

Grand Valley State University
Syllabus
PSY 400 - Advance Research in Psychology, Fall, 2025

Instructor Information

Name: Mario Fifić, Ph.D., Professor
Office hours: By appointment or Zoom
Email: fifcm@gvsu.edu. Reaching me by email is generally much easier than reaching me by phone.
Phone: (616) 331-5061

Office Hours:

M/W/F 12:00pm-1:00pm. Schedule via email. We could meet in my office Room 2217 at the Psychology Department in Au Sable, or in a virtual office over the Zoom application. You can schedule a meeting with me by using the available scheduling options during my office hours. Alternatively, you can contact me and suggest a specific time to arrange a meeting. Please do not hesitate to contact Prof. Fific!

Class Time and Place

PSY 400 01 - Advanced Research in Psychology 33490 (F25). 3:00 -3:50 pm M/W/F, Lake Superior Hall 112
PSY 400 02 - Advanced Research in Psychology 25732 (F25). 11:00 -11:50 pm M/W/F, Lake Ontario Hall 168
PSY 400 05 - Advanced Research in Psychology 25730 (F25). 6:00 -8:50 pm TR, AuSable Hall 1310

Prerequisites

PSY 101, STA 215, and PSY 300. A good understanding of basic statistics is a must as the application of correlation and ANOVAs will be requested during the course.

Why Should You Take This Course?

Valid inference-making is crucial in modern society, both professionally and as consumers. For instance, we may seek to determine the most effective teaching methods for elementary students, the optimal treatment approach for a particular illness, or which produce provides the best value for our money. Such inferences depend on evaluating evidence obtained through appropriate methods. The research methods course provides valuable insights into the process of validating inferences, including the essential methods and procedures involved. By taking this course, you can enhance your ability to make more robust and valid inferences, as well as recognize the level of inference in knowledge-sharing systems such as media and research databases.

In the advance research method class (PSY400), you will be able to learn the following:

1. Learn how to choose an appropriate statistical analysis for your research.
2. Learn advanced statistical hypothesis testing.
3. Work on modeling complex relationships between variables.
4. Learn to use high-level factorial and multiple regression statistical analyses.
5. Learn about the principle of convergent validity in research.
6. Work on the analysis of simulated data systems.
7. Engage in group work.
8. Run an empirical study, collect data, conduct analysis, and create a report.
9. Create reports (poster and paper).

10. Develop critical thinking skills - evaluative and synthetic skills

Course Goals

The primary goal of this course is to apply knowledge of research methods in psychology to design an empirical study, collect data, and write a paper. Topics such as theoretical and ethical issues, measurement, reliability and validity of methods, descriptive, correlational, and experimental research designs, biases in experimentation, and univariate and multivariate data analysis will be covered in class.

To achieve this goal, the course has three main objectives:

- (1) Students will demonstrate the ability to design and develop an empirical study in psychology and write an APA-style research paper.
- (2) Students will learn to evaluate their own study critically by identifying limitations and issues.
- (3) Students will enhance their overall knowledge of research in psychology.

Recommended Text

Textbook: Stangor, C. (2015, 5th ed. or earlier edition). Research methods for the behavioral sciences. New York: Houghton Mifflin Company. ISBN: 9781285077024. Previous editions (4th ed.) can be used for this class.

Additional Readings

At various times during the semester, additional readings will be assigned. These readings will be required, and will supplement the text and lecture. The instructor will announce and make the readings available on Blackboard, i.e., students will not be required to purchase them.

Writing Center and Library Knowledge Market

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: (Mon-Thurs 9am-11pm, Friday 9am-3pm, Sunday 2pm-11pm). Limited in-person consulting may be available; please check the Writing Center's [website](#) for up-to-date information. All service options (drop-ins, appointments, email support) can be accessed via the Writing Center's online scheduling system - [Book It](#). We look forward to working with you!

Required software (available for free):

1. **SPSS:** SPSS (newest version) Statistics is a software package used for statistical analysis Instructions for Downloading: <https://www.gvsu.edu/it/how-to-download-and-install-spss-224.htm>
2. Alternatively, (or in addition) you could use the **Virtual Lab**, GVSU web service to access to **SPSS**: [Link is here: <https://winlab.gvsu.edu/>]. You will be prompted to logon to the virtual computer (PC or Mac) with your GVSU account. You should log in using the same password that you use for Banner. Then, a remote desktop will be opened for you (as if you were using some of the GVSU lab computers). You will be able to open SPSS by going to "lab applications" on the desktop, then to "STATISTICS" and then I can choose either "IBM SPSS STATISTICS 22" or "24" (or newer).
3. "Microsoft Word" (find the installation [link](#) through GVSU IT)

Course Webpage

The instructor will administer all elements of the course using GVSU's Blackboard system. The webpage will contain pertinent course information, grades, lecture materials, announcements, readings, assignments, and exams.

