

PSY 493: Psych Friends Practicum I
Course Syllabus
1 to 3 credits, pre-arranged

Psych Friends:

Psych Friends is a peer-to-peer mentorship program that connects upper division Psychology majors (mentors) with students newer to the major (mentees) to exchange information and to build a strong social network within the psychology community. Psych Friends Peer Mentors focus on increasing the academic success & well-being of psychology students.

Course Objective:

This course provides junior and senior Psychology and Behavioral Neuroscience majors with the opportunity to gain knowledge in key principles and processes related to mentorship and apply this knowledge by serving as a Psych Friends Peer Mentor. Students will complete online training and attend a weekly group meeting with the practicum coordinator and other students enrolled in the course. Once training is complete, students will spend approximately 3 hours per week per registered credit hour engaging in hosting peer-to-peer mentoring sessions, designing promotional and student resources, and / or participating in community building events and advising sessions. This course is aimed at students who would like to further develop and offer their leadership skills and knowledge about the major and field of psychology to students newer to the major by serving as a peer mentor.

Prerequisites: PSY 101, completed a minimum of 9 additional PSY credits, Psychology or Behavioral Neuroscience major, Junior or Senior Standing, and Instructor Permission.

After successful completion of the course, students will be able to:

1. Understand and communicate knowledge regarding the major, effective study habits, time management skills, careers and education paths in psychology, and self-care techniques to peers.
2. Identify best practices in mentorship and apply these strategies to effectively mentor peers.
3. Assess their mentorship skills and competencies.
4. Relate the knowledge and skills they've gained serving as a peer mentor to their future education and career goals.

Course Requirements:

1. Students must be accepted into a practicum by the instructor. To gain permission to enroll in the course, students must have completed all prerequisites and complete a short application and interview with the instructor.
2. Students will meet once a week as a group for group discussion and content discussion (content detailed below). These meetings are mandatory, and only excused absences per the GVSU attendance policy will be permitted (i.e., intercollegiate events, religious holidays, military duty, documented medical conditions, birth/adoption of child, attendance at an academic or professional conference). **More than one unexcused absence will result in an automatic grade reduction. More than two unexcused absences will result in failure of the course.**

3. Students are required to complete post session notes after each mentoring session and are also required to provide their own reflection and feedback on their experience as a Psych Friends Peer Mentor.
4. Students are required to participate in the creation of promotional materials and student support resources.
5. Students will engage in a series of assignments (detailed below) pertaining to their experiences and various topics (also detailed below) that will be discussed during the weekly meetings.

Assignments/Methods of Evaluation:

Assignment:	Total Possible Points:	Percentage of Grade:
Post Session Notes	100	20%
Journal Reflections	100	20%
Log of Hours	50	10%
Program Materials	100	20%
Final Paper	150	30%
Total	500	100%

1. **Post Session Notes (100 points):** After each mentoring session, students are required to complete Post Session Notes in Navigate where they answer specific prompts related to their level of preparedness for the session and the mentee’s level of engagement, as well as resources discussed. Post Session Notes will be reviewed by the instructor each week.
2. **Journal Reflections (100 points):** For each weekly meeting, students will be required to submit a 250-300 word journal reflection discussing their mentorship experience for the prior two weeks. Students can write about anything regarding their experience. Entries should be typed and include a word count.
3. **Log of Hours (50 points):** For each weekly meeting, students must turn in a log of all the hours they were engaged in peer mentoring activities, including a total number of hours.
4. **Program Materials (100 points):** Students enrolled in the course will work collaboratively to create promotional materials (fliers, emails, social media posts, etc.) as well as student support resources.
5. **Final Paper (150 points):** At the end of the semester, students will be required to write one final paper (750-1000 words) that discusses the skills they have learned and/or improved upon through their mentorship experience and how they will use those skills to enhance their future education and career experiences. This paper should be typed, double-spaced, and must include a word count at the end.

Grading Scale:

	PASS		FAIL
93% and above	A	70-72%	C-
90-92%	A-	67-69%	D+
87-89%	B+	60-66%	D
83-86%	B	59% or below	F
80-82%	B-		
77-79%	C+		
73-76%	C		

The final grade for the course will be calculated by dividing the total points obtained by the total points possible in the class (500 points). Given this course is pass/fail, students must obtain at least an C (73%, or 365 points) across all graded assignments to pass the course.

Course Policies:

1. This course is subject to all standard GVSU course policies which can be found at <https://www.gvsu.edu/coursepolicies/>

Topics Covered:

- Rapport and relationship building skills.
- Identifying early warning signs of mental illness, the referral process, and suicide prevention.
- Sexual Harassment and the reporting process.
- Issues related to working with students from diverse backgrounds and inclusion practices.
- FERPA and Confidentiality.
- Effective Study, Time Management, and Exam Preparation Techniques for PSY and BNS students.
- Psychology and Behavioral Neuroscience (BNS) Major Requirements.
- How students can get involved in the field of Psychology.
- Careers in Psychology.
- Process of applying for Graduate School in Psychology.
- Ways to manage stress, maintain physical and mental health as a student.
- Effective mentorship practices.