

Grand Valley State University
Psychology 300
Research Methods in Psychology
Fall 2025

COURSE SYLLABUS

<u>Instructor:</u>	Tara Cornelius, Ph.D. (Pronouns: She/Her/Hers)		
<u>Office:</u>	1321 AuSable Hall		
<u>Office Hours:</u>	MW 10:00-11:00am, and by appointment		
<u>Phone:</u>	(616) 331-8702		
<u>Email:</u>	cornelta@gvsu.edu		
<u>Course Sections/Locations:</u>	Section 11:	MWF 9:00-9:50am	ASH 2120
	Section 12:	MWF 12:00-12:50pm	LSH 226

Course Description

The world is awash in research and claims about human behavior, but how can you tell what research and claims to believe? This course will teach you to look at the world like a research psychologist. You will learn how to identify a claim in a research study, as well as how to tell if the claim is likely to be true or valid. We will work to understand different types of research designs, the types of claims based on these designs, and the strengths and weaknesses of each research design. In addition to learning to be a critical consumer of research, this course will strengthen your ability to communicate about the results of research by writing like a research psychologist.

Students who complete the course should be able to:

- Critically evaluate research studies
- Conduct efficient literature searches
- Know how to write scientifically
- Make hypotheses
- Know how to conduct ethical research
- Do good science

I hope that you find this course intellectually challenging, and I know that you will meet this challenge. I am committed to critically examining research in psychological science and I hope that this course will stimulate us all to think, question, and engage in interesting and productive discussions about empirical research.

Learning Objectives (from the Syllabus of Record)

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/Describe: Describe the details of and summarize the essence of research articles.
2. Application/Write: Write clearly and cogently in a scientific way.
3. Evaluation/Evaluate: Evaluate strengths and weaknesses of empirical studies consistent with the standards of psychological science.

Required Texts

Morling, B (2021). Research Methods in Psychology: Evaluating a World of Information (Fourth Edition); ISBN-10: 0-393-89372-3

Recommended Texts (but not required)

Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 7th Edition (available at the library)

Course Prerequisites and SWS Designation

Prerequisites for this course are: PSY 101 or HNR 234; STA 215 or STA 312

This course is designated as a SWS. 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, and a substantial part of this will come from essays, reports, and research papers. I will work with you to revise drafts of your 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 this course will be based on 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 that the student passes with a "Credit" grade.

University Policies and Policy on Academic Integrity

This course is subject to the GVSU policies listed at: www.gvsu.edu/coursepolicies Students will be held accountable for violations of the policies regarding cheating, academic misconduct, plagiarism, and fabrication that are outlined in the Grand Valley State University Student Code. To avoid any appearance of academic dishonesty, please scrupulously attend to the importance of citing the ideas and works of other authors. Any student who is found, after appropriate investigation, to have engaged in an act of academic dishonesty will be subject to discipline as outlined in the Student Code.

Plagiarism of any form will not be tolerated and is grounds for failure of this course. But there should be no need to worry about this - just read, think, and write for yourself!

Blackboard

Blackboard will be our online learning forum for this course. It is the student's responsibility to use Blackboard daily and to complete all coursework and submit assignments through this platform. Please be sure that you review the online resources on www.gvsu.edu related to interacting with Blackboard to be sure you have the basic technological skills to complete this online course.

READ EVERYTHING! Everything that you need to know for the class will be in the syllabus, posted on the Announcements, or sent via email in Blackboard. Please make sure that you are checking your GVSU email frequently to stay up to date on the course. There is a Discussion Board that is available for any questions you may have that may pertain to the entire class. For more personal concerns, please email me directly through Blackboard.

Computing Policies

Laptops and tablets are welcome for the purposes of note taking, research on topics under discussion, and review of PowerPoints in class. Please silence and put away your cell phones during all class periods. If I see your phone out during class, I will ask you to put it away. Please refrain from sending text messages, chatting online, or using social networking sites during class. If you would prefer to spend your time doing these things, please do not come to class. If you urgently need to send a message or answer a call, please leave the classroom.

My policy is to try to respond to your email within **1 business day**, which means within 24 hours on weekdays and by 5pm on Monday if you send me an email on Friday or over the weekend. I expect that emails be drafted in a careful, considerate manner such that they reflect an email to a professor and not to a friend. I will also respond in this same professional manner. Congrats on reading this far into the syllabus- if you send me a picture, meme, or gif of a hedgehog, I will reward you with a sweet, delicious treat.

Please be advised that use of university technology, including email, for commercial use is prohibited. Resources should be used for GVSU purposes or academic work.

Writing Center and Library Knowledge Market

The Fred Meijer Center for Writing, with locations at the Allendale and Pew/Downtown Grand Rapids campuses, is a peer service 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 an idea, prompt, or draft of your paper along with the assignment sheet to any of the Center's locations. Also, through your Gmail account, you have access to online consultations through Google Docs. 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). Peer support is available for research and speech/presentation through the Knowledge Market, where the Writing Center partners with the Speech Lab and the Peer Research Center.

