

Comparative Psychology: PSY375 (section 01, 41510), Spring 2025
Robert Deaner, Ph.D., Professor

Virtual Office Hours: Mondays 12:00 – 1:00, and by appointment. Virtual “Walk-ins” are welcome, but students with appointments have priority. It is recommended that you make an appointment by emailing the instructor.

Email: robert.deaner@gmail.com (recommended and preferred to deanerr@gvsu.edu). Always type “PSY375” in the subject line and include your full name in the message. Please email me directly, not through Blackboard.

Course time: Mondays and Wednesdays, 10:15 – 11:45

Prerequisites: PSY101 (pass)

Zoom - Deaner Office & Classroom Spring/Summer 2025

<https://gvsu-edu.zoom.us/j/92880022171?pwd=HJNGnD5qwkIvMwK1W2FfsPeHWqfmhy.1>

Meeting ID: 928 8002 2171 (that you probably don’t need)

Passcode: 813481(that you probably don’t need)

Required text: Buss, David M. (2019). *Evolutionary Psychology: The New Science of the Mind* (6th ed.). Psychology Press. ISBN 978-1138088610. Earlier editions of Buss are acceptable but may occasionally put students at a disadvantage when the newer edition covers additional material. The hardcopy (actually a paperback) of the 6th edition is somewhat difficult to read because of poor quality ink and paper. The best option is probably getting electronic access to this book through GVSU Saves. All students will be enrolled in this program by default, and you will need to take action if you don’t want to pay for this access. The instructor will provide more information about this option during the first week of class.

Course Format: This is a synchronous 6-week online course, using a “flipped classroom” model. This means:

We will have synchronous meetings where students and the professor will meet at the same time via Zoom. These meetings are required and will occur twice per week, generally for 80 - 90 minutes, on both Mondays and Wednesdays.

Students will prepare for each synchronous meeting in several ways.

First, they will do a reading (usually a full chapter of the textbook but sometimes more).

Second, they will watch a pre-recorded video lecture narrated by the professor. This lecture will be broken in several parts and will be 60 – 120 minutes in length. Most parts can be viewed at 1.25 or 1.5 speed and still be easily comprehensible. The lecture will highlight the main points covered in the reading and sometimes substantially expand upon them.

Third, students will complete a written assignment (“Response Assignment (RA)”) based on readings (or occasionally a video), and this will be due prior to the meeting. The readings for the Response Assignments will typically be primary research articles.

The synchronous meetings typically will involve the professor asking students questions about the main points of the narrated lectures and readings and applying them to current situations. This will take about 40 – 50 minutes. Then we will discuss that day’s Response Assignment for about 30 – 40 minutes. Students will often work together in groups. **Participating is required and will be fun!**

After most synchronous meetings, students will have an opportunity to take a low-stakes extra credit quiz. Although these quizzes are not worth many points, they are a crucial way for students to gauge their understanding of the lectures and readings. Preparing and taking the quizzes is also an important part of preparing for the Midterm and Final exams. Some quiz questions may appear on the exams.

Catalog Description: Study of the relationship between human and animal behavior. Includes discussion of mind in nonhumans, the sociobiology debate, natural selection and human behavior, including language and sexual behavior, and implications for child development and schooling. Includes zoo or field observations. Lecture and field study.

Additional information: Please note that a somewhat similar class is offered in the Biology Department called Animal Behavior (BIO352). However, PSY375 differs from BIO352 in several ways: PSY375 does not assume that students already have an extensive background in biology; PSY375 does not have a major lab component; PSY375 will place greater stress on particular topics, e.g. social learning and intelligence; and PSY375 places a greater stress on the application of principles to humans.

