

PSY300, Section 02: **Research Methods in Psychology**  
Winter 2018

**Instructor:** Dr. Brent Steffens

**Email:** steffbre@gvsu.edu

**Office:** 2112 Au Sable Hall

**Office Hours:** Monday 1-3pm, Wednesday 10-11am, or by appointment

**Meeting Time:** MWF, 12-12:50pm

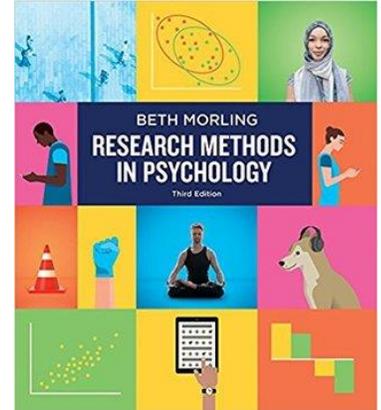
**Room:** ASH1314

**Required Course Materials**

Morling, B. (2018). *Research methods in psychology: Evaluating a world of information*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition. Norton & Company: New York

**Recommended (but not required):**

American Psychological Association (201). *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (Sixth Edition). Washington, D. C.: APA.



**Prerequisites:** PSY 101 or HNR 234, STA 215 or STA 312, & WRT 150 (grade of C or better)

**Course Topic & Learning Outcomes**

The aim of this course is to provide you with an understanding of the processes involved in performing psychological research. This content is fascinating - rather than focusing on the findings and theory of a particular field, we are taking a step back to consider what decisions were made to make the research possible. We will discuss how psychologists approach study design, measurement, ethics, data analysis, and interpreting statistics. From this course, you will gain an appreciation for the methods scientists use to in order to understand how and why different human behaviors occur.

This course is also focused on the development of skills required to perform and consume research. Part of class is devoted to regularly reading, writing, and critiquing research. These activities can be challenging, but can be very rewarding, whether your intention is to enter into the field of psychology or not. Training yourself to have a thoughtful, critical eye will help you evaluate scientific research wherever you encounter it, whether it appears in a journal, a press release from a university, or a report in the news.

The content of the course is rewarding, but can be challenging at times. I cannot emphasize enough how critical it is that you use the materials at your disposal. This includes the book, the lectures, and the professor. I cannot answer any questions that I am not asked – it is your responsibility to approach me if you need support.

<b><u>Determination of Grades</u></b>		
<b>TASK</b>		<b>POINTS</b>
<b>Exams</b>	<b>3 exams x 40 pts. each</b>	<b>120 pts.</b>
<b>Assignments</b>	<b>4 article summary/reviews</b>	<b>40 pts.</b>
	<b>6 content assignments</b>	<b>55 pts.</b>
<b>Research Paper</b>		<b>155 pts.</b>
<b>Total points:</b>		<b>370</b>

**Exams (3 exams x 40 pts. each; 120 pts. total)**

There will be three exams throughout the semester. None of the tests are cumulative, but they will cover information from **the class lectures and from the book.**

## **Assignments (95 pts. total)**

Assignments will be given regularly across the semester. These activities target critical components of reading, evaluating, and performing research. There are two major types of assignments; article reviews and content assignments. The tentative due date of each assignment can be found on the schedule at the end of the syllabus. It is your responsibility to know when these assignments are due. Any adjustments to due dates will be mentioned in class, posted to Blackboard, and sent through email.

**Article Reviews (10 pts. each; 40 pts. total):** Throughout the semester, you are expected to complete brief reviews of different journal articles. These assignments require you to read the article and write a brief summary and critique. A few of the articles will be revised in-class by your peers; you will need to complete these revisions and submit a) the original copy with the peer edits, and b) the revised version, for a grade during the following class. Some of the articles will be posted to Blackboard by Dr. Steffens, and some will be found/chosen by you. The specific details of each review will be given in class. All answers and summaries/critiques must be in your own words (plagiarism will not be accepted – see policy below)

**Content Assignments (5-10 pts. each; 55 pts. total):** These assignments focus on understanding and applying the content discussed in the book/lectures throughout the semester. These assignments will be handed out in class.

## **Group Research Paper (5 sentence project summary 5 points; Intro draft 25 pts.; Methods draft 25 pts.; final paper 100 pts.)**

Students will be assigned to groups and will write an APA-style paper for a research project that addresses one of the questions provided by Dr. Steffens. The goal is for you to experience designing and writing up a research project. You will “conduct” a twist on a study by Roediger and Karpickie (2006) on the testing effect. This means you will be taking part of their design, and adding some new aspect/element that they didn’t test. I will provide a project overview at the beginning of the semester. You will not be collecting actual data – mock data will be provided to simulate data collection. The specifics of the design will be discussed in class; however, the design will consist of a) comparing two groups (must be manipulated) on a dependent variable, and b) correlating that dependent variable with another variable. The paper must include these components:

