

INTRODUCTORY PSYCHOLOGY (PSY 101-01)

Spring Semester, 2019
Wednesdays and Fridays, 8:30 – 11:50 a.m.
410 Eberhard Center

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Course Description

This course serves as an introduction to psychology, which is the science of behavior and mental processes. We will cover how psychologists conduct research, and how psychological phenomena are examined at the biological, cognitive, behavioral, and sociocultural levels of analysis. Among the topics we will discuss are perception, learning, memory, intelligence, human development, personality, social behavior, and abnormal psychology. Critical thinking, ethical reasoning, and the adoption of a scientific mindset will be emphasized throughout the semester. This course is worth three credits.

Learning Objectives

Upon successfully completing this course, students should be able to (a) demonstrate an understanding of the scientific process in psychology, (b) identify major psychological theories and use psychological terminology correctly, (c) critically evaluate the findings of psychological research, and (d) recognize examples of how psychological concepts are applied to daily life.

General Education Foundations

Introductory Psychology is part of the General Education program at GVSU, and meets the Social and Behavioral Sciences Foundations criteria listed at:

<https://www.gvsu.edu/gened/foundations-social-and-behavioral-sciences-277.htm>

Required Texts

Two books are required for this course:

- Griggs, Richard A. (2017). *Psychology: A Concise Introduction* (5th edition). New York: Worth.
- Landrum, R. Eric (2019). *Annual Editions: Psychology* (49th edition). New York: McGraw-Hill.

It is essential that you keep up with the readings, and I expect everyone to have completed the assigned chapters and articles for any given meeting prior to coming to class. The due dates for all of our readings can be found in the course schedule at the end of this syllabus.

Blackboard

Our Blackboard website is a central component of this course. In addition to serving as the platform for our online journal (described below), Blackboard will be used to post class announcements, course documents, and student grades. Important class announcements will regularly be posted on Blackboard. Also, I will be using Blackboard to send out e-mails to members of this class, which means that you should regularly check the messages on your GVSU student e-mail account.

Course Evaluation

The maximum number of points you can receive in this course is 300, and point totals will be translated into grades at the end of the term using this scale:

279 – 300 points = A	219 – 230 points = C
270 – 278 points = A-	210 – 218 points = C-
261 – 269 points = B+	201 – 209 points = D+
249 – 260 points = B	180 – 200 points = D
240 – 248 points = B-	179 points or less = F
231 – 239 points = C+	

Your grade will be cumulatively determined by the following:

Exams. There will be two multiple-choice exams – a midterm and a final – covering material from the assigned readings and the lectures. The exams are worth 75 points each, for a total of 150 points (50% of your grade). The final exam will not be cumulative.

If you miss a scheduled exam due to an excused absence, you will be able to take a make-up exam. However, excused absences are limited to a small number of specific situations, require appropriate documentation, and must be arranged with the instructor before the exam date.

Homework. There will be ten homework assignments due this semester. The homeworks are worth six points each, for a total of 60 points (20% of your grade). The due dates for all of our homeworks can be found in the course schedule at the end of this syllabus. Late homeworks will not be accepted.

Journal. Throughout this course, you will be keeping a written journal documenting your reflections on and reactions to the material we read and discuss. More specifically, you are expected to compose and submit ten journal entries this semester, each of which will delve into a different area of psychology explored in one of our class meetings. Your entries should not be summaries of the relevant readings; rather, what I would like you to write are your own thoughts and feelings about what we have covered.

There is no template for what the “ideal” journal entry should look like, and you should follow your muse when composing each one. But here are some examples of the kinds of questions you might consider when writing in your journal:

- Did certain concepts, theories, or studies strike you as being especially important in terms of understanding human nature?
- Did any of the concepts, theories, or studies help you make sense of things that you (or people you know) have done, felt, or experienced?
- Did some of the ideas challenge beliefs that you’ve held about human nature? If so, how did you find yourself responding to this challenge?
- Do any practical applications of concepts, theories, or studies come to mind that were not covered in the readings and class discussions?

(The above questions should be treated as food for thought – feel free to approach the material from whatever direction you’d like.)

The minimum length of each journal entry should be 250 words. Do not attempt to write about every significant issue covered in the readings; instead, focus on a small set of concepts,

theories, or studies that grabbed your attention and made you think. (Two to three such issues per journal entry would be a reasonable number.) The tone of your writing can be informal, but I do expect you to write using complete sentences. All of your journal entries should be submitted through our Blackboard website. In order to make a submission, click the Journals tab in the course menu, select and click the appropriate Journal Entry tab for the relevant readings, and then create and post your entry. Detailed instructions for creating and posting journal entries on Blackboard can be found at:

<https://www.gvsu.edu/elearn/help/blogs-journals-51.htm>

A journal entry for a given class meeting must be submitted within three days of that meeting. In other words, submissions for Wednesday meetings are due by the end of Saturday, and submissions for Friday meetings are due by the end of Monday. The exact due dates for each of our journal entries can be found in the course schedule at the end of this syllabus. Late journal entries will not be accepted.