Course Objectives:

- ☐ Integrate different areas of knowledge and view behavioral phenomena from multiple perspectives, e.g. proximate vs. ultimate explanations; homology vs. analogy
- ☐ Use evolutionary principles to explain animal and human behavior
- ☐ Critique primary research articles
- ☐ Apply observational behavior methods to animal behavior
- ☐ Appreciate aspects of human psychology that have precursors in animals and those that don't
- ☐ Appreciate the relevance of evolutionary biology and other fields to psychology

Basis for Grading:

<u>Potential Points</u>		<u>Grading Scale</u>	
		94 and above	A
		90-93.99	A-
		87-89.99	B+
		83-86.99	B
		80-82.99	B-
		77-79.99	C+
		73-76.99	C
		70-72.99	C-
		67-69.99	D+
		60-66.99	D
		59.99 & below	F

Extra Credit Quizzes	(20)		
Attendance & Participation	50		
Course Connection	5		
Observational Exercise	30		
Response Assignments	100		
Exams	200 (midterm and final exam, 100 pts each)		
Total Points =	<u>385</u>		

Number Grade = Earned pts/385 x 100 (no rounding up!)

Course Connection (5 pts)

- *Description* – Your first assignment is to briefly explore your personal connection to this course and to introduce yourself to the instructor. To earn all 5 points, you must complete this assignment by Wednesday May 7 at 11:59 PM (a minute before midnight). In 100 – 150 words, please tell me some or all of the following:
 - o Your year and major(s)
 - o Three things of personal interest, such as your job, hobby, pet, unusual talent, disability, living situation, family situation, or health situation.
 - o Something about this course that concerns you, that you are curious about, or that you hope to learn from this course.
 - o Discuss how what you anticipate learning in this course might be relevant to your other courses or your life outside of GVSU (e.g., job, family, hobbies).
 - o Including a picture (or two) is optional but highly encouraged.

Response Assignments (RAs) (10 assignments, 10 pts each, 100 pts in total):

- *Description* – A major part of our synchronous meeting time will involve discussing an assignment that students will complete prior to the class. Generally, this will involve answering questions and responding to one or two primary research articles or chapters, although it may also involve some other

activity such as watching a video. Materials for each assignment generally will be provided about one week in advance. Students will submit their responses via Bb by 10:00 AM prior to the meeting where they will be discussed. Students can only earn full credit for an assignment if they submit it by the deadline.

- Each student will be allowed two “catch-up coupons” (not freebies) during the semester. A “catch-up coupon” means you can submit an RA late without penalty. I suggest trying to save these for a time in the semester when you are ill or very busy with other things. Once you’ve used your two catch-up coupons, you can’t earn any credit for late RAs. Even if you have a catch-up coupon remaining, nothing will be graded that is submitted after Sunday June 15.

Observational Exercise (30pts):

- *Description:* Many psychology studies measure human subjects’ behavior and attitudes with some type of self-report method, such as a questionnaire. However, an animal cannot report its behavior linguistically and therefore scientists must directly observe it. For example, rather than asking a monkey about its eating habits, a scientist will count how many times a monkey brings a handful of berries to its mouth. We will have readings and a lecture on the various observational methods that can be used to effectively measure animal behavior. Then, outside of class, each student will conduct an exercise “in the field” where they will apply these methods. This exercise will probably occur at the John Ball Zoo in Grand Rapids, although other zoos may be suitable if they have a large group of primates (lemurs, monkeys, or apes. Doing this assignment requires one zoo visit, and it will take 90 - 120 minutes. I’ll provide more details about this assignment later in the semester. **Students will be responsible for paying their admission to the zoo (about \$20, \$15 with student ID).**

Exams (2 exams, 100 pts each = 200 pts)

- *Exam format:* There will be 2 exams, a Midterm and a Final. Exams will consist of multiple-choice questions. Questions will be drawn from the lectures, response assignments and required readings. The second exam may be partly cumulative.

Extra Credit Quizzes (0 pts):

- *Description:* There will be roughly 10 brief multiple-choice quizzes. These are for extra credit. **Quizzes will be your only opportunity for earning extra credit.** The quizzes will address assigned textbook readings, recent lectures, response assignments or other course activities. **Quizzes cannot be made up. If you have a great excuse for missing a quiz (even if excused by the University), you still cannot make up a quiz.** Quizzes will have 5 questions, each worth 0.4 points (2 points max per quiz). There will be a total of 18 - 20 quiz points available during the semester. This is enough to substantially boost your overall course grade. For example, a student who answers an average of 3 out of 5 questions correctly on 9 quizzes would earn an extra 10.8 points, which would raise their overall course average by about 2.5 points; this could be enough to push a student with a B average (e.g., 85.5) to a B+ (e.g., 88).
- No password is required to take the quizzes. A student can take a quiz even if they didn’t attend that day’s synchronous session. Quizzes will be available from 10:00AM (morning) until 11:59PM (one minute before midnight) on the day of the synchronous session.