- Title page
- Abstract
- Introduction (reviews relevant articles, includes overview of current study, hypotheses & predictions)
- Methods (Participants, Materials, Design, Procedure)
- Results (summarizing analysis from provided data set)
- Discussion (Interpretation of results, Limitations, Future Directions)
- References

Each of these sections will be discussed in class. Still, the APA manual and your textbook will help you with the formatting and structure of the paper. All aspects of the paper must be written by your group. Plagiarism of another group’s work, or the work of other papers, articles, or other media will be dealt with in accordance with GVSU’s policy on academic integrity (see Student Code; excerpt on plagiarism included below). At the beginning of the semester, you will write a short, 5-sentence summary of the project, to ensure that you understand the project expectations. Drafts of two sections (introduction, methods) will be submitted for a grade through Blackboard, and groups will be given feedback so that changes can be made for the final draft due at the end of the semester. These two drafts will be worth 25 points each, and the final paper will be worth 100 points. Please note that you will not simply receive points for completing the drafts – you will be graded on the quality of the draft your group submits.

You will also complete a review of your group members at the end of the term (multiple questions, answered on a scale out of 5). If a group member receives an average score of 2 or lower, the highest final grade they can receive on the paper is a 70%.

### Plagiarism

Any ideas or material taken from another source for either written or oral presentation must be fully acknowledged. Offering the work of someone else as one's own is plagiarism. The language or ideas taken from another may range from isolated formulas, sentences, or paragraphs to entire articles copied from books, periodicals, speeches, or the writing of other students. The offering of materials assembled or collected by others in the form of projects or collections without acknowledgment also is considered plagiarism. Any student who fails to give credit in written or oral work for the ideas or materials that have been taken from another is guilty of plagiarism.

Such activity may result in failure of a specific assignment, an entire course, or, if flagrant, dismissal from Grand Valley. For further information see the Student Code.

**Writing Center.** One valuable resource you can use to help you write the paper is the GVSU Writing Center. The Fred Meijer Center for Writing, with locations at the Allendale and Pew/Downtown Grand Rapids campuses, is available to assist you with writing for any of your classes. Writing consultants, who are fellow GVSU students, are trained to help you with all stages of your writing process, from brainstorming to organizing to editing your papers. Simply bring a draft of your paper, the assignment sheet, and your questions/concerns to any of the Center's locations. Also, through your Gmail account, you have access to online consultations through GoogleDocs. The Center's services are free and you can drop in and work with a consultant or make an appointment, either through our website or by calling the Center (331-2922). For more information about our services and locations, please visit our website: <http://www.gvsu.edu/wc/>

**Knowledge Market.** The knowledge market is another valuable resource if you need help with your writing. The Knowledge Market is located within the Mary Idema Pew GVSU Library, on the Allendale campus. Student workers have been trained to help you formulate and structure your ideas, and give you feedback on your writing. You can learn more about the market at there website: <https://www.gvsu.edu/library/km/>

### Grade Assignment Scale:

Points (%)	Grade	Points (%)	Grade
≥ 93	A	77 – 79.9	C+
90 - 92.9	A-	73 – 76.9	C
87 – 89.9	B+	70-72.9	C-
83 – 86.9	B	60 – 69.9	D
80 – 82.9	B-	≤ 59.9	F

### Course Guidelines

The classroom is a special environment in which students and faculty come together to promote learning and growth. It is essential to this learning environment that respect for the rights of others seeking to learn, respect for the professionalism of the instructor, and the general goals of academic freedom are maintained. To create and preserve a classroom atmosphere that optimizes teaching and learning, all participants share a responsibility in creating a civil and non-disruptive forum. Students are expected to conduct themselves at all times in this classroom in a manner that does not disrupt teaching or learning.

1. Class begins promptly at the beginning of the class period. Students should be in their seats and ready to start participating at that time.
2. **For Tests:** If you arrive late for a test that has already started, you may take the test for the remaining amount of time allotted for that test.
3. Students caught cheating will be dealt with severely, in accordance with the Grand Valley State University regulations. Students will not be allowed to retain copies of exam questions.
4. Students will stay until the end of class and will not pack up early, before that time.
5. Students who have to arrive late or leave early for a compelling reason, will inform me of that fact in

advance and should be seated close to the door.