Students are responsible for all information provided via Blackboard. The full, detailed description of all assignments, exams, and due dates will be found in Blackboard.

To access Blackboard, go to <https://lms.gvsu.edu/ultra/institution-page> and enter your log in and password.

Take a look at the GVSU Online Learning pages to find numerous materials about using Blackboard and online learning <http://www.gvsu.edu/online/>.

Use of Blackboard is integral to this course and students must log on a few times each week in order to complete course requirements, receive important announcements and updates, and communicate with instructors and other students about course content.

Check the current [technical requirements](#) to use Blackboard and [preferred browser information](#).

Technical difficulties with Blackboard

If you experience technical problems with Blackboard, contact the help desk by email or phone -

helpdesk@gvsu.edu or 616-331-3513. The help website is <http://www.gvsu.edu/it>

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, periodical, speeches, or the writing of other students. The offering of materials assembled or collected by others in form of projects or collections without acknowledgement 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.” (GVSU, Undergraduate & Graduate Catalog 2004-2005, p. 91). Plagiarism or cheating will result in an F for the course.

Course Requirements

Your class grade will be determined based on your achievement on (1) Research papers, (2) Class/Online discussions (3) Reflections, and (4) Quizzes & Assignments.

(1) Research Papers [around 30% of grade points]

The course will involve two research projects, each of which will require the submission of a research paper. These projects may be completed individually or in groups.

To receive a passing grade in the course, students must meet two requirements:

(1) Submit and pass all written research projects.

(2) Achieve a minimum grade of 59% (F grade) on each written project. If a student fails to meet either of these requirements, they will not be able to receive a passing grade, regardless of their performance on other assignments and tests.

(2) Class Discussion participation [around 30% of grade points]

As part of this course, you will engage in several discussion topics through the blackboard discussion forum. Your participation in these discussions will be graded, but more importantly, it will allow you to interact with the lecturer and other students. Details about the expected discussion role will be provided within each module, and you will have the opportunity to share your thoughts, engage in debates, and deepen your understanding of the course material through these discussions. So be sure to participate actively and make the most of this opportunity to collaborate and learn from your peers.

(3) Reflections [20%]

As part of this course, you will have the opportunity to engage in reflective thinking by reflecting on the class material. You will be asked to write a short paragraph or two on a specific part of the learning module. Through these reflection exercises, you will be able to process and consolidate your understanding of the course material. Reflection is a critical component of the learning process, as it allows you to connect new information to prior knowledge and experiences, identify areas for further exploration, and develop a deeper understanding of the material. Additionally, reflective thinking can enhance your critical thinking skills and enable you to apply your knowledge in real-world situations. These reflection exercises will enable you to develop a reflective practice that you can use throughout your academic and professional career.

(4) Quizzes & Assignments[20%]

As part of this course, you will be required to take several quizzes/assignments throughout the semester. These quizzes will cover the material learned in class and consist of multiple-choice or open-ended questions. You will access the quizzes through BB, and they are designed to serve as practice and learning opportunities. These quizzes will help you assess your progress and identify areas for improvement.

Being exam excused or making late assignment submission

Late submissions of any work will result in a 10% reduction of points per day. Please note that being late means submitting work one second or longer after the deadline.


You have the option to miss one in-class activity per week without providing an excuse. If you choose to do so, you'll be offered an alternative assignment to write a chapter summary of no less than 1200 words.

If you plan to miss class activities for the second time, or you have an important issue that prevents you from attending, you'll need to provide a written excuse. This can be in the form of a confirmation letter from the head of the department or a physician. Only after providing an excuse, you will be offered an alternative assignment.

Weekly deadline

There will be an important deadline for most assignments each week, set for Friday at 11:59 p.m. This deadline applies to all graded submissions unless otherwise specified.

DAYS OF THE WEEK 7 days		
WEEKDAYS 5 days	Monday	Mon.
	Tuesday	Tue.
	Wednesday	Wed.
	Thursday	Thu.
	Friday	Fri.
WEEKEND 2 days	Saturday	Sat.
	Sunday	Sun.



Finish all other to-be-graded tasks for the week by this time!