All ten journal entries are worth six points each, for a total of 60 points (20% of your grade).

Enrichment activities. You are required to complete two enrichment activities for this course, which are explained in detail in a handout accompanying this syllabus. The enrichment activities are worth 15 points each, for a total of 30 points (10% of your grade). Both enrichment activities must be completed by Wednesday, June 12.

Reading and Studying Tips

As stated earlier, I expect everyone to keep up with the assigned readings for this course. There are, however, both good ways and bad ways of reading if your intention is to learn. Here are some tips for engaging with each of our required books. (Some of this advice may run counter to the ways in which you typically prepare for classes, but it is based on solid empirical research on effective reading and studying techniques – research that we will discuss later in the course.)

How to read *Psychology: A Concise Introduction*. This is our primary textbook. Each chapter begins with a brief overview (which you should read), and is then divided into three primary sections. Try to read each section in a single sitting, and take detailed notes while reading the section. (Taking notes is a more effective learning strategy than simply highlighting or underlining key phrases and sentences. Also, you should write your notes by hand instead of typing them on a computer.) After you have finished reading a chapter section and the section summary, immediately test your comprehension of the most important points with the ConceptCheck questions – compare your responses to these questions with the ConceptCheck answers given at the end of the chapter, and go back and review the relevant material if your responses fell short. Once you have finished reading all three sections of a chapter – and have completed all three ConceptChecks – set the book aside for a while. When we have our class meeting to discuss the chapter, there is no need to bring the book with you, but do bring the notes you took on the chapter. A few hours after the end of class, pull the book back out, go to the Study Guide at the end of the chapter, and test yourself with the Key Terms Exercise and the Practice Test Questions. Check your answers and, as before, go back and review the relevant material for any questions you struggled with.

How to read *Annual Editions: Psychology*. This edited collection of short articles is meant to complement our primary textbook. Wait to read the assigned articles for a given topic until you have finished reading the associated chapter from *Psychology: A Concise Introduction*. There

is no need to take extensive notes on any of these articles; rather, while reading an article, you should (a) think about how the article relates to the material from our primary textbook, and (b) write down any questions or comments you might have about the article. We will be discussing each of these articles during class in an open-ended fashion, and your comments and questions will be most welcome.

More generally, whenever you sit down to read and study for this (or any) class, you should eliminate as many distractions as possible. Find a quiet spot, take out your earbuds, close your laptop, and keep your smartphone on silent and out of sight. (You may believe that such devices are not truly distracting, or that you can multitask while reading, but then you would be wrong.)

If you follow the above advice as you read each of our two required books, you will not only be well prepared for all of our regular class meetings, but will also have done much of your actual studying far in advance of our midterm and final exams, and will therefore feel far less of a need to “cram” before taking these tests. (“Cramming” is both stressful and a terrible way to study.)

Class Attendance and Participation

Although attendance does not figure into the course evaluation, you are strongly encouraged to come to every one of our class meetings. Here are some guidelines for how to get the most out of our meetings – and how to make these meetings a positive experience for everyone:

- **Come prepared.** This means reading the required chapters and articles in advance; remembering to bring your notebook, a pen, and any assignments due that day; and being ready to actively participate during class.
- **Take minimal notes when I lecture.** The lecture segments of our meetings will largely be spent reviewing material from *Psychology: A Concise Introduction* that I consider especially important, and because you will already have taken detailed notes on this material (see above), you should primarily be listening to the lectures to check and solidify your comprehension. (It is difficult to actually listen to someone or something if you are trying to write down every single thing you hear at the same time.)
- **Do not take any notes during class demonstrations and video clips.** These in-class activities are meant to illustrate specific concepts from the lectures in order to deepen your understanding of the material, and are most effective when receiving your undivided attention.
- **Ask questions.** If something is not clear to you, or if you are especially curious about something, do not hesitate to raise your hand and ask about it, even if you are not quite sure about the best way to phrase your question.
- **Participate in our open-ended discussions.** The discussion segments of our meetings will often delve into the ways in which psychological science is personally relevant, and these discussions will therefore benefit from everyone being personally involved.
- **Take advantage of our class breaks.** Because our biweekly class meetings are long (almost three-and-a-half hours), I will typically offer two or three ten-minute breaks during each meeting. Put these breaks to good use – if you need a snack, need to use the restroom, need to call or text someone, or just need to move about a bit (which I recommend), these are the times to do so.
- **Be mindful and courteous.** This means being on time to class; silencing your smartphone and putting it away; not surfing the web on your laptop; and not taking naps (especially if you snore). In other words, be fully – and respectfully – present.

GVSU Policies

This course is subject to all GVSU policies regarding enrollment, grading, academic integrity, and fairness listed at:

<https://www.gvsu.edu/coursepolicies/>

Students with Disabilities

If there is any student in this class who has special needs because of a cognitive, physical, or other disability, please let me know, and contact Disability Support Resources (DSR) at (616) 331-2490. Although students with disabilities are held to the same academic standards as all other students, accommodations will be provided as appropriate.

