PSYC 100-DL1: BASIC CONCEPTS IN PSYCHOLOGY (3 credits)
Fall 2018

Course Logistics | **Course Description** | **Course Learning Outcomes** | **Blackboard Login Instructions** | **Required Readings** | **Technology Requirements** | **Assignments Description** | **Grading Scale** | **Course Policies** | **Course Schedule** | **University Policies and Resources**

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NOTE: This course is entirely online. There are no scheduled meeting times. Please read this syllabus very carefully to be sure you understand all aspects and requirements of the course.

Course Logistics

This course is completely online. It will require just as much time and effort as a face-to-face course, but in a different format. Even though we don't meet in person, we will have substantial interaction with each other, and you will engage in group projects and discussions throughout the course. Because the course is entirely online, it is extremely important to become familiar with the online format right away. The first few days will involve getting to know the format of the class and getting to know a bit about each other, before we jump into the material. This time is essential for the class, and does involve graded assignments!

Of note, the TA and I will be available through email, Blackboard Collaborate Ultra, or in person throughout the entire session. We will also have a Q&A forum in Discussion Board that runs throughout the semester. So there will be multiple ways for you to contact me with questions – I will do my best to respond as quickly as possible.

[top]

Course Description

This asynchronous online course will provide a general overview of the field of psychology, which focuses on explaining people's thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. Psychology covers all kinds of human experience: how the brain works, why we dream, mental illnesses and how to treat them, why we forget some things (like a birthday or anniversary) but remember others (like the name of our 2nd grade teacher) … All of this information deals with how and why people think, feel, and act the way they do. The class will involve learning this basic information *and* learning to apply it. Psychology is very broad; therefore, this course will cover a great deal of information. Thus, it is *very important* to keep up with the readings, assignments, etc.

The class website in Blackboard will contain access to videos, assignments, Blackboard Collaborate Ultra (method for videoconference), the discussion board, exams, and other course resources. All course activities will take place in Blackboard, so it is important to login and begin to explore the various components in the first days of the semester.

[top]

Course Learning Outcomes

You will develop the following skills:

1. Identify and explain fundamental concepts of research (e.g., research design, internal and external validity) in the behavioral sciences, and be able to apply these concepts to basic novel situations.
2. Define the focus of each of the primary areas within psychology (e.g., developmental psychology, clinical psychology), and the similarities and differences among them.
3. Explain and discuss fundamental concepts and terminology within each area of psychology and apply these concepts and terminology to basic novel situations.

[top]

Blackboard Login Instructions

Access to MyMason and GMU email are required to participate successfully in this course. Please make sure to update your computer and prepare yourself to begin using the online format BEFORE the first day of class. Check the IT Support Center website. Navigate to the Student Support page for help and information about Blackboard. In the menu bar to the left you will find all the tools you need to become familiar with for this course. Take time to learn each. Make sure you run a system check a few days before class. Become familiar with the attributes of Blackboard and online learning. ***It is extremely important to access Blackboard 9.1 through the MyMason Portal – please follow these instructions:***

1. Go to http://mymasonportal.gmu.edu/
2. Login using your Mason ID and password (the same one you use for your GMU email account)
3. Click on the 'Courses' tab (toward the top right of the screen)
4. Go to the list of courses entitled "Course List" (in the **middle** of the screen)
5. Click on the link for Psyc 100-DL1

The class website in Blackboard will contain access to videos, assignments, Blackboard Collaborate (method for videoconference), the discussion board, exams, and other course resources. All course activities will take place in Blackboard, so it is important to login and begin to explore the various components in the first days of the semester.

[top]

Required Readings

E-Readings. The readings for the course come from two open access educational resources, coordinated through the Noba Collection and Open Stax. Both are the results of efforts to collect textbook material written by experts in various fields, and make that content freely available online. A collection of chapters has been customized for use in this course and is available to you through the course site on Blackboard.