Severe Weather/Fire Policy

In the event that GVSU classes are canceled because of severe weather, activities for the canceled class will be converted to an online format, or cancelled, at the direction of the professor. In the case of fire, please proceed to the nearest exit. Do not use elevators. For more information please consult www.gvsu.edu/emergency

Accommodations for Disabilities

Any student who requires accommodation because of a physical or learning disability must contact Disability Support Resources at 616-331-2490 as soon as possible. After you have documented your disability, please make an appointment or see me to discuss your specific needs.

Library

Each department has a designated librarian to support your research needs. Christine Malmsten is our liaison librarian for Psychology. Her email is malmstec@gvsu.edu and she is available for online consultations via Google Meet, Zoom, or email. You can also check out the [Psychology Subject Guide](#), which is a great place to start your library research.

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> and Questions Email psychfriends@gvsu.edu

Changes to the Syllabus

The instructor reserves the right to change the contents of this syllabus. Students will be given notice of relevant changes in class, through a Blackboard announcement, or through GVSU email.

Course Format and Assignments

This course is designed to be interactive and application based. Because students learn best by interacting with the material, you should expect that at least one class period a week will be devoted to an applied activity. This may take place in class or as an online activity. We will also spend time on writing, critical evaluation of research, data management and analysis. We will work on a research proposal in class, and as an SWS, there will be a heavy emphasis on writing.

Reading Assignments

It is to your advantage to read each assignment before the class in which it will be addressed in lecture/discussion. During your initial reading of the text, you should begin to formulate thoughts and questions that will form the basis of class discussion. Please bring these to class to discuss!

Attendance/In-Class Activities

Students are expected and are strongly encouraged to attend each class for the full class period. Material will be covered in classes and videos that is not in your text, and knowing this material will be essential for you to do well on the exams. *The primary format for the course will be in-person, but I reserve the option to utilize online formats when scheduling and pedagogical needs make it appropriate. When it is needed, we will utilize Zoom as our mechanism to interact online.* You are responsible for all material covered in class. Therefore, attendance is considered required and you will likely have difficulty on the exams if your absence is a regular practice. If you miss class, I recommend you obtain notes from at least two different classmates. In the case of illness and/or special circumstances, please reach out to me *as soon as physically possible*. I want everyone to be successful in the class and will support you to help that happen, but that necessitates communication from you.

Please come to all classes ready to engage as an active learner in class discussions and activities. Please treat everyone in the classroom with respect. In-class assignments include announced and unannounced activities that will involve group

reflection and discussion on various issues from your assigned readings, and may take place online or in-person. If you are not present for a class activity, you will not receive any points for that activity. If you are absent because of a university-sponsored event or medical emergency, please contact me before leaving for a makeup activity. Other unexcused absences will not be eligible for makeup.

Class participation is a crucial component of clearly understanding the course material. Group and discussion activities are a critical part of the educational process, and you should expect to participate fully in these activities. In-Class activities are worth *30 points*, and this will contribute to your final grade.

Homework Assignments

Throughout the course of the semester, you will have assignments that are designed to help facilitate your understanding of the material in the course and prepare you for the research writing project. These must be completed by the due date listed on the syllabus, utilize professional and proofread writing, and be completed in accordance with the grading criteria.

Research Writing Project

This course will teach you to write an extended research paper. We will break the process into parts. I will teach you to locate peer reviewed scholarship on a topic, summarize articles, narrow a topic to a debatable question, paraphrase scholars' viewpoints, introduce and analyze direct quotations, and support your own standpoint. At least 4 hours of class time will be devoted to studying the form and function of research papers, moving from topics to questions, distinguishing between a summary, paraphrase, and quote, organizing support for your own viewpoint, editing for conventional comma placement, conferencing with me, and peer review. Initial drafts of selected sections of the research paper will be due preceding the whole draft deadline (deadlines will be announced). Final papers will be assessed using the **Written Communication Skills** rubric and holistic criteria for effective research papers in English. All writing assignments will utilize SafeAssign.

AI Policy Statement

Because an objective of this course is to *learn to critically write in your own voice*, in SWS courses, you may not submit any text or parts of texts generated by an AI program as your own without noting and citing that use. You are not permitted to submit any entire homework assignment or any portion of the research assignment that has been generated by AI tools for a grade. You may not use AI-based tools to compose work that you submit as your own (by copying and pasting). If you use AI in your assignments, you will need to write a note at the end of your assignment to clarify where in your process you used AI, which platform was used, how it was used, and distinguish parts of your work that were not influenced by the use of AI at all. Please also include all prompts and output that AI provided. Please see this website for additional information about the use of AI for SWS courses: <https://www.gvsu.edu/sws/writing-with-artificial-intelligence-80.htm>

Late assignments

Assignments can be handed in late, however, late assignments will lose 25% of the total points earned for that assignment every day they are late (i.e., 4 days late = 100% point loss. Weekend days are *included* in the count.). Assignments are to be uploaded to Blackboard by 5pm on the date they are due, as stated on the syllabus/assignment. Any assignment turned in after that time – even if it is turned in only one minute later than 5:00pm – will be counted as late. Please make sure you that have your assignment completed early enough so that last minute technical errors (e.g., computer/printer malfunction) do not occur. Last minute technical errors will not be accepted as an excuse for why an assignment was turned in late. If a special extenuating circumstance has come up that will cause your assignment to be late, you must speak with me about it as soon as possible after it presents itself.

