – create or update your Linked In profile
10	Researching Employers – practice strategies for researching a company/organization
5	Informational Interview Blog – share details from informational interview
10	Informational Interview Reflection – analyze the knowledge gained from your interview
10	Workplace Expectations – analyze your expectations for workplace environment
10	Professional Portfolio – compilation of course assignments

Total points: 200

Course grades will be calculated by dividing your earned points by 200 and then multiplying this result by 100. For example, a student receiving 180 points would have a course grade of 90%. Letter grades will be assigned as follows:

Grade Breakdown

A+	99-100%	A	93-98%	A-	90-92%
B+	87-89%	B	83-86%	B-	80-82%
C+	77-79%	C	73-76%	C-	70-72%
D	60-69%				
F	below 60%				

- a. 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. The Code can be found [here](#). It is your responsibility to see me if you have questions about these policies.

Academic Integrity: Academic integrity refers to honest and ethical behavior in all aspects of academic activity. This includes: not cheating on homework assignments (e.g., copying the work of others), not passing off someone else's ideas as your own (plagiarism), not engaging in dishonesty of any kind 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 class 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 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.

- b. Official Communications via GMU E-mail: 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 e-mail account and are required to activate that account and check it regularly. In the event that Mason cancels classes, I will notify you via email regarding any changes to scheduled assignments.
- c. 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 (available from the Registrar's Website: registrar.gmu.edu). After the last day to drop a class, withdrawing from this class requires the approval of the dean and is only allowed for nonacademic reasons. Undergraduate students may choose to exercise a selective withdrawal. See the Schedule of Classes for selective withdrawal procedures.
- d. Students must follow the university policy for [Responsible Use of Computing](#)
- e. Student services: The University provides range of services to help you succeed academically and you should make use of these if you think they could benefit you. I also invite you to speak to me (the earlier the better).
- f. [The George Mason University Counseling and Psychological Services \(CAPS\)](#) staff consists of professional counseling and clinical psychologists, social workers, and counselors who offer a wide range of services (e.g., individual and group counseling, workshops and outreach programs) to enhance students' personal experience and academic performance. Counseling Center: Student Union I, Room 364, 703-993-2380. Website [here](#).

- g. 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 Student Union Building I (SUB I), Suite 2500. Email: ods@gmu.edu | Phone: (703) 993-2474
- h. [The George Mason University Writing Center](#) staff provides a variety of resources and services (e.g., tutoring, workshops, writing guides, handbooks) intended to support students as they work to construct and share knowledge through writing. University Writing Center: Robinson Hall Room A114, 703-993-1200. The writing center includes assistance for students for whom English is a second language.
- i. [Diversity](#): George Mason University promotes a living and learning environment for outstanding growth and productivity among its students, faculty and staff. Through its curriculum, programs, policies, procedures, services and resources, Mason strives to maintain a quality environment for work, study and personal growth. George Mason University promotes a living and learning environment for outstanding growth and productivity among its students, faculty, and staff. An emphasis upon diversity and inclusion throughout the campus community is essential to achieve these goals. Diversity is broadly defined to include such characteristics as but not limited to, race, ethnicity, gender, religion, age, disability, and sexual orientation. Diversity also entails different viewpoints, philosophies, and perspectives. Attention to these aspects of diversity will help promote a culture of inclusion and belonging, and an environment where diverse opinions, backgrounds, and practices have the opportunity to be voiced, heard, and respected.
- j. Notice of a mandatory reporting of sexual assault, interpersonal violence, and stalking: As a faculty member, I am designated as a “Responsible Employee”, and must report all disclosures of sexual assault, interpersonal violence, and stalking to Mason’s Title IX Coordinator per University Policy 1412. If you wish to speak with someone confidentially, please contact one of Mason’s confidential resources, such as Student Support and Advocacy Center (SSAC) at 703-380-1434 or Counseling & Psychology Services (CAPS) at 703-993-2380. You may also seek assistance from Mason’s Title IX Coordinator by calling 703-993-8730 or emailing cde@gmu.edu.
- k. Religious Holidays: A list of religious holidays is available on the University Life Calendar page. See the [Religious Holiday Calendar](#). Any student whose religious observance conflicts with a scheduled course activity should let me know in advance of the conflict date so that we can make alternative arrangements.

Don’t see what you need? Check out the [Stearns Center list of Student Support Resources on Campus](#) .