[top]

Technology Requirements

All primary contact in the course will be via email and Blackboard; thus, you are _required_ to check your Mason email account regularly and to keep your mailbox maintained, so that messages will not be rejected for being over quota. You may forward GMU emails to other accounts, but emails to the instructor should come from your GMU account, to allow verification of your identity. For this course, _all assignments are completed online_ within Blackboard (see below). You may need to download various free programs to view some resources (see below).

Hardware: You will need access to a Windows or Macintosh computer with at least 2 GB of RAM and access to a fast and reliable broadband internet connection (e.g., cable, DSL). A larger screen is recommended for better visibility of course material. You will need speakers or headphones to hear recorded content and a headset with a microphone is recommended for the best experience. For the amount of Hard Disk Space required taking a distance education course, consider and allow for:

1. the storage amount needed to install any additional software and
2. space to store work that you will do for the course.

If you consider the purchase of a new computer, please go to Technology Buying Guide to see recommendations.

Software: This course uses Blackboard as the learning management system. You will need a browser and operating system that are listed compatible or certified with the Blackboard version available on the myMason Portal. See supported browsers and operating systems. Log in to myMason to access your registered courses. Online courses typically use Acrobat Reader, Flash, Java, and Windows Media Player and/or Real Media Player. Your computer should be capable of running current versions of those applications. Also, make sure your computer is protected from viruses by downloading the latest version of Symantec Endpoint Protection/Anti-Virus software for free here. Finally, you may need to video record your introduction, which you can do with a smartphone or other video camera, such as Kaltura CaptureSpace in Blackboard. Other tools you may need to record your introduction: Audacity free audio recording software; Jing or ScreenCast-o-Matic free video recording software.

Students owning Macs or Linux should be aware that some courses may use software that only runs on Windows. You can set up a Mac computer with Boot Camp or virtualization software so Windows will also run on it. Watch this video about using Windows on a Mac. Computers running Linux can also be configured with virtualization software or configured to dual boot with Windows.

Note: If you are using an employer-provided computer or corporate office for class attendance, please verify that you will be able to install the necessary applications and that system or corporate firewalls do not block access to any sites or media types.

Course-specific Hardware/Software: Check the syllabus for your course or contact the instructor prior to the start of the course to find out about specific technical requirements for your class. In addition, you must sign up for required experiments/alternatives through the Sona Systems website or complete online alternatives via Blackboard (see Research Requirement Handout). Hardware or software required for your course or program may be available for purchase at Patriot Computers (the University's computer store that offers educational discounts and special deals).

[top]

Assignments Description

Your grade in this course is based on 5 separate components:

1. _Introductory Engagement: 3%._ In the first week, you are asked to familiarize yourself with the course and to post an introduction of yourself to the other members of your group. This requires you to read over various pieces of information (like this syllabus), watch the orientation video and group work video, and access the readings. This introductory work will help lay the foundation for your successful engagement in the class, and simply completing this work as described is worth 3% of your grade.

2. _Group Work: 15%._ In each module, there are two group work assignments (module 5 has one group work assignment because of Thanksgiving break) that are intended to help you learn the material. Except for Module 1, these are always in the first two weeks of the module. These assignments are graded on rubrics that are presented with the assignment. The majority of the grade on these assignments reflect the _effort_ you put in, not the specific outcome. The goal is for these assignments to help you work through material to learn it well, and to prepare for Weekly Quizzes and Module Exams.

   During the discussions, you will work in a group with 18-19 students, and each group will have its own, private _group discussion board._ We will have 9 graded discussions throughout the semester. Each group member will play _a summarizer_ role once during the semester, which involves writing a consensus summary of the group's thoughts and posting it on _the class discussion board_ (the left-hand menu in Bb). If you are a summarizer, you should fulfill only summarizer's responsibilities during the week. Please read PSYC 100 Participation in Group Work document for more information in module 1 in Bb, and be sure to sign up for the week you would like to take on the summarizer role in the class Wiki in Week 1 of Module 1.

3. _Weekly Quizzes: 15%._ Weekly Quizzes are 10 questions at the end of each week (except Week 3). These quizzes will (a) test your knowledge of the material that was covered that week and (b) help prepare you for the Module Exams. Questions on these quizzes will be similar to those presented on Module Exams. You have up to 3 chances to take each quiz, and your highest grade is counted in your quiz average. If you complete the quiz after the due date, you will lose 1 point per day. Quizzes cannot be submitted more than 2 days late.