Attendance and Participation (50 pts)

- Your attendance will be recorded, and— along with your in-class participation—is worth up to 50 points, roughly 4.5 pts per class meeting (50 points / 11 class meetings = 4.5).
- You will earn none of the points if you are absent without a university approved excuse. You will earn none of the points if you attend but do not actively participate. You will only earn some of the points if you join the class late, leave early or do not keep your camera on.
- GVSU’s attendance policy, including what counts as an excused absence, can be found here: <https://www.gvsu.edu/catalog/2021-2022/navigation/academic-policies-and-regulations.htm#anchor-44>

PSY375

- I follow this policy very closely. This means that being called in for work, needing to take care of a pet, friend or family member, or having car trouble or technology problems do not count as excused absences. Also, even if your absence is for a reason included in the GVSU attendance policy, in order for it to be excused, you must provide documentation (e.g., physician's note; orders from your military officer).
- If your absence is excused, you will not receive or lose credit for that class meeting. Instead, your other meetings will count for slightly more points. For instance, if a student missed 5 of our 11 meetings and 3 of their absences were excused, then they would have attended 6 of 8 meetings they were expected to attend. This means they could earn up to six-eighths or 75% of the 50 points for attendance and participation (assuming they arrived on time and actively participated during the 6 times they attended.)
- The instructor will keep track of daily attendance and participation on a spreadsheet, not on Bb. Just ask if you want to see how you are doing.

Course Schedule:

Below is a provisional schedule, meaning dates might change based on time constraints, unanticipated events, and the instructor's discretion. However, every effort will be made to make sure there will be no changes to the exam dates or the grading scheme. When the instructor makes changes, he will communicate them in class meetings and via announcements on Bb.

Provisional Schedule

Week #	Day	Topic & Due Dates
1	Mon May 5	Reading and Discussion about Glasses
1	Wed May 7	Chpt 1; RA#1; Quiz #1; Course Connection
	Fri May 9	Last day to add/drop 1st 6wk/12wk courses/100% tuition refund deadline (by 5:00 p.m.)
2	Mon May 12	Chpt 2; RA#2; Quiz #2
2	Wed May 14	Chpt 3; RA#3; Quiz #3
	Fri May 16	75% tuition refund deadline for 1st 6-week courses (by 5:00 p.m.)
3	Mon May 19	Observational Methods; RA#4; Quiz #4
3	Wed May 21	Chpt 4; RA#5; Quiz #5
4	Mon May 26	Memorial Day Recess - No regular meeting
4	Wed May 28	Chpt 5; RA#6; Quiz #6
4	Friday May 30	Midterm Exam Review at 6:00 PM
4	Saturday May 31	Midterm available from 8:00 PM Friday until 11:59 PM (end of day) Saturday
5	Mon June 2	Chpt 6; RA#7; Quiz #7
5	Wed June 4	Chpt 7; RA#8; Quiz #8
	Fri June 6	W" deadline for 1st 6-week courses (by 5:00 p.m.)
6	Mon June 9	Chpt 9; RA#9; Quiz #9
6	Wed June 11	Intelligence; RA#10; Quiz #10
7	Mon June 16	Final Exam Review Session at 10:15 AM
7	Tues Jun 17	Final Exam available from 8:00 AM until 11:59 PM (end of day)
7	Wed Jun 18	Observational Assignment Due at 11:59 PM (end of day)

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:

If there is any student in this class who has special needs because of learning, physical or other disability, they should contact Dr. Deaner via email or Student Accessibility Resources (SAR).

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

The Student Code, Academic Dishonesty, and Plagiarism:

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

Students are responsible for upholding ALL aspects of the Student Code:

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

For example, **lying to a professor is a violation of the Code**. Here are some more details:

As described by the GVSU Student Code, “Academic dishonesty is defined as actions or behaviors that misrepresent one’s contributions to or the results of any scholarly product submitted for credit, evaluation, or dissemination.”