Grading

The assignments, quizzes, forum discussion and exams will collectively be worth approximately 436 points. Based on your cumulative point score the following grades will be assigned:

Grade Distribution

A	94 - 100%
A-	90 - 93%
B+	88 - 89%
B	84 - 87%
B-	80 - 83%

C+	78 - 79%
C	74 - 77%
C-	70 - 73%
D+	67 - 69%
D	60 - 66%
F	59% and lower

THE GRADING SCALE AS PRINTED ABOVE IS **FINAL!** Any changes in grading policy will be announced on the course website.

Netiquette

This course will involve frequent opportunities to interact with your peers via the Blackboard Discussion Board. Although many of us have experience with e-mail, online discussion is different because we're communicating "one to many" rather than "one to one." Therefore, it's important that we maintain a sense of freedom to express our thoughts while at the same time providing a safe atmosphere for that expression. Please keep this mind as you are communicating with others.

All participants should maintain a professional attitude and manner of discussion. While spirited debate is encouraged, unprofessional behavior is not tolerated. Words often come across "more directly and harshly" in this written form of communication, since there are no facial gestures, expression or tone of voice to help convey your message fully. Your contributions should not be overly negative or personal in nature.

Emergencies and Schedule Conflicts

Exams will be administered online during limited time windows on specific days throughout the semester (see tentative schedule below). Absences from these exams related to participation in a university-sanctioned event, a personal illness, a family emergency, or a major religious holiday will be excused provided that you a) give the instructor at least one week advance notice (when the conflict is foreseeable) or a timely explanation upon your return (when the conflict is unforeseeable) and b) give the instructor written documentation from an appropriate faculty member, university administrator, physician, or clergy member. Make-up exams will be administered only if an absence from the exam is excused for one of the above reasons. Note that vacation is not considered a valid excuse. You may take a make-up exam either at another time on the normal exam day, or on the soonest possible date thereafter. An unexcused absence from an exam will constitute a score of 0.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

If there is any student in this class who has special needs because of learning, physical or other disability, please contact Disability Support Resources (DSR) at (616) 331-2490 to develop a plan of assistance that you can provide to me.

Tentative Course Schedule

Learning Modules: The learning modules in Blackboard will be a foundational part of the course. Modules are where you will find instructions for each one-week segment of the course including reading assignments, video lectures, practice activities, and assignments. Modules will open up one week at a time and various assignments will be due during those windows. All previous modules will be open throughout the course.

MODULE	DATE	TOPIC(S)	READING
1&2	Aug 25-29	Recap: basic research tools and concepts	
		Variables, Research Designs Construct Validity, Measures – Converging validity principle	Ch. 1 Ch. 2
	Sep 1-5	Sep 1: Labor Day recess	Ch. 4 Appendix A

		Operational definition/ Scales and measures/How to choose statistical analysis/ External Validity/ Research Topics & APA format for publication/	
3&4	Sep 8-12	Guidelines for ethical issues, Relationship between variables	Ch. 8
		STEP 1: Descriptive/naturalistic observation	
	Sep 15-19	Statistical Inference, Frequentist vs. Bayesian Hypothesis testing, Writing STEP 1 APA Reports	
5&6	Sep 22-26	STEP 2: Correlational study STEP2: Specifying your correlational research design Correlational Designs: Regression, Multiple regression	Ch. 9
	Sep 29-Oct3	STEP2: Specifying your Multiple regression research design	
		STEP 2: Informal presentations about your research project ideas, Complex Relationship between variables: Interactions	
7&8	Oct 6-10	Writing STEP 2 APA Reports	
		Factorial Designs: 2-Way ANOVA	
	Oct 13-17	STEP3: ANOVA research design, STEP3: Specifying your experimental (ANOVA) research design	Ch. 10 Ch. 11
9&10	Oct 20-24		
		Complex Relationship between variables: ANOVA Interactions	
	Oct 27- 31		
11&12	Nov 3- 7	Writing STEP 3 APA: Final paper and Converging Validity	
		STEP 3: Informal presentations about your research project ideas	
	Nov 10-14	Research paper/APA	
		LAB bring your data	

13	Nov 17 -21	Data analysis Nov 19-23 Prof. Fific is away	
	Nov 24-28	Oral presentation (video recorded for Spring)	
		Nov 26- 30: Thanksgiving Day recess	
	Dec 1-5	Oral presentation (video recorded for Spring)	

Disclaimer:

All of the information included in this syllabus, including the course schedule, assignments, and grading procedure, is subject to change. Any consequential changes to this syllabus will be announced on Blackboard.

