

Research Methods in Psychology

(PSY 300 – Winter 2025)

Online

Course Description:

This course is designed to introduce you to basic research methods in psychology. Emphasis on the logic of psychological research, the formulation and testing of hypotheses, research design, sampling procedures, and the ethics of conducting research. *This is a supplemental writing skills course (SWS) and will have focused elements on developing writing skills relevant to psychology.* It is the first course in a three course series to help advance your understanding of research methods in psychology.

About Me:

Professor: Jonathan JK Stoltman, PhD

Contact: stoltmaj@gvsu.edu

Office: Remote

Office Hours: By request – all office hours are remote (on zoom/google chat)

Contacting me: e-mail is best, office hours work too. I check e-mail throughout the day but may only reply during normal business hours (9 am – 5 pm) during the work week (M-F). I will send regular emails with course updates, recaps, etc. Announcements like these are considered amendments to the syllabus. *Please read all relevant emails before sending me an email. I may not reply if the question is answered in one of my announcements or emails.*

My expertise: For the past +10 years I have been an addiction research scientist. I earned a Ph.D. and a master's degree from West Virginia University, a master's in counseling with a focus on substance use disorders from Wayne State University, and a bachelor of science from John Carroll University. I have published in top academic journals, conferences, and had our work featured on Vox, NPR, and WIRED. My main areas of research are the intersection of addiction and sexual/reproductive health, privacy and technology, and addiction related stigma.

Our Social Contract:

For this course to function optimally, we both have parts to play, and when we each do our part, everyone benefits. As professor, I promise to always do my very best to select interesting and thought-provoking course material. I will prepare course materials to the best of my abilities, and I will make decisions about the course according to the learning goals I have outlined here. I will act fairly – holding every student to the same high standard and providing equal opportunities for success. I will also work to make this course not stressful should you have a health or other emergency during the semester. I included a number of drops so the lowest score (or if you miss an assignment) won't drag down your grade.

As a student, you promise to prepare diligently for class, to always contribute to the best of your abilities, to never cheat or act dishonestly, and to treat your classmates and me with the highest respect. You will do your best to attend any scheduled meetings and be on time. You will not ask me to grant you special privileges that aren't available to the rest of your classmates, in order that I may adhere to my promise to be fair and just to all of you.

This course is subject to the GVSU policies listed at <http://www.gvsu.edu/coursepolicies/>

Course Info:

Credits: 3

Prerequisites and/or co-requisites: PSY 101; STA 215 or STA 312; WRT 150 (C or better)

Course Location:

Online (Blackboard)

Textbook (*Required*):

Research Methods in Psychology: Evaluating a World of Information. (2021; 4th edition) by Beth Morling.

Electronic version is a good option.

GVSU Save may be a good option to get a cost-effective digital version.

ISBN-13: 978-0393536270

ISBN-10: 0393536270

Alternative Textbook:

Research Methods in Psychology: Evaluating a World of Information. (2017; 3rd edition) by Beth Morling.

3rd edition may be an acceptable (and more cost effective) alternative. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that they have read the required sections should they choose to use the alternative text.

Quizzes and exams will be based on the 4th edition, material presented in class, and online.

Recommended Supplemental Text:

Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 7th Edition (**available at the library and online**

– **DO NOT BUY THIS**)

Additional Readings:

All other required readings will be posted on the course website.

Computer Access:

Required. Submitting course assignments, quizzes, and exams will all require computer access. Supplemental information will be provided on Blackboard. Course info will be provided through email. Online asynchronous lectures will occur with recordings posted on Blackboard.

Attendance:

Not required but highly encouraged.

Course Policies:

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About the Online Version of the Course:

- This course is online and asynchronous (**self-paced**).
- *It is highly recommended that the course be completed in order.* Each part of the course builds on the prior part.
- To assist you with pacing the course, I included **suggested dates** in the course calendar below.
- There are also **Required Due Dates**.
 - *There are no late assignments so make sure to pay attention to the Required Due Dates.*
- This is a supplemental writing skills course (SWS).
 - That means the instructor (me) must provide you with the opportunity to **revise** Writing Activities. This is meant to give you a chance to incorporate feedback I provide and help you grow as a writer.
 - Because of this feedback and revision loop: **the due dates/times for Writing Activities are REQUIRED.**
 - There are no lates – **anything not submitted in time will result in a ZERO.**
- The Final Exam can be taken earlier than the due date, but not after the **required due date noted below.**
- I recommend blocking out time on your calendar for each component of the course to help you stay on top of the reading and materials.
- The writing activities will be challenging if you haven't done the reading that leads up to them...