4. _Module Exams: 60%._ There will be one exam per module of the course – 5 exams total. Each exam will count equally. Most exams are 40 questions each. Students should not use any materials (textbook, notes, flashcards, etc.) during the exam. To ensure that students adhere to this, exams will be timed – once an exam is opened, _**it must be completed within 45 minutes**_ (if you need accommodations for extra time, please see the section below regarding disabilities). Also, exam questions will be randomly selected **for each student**, so no student will take the same exam. Questions are taken from a pool of over 1,000 questions and matched for difficulty and content.

   There is an _optional_ cumulative final exam at the end of the semester. If you take the final, it will replace your lowest exam score of the semester (unless it is lower than your lowest score, in which case, the final will not count against you). There are two primary reasons you might choose to take this exam: (1) if you miss an exam during the semester, this will be your option for making it up (your score on the final will replace the '0' you received for the missed exam), and (2) to replace a score on an exam on which you did poorly.

5. *Research Requirement: 7%.* The psychology department believes that participation in psychological research can enhance your learning about the field. Thus, for 7% of the grade in this course, all students are required to serve for 7 hours as participants in psychological research. For students who prefer not to participate, you can also complete 7 hours' worth of alternative research article review assignments. You may fulfill the 7-hour requirement through any combination of these two options – handouts with detailed information are posted on Blackboard (see Research Requirement tab). See handouts for more details.

[top]

Grading Scale

The final grade will be calculated using the percentages above, with 100% as the highest possible total grade. Letter grades will be assigned based on the standard format (scores of .5 and above are rounded up, anything below .5 is rounded down):

A+	97%-100%	B+	87%-89%	C+	77%-79%	D	60%-69%
A	93%-96%	B	83%-86%	C	73%-76%	F	< 60%
A-	90%-92%	B-	80%-82%	C-	70%-72%		

[top]

Course Policies

Late Assignments: All assignments must be turned in on the due date given on the assignment sheet. Assignments are penalized when late, according to grading rubrics.

Instructor-Student Communication: I will respond to your emails within 48 hours. If I will be away from email for more than one day, I will post an announcement in the Blackboard course folder. Before sending an email, please check the following (available on your Blackboard course menu) unless the email is of a personal nature:

1. Syllabus
2. Ask Professor
3. On-demand Blackboard videos on how to use Blackboard features, and Technical Requirements.

Feel free to respond to other students in the Ask Professor forum if you know the answer.

Course Schedule

There are five modules, each with 3 weeks. The assignments and due dates are fairly similar across all modules, but there are some differences in Module 1, around Thanksgiving, and at the end of the semester. Please pay careful attention to the due date for the Module 5 Exam, which is Saturday 12/8 – this is because classes end on that date. The final exam is optional and can be completed anytime between Wed 12/12 and Sun 12/16.

