

**Grand Valley State University**  
**Syllabus**  
**PSY 101-03, Introductory Psychology, Winter Semester, 2025**

**Instructor Information**

Name: Benjamin Swets, Ph.D., Professor  
Office hours: MW 1:00-1:50 pm, or by appointment. Please email me to make appointments.  
Office location: 2317 Au Sable Hall  
Email: swetsb@gvsu.edu. Reaching me by email is generally easier than reaching me by phone.  
Phone: (616) 331-2169

**Class Time and Place**

MWF 12:00pm – 12:50pm 114 LMH

Note: This is a hybrid course for which parts of the course will be administered online. You should plan to attend class in-person every Monday and Wednesday. Friday classes will sometimes meet in person, but will more often be replaced by asynchronous content found online in Blackboard.

**Course Description (from GVSU)**

“General survey of psychology, the scientific study of behavior and experience, including overt actions and mental activity. Covers how psychologists think and act as scientists and how the study of its subject matter may be integrated at the biological, psychological, and social levels of analysis. Fulfills Social and Behavioral Sciences Foundation requirement.”

**Course Description (mine)**

This course serves as an overview of the scientific study of psychology from many different perspectives. We will cover such topics as learning, perception, emotions, psychological disorders, and social processes. I have a simple philosophy for the teaching of this course: to match student goals with instructor goals. My goal in teaching this course is to have students learn the essential skills, concepts and information that any student in Introductory Psychology ought to learn. I hope that one of your main goals is to get a good grade. By ensuring that the concepts and skills I want you to learn comprise the basis of evaluation for your grade, our goals become one and the same.

**Why Should You Take This Course?**

This course will provide you with fascinating insights into human thought and behavior. If that isn't enough, this course also satisfies a departmental requirement for Psychology majors and is a prerequisite for almost every other Psychology course. Introductory Psychology is also part of the Social Sciences General Education Foundation Category.

**Course Objectives**

- To demonstrate an understanding of the scientific process in Psychology. I consider this course to be an opportunity to teach more than just WHAT we know about psychology. It is an opportunity to also teach HOW psychology is studied. Psychology is a science, and this course will emphasize that point.
- To identify major psychological theories and use psychological terminology correctly.
- To critically evaluate the findings of psychological research. Be prepared to think skeptically in this class.
- To recognize examples of how psychological concepts are applied to daily life.

**Required Text**

Textbook: Pomerantz, A. M. (2023). *My Psychology* (3<sup>rd</sup> edition) with Achieve access. You will complete required assignments in the Achieve software, and the online textbook is included with this package. This software/textbook combo is automatically charged to your student account and is available in Blackboard Ultra at the start of the semester. (Note that this charge will be reversed if you opt out to purchase the software on your own before Sept. 9, or if you drop the course.) *Make sure to register for Achieve through Blackboard—if you register through Achieve, your grades will not be counted.* There is more information about Achieve Registration under a module with that title in Blackboard Ultra, and the following link gives you more instructions about Achieve registration as well: <https://mhe.my.site.com/macmillanlearning/s/article/Students-Register-for-Achieve-courses-via-your-school-s-LMS#blackboardUltra>.

## **Course Webpage**

The instructor will maintain a course webpage using GVSU's Blackboard Ultra system. The webpage will contain pertinent course information, reading assignments, grades, lecture slides, announcements, etc. The webpage is meant to supplement the lectures, not replace them. Students are responsible for all information provided in the lecture that may, or may not, be included on the web page.

## **Course Requirements**

*Quizzes/In-Class Assignments (85 points total):* Throughout the semester, quizzes and assignments will be administered that might take place in class, unannounced, or online, announced to the whole class on Blackboard. Quizzes will cover basic ideas covered in the reading and in class materials. In-class assignments will allow groups to work together to apply course concepts to real-world examples. *No make-up quizzes will be administered*, but students may miss 1 quiz/in-class assignment without penalty. It is a good idea to do the reading assignments before the date on which they are listed, and to take careful notes in class.