To further help you plan for the semester, here is the estimated time it takes to complete each component of the course:

1. Reading "Parts":
 - a. 2-3 chapters (approximately 50 pages total; reading time varies)
 - b. 2-3 lectures videos (approximately 60 minutes **each**)
 - c. 2 quizzes (10 min per quiz)
 - i. NOTE – I recommend taking the quizzes **after** reading the course material to check your comprehension
2. "Regular" Exams (45 min per exam)
3. Cumulative Final Exam (60 min)
4. Writing Activities (5-8 hours per activity)
 - a. During Writing Activity Weeks, I will provide enhanced meeting hours to answer any questions as you work on the assignments. (Time allocation variable)
 - b. I will also provide enhanced meeting hours during the week leading up to when the Writing Activity Revisions are due. (Plan to meet for 20 min per activity)

Course Calendar:

Unit	Quizzes and Activities	Suggested Dates	REQUIRED Due Dates
Part 1 Scientific Reasoning	Quizzes 1 + 2 Read Part 1	Week of Jan 6	
Part 2 Research Foundations for Any Claim	Quizzes 3 + 4 Read Part 2	Week of Jan 13	
Exam 1	Part 1 + Part 2	Week of Jan 20	
Academic Writing 1	Activity 1	Week of Jan 20	
Writing Activity 1 Due	Activity 1		Jan 30, 10p
Part 3 Tools for Evaluating Frequency Claims	Quizzes 5 + 6 Read Part 3	Week of Feb 3	
Part 4 Tools for Evaluating Association Claims	Quizzes 7 + 8 Read Part 4	Week of Feb 10	
Exam 2	Part 3 + Part 4	Week of Feb 17	
Writing Activity 2	Activity 2	Week of Feb 17	
Writing Activity 2 Due	Activity 2		Feb 27, 10p
Spring Break			
Part 5 Tools for Evaluating Causal Claims	Quizzes 9 + 10 Read Part 5	Week of Mar 10	
Part 6 Balancing Research Priorities	Quizzes 11 + 12 Read Part 6	Week of Mar 17	
Exam 3	Part 5 + Part 6	Week of Mar 24	
Writing Activity Revisions Due	Revisions from Activities 1 + 2		Apr 17, 10p
Cumulative Final Exam	Part 1 thru Part 6	Open Earlier	Apr 19, 10p – Apr 26, 10p
All Course Material Due			Apr 26, 10p

n.b., Subject to change with proper notification

Due Date Summary List:

Activity	Suggested Dates	Required Due Dates
Quizzes 1 + 2	Week of Jan 6	
Quizzes 3 + 4	Week of Jan 13	
Exam 1	Week of Jan 20	
Writing Activity 1		Jan 30, 10p
Quizzes 5 + 6	Week of Feb 3	
Quizzes 7 + 8	Week of Feb 10	
Exam 2	Week of Feb 17	
Writing Activity 2		Feb 27, 10p
Quizzes 9 + 10	Week of Mar 10	
Quizzes 11 + 12	Week of Mar 17	
Exam 3	Week of Mar 24	
Writing Activity Revisions 1 + 2 Due		Apr 17, 10p
Cumulative Final Exam	Open Earlier	Apr 19, 10p - Apr 26, 10p
All Course Materials Due		Apr 26, 10p

All activities, exams, and quizzes are completed online.

All due dates are for 10p on the day indicated. Subject to change.

Evaluation:

Exams:

There will be four (4) total exams:

- Three (3) "regular" exams (45 min per exam)
- One (1) *cumulative* final exam (60 min)

More info about exams:

- Multiple choice format
- Administered online
- **The lowest scoring exam from the 3 "regular" exams is dropped.**
- **The final exam is *not* able to be dropped.**
- All exams are online, open book.
- **Exams are not to be taken in groups and doing so is a violation of the student code of conduct + considered cheating and may result in a zero for the exam or the class.**
- Exams will be based on the 4th edition textbook, material presented in class, and online.