HOW MUCH TIME DO I NEED TO SPEND ON THIS COURSE?

Because PSY400 is a 3-credit course, you're expected to spend a total of 108 hours on the course (3 course credits x 36 work hours per credit = 108 total work hours for the entire course, excluding attending the video lectures). If you are taking this course during the SPRING term: You are expected to work on this course 3 HOURS per DAY, six days a week.

Tips for a Successful Learning Experience

**Although these might seem obvious and simple, they will make a difference*

- ☐ Read the syllabus and view all preparatory information on Blackboard
- ☐ Stay organized and track due dates
- ☐ Plan weekly study times
- ☐ KEEP UP ON THE READING AND LECTURES
- ☐ Take your own notes on each lecture video, or write your own notes into the provided slides
- ☐ Log onto Blackboard at least 3 times per week to check announcements, discussion board, and interact with course material. Online courses require perseverance, self-discipline, self- motivation, and the ability to work independently – more so than face-to-face on-campus classes.
- ☐ Post questions, comments, and ideas on discussion board
- ☐ Ask questions of the instructor. Not just clarification questions about logistics, but content questions.

Academic Integrity

This course is subject to GVSU's general requirements for courses. A full list with pointers to resources may be found at www.gvsu.edu/coursepolicies.

Section STU 4.0 of GVSU's Student Code contains very specific information about maintaining academic integrity. It states: "The principles of academic honesty and integrity are fundamental to a community of scholars. The University expects that students will not engage in acts of academic dishonesty in curricular and non-curricular academic activities. Engaging in academic dishonesty compromises the integrity of university grades, and scholarship and research.

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. This definition includes, but is not limited to, fabrication, falsification, cheating, and plagiarism. Terms are defined as the following:

- Cheating is defined as attempting to use materials, information, or study aids in any academic exercise that have not been allowed by the instructor.
- Plagiarism is defined as offering the work of someone else as one's own. 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 writings of other students. Academic dishonesty compromises the integrity of grades, meaning that all academic work should be done by the student to whom it is assigned without unauthorized aid.

PROCEDURES

When the instructor feels that action beyond a failing course grade is warranted, the instructor will report the incident at www.gvsu.edu/conduct and request additional action via the University Conduct Process. When the alleged violation is related to the Academic Honesty - Integrity of Scholarships and Grades, the Hearing Body shall be composed of faculty members.

It is the instructor's responsibility to establish a classroom atmosphere that fosters academic honesty on the part of the students. If any instance of academic dishonesty is discovered by an instructor, they will notify the student and discuss the incident. After discussing the instance with the student, the instructor will make a decision. Depending on the instructor's judgment of the particular case, they may do nothing, impose additional course requirements, ask the student to repeat the work in question, or give a failing grade for the assignment, examination or the entire course. Any time an instructor addresses a violation of Academic Honesty with a failing grade on an assignment or in a course, they must report the incident at www.gvsu.edu/conduct. Other incidents may be reported for tracking purposes. Reporting the incident will notify the Department Chair, the Dean of Students, and the Dean(s) of the Instructional Colleges. Reporting the incident does not automatically initiate additional action but keeps record of the incident. Students may utilize the Academic Grievance Process to appeal a faculty-initiated decision."

Students will comply with the following rules, when engaging in coursework:

1. No student shall knowingly, without authorization, procure, provide or accept any materials which contain questions or answers to any examination or assignment.
2. No student shall, without authorization, complete, in part or in total, any examination or assignment for another person.
3. No student shall, without authorization, allow any examination or assignment to be completed, in part or in total, by another person.
4. No student shall knowingly plagiarize, copy the work of another person, or submit work generated by artificial intelligence tools as their own without proper attribution or authorization.
5. No student shall submit work that has been previously graded, or is being submitted concurrently to more than one course, without authorization from the instructor(s) of the class(es) to which the student wishes to submit it.
6. The course materials are intended for curriculum and course-related purposes and are copyrighted by the University. Appropriate access to this content is given for personal academic study and review purposes only. Unless otherwise stated in writing, this content may not be shared, distributed, modified, transmitted, reused, sold, or otherwise disseminated. These materials may also be protected by additional copyright; any further use of this material may be in violation of federal copyright law. Violators of this policy will be referred to the Committee on Professionalism, Performance, and Promotion for disciplinary purposes.
7. The student signed below understands and accepts all the terms of the above syllabus.

If you agree with 1-7 please post the signed document on BB

Student's full name printed and signed _____

G# _____