*Reading Assignments (65 points total):* To help encourage students to read the textbook carefully before class and foster learning, they will complete reading assignments before class. The reading assignments can be found in Blackboard under Modules, and will be completed through the Achieve access that is described above. Students can miss 1 of these reading assignments without penalty.

*Enrichment Activities (20 points total):* As a part of an enriched academic experience, you are required to participate in four (4) hours of psychology studies or alternative activities (see attached).

*Midterm Exams (120 points total):* There will be three midterm exams worth 40 points apiece. Exam dates appear on the Course Schedule, below. Midterms will consist of multiple choice questions that engage your understanding of course concepts. Questions may cover any information provided by the lecture, textbook, and supplementary classroom activities such as videos. Midterms will not be cumulative.

*Final Exam (65 points):* The final exam will consist of multiple choice questions. Some of the points on the final exam will come from the final course unit, and the remaining questions could be on any topic from any time in the course. Therefore, some of the final exam will be cumulative, and some will be like a Midterm Exam.

## **Grading**

The Quizzes, Enrichment Activities, Midterm Exams, and Final Exam will collectively be worth 355 points. Based on your cumulative point score the following grades will be assigned:

<i>Percentage</i>	<i>Grade</i>		
93 – 100%	A	73 – 76.99%	C
90 – 92.99%	A-	70 – 72.99%	C-
87 – 89.99%	B+	67 – 69.99%	D+
83 – 86.99%	B	60 – 66.99%	D
80 – 82.99%	B-	59.99% or less	F
77 – 79.99%	C+		

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

## **Attendance**

There is no attendance requirement, but I strongly recommend attending class, for several reasons: 1) There will be material covered in class that will not be found in the text book, but will be found in exam questions. 2) Surprise quizzes/in-class assignments comprise part of the grading of this course. 3) Repeated and varied exposure to course material results in better memory and understanding of that material.

## Tentative Course Schedule

**Learning Modules:** The learning modules in Blackboard are a foundational part of this course. Modules are where you will find instructions for each segment of the course including reading assignments, lecture slides, and review sheets. Modules will open up every three to four weeks and various assignments will be due during those windows.

	<b>DATE</b>	<b>TOPIC(S)</b>	<b>READING</b>
Module 1: Psychological Foundations	Jan 6	Syllabus, Introduction	
	Jan 8	History of Psychology I	Chapter 1 (1 <sup>st</sup> half)
	Jan 10	History of Psychology II	
	Jan 13	Research Methods I	
	Jan 15	Research Methods II	Chapter 1 (2 <sup>nd</sup> half)
	Jan 17	Evolutionary Theory	See Blackboard
	Jan 20	<b>NO CLASS MLK DAY</b>	
	Jan 22	Brain I	Chapter 2
	Jan 24	Brain II, Review	
	Jan 27	<b>EXAM I</b>	
Module 2: Learning and Cognition	Jan 29	Learning and Behavior Analysis I	Chapter 6
	Jan 31	Learning and Behavior Analysis II	
	Feb 3	Perception I	Chapter 3
	Feb 5	Perception II	
	Feb 7	Perception III	
	Feb 10	Memory I	Chapter 5
	Feb 12	Memory II	
	Feb 14	Memory III	
	Feb 17	Memory IV	
	Feb 19	Memory V	
	Feb 21	<b>Review</b>	
	Feb 24	<b>EXAM II</b>	
Module 3: Development, Emotion, and Disorders	Feb 26	Development I	Chapter 9
	Feb 28	Development II	Chapter 7
	Mar 3	<b>NO CLASS: SPRING BREAK</b>	
	Mar 5	<b>NO CLASS: SPRING BREAK</b>	
	Mar 7	<b>NO CLASS: SPRING BREAK</b>	
	Mar 10	Development III	
	Mar 12	Emotions, Stress and Health I	Chapter 8
	Mar 14	Emotions, Stress and Health II	
	Mar 17	Emotions, Stress and Health III	Chapter 11
	Mar 19	Psychological Disorders I	Chapter 14
	Mar 21	Psychological Disorders II (online)	
	Mar 24	Psychological Disorders III	
Mar 26	<b>EXAM III</b>		
Module 4: Social Psychology	Mar 28	Treatment of Disorders I (online)	Chapter 15
	Mar 31	Social Cognition I	
	Apr 2	Social Cognition II	Chapter 13 (1 <sup>st</sup> half)
	Apr 4	Social Cognition III (online)	
	Apr 7	Social Processes I (online)	
	Apr 9	Social Processes II (online)	
	Apr 11	Social Processes III (online)	Chapter 13 (2 <sup>nd</sup> half)
	Apr 15	Social Processes IV	
	Apr 17	Social Processes V	
	Apr 19	Review Session (In-Person)	