Quizzes:

There will be 12 total quizzes:

- Two (2) quizzes per unit (10 min per quiz)
- The purpose of the quizzes is to help you check your understanding of course material and make sure you are keeping up with the material.
- The quizzes are designed to be low stakes check-ins and a good way to stack points.
- *Not performing well on the quizzes is a sign to seek help before an exam.*
- At the end of the semester, the lowest scoring two quizzes will be dropped (out of the total 12 number of quizzes).
- You are encouraged to take quizzes alone to check *your* understanding.
- Quizzes will be based on the 4th edition textbook, material presented in class, and online.

Writing Activities:

There will be two (2) total writing activities:

- To develop students' capabilities to write like psychologists, students will complete a series of writing training exercises, including worksheets and article critiques.
- These exercises will hone individual skills that are needed to locate, understand, evaluate, and synthesize psychological research articles.
- Writing activities are to be completed individually unless noted otherwise.
- Completing activities with other people may be a violation of the student code of conduct + considered cheating and can result in a zero for the activity or the class.
- **Writing activities are due at the date/time noted in the syllabus.**

Point Breakdown by Category:

Assignment	Number of Assignments	Points Per	Total Possible Points	% of Total Grade
"Regular" Exams**	3	110	220	27.2%
Final Exam	1	190	190	23.5%
Quizzes**	12	10	100	12.3%
Writing Activities	2		100	12.3%
Writing Activity 1		50		
Writing Activity 2		50		
Writing Revision	2		200	24.7%
Writing Activity 1R		100		
Writing Activity 2R		100		
TOTAL			810	100%

n.b., **Lowest Score(s) Dropped

Grading Scale:

Grade	%
A	93-100
A-	90-92
B+	87-89
B	83-86
B-	80-82
C+	77-79
C	73-76
C-	70-72
D+	65-69
D	60-64
F	<60

Late Policy:

Course deadlines are arranged by course unit with all deadlines at 10:00 pm (EST). *Why 10pm? Because healthy sleep is an important part of overall (and psychological) well-being.* Deadlines are used to help students progress towards course completion. As such:

- Late quizzes are not accepted.
- Late writing activities are not accepted.
- Late exams are not accepted.

Students with extenuating emergency or health circumstances should reach out to the instructor via email as soon as possible. Since the window for all assignments is 48 or more hours, emergency or health situations less than 24 hours from the due date/time may not be accommodated. Also, I built in drops to reduce the stress of these circumstances.

Drops:

We drop the *lowest scoring*:

- Two (2) quizzes (from the whole of the semester, not per unit)
- One (1) exam from the 3 regular exams (**final exam not eligible to be dropped**)

Objectives:

The aim of this course is to acquaint students with basic research methods in psychology while exploring practical, theoretical, and ethical issues regarding research design and its implementation in psychology. Upon successful completion of this course students will be able to:

1. **Comprehension**

- a. Describe the details of and summarize the essence of research articles.

2. **Application**

- a. Write clearly and cogently in a scientific way.

3. **Evaluate**

- a. Evaluate strengths and weaknesses of empirical studies consistent with the standards of psychological science.

Domain	Objectives for 300
The scientific method in psychology	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Be able to distinguish scientific from pseudo-scientific approaches▪ Understand how research is produced and peer-reviewed before being published in the scientific literature
Theories and hypotheses	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Understand the difference between a theory and a hypothesis
Searching the scientific literature	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Use PsycInfo to locate peer-reviewed articles on a research topic▪ Create citations for articles in-text and in reference list according to APA style▪ Read and understand primary source literature in psychology
Research ethics	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Understand and apply principles from the Belmont Report given research with a particular design▪ Remember and recognize examples of questionable research practices that undermine the scientific literature
Experimental designs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Recognize an experimental design▪ Distinguish between-subjects from within-subjects designs▪ Recognized mixed (between and within) designs▪ Identify the independent variable and dependent variable in a research design▪ Distinguish experimental designs from correlational and quasi-experimental designs▪ Understand that experimental designs test causal claims▪ Recognize threats to internal validity in the context of experimental designs
Correlational designs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Understand that correlational designs test associational claims▪ Explain why correlation does not prove causation▪ Recognize validity threats for correlational designs▪ Identify potential third variables given a study's design▪ Distinguish correlational from experimental designs
Internal validity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Remember and understand factors that strengthen causal conclusions in a research design▪ Understand the importance of random assignment for strengthening