Disclaimer

The schedule of topics and assignments in this syllabus is subject to change. Any such changes will be announced during class.

COURSE SCHEDULE

May 8 – Introduction

May 10 – The Science of Psychology

Readings

Chapter 1 of *Psychology: A Concise Introduction* (pp. 1-41)

"Investigating Variation in Replicability" (*Annual Editions*, pp. 13-25)

"That's So Random" (*Annual Editions*, pp. 26-27)

Also

Turn in Homework 1 during class.

Submit journal entry on above readings by the end of May 13.

May 15 – Neuroscience

Readings

Chapter 2 of *Psychology: A Concise Introduction* (pp. 42-99)

"Sleep Deprivation and False Confessions" (*Annual Editions*, pp. 53-58)

"Could a Dose of Sunshine Make You Smarter?" (*Annual Editions*, pp. 59-60)

"Evoking the Ineffable" (*Annual Editions*, pp. 85-95)

"On the Science of Creepiness" (*Annual Editions*, pp. 132-134)

Also

Turn in Homework 2 during class.

Submit journal entry on above readings by the end of May 18.

May 17 – Sensation and Perception

Readings

Chapter 3 of *Psychology: A Concise Introduction* (pp. 100-149)

"Some People Are More Likely to See Faces in Things" (*Annual Editions*, pp. 75-76)

"A New Way to Trick the Brain and Beat Jet Lag" (*Annual Editions*, pp. 77-78)

Also

Turn in Homework 3 during class.

Submit journal entry on above readings by the end of May 20.

May 22 – Learning

Readings

Chapter 4 of *Psychology: A Concise Introduction* (pp. 150-199)

"A 'Learning' Attitude Helps Boost Job Search Success" (*Annual Editions*, pp. 102-103)

"B.F. Skinner at Harvard" (*Annual Editions*, pp. 107-109)

Also

Turn in Homework 4 during class.

Submit journal entry on above readings by the end of May 25.

May 24 – Memory

Readings

Chapter 5 of *Psychology: A Concise Introduction* (pp. 200-241)

“You Have No Idea What Happened” (*Annual Editions*, pp. 99-101)

“Cognitive Shields” (*Annual Editions*, pp. 113-117)

Also

Turn in Homework 5 during class.

Submit journal entry on above readings by the end of May 27.

May 29 – Midterm Exam

May 31 – Thinking and Intelligence

Readings

Chapter 6 of *Psychology: A Concise Introduction* (pp. 242-285)

“Getting a Scientific Message across Means Taking Human Nature into Account” (*Annual Editions*, pp. 118-120)

“A Brief History of Twin Studies” (*Annual Editions*, pp. 141-142)

“How Are Horoscopes Still a Thing?” (*Annual Editions*, pp. 167-171)

Also

Turn in Homework 6 during class.

Submit journal entry on above readings by the end of June 3.

June 5 – Developmental Psychology

Readings

Chapter 7 of *Psychology: A Concise Introduction* (pp. 286-331)

“How Do Smartphones Affect Childhood Psychology?” (*Annual Editions*, pp. 147-149)

“A Potent Side Effect to the Flint Water Crisis” (*Annual Editions*, pp. 207-209)

“It’s Not Just You” (*Annual Editions*, pp. 213-214)

Also

Turn in Homework 7 during class.

Submit journal entry on above readings by the end of June 8.

June 7 – Personality Theories and Assessment

Readings

Chapter 8 of *Psychology: A Concise Introduction* (pp. 332-369)

“How Democracy Can Survive Big Data” (*Annual Editions*, pp. 174-175)

“Being Neurotic Makes It Harder for You to Remember Things” (*Annual Editions*, pp. 201-202)

Also

Turn in Homework 8 during class.

Submit journal entry on above readings by the end of June 10.

June 12 – Social Psychology

Readings

Chapter 9 of *Psychology: A Concise Introduction* (pp. 370-425)

“Hand on the Wheel, Mind on the Mobile” (*Annual Editions*, pp. 123-131)

“Are People More Disturbed by Dog or Human Suffering?” (*Annual Editions*, pp. 190-197)

Also

Turn in Homework 9 during class.

Submit journal entry on above readings by the end of June 15.

June 14 – Abnormal Psychology

Readings

Chapter 10 of *Psychology: A Concise Introduction* (pp. 426-477)

“The Largest Health Disparity We Don’t Talk About” (*Annual Editions*, pp. 61-63)

“Overcoming the Shame of a Suicide Attempt” (*Annual Editions*, pp. 203-204)

“Study Finds Virtual Reality Can Help Treat Severe Paranoia” (*Annual Editions*, pp. 235-236)

“Could Brain Scans Help Guide Treatment for OCD?” (*Annual Editions*, pp. 237-238)

Also

Turn in Homework 10 during class.

Submit journal entry on above readings by the end of June 17.

June 19 – Final Exam