*The above schedule is tentative. Any changes in the schedule will be announced in class and posted on Blackboard.*

**FINAL EXAM: Wednesday, April 23, 12:00 pm - 1:50 pm**

## **Caveat**

All of the information included in this syllabus, including the course schedule, assignments, and grading procedure, is subject to change. Any changes to this schedule will be announced in class and on the course webpage. In addition, this course is subject to the GVSU policies listed at <http://www.gvsu.edu/coursepolicies/>.

## **Emergencies and Schedule Conflicts**

Absences *from 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. 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. I would be happy to help, but DSR is the proper channel. If you have a disability and think you will need assistance evacuating this classroom and/or building in an emergency situation, please make me aware so I can develop a plan to assist you.

## **Academic Integrity**

**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.

**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 or copy the work of another person and submit it as his/her own.
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.

## **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](http://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](http://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.”

### **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 email questions to [psychfriends@gvsu.edu](mailto:psychfriends@gvsu.edu).

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### **APPENDIX #1:**

#### **Enrichment Activities: Learning about Psychological Research**

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In the Enrichment Activities (EA) portion of the course, students will be given the opportunity to experience psychological research first-hand. Two kinds of enrichment activities are available:

- *Option 1* involves being a participant in research studies conducted by Psychology Department faculty and students.
- *Option 2* involves completing activities that will introduce you to a variety of research techniques used in psychological research.

Students must earn **four** EA credits for this requirement. The credit you earn by completing each EA is a function of the amount of time it takes to complete it. For example, by participating in a brief online study (30 minutes or fewer) you would earn ½ of an EA credit whereas an EA that takes one hour to complete would earn 1 credit. Both types of Enrichment Activities will be available in face to face and online formats. You may complete the EA requirement using any combination of EA types, however, **at least two full credits of EAs must be completed in person.**

Enrichment activities are scheduled and offered through the Sona Study Scheduling System. You will receive an email from Study Scheduling System at the beginning of the semester containing your User ID and an initial password, and a link to the Sona system website at <https://gvsu.sona-systems.com>. If you do not receive an email regarding your account by Tuesday January 14<sup>th</sup>, please check your spam folder. Should the email still not appear, please contact the Lab Supervisor, Hannah Todd, at [psychlab@gvsu.edu](mailto:psychlab@gvsu.edu).

SONA Systems maintains a strict policy protecting your privacy and confidentiality. This policy is available for review in the Psychology Office. Additional details regarding the enrichment activities and an FAQ are available online at <https://www.gvsu.edu/psychology/psy-101-participation-in-research-sona-435.htm>

**Screening Instrument:** Once you receive your User ID and password, you will be able to immediately earn .5 credits by completing an online prescreening questionnaire. This is a short questionnaire used by some researchers to determine your participation eligibility for studies carried out throughout the semester. You must be 18 or older to complete the prescreen survey. You are not required to complete it, but doing so increases the number of studies you will be able to choose from during the semester. You can complete the prescreen at any time from the My Profile tab on the blue bar at the top of the page, however, completing it early (within the first two weeks of class) ensures that you will have access to the widest variety of EA activities within the Sona System.

### **Enrichment Activity Deadline**

The last day to complete your EA requirement is **Friday, April 18<sup>th</sup> @ 5:00pm.**

If you have questions regarding any aspect of the Enrichment Activities, please contact the Lab Supervisor Hannah Todd, who can be reached in the Psychology Department Office (2224 Au Sable Hall, 616-331-2427) or by sending an email to [psychlab@gvsu.edu](mailto:psychlab@gvsu.edu).