As described by the GVSU Student Code, “Offering the work of someone else as one's own is plagiarism...” “Any ideas or material taken from another source for either written or oral presentation must be fully acknowledged.” “Depending on the instructor's judgment of the particular case, he/she may...give a failing grade for the ... entire course.”

Simply rearranging the words or substituting synonyms in the original source is still plagiarism.

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. Additional information about the Knowledge Market and Writing Center services and locations can be found on our website.”

Blackboard:

The syllabus, announcements, outside readings, assignments, and grades will be posted on Blackboard. If additional materials are placed elsewhere, e.g. electronic library reserves, I will provide links. I will attempt to make the lecture materials and other materials available prior to each class, although I cannot guarantee this.

Communication

The instructor will communicate all class announcements via Blackboard email. **You are expected to check your email regularly.** Announcements will generally remain on Bb throughout the semester. They should be considered as official amendments to the syllabus. Please read the relevant announcement before emailing a question to the instructor.

About the instructor, Dr. Robert Deaner

- I've been teaching PSY 375 at GVSU since 2006. I've taught about 20 sections of it now (about 600 students). I also teach PSY300 (Research Methods in Psychology), PSY315 (Psychology of Sex Differences), and PSY311 (Controversial Issues).
- I'm an active researcher, and I usually do research with a few students each year. Many of my projects address sports, showing off, sex differences, or all of these. I'm currently doing research on sex differences in rock climbing. I'm also interested in how evolution and sex/gender issues are portrayed in textbooks and in the popular media.
- I did a BA in Psychology at Colgate University (1994).
- I did a PhD in Biological Anthropology at Duke (2001). I studied the evolution of social behavior and intelligence in monkeys and apes.
- I did postdoctoral work in Neuroscience at Duke until 2006. I studied mechanisms of social cognition in monkeys.
- I'm married and have 3 children.

Meetings with instructor

- Many of you won't need to meet with me regularly (or at all) outside of our regular zoom meetings. However, I enjoy meeting with students, and you are always welcome to chat with me. A few minutes before or after our zoom meetings will probably work well, but you are always welcome to schedule a longer meeting at a different time. Mondays and Wednesdays are best for me, but other days are certainly possible.
- I will probably be in my office on the Allendale campus for several of our Monday and Wednesday zoom meetings. If you'd prefer to meet in-person, before or after a zoom meeting, we should be able to do that.

Textbook

- The Buss textbook is more "strongly recommended" than "required." Some students may choose not to purchase it and still do well in the course.
- However, reading the book will allow you to engage more deeply with the material. Most students who perform well do read the book.
- If you are unsure about whether you should get the book, you should give it a try. You have access to it for free on GVSU Saves until Friday May 16.
- Most lectures are based fairly closely on the book. For those of you who have taken other courses with me, my PSY300 lectures are about 90% similar to the book, my PSY315 lectures are about 20% similar to the book, and my PSY375 lectures (this course) are about 60% similar to the book.
- The material you need to know for quizzes and exams will come mostly from the lectures and the Response Assignments (RAs) and only a little bit from the book.

Synchronous Zoom meetings

- Synchronous meetings are for reviewing crucial points, applying what you have learned to contemporary issues, discussing the RAs, and having fun. They will not be lectures. You should prepare for each meeting by taking notes on the video lectures, reading the textbook, and doing the RA. **About 90% of your learning will be done on your own prior to class.** If you don't prepare, you won't enjoy the synchronous meetings and you won't do well in the course.
- I will not record our Zoom meetings. If I did this, this might undermine students' interest in attending class. Also, recording can make people less willing to offer candid opinions

and to ask “stupid” questions (which are usually the ones that are most helpful to everyone).

