Psychology 101 (Section 002): Introductory Psychology

Fall, 2020

# Course Information:

**Time/Format:** Online, Asynchronous

# Course Personnel:

**Instructor**: Dr. Richard Lucas **Teaching** **Assistant**: Nathan Baker

**Email**: lucasri@msu.edu bakerna7@msu.edu

**Office** **Hours**: Wednesdays 1-3 Thursday 3-5

**Undergraduate Assistants**: Natalie Charron (charro10@msu.edu) and Stephanie Johnson (john7024@msu.edu)

# Course Objectives:

* To learn about the major theories and findings from the field of psychology.
* To learn about the research methods that psychologists use.
* To learn to think critically about conclusions made by psychologists and other social scientists.
* To apply ideas from psychology to your own life experiences.

Free!!!

# Course Readings and Materials:

**Required Text**: Noba Project: Introductory Psychology

Available at: <http://noba.to/xk7w89qr>

This is a **free**, online textbook that is specifically designed for this course. You have the option of paying a small fee to have a paper copy sent to you (see the course website for details). The readings and dates are listed online.

There will also be occasional readings from popular news sources and websites. The course website is organized by weeks, and these additional readings will be posted in the appropriate week on the website.

# Course Policies and Assignments

****Course Material****: This course will be administered in an on-line, asynchronous format. This means that there are no scheduled lecture times; all material will be posted on the course website (organized by week) and you can work through it mostly at your own pace. Please note, however, that the course is structured into four modules, each with three or four weeks of material. Although you can decide when, within each week, you do the course readings, lectures, and activities, there are assignments that must be completed by the end of each week. Specifically, there are quizzes that will be available for you to take at the end of each week. There are weekly discussion forums to which you must contribute by Saturday of each week. And there is one larger exam for each of the four modules, and those exams take place on the Monday immediately following the module. So it will be important to keep track of the assignments associated with each week and each larger module.

**Grading:** There are 500 total points that you can receive in this class. These points come from the following categories of assignments: 15 Weekly Quizzes (180 points total), 4 Exams (160 points), 15 Weekly Discussion Forum Posts (60 points), 16 Research Participation Credits (48 points), 2 homeworks (40 points), 2 brief surveys (12 points total).

**Quizzes:** The course is organized by week. At the end of each week, there will be an on-line quiz, consisting of 12 questions, drawn from a larger pool of questions (so different students will get somewhat different questions). You will have 30 minutes to complete each quiz, and each is worth 12 points (one point per correct answer). These quizzes cover any material that we have discussed during the week, including textbook readings, additional readings, lectures, videos, or other activities. These are open-book quizzes, so you can use your book and notes to complete the quizzes. However, **you must complete each quiz on your own; you cannot work with others.** Your quizzes will be graded immediately, but because different students are taking the quizzes at different times, the answers will not be revealed. Quizzes will open at 7AM on each Friday and close at 11:59PM on Saturday, so you will have almost two days in which you can attempt each quiz.

**Exams:** On the Monday following the end of each of the four larger modules, there will be a slightly larger exam that covers all material from within that module. Each exam will be 40 questions long and worth 40 points. Again, questions will be drawn from a larger pool, so not every student will receive the exact same questions. You will have 40 minutes to complete the exam. **Exams are also open-book but you must complete each quiz on your own; you cannot work with others.** There is added time pressure, and the questions will be harder, so you will need to study the material beforehand to do well. You will have a 24-hour period during which you can take the exam, usually starting at 7AM on the Monday following the end of each module (running through 7AM on Tuesday).