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	internal validity
External validity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remember and understand the factors that strengthen generalizability of conclusions in a research design Distinguish sample from population Understand the importance of random selection for external validity
Construct validity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Distinguish operational definitions from conceptual definitions Understand reliability in the context of measurement Distinguish reliability from validity Evaluate construct validity and reliability of published measures/operationalizations Recognize scales of measurement (nominal, ordinal, interval, ratio)
Statistical validity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand the text of results as reported in primary research articles Interpret graphical displays of data (e.g., bar chart and scatterplot) Be able to distinguish bivariate from multivariable designs (one predictor vs. more than one predictor) Distinguish third variables from mediators and moderators, conceptually
Writing in APA style	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recall rules of APA style, including use of numerals, sections in an APA style report, references, fonts, tables and figures Summarize the results of published research in writing Be able to distinguish data-based results from interpretation/extrapolation from those results Critique research studies in writing based on their designs and relevant threats to validity Integrate findings from 2-4 research articles into a brief, coherent narrative

Writing with Large Language Models/AI/AI Chatbots/GenAI etc

Adapted from other GVSU SWS course guidance about AI: Supplemental Writing Skills (SWS) courses at Grand Valley State University teach students advanced and discipline-specific writing, information literacy, and critical thinking skills to improve their personal, civic, and professional lives.

In the last few years, the introduction of ChatGPT and other generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) tools have created interesting challenges and learning opportunities for students as they build their writing skills. In addition to whole language-generative AI, language-enhancing auto-correct AI tools are increasingly integrated into word processing software and search engines.

While the future of GenAI suggests there will be exciting opportunities and developments, currently some of what these tools create is inaccurate, biased, or disrespectful to the intellectual work from which they borrow. While AI can provide information to spark human thinking, relying too heavily on GenAI tools during the writing process may stifle your own creativity, identity-related dialect, and growth as a writer.

In this course, all writing assignments must be completed without using these tools to generate answers to writing assignment questions. You are not permitted to submit an entire paper/project that has been generated by AI tools for a grade. If your work includes unexplained/uncited material from an AI tool, I will follow the procedure for addressing plagiarism and academic misconduct as outlined in the university's plagiarism policy.

The purpose of this course is to learn how to read, write, and think about academic research. Yes, AI tools can help with this...but using them in this class will skip past **you** learning these skills. That's what you're paying for. To not learn these skills is a waste of **your** time and money. College isn't cheap. I boiled down this course to the essential skills you need to do well in this class and the others in this sequence. If these aren't skills you're interested in learning, you're in the wrong course!

Therefore, the policy for this course is:

You must not use AI-based tools to compose work you submit as your own (by copying and pasting).

****An AI detector may be used to detect AI-driven work.**

Here are some examples of INAPPROPRIATE/UNETHICAL uses of AI in assignments in this course:

- Directly copying from an AI generator
- Pasting the prompt to a homework task and then pasting the output response as your own submission
- Plagiarizing ideas as your own
- Summarizing research papers used for writing assignments

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Supplemental Writing Skills (SWS) Course Info:

This course is designated SWS (Supplemental Writing Skills). Completion of WRT 150 with a grade of C or better (not C-) is a prerequisite. SWS credit will not be given to a student who completes this course before completing the prerequisite.

SWS courses adhere to certain guidelines:

Students turn in a total of at least 3000 words of writing. Part of that total may be essay exams, but a substantial amount of it is made up of essays, reports, or research papers. The instructor works with the students on revising drafts of papers, rather than simply grading the finished piece of writing. At least four hours of class time will be devoted to writing instruction. At least one third of the final grade in the course is based on the writing assignments. Students must complete the course with a grade of "C" or better in order to receive SWS credit. Students may receive SWS credit for taking the course as Credit/No Credit provided the student passes the course with a "Credit" grade.

Writing skills will be taught through structured activities during the two Academic Writing Weeks noted on the course calendar. Each Academic Writing Week will have accompanying activities that can be worked on in-class or outside of class and are due at 10p on the days noted. A total of 4 writing activities will be assigned. The lowest score for the activities is dropped from the final point total. Each writing activity is worth 50 points. Each writing activity will also have revisions and an opportunity to re-submit for additional points at the end of the semester. Office hours and additional instruction is available to provide support during the revision process. Writing assignments are to be completed independently unless otherwise noted.

Disability Accommodation:

Any student in this class who has special needs because of a learning, physical, or other disability, please contact me and Disability Support Services (DSS) at (616) 331-2490. It is the student's responsibility to request assistance from DSS.

