

**Psychology 301-004**  
**Research Methods in Psychology**  
**Spring 2009**

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<b>Office Hours:</b>	Tues/Thurs 2:20pm-3:20pm and by appointment
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<b>Class Location:</b>	Enterprise 175
<b>Class Date/Time:</b>	Tuesday/Thursday 1:30pm-2:20pm
<b>Class website:</b>	<a href="http://mres.gmu.edu/PSYC301/">http://mres.gmu.edu/PSYC301/</a>
<b>Important Dates:</b>	Please see GMU academic calendar

**Required Textbooks:**

- Shaughnessy, J.J., Zechmeister, E.B., & Zechmeister, J.S. (2009). *Research Methods in Psychology* (8th edition). Boston: McGraw-Hill Higher Education.
- Dunn, D. (2008). *A Short Guide to Writing About Psychology* (2nd edition). Boston: Longman.
- *Publication Manual for the American Psychological Association* (5th edition).

**Course Overview:** PSYC 301 offers an introduction to research methods in psychology. The course covers general research issues as well as specific descriptive, experimental, and applied research methods. For both general and specific topics, you will learn their respective strengths and weaknesses, data collection and analysis methods, and interpretation of results. Students develop skills in critically evaluating research studies and learn to apply these tools in their own future research interests.

**Course Format:** The course meets twice each week for lecture. During those lectures, I will cover the material in the text as outlined below. Each week you will also be required to attend a lab where you will learn how to conduct the procedures discussed in the lecture that week. **Please be sure that you are enrolled in a PSYC 301 lab section.**

**Exams (40% of your final grade):** Every week, a 1020 question exam will be administered online at this website. Use your G number (i.e., G123456789) as your username and your Last Name (how you would normally spell it) as your password. Each week's exam will have new questions as well as some old questions from previous weeks. By re-administering the questions, I give you ample opportunity to learn the material and correct mistakes from previous exams. I post scores at the end of each week so you may see how you are performing. Please refer to the course website for specifics about the location and timing of the exams. In total, there will be at least 14 exams - perhaps more if time permits. I base your grade on the **10 highest exam scores**. The exams cover material from the book, lecture and lab so it is in your best interest to read the book and to pay attention in the lecture and lab. Each weekly exam has a time limit of 1 hour and can be completed any time between Friday (noon) and Monday (midnight). Once you begin an exam, the clock starts and it will close the exam in 60 minutes. Be sure to prepare yourself for an hour exam just as you would if we had an in-class exam.. You may use a calculator, SPSS, computer, book, or any other supporting material you desire, however, you may not use a friend, parent, or any other person to assist you during the exams. I track everything on the exam site so please

comply with the GMU honor code. **GIVEN THE LIBERAL POLICY THERE WILL BE NO MAKEUP EXAMS UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES.**

**Lab Assignments (40% of your final grade):** You must be enrolled in a PSYC 301 lab section and attend that section that you are enrolled. We designed the lab to provide you with hands-on experience with research methods and expose you to some classic research studies. The department considers the lab to be a **writing intensive** part of the course so expect multiple writing assignments. Please consult your lab section syllabus for more details.

**Experimental Participation (20% of your final grade):** One of the best ways for you to understand research is to participate. Direct exposure to experimental research also prepares you to conduct research of your own, interact with faculty members, and understand the nature of social scientific inquiry. A total of **3 hours** of experimental credit (or the hour equivalent for those who opt out of direct participation and wish to attend the experimental lectures) are required to satisfy this portion of your grade. Please see the following website for more details: <http://gmu.sona-systems.com/>. **PLEASE DO NOT PUT OFF THE EXPERIMENTS IF YOU INTEND TO PARTICIPATE.** Successful completion of the experimental participation includes not only direct participation but also completing a written assignment (**due at the end of the last lecture**) where you *a*) identify the study, *b*) briefly describe what you did, *c*) comment on the mechanics (e.g., how the study was conducted) and methods (e.g., were the methods sound?). in one page. The written assignment is worth half - 10% - of your final grade.

**Grading:** Letter grades will be assigned according to standard cut scores (A: > 90; B: > 80; C: > 70; D: > 60; F: < 60). If your score falls on the high side of the range, I will assign you a “+” and similarly, if your grade falls on the extreme low-end, I will assign you a “-” with the grade.

**Cheating and the Honor Code:** I expect all students to abide by the GMU Honor Code: “Student members of the George Mason University community pledge not to cheat, plagiarize, steal, or lie in matters related to academic work.” Specifically, I expect all exams and assignments to be individual efforts unless otherwise noted **in writing**. GMU honor code violations can result in failure of an assignment or exam, depending on the severity of violation. I report all violations to the Honor Committee without exception. Please refer to the GMU honor code if you have any questions.

**Disability Accommodations:** If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at 703-993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office. Note that this provision includes the range of disabilities, including physical, psychiatric, and learning disabilities.

**Tentative Schedule:** The following is an ordered list of the topics I intend to cover, the associated readings with each topic, and the approximate date I intend to cover the material. Readings are abbreviated with “c” that stand for chapter followed by a number - the chapter number I intend to discuss - and occasionally followed by page numbers when the entire chapter may not be suitable. The chapters can be found in the primary text by Shaughnessy, Zechmeister, and Zechmeister.

Date	Topic	Reading
1/22	Introduction	syllabus, c1
1/23	Exam 1 begins	
1/26	Exam 1 ends	
1/27	Scientific Method	c2
1/29	Scientific Method	
1/30	Exam 2 begins	
2/2	Exam 2 ends	
2/3	Ethics	c3
2/5	Ethics	
2/6	Exam 3 begins	
2/9	Exam 3 ends	
2/10	Observational Designs	c4
2/12	Observational Designs	
2/13	Exam 4 begins	
2/16	Exam 4 ends	
2/17	Survey Research	c5,c12(pp.389;400-408)
2/19	Survey Research	
2/20	Exam 5 begins	
2/23	Exam 5 ends	
2/24	Unobtrusive Measures	c6
2/26	Unobtrusive Measures	
2/27	Exam 6 begins	
3/2	Exam 6 ends	
3/3	Independent Group Designs	c7,c12(pp.375-388)
3/5	Independent Group Designs	
3/6	Exam 7 begins	
3/10	SPRING BREAK	
3/12	SPRING BREAK	
3/16	Exam 7 ends	
3/17	Independent Group Designs	c8,c13(pp.439-442)
3/19	Repeated Measures Designs	
3/20	Exam 8 begins	
3/23	Exam 8 ends	
3/24	Repeated Measures Designs	
3/26	Repeated Measures Designs	
3/27	Exam 9 begins	
3/30	Exam 9 ends	
3/31	Complex Designs	c9,c13(pp.444-447; 452-454)
4/2	Complex Designs	
4/3	Exam 10 begins	
4/6	Exam 10 ends	
4/7	Complex Designs	
4/9	Complex Designs	
4/10	Exam 11 begins	
4/13	Exam 11 ends	
4/14	Quasi-Experimental Designs	c11
4/16	Quasi-Experimental Designs	
4/17	Exam 12 begins	
4/20	Exam 12 ends	
4/21	Quasi-Experimental Designs	c14
4/23	Communicating Findings	
4/24	Exam 13 begins	
4/27	Exam 13 ends	
4/28	Communicating Findings	
4/30	Communicating Findings	
5/1	Exam 14 begins	
5/4	Exam 14 ends	
5/5	FINAL EXAM begins	
5/7	FINAL EXAM ends	