**Discussion Forums:** Because we will not have an in-person component to this class, we will be using discussion forums as an opportunity for more discussion of the course material. Each of you will be assigned to a small group that will be maintained throughout the semester. When you post to a discussion forum, you will be able to see (and respond to) the posts from other members of your group. You are required to post at least once per week to the group discussion forum. Sometimes, there will be specific questions that you will be asked to answer in the discussion forum. However, if a specific question was not posed, then you can get credit for posting in one of three ways:

* Post a link to an on-line article or video that is related to the material discussed that week. If you choose to post an article or video, give a brief summary of it and explain which material it relates to and how it is relevant.
* Ask a question about the course material. If you choose this option, please make sure that the question is thoughtful and detailed. For instance, don’t just ask a question that can be answered simply by reading the text (or even by googling). Instead, describe some idea that you are struggling with, explain what is making you confused, and what you have done to try to figure out the answer.
* Answer a question that someone else has posed. Often, the best way to learn about new material is to explain it to others. If one of your group members poses a question, you can get credit for answering. Try to be detailed in your responses, and if possible point them to material in the book or lectures for more information.

You can receive up to 4 points for each discussion post, depending on the quality of the post. The more thoughtful and detailed it is, the more likely you will be to get the full points. Make sure you make your posts by Saturday night at 11:59PM each week (though discussion forums will open on Sunday of each week, so it will be available all week).

Remember, it is important to be respectful of your classmates when participating in group discussion, and harassment and inappropriate content will not be tolerated. Do not insult your classmates (directly or indirectly), do not belittle other people’s posts, and do not post content that has the potential to offend your classmates. When in doubt, you can run your post by the instructor or course assistants for guidance. Inappropriate posts will result in the deduction of **all** discussion points and potentially additional disciplinary action.

**Research Participation**: An important part of your education in psychology is to learn, first hand, how psychological research is carried out. In Psychology 101, this is accomplished through a research participation requirement. Students in Psychology 101 are required to participate in eight hours of research credit. The psychology subject pool allocates credits in half hour units. This means that you will need 16 half-hour credits to complete your research participation requirement. Each credit is worth 3 points towards your overall grade. Completing your participation requirement is a very easy way to improve your grade in this course! You must complete your research participation by **the last day of classes. Because this course is being conducted in an on-line format, there will be on-line options for completing the research participation requirement (though there may also be some in person opportunities available).**

By participating in research projects, you will learning about the research process and providing an important service to psychologists who are trying to further knowledge in the field. As you read through your textbook, you may notice the names of some of the professors at Michigan State. In most cases, these professors’ studies were carried out right here at MSU, using participants from Psychology 101. So, at some point in the future, you may be able to point to a study that is being reported in a textbook or even in the news and say “I was a participant in that study, they’re talking about me!” If you have any objections to participating in psychological research, alternative projects are available. These will involve reading and writing about published psychological studies. Details about these alternative projects will be posted on the course web site.

**Homework**: There will be two written homework assignments. The goal of these assignments will be to have you apply ideas from the course to your own life. Each assignment will be worth 20 points. You will be required to submit these assignments to an electronic “drop box” on the course web site. This drop box will record the time that you submitted the assignment. You will lose points for each hour that the paper is late. For this reason, you may want to complete these assignments and submit them earlier than the due date. **You cannot work with others on either homework assignment. Working with others will be considered academic dishonesty.**

Consistent with MSU’s efforts to enhance student learning, foster honesty, and maintain integrity in our academic processes, we use a tool called Turnitin to compare a student’s work with multiple sources. The tool compares each student’s work with an extensive database of prior publications and papers, providing links to possible matches and a ‘similarity score’. The tool does not determine whether plagiarism has occurred or not. Instead, the instructor must make a complete assessment and judge the originality of the student’s work. All submissions to this course may be checked using this tool.

Students should submit papers without identifying information included in the paper (e.g. name or student number), the system will automatically show this info to faculty in your course when viewing the submission, but the information will not be retained by Turnitin. Student submissions will be retained only in the MSU repository hosted by Turnitin.

**Surveys:** There will also be two surveys that you will be asked to complete during the semester (including one during the second week of class). These survey will be used for in class demonstrations, and also to provide some information to me about you. Each survey will be worth three points towards your grade.

**Makeups: We realize that completing class work during this challenging time can be difficult. The most important policy regarding makeup assignments is that you contact the instructor or course assistants at least 12 hours before the close of an assignment to let them know that you will not be able to complete an assignment and to work out alternative arrangements. If you have any technical difficulties when taking an on-line quiz or exam, contact D2L support (their number is:** 517-432-6200**)** so they attempt to troubleshoot or at least document the problem. You may not be able to retake an assignment for which you had technical difficulties if you do not document the problem with D2L support at the time it occurs.