Academic Honesty:

Unless otherwise noted, all work for this course should be independently completed. Students should take special care to provide proper citation of sources when submitting written work. Adopting words, passages, or ideas without citation is *plagiarism* and will be treated as such per GVSU guidelines. Furthermore, students should not self-plagiarize, that is, reuse their own work from another course. The penalties for academic dishonesty range from zero on that assignment to failure in the course.

If I have evidence of any form of academic dishonesty (cheating on an exam, giving or receiving information about what is asked in the exam, or any other form of cheating such as plagiarism), you will receive a failing grade in that activity and other consequences as dictated by GVSU policy. Plagiarism is presenting work, ideas or words that are not your own as though they were your own—this includes work of other students or work that is in a published source (the textbook, a journal article). To avoid plagiarism be sure to do your own work and put information in your own words. Use of quotes with appropriate reference to the original source from which you got the information or ideas is acceptable but less preferred than paraphrasing (with referencing of the source provided) in psychological writing.

A note about collaboration: Collaborative work is sometimes allowed in this course. Collaborative work means sharing ideas with your peers. Collaboration does not mean giving completed work to your peers to use.

For additional details on academic honesty, please see the student code.

PSYCH Friends

If you feel you could use some extra help/guidance/support in any academic domain or for your well-being, please consider scheduling an appointment with a mentor through Psych Friends. Psych Friends mentors are upper-level undergraduate peer mentors who are trained to provide support in many areas including: effective study and time management techniques, exam preparation and reflection skills, comprehension of the psychology and behavioral neuroscience major requirements, tips for engaging in the field, strategies for education continuation, methods for maintaining physical and mental health.

Schedule an appointment here: <https://www.gvsu.edu/navigate>

Questions? Email psychfriends@gvsu.edu

Miscellaneous:

Writing Center:

Fred Meijer Center for Writing and Michigan Authors

Web: gvsu.edu/wc

Contact: virtualwc@mail.gvsu.edu (616-331-2922)

Location: Lake Ontario Hall, Room 120 (Allendale)

Online: Virtual writing support is available during all hours of operation for both drop-ins or scheduled appointments. Email support is also available (provided within 72 hours of submission). The Fred Meijer Center for Writing provides writing assistance to all GVSU students, on any type of project and at any stage of the process. The Writing Center employs both undergraduate and graduate writing consultants from across majors and disciplines. Consultants are trained to help writers brainstorm, organize, or develop their ideas; and they can help writers edit their own work and document sources correctly. The Center's services are free and students can work with an idea, assignment prompt, or draft of their paper. Students can virtually drop in or schedule an appointment; both appointments and drop-ins are available during all service hours.

Writing Center services are available in-person and online during all hours: (Mon-Thurs 9 a.m.-11 p.m., Friday 9 a.m.-3 p.m., Sunday 2 p.m.- 11 p.m.). Students can schedule appointments in advance via [Book It](#) or drop-in (first-come/first-serve) at any service location or virtually. Hours vary by location so please check [Book It](#) and our program website for up-to-date information - gvsu.edu/wc

Library Services:

Each department has a designated librarian to support your research needs. Samantha Minnis is our liaison librarian for Psychology. Her email is minniss@gvsu.edu and she is available for online consultations: BB Collaborate, Google Meet, Zoom, or email. You can also check out the Psychology Subject Guide, which is a great place to start your library research.

Knowledge Market:

Our highly trained student consultants work one-on-one or in small groups to help with your library research, digital skills, writing, or oral presentations. We now offer online support in two ways: online peer consultations during open hours and a database of browsable resources that are available 24/7. For information about the Knowledge Market or to make a virtual appointment, visit www.gvsu.edu/library/km.

Library Services:

You can find out more about our library spaces, how to check out books and access articles, and other library services this semester by visiting our Buildings Reopening page and our online services.

Additional Supports:

The Tutoring and Reading Center <https://www.gvsu.edu/trc/>

Mental Health Needs (Counseling Center) <https://www.gvsu.edu/counsel/>

Financial Wellness (Money Smart Lakers) <https://www.gvsu.edu/moneysmart/>

Financial Aid Issues <https://www.gvsu.edu/financialaid/>

Career Services (Career related events, resume writing, sample interviews): <https://www.gvsu.edu/careers/>

Professional Advising (for major and graduation requirements, etc.): <https://www.gvsu.edu/clasadvising/>

GVSU COVID Information: <https://www.gvsu.edu/lakerstogether/>

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