Quizzes

- Quizzes are all for extra credit, and they are optional, not required. It is highly recommended, however, that you take every quiz that you can. Quizzes must be taken on the day of our synchronous Zoom meetings (always a Monday or Wednesday).
- Nobody can make up a quiz for any reason. You don't need to ask me about this. The answer, for everyone, I promise, is “no, you can't make up the quiz.” The only possible exception would be if there is a technology problem on my end (which hasn't happened in the 8 years since I started offering these online quizzes.)
- All quizzes will be multiple choice.
- Quizzes will be available from 10:00 AM until midnight, a 14 hour window. No password is required. You can and should take the quiz even if you didn't attend our synchronous class session.
- We're not going to have a quiz on the first day of class, Monday May 5. However, we will probably have a quiz on every other meeting day of the semester.
- Quizzes will be on material covered in the video lectures and (usually) the RAs.
- Quizzes (and exams) will be open book, open powerpoint, open note, open video, and open internet. The only thing prohibited is discussing (by voice or writing) questions with other people (including peers in this course).
- The quizzes and exams have time limits, generally about 1 to 1.25 minutes per multiple choice question. This means you will not have time to look up (many) answers during the quiz or exam. To do well, you must be prepared before you begin.

Exams

- Exams will be multiple choice but difficult. Even good students might get 75% or lower.
- You need to build a buffer by doing well on the RAs and the extra-credit quizzes.
- Cramming doesn't usually work for exams. Keeping up does. Studying with classmates can also be very effective.

Narrated lectures and powerpoints

- I will often break narrated video lectures into sections of 15 to 20 minutes. Some narrated lectures may be only 20 minutes in total, but some may be 110 minutes or more.
- I sometimes speak slowly so you may wish to watch the lectures at 1.5 (or faster) speed. Pause and go back when you need to take notes.
- Have the powerpoint presentation open when watching the lectures. There will usually be underlined red blanks for you to fill in.
- You should be taking notes in addition to filling in the red blanks. Do things such as, restating things in your own words and making notes about what is unclear or confusing so that you can email me or ask at our next synchronous meeting. Studying actively leads to deep and well-retained knowledge; passive learning (only listening and/or reading) generally does not.
- Use the outlines at the beginning of each part of the lecture. Those are also exam study guides. Try to figure out what the key point/message is for each item in the outline. Then try to state it in your own words so that you could explain it to someone else.
- There will sometimes be suggested videos and links. Most are optional. I'll let you know when they are “required.”

- It may be wise to watch narrated lectures before you read the book. Some students can do well without reading the book, but most students will learn things much more thoroughly if they also read.
- **I strongly recommend sampling some of these video lectures as soon as you can.** If you really dislike these lectures and can't imagine watching them and taking notes on a regular basis, then you should probably drop this class.

Response Assignments (RAs)

- Yes, there will be exam and (sometimes) quiz questions based on the response assignment questions.
- Read these directions carefully.
 - For each question, paste the question and its question number onto your page. Leave a blank space and then type in your answer. Leave a blank space before the next question and answer. Make it easy for me to tell what question you are answering.
 - Use complete sentences. Grammar and spelling count.
 - Answers to assignments should be in your own words and should avoid technical terms when possible. It's your responsibility to "show you know." If you haven't convinced me that you can explain the answer to someone who hasn't read the paper, then you won't receive full credit.
 - Some questions have more than one part (e.g., sub-questions). Answer all parts of each question if you want to earn full credit.
 - Upload your answers as an attachment, preferably a Word document (best) or a pdf (okay). Google Docs, Pages, and other formats are NOT okay.
 - I strongly prefer that you upload your answers as an attachment. However, if you can't do that, it's acceptable to place your answers in the textbox field.
- A grade of 9.99 on an RA means that you did a great job and essentially received full credit. However, I didn't give you 10/10 because I wanted you to look in the comments because I wanted to show you an answer that was better or more complete than one of yours.
- Yes, you can still earn full credit even if you don't answer a question or two superbly. I realize that some questions are very challenging.
- If you are having difficulty answering a question, you certainly can ask me for help, but I expect you to do these assignments mainly on your own.
- Working with a classmate is fine but you must put your answers into your own words.

Course Connection

- Easy 5 points, and you don't want to lose that. It's not extra credit - It's required. Due by Wednesday May 7 at 11:59 PM (one minute before midnight).