If you cannot take the exam because of a university-scheduled event (e.g., a commitment for a sports team), a religious holiday, or some other acceptable event that you could have foreseen, you must notify the TA **at least one week before the **assignment****.

**Accommodations for Students with Disabilities**: Michigan State University is committed to providing equal opportunity for participation in all programs, services and activities. Requests for accommodations by persons with disabilities may be made by contacting the Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities at 517-884-RCPD or on the web at [rcpd.msu.edu](http://rcpd.msu.edu/%22%20%5Cl%20%22_blank). Once your eligibility for an accommodation has been determined, you will be issued a Verified Individual Services Accommodation ("VISA") form. Please email this form to me at the start of the term and/or **two weeks prior to the accommodation date** (test, project, etc.). Requests received after this date may not be able to be honored. When sending the form, please specify which accommodations you will actual request to use, as some students are entitled to accommodations that they don’t intend on using.

**Questions**: If you have questions about any of the material in the textbook or lectures, please attend my office hours or the teaching assistants’ office hours.

**Grade Breakdown**. Your grade will be calculated in the following way. There are 500 total points available in this class.

To get this grade: You need this percentage: Which is this many points:

4.0 90% 450

3.5 85% 425

3.0 80% 400

2.5 75% 375

2.0 70% 350

1.5 60% 300

1.0 50% 250

0.0 <50% <250

**Your total points (i.e., the actual points you get from exams, homework, participation, etc.) will be rounded to the nearest whole number.**

The D2L site keeps track of your progress throughout the class, including the readings you access, the activities you upload, and the time you spend watching the lectures. If you complete 100% of the activities (including spending the right amount of time watching the lectures) during the week in which they were assigned, and you are 1 point below the cutoff for the next grade, then you can petition to be bumped up to the next grade. This is the only condition under which any grade adjustments will be made, so plan ahead!

There will be a grade calculator available for download on the course website. You can download it and use it to keep track of your grades in the course.

# Academic Integrity

The only way that you will benefit from this or any other course is to do the required work. All work (including the homework and the exams) should be done entirely your own. If you engage in any form of cheating, you will receive a 0.0 for this course.

Statement on Academic Integrity from the MSU Office of the Ombudsman: There is a statement from the MSU ombudsman posted on the course website. This provides a definition of what cheating and academic dishonesty is. You should read this statement, as it provides clear guidance on what counts as cheating in this and other courses at the university. Not knowing that your behavior is cheating is not an excuse if the behavior is covered in this document.

# Limits to confidentiality

Essays, journals, and other materials submitted for this class are generally considered confidential pursuant to the University's student record policies. However, students should be aware that University employees, including instructors, may not be able to maintain confidentiality when it conflicts with their responsibility to report certain issues to protect the health and safety of MSU community members and others. As the instructor, I must report the following information to other University offices (including the [MSU Police Department](http://police.msu.edu/)) if you share it with me:

* Suspected child abuse/neglect, even if this maltreatment happened when you were a child,
* Allegations of sexual assault or sexual harassment when they involve MSU students, faculty, or staff, and
* Credible threats of harm to oneself or to others.

These reports may trigger contact from a campus official who will want to talk with you about the incident that you have shared. In almost all cases, it will be your decision whether you wish to speak with that individual. If you would like to talk about these events in a more confidential setting you are encouraged to make an appointment with the [MSU Counseling Center](http://counseling.msu.edu/).

**Important Dates (in addition to weekly quizzes and discussion forum posts)**

September 12th (11:59PM): Complete first class survey (see Week 2 material)

September 21st: Exam #1

October 11th (11:59PM): Homework #1 Due

October 19th: Exam #2l

November 7th (11:59PM): Complete second class survey (see Week 10 material)

November 16nd: Exam #3

December 6th (11:59PM): Homework #2 Due

December 15-17th: Exam #4

December 11th (5:00 PM): Complete research participation

Please see the course schedule document for a list of topics and readings by week.