6. **PHONES:** TURN YOUR PHONE ON SILENT. Please stay off your phone during class. Come ready to focus for the 50-minute class. It's not all day.
7. Students will pay attention during class: no talking while another classmate or the professor is talking, no reading newspapers, no doing work for other classes. Students who are asked to leave for the day for engaging in these behaviors will do so quickly and quietly.
8. Students are responsible for all material presented in class whether or not they are present. This material includes the lectures, discussions, and activities. Students who miss class should obtain lecture notes and handouts from another student. Please bring these notes to my office hours so I can be most helpful.
9. I am a challenging teacher but provide many opportunities for you to get help. It is your responsibility to ask for help when you need it (e.g., attend office hours, read the book, go to the learning or writing center). If some material is unclear, please let me know. Most of the lectures require you to apply the knowledge learned in class and in readings, so it is critical that you really understand the material. I truly enjoy questions in class – it makes the class more interesting to me and informative to other students. Chances are, if you have a question, others have that same question but is too shy to ask it. When you do want to ask a question, raise your hand and wait for me to call on you.
10. Civility in the classroom and respect for the opinions of others is very important in an academic environment. It is likely you may not agree with everything that is said or discussed in the classroom. When speaking, use courteous, respectful language and keep comments and questions relevant to the topic at hand.
11. Students have a responsibility to themselves, their fellow classmates, and the professor to be prepared and to participate in classroom discussions. Learning is an interactive process.
12. Students are also responsible for being aware of all assignments, exam dates, and other course scheduling information.

I will feel no compunction reminding you about violation of rules and will ask you to leave if you negatively influence the learning environment.

**Class attendance.** It is expected that you notify me by email about your absence before the class has started. I teach content that may go beyond what is in the book, and this material will be on the exams. It is therefore critical that you regularly attend class in order to learn this content.

**Receiving assistance.** If you are in need of accommodations due to a learning, physical, or other disability you must present a memo to me from Disability Support Resources (DSR), indicating the existence of a disability and the suggested reasonable accommodations. If you have not already done so, please contact the Disability Support Resources office (4015 JHZ) by calling 331-2490 or email to [dsrgvsu@gvsu.edu](mailto:dsrgvsu@gvsu.edu). Please note that I cannot provide accommodations based upon disability until I have received a copy of the DSR issued memo. All discussions will remain confidential.

### Course Recommendations

**Be proactive.** Act *early* in the semester if your grades are falling below what you hoped for. There is NOTHING you can do to increase a poor grade to a better one the week before finals. Grades ARE FINAL at the end of term.

**Team work.** I strongly encourage students to exchange contact information with 1-2 students. You are responsible for all material presented in class, so if you miss a day please get in contact with another student to ask for their notes.

**Check your email.** Whenever a new announcement, or other notice is posted to Blackboard, an email is sent to your GVSU G-ID email account ([Hyperlink to GVSU Email](#)). I would advise checking your email at least once a day to make sure you do not miss any important updates.

**Nourishment.** You are welcome to eat a snack or sip a beverage during class if it helps you get there on time or focus. Please be considerate of classmates in your choices (e.g. no noisy / messy / smelly food).

*Course Dates*  
***Tentative Winter 2018 Semester Schedule***

<b>Dates</b>	<b>Topics</b>	<b>Chapters in Methods in Behavioral Research</b>	<b>Assignment Due</b>
January 8, 10, 12	Syllabus & Intro to Psychological Science	1	Handbook due January 10 Roediger & Karpickie (2006) Questions & Summary Due January 12 (No Revision)
January 15	<b>NO CLASS: Martin Luther King Jr. Day</b>		
January 17	Article Revision Day		5 Sentence Summary of Project Due Project Article Review Due Today (Revision due January 19)
January 19, 22, 24	Scientific Claims, Evidence & Validity	2 & 3	Project Article Revision Due January 19
January 26	<b>Literature Search Workshop:</b>		Search Terms Due Today
January 29, 31, February 2	APA Format		Claims & Plagiarism Assignment Due January 31
February 5, 7, 9	Variables & Measurement	5	Hypotheses & Predictions Assignment Due February 5
February 19	<b>Monday, February 19: Exam 1 (chapters 1, 2, 3, 5)</b>		
February 14	IN-CLASS WORK DAY		Article from Intro Review Due Today (No Revision)
February 16, 19, 21	Sampling	7	
February 23	Article Revision Day		Claim Search Article Review (Revision due February 26)
February 26, 28, March 2	Bi-variate Correlation	8	Claim Search Article Revision Due February 26  Draft of Introduction Due Friday, March 2 <sup>nd</sup> , by Midnight
March 5, 7, 9	NO CLASS: Spring Break		
March 12, 14, 16	Simple Experiments	10	
March 19, 21, 23	Simple Experiments Cont'd	11	Experiment Design Assignment Due March 21
March 26	<b>Monday, March 26: Exam 2 (chapters 7, 8, 10, 11)</b>		
March 28	IN-CLASS WORK DAY		
March 30, April 2, 4	Complex Experiments	12	Draft of Methods Due Friday, March 30 <sup>th</sup> , by Midnight
April 6	Quasi-Experimental Designs Cont'd	Ch. 13 (only pages 381-398; stop at Small-N designs)	
April 9, 11, 13	Survey Design	6	Design Comprehension Assignment Due April 13
April 16, 18, 20	Ethics in Research	4	Final Paper Due Friday, April 20 <sup>th</sup> , by Midnight
April 25	<b>Wednesday, April 25, 2-3:50pm: Exam 3 (chapters 4, 6, 12, 13 [required pages only])</b>		