Module	Week	Topic	Submitted Assignments	Due Dates
1 INTRODUCTION & RESEARCH METHODS 08/28-09/17	1 08/28 09/04	Introduction, Overview & Subfields of Psychology *Labor Day 09/03*	Sign up for Summarizer role in Wiki Group Work: Introductions Week 1 Quiz	Tue 09/04 Tue 09/04 Tue 09/04
	2 09/04 09/10	Empiricism & Research	Group Work: Mod 1 Discussion 1 • Posts in Group Disc Board • Summarizer post (Class Disc) Week 2 Quiz	Fri 09/07 Mon 09/10 Mon 09/10
	3 09/11 09/17	Empiricism & Research	Group Work: Mod 1 Discussion 2 • Posts in Group Disc Board • Summarizer post (Class Disc) Module 1 Exam	Fri 09/14 Mon 09/17 Mon 09/17
2 BIOLOGICAL BASES OF BEHAVIOR 09/18-10/09	4 09/18 09/24	Biopsychology	Group Work: Mod 2 Discussion 1 • Posts in Group Disc Board • Summarizer post (Class Disc) Week 4 Quiz	Fri 09/21 Mon 09/24 Mon 09/24
	5 09/25 10/01	Sensation & Perception	Group Work: Mod 2 Discussion 2 • Posts in Group Disc Board • Summarizer post (Class Disc) Week 5 Quiz	Fri 09/28 Mon 10/01 Mon 10/01
	6 10/02 10/09	Consciousness *Columbus Day 10/08*	Week 6 Quiz Module 2 Exam	Fri 10/05 Tue 10/09
3 COGNITIVE & AFFECTIVE BASES OF BEHAVIOR 10/09-10/29	7 10/09 10/15	Memory	Group Work: Mod 3 Discussion 1 • Posts in Group Disc Board • Summarizer post (Class Disc) Week 7 Quiz	Fri 10/12 Mon 10/15 Mon 10/15
	8 10/16 10/22	Cognition	Group Work: Mod 3 Discussion 2 • Posts in Group Disc Board • Summarizer post (Class Disc) Week 8 Quiz	Fri 10/19 Mon 10/22 Mon 10/22
	9 10/23 10/29	Motivation & Emotion	Week 9 Quiz Module 3 Exam	Fri 10/26 Mon 10/29

4 INTERNAL & EXTERNAL INFLUENCES ON BEHAVIOR 10/30-11/19	10 10/30 11/05	Development	Group Work: Mod 4 Discussion 1 • Posts in Group Disc Board • Summarizer post (Class Disc) Week 10 Quiz	Fri 11/02 Mon 11/05 Mon 11/05
	11 11/06 11/12	Personality	Group Work: Mod 4 Discussion 2 • Posts in Group Disc Board • Summarizer post (Class Disc) Week 11 Quiz	Fri 11/09 Mon 11/12 Mon 11/12
	12 11/13 11/19	Learning	Week 12 Quiz Module 4 Exam	Fri 11/16 Mon 11/19
5 NORMAL & ABNORMAL FUNCTIONING 11/20-12/10	13 11/20 11/26	Social Psychology *Thanksgiving Break 11/21 – 11/25*	Week 13 Quiz	Mon 11/26
	14 11/27 12/03	Psychological Disorders	Group Work: Mod 5 Discussion 1 • Posts in Group Disc Board • Summarizer post (Class Disc) Week 14 Quiz	Fri 11/30 Mon 12/03 Mon 12/03
	15 12/04 12/08	Psychological Therapies	Week 15 Quiz Module 5 Exam	Fri 12/07 Sat 12/08
	16 12/12 12/16	FINAL EXAM (optional)		Sun 12/16

[top]

University Policies and Resources

a. <u>Honor Code:</u> You are expected to be familiar with and abide by the University's Honor Code. The Code can be found here. It is your responsibility to see me if you have questions about these policies. George Mason University has an honor code that states the following:

> *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:*

Student members of the George Mason University community pledge not to cheat, plagiarize, steal, or lie in matters related to academic work.

I encourage you to learn the material taught in this course in any and all ways that best fit your learning style. However, your performance on graded assignments and exams, and in the research requirement portion of the course, MUST BE YOUR OWN, INDEPENDENT WORK. You are not to use any unauthorized aids while completing such tasks (e.g., using your E-book while completing an exam). Any violations such as these will be reported to the Honor Code Committee, and the instructor for this course reserves the right to enter a failing grade to any student found guilty of an honor code violation.

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. Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing

d. 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).

e. Students are responsible for the content of university communications sent to their George Mason University email account and are required to activate their account and check it regularly. All communication from the university, college, school, and program will be sent to students solely through their Mason email account.

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. Web-site here.

g. Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with the George Mason University Office of Disability Services (ODS) and inform their instructor, in writing, at the beginning of the semester. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office. Please note that accommodations MUST BE MADE BEFORE assignments or exams are due. I cannot adjust your grade after the fact.

h. Students must follow the university policy stating that all sound emitting devices shall be turned off during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.

i. 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.

j. 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.

[top]