Examinations

Three exams worth a possible 100 points each will be given throughout the semester. Each exam will consist of multiple choice and short answer essay questions designed to assess your understanding of the material, rather than rote memorization. In other words, you should expect to apply material from the text and class to novel situations. Exams may include material covered for the present chapters as well as from preceding chapters.

Exams will be conducted online through Blackboard, and you will attest to your academic honesty for each test. ***Every test is closed-book, meaning that you should not consult any other resources or other people in taking the exam.*** Please do not sacrifice your academic integrity by failing to follow these directions. The answer submitted on Blackboard will be considered your final answer, so please be sure to carefully check your answers before submission. If you find yourself

having difficulty on the exams, please seek assistance from the instructor. I am always willing to help students identify areas of difficulty and assist in identifying improved ways of studying. Please seek help earlier rather than later!

Missed Examination Policy

Make-up examinations will be given in the event of extreme, unavoidable circumstances (e.g. death in family, illness) or other excused absence, and ONLY at my discretion. In addition, I reserve the right to request and obtain written documentation verifying the reported circumstance. Students who must miss an examination due to an extreme circumstance must contact me at least one hour prior to the onset of class in order to be considered for a make-up exam. If you are in a situation in which you know well in advance that you will have to miss an examination, please notify me at least one week prior to the test so I can arrange for a make-up examination time. The format of the make-up examination may be multiple-choice, essay, or oral, at the discretion of the instructor.

Outline of Assignments/Points

Your final grade for the course will be based upon exams and the assignments outlined above.

1. Exam 1 (20%) 100 points
2. Exam 2 (20%) 100 points
3. Exam 3 (20%) 100 points
4. Mini Research Proposal
 - a. Part 1: Pick a topic assignment: (2%) 10 points
 - b. Part 2: Research Proposal Sources: (3%) 15 points
 - c. Part 3: Research Outline: (4%) 20 points
 - d. Part 4: Draft 1 of Proposal (6%) 30 points
 - f. Part 5: Final Proposal (10%) 45 points
5. Homework Assignments
 - a. PsycInfo Search/library speaker assignment: (2%) 10 points
 - b. IRB/Ethics assignment: (2%) 10 points
 - c. Paraphrasing assignment: (2%) 10 points
 - d. Strategies for reading scientific articles assignment: (2%) 10 points
 - e. Real World Research assignment: (2%) 10 points
6. In-Class/Applied Activities 30 points

Grading

The final grade for the course will be based upon the scores obtained from the three examinations (300 points), Research Writing Proposal (120 points), In-Class Activities (30 points), and Homework Assignments (50 points). Percentages are calculated by dividing the total points obtained by the total points possible in the class (500 points in total).

Assignment	Possible Points
Exams (3 in total)	300
Research Writing Project	120
In-Class Activities	30
Homework Assignments	50
TOTAL:	500

Percentage	Grade
93-100%	A
90-92%	A-
87-89%	B+
83-86%	B
80-82%	B-
77-79%	C+
73-76%	C
70-72%	C-
66-69%	D+
61-65%	D
60% or less	F

Schedule of Topics and Readings:

Week	Topic	Readings	Assignments/Exams
1 (8/25)	Psychology as a Way of Thinking	Syllabus/ Chapter 1	Introductory Video
2 (9/1)	Sources of Information in Psychology	Chapter 2	Paraphrasing Assignment
3 (9/8)	Three Claims and Four Validities	Chapter 3	PsycInfo Assignment
4 (9/15)	Ethical Guidelines in Psychology	Chapter 4	Ethics Assignment
5 (9/22)	Writing in Psychology	Pgs. 518-554	Exam #1
6 (9/29)	Measurement in Psychological Research	Chapter 5	Research Proposal: Pick a Topic Due
7 (10/6)	Surveys and Observations	Chapter 6	Reading Articles Assignment
8 (10/13)	Sampling	Chapter 7	Research Proposal: Sources Due
9 (10/20)	Bivariate Correlational Research	Chapter 8	Research Proposal: Outline Due
10 (10/27)	Multivariate Correlational Research	Chapter 9	Exam #2
11 (11/3)	Simple Experiments	Chapter 10	Research Proposal: Draft #1 Due
12 (11/10)	Confounding and Obscuring Variables	Chapter 11	Real World Research Assignment
13 (11/17)	Multiple Independent Variables	Chapter 12	
14 (11/24)	Multiple Independent Variables	Chapter 12	Research Proposal: Final Draft Due
15 (12/1)	Quasi-Experiments and Small <i>N</i>	Chapter 13	
Finals (12/8)	Final Exam Scheduled		Exam #3