

Introduction to General Psychology

Last Updated: Wed, 01/07/2026

Course prefix: PSYC

Course number: 1101

Section: K

CRN (you may add up to five):
33118

Instructor First Name: Dianne

Instructor Last Name: Leader

Semester: Spring

Academic year: 2026

Course description:

This is a broad survey course in scientific psychology, presenting an overview of the field and its methods of inquiry. As a prerequisite for more advanced psychology courses, PSYC 1101 is designed to provide a solid foundation for further study in the field. It also provides opportunities to develop new insights into yourself and others, while honing your scientific and critical thinking skills.

You'll learn how brain activity underlies human behavior and our perception of reality. We'll explore the basic psychological processes of learning, memory, thinking, and human development. And we'll discover what personality theories reveal about the individuality of each unique one of us.

Course learning outcomes:

By the end of the course, you should be able to:

1. Describe the major concepts, theoretical approaches, historical trends, and empirical findings in psychology.
2. Identify and explain the basic methodologies used in psychological research, including experimental, observational, and survey methods and the general principles and techniques of research design.
3. Use critical thinking skills to analyze and evaluate information, to solve problems, and make informed decisions regarding psychological principles and research.
4. Apply psychological concepts, theories, and research findings to real-world situations and personal experiences.

5. Recognize ethical standards in psychological research and practice and understand the importance of ethical behavior in diverse settings.

Required course materials:

The required digital package includes: Phelps, E.A., Berkman, E.T., and Gazzaniga, M.S. (2022), Psychological Science. New York: Norton (7th edition), with InQuizitive (online quizzing homework) and ZAPS (online experiential labs).

A 21-day free trial is available online, allowing you to start working right away. For continuing access, you'll need to pay before the end of the trial using a credit card or a code purchased from the bookstore.

A hard copy of the textbook bundled with the digital package is available from the publisher or the bookstore at a higher price.

Grading policy:

The traditional percentage grading scale will be used

- A: 90 - 100%+ excellent
- B: 80 - <90% very good
- C: 70 - <80% satisfactory
- D: 60 - <70% passing
- F: under 60% failing
- A grade of C or higher is required to pass if you're taking the course Pass/Fail.
- If your grade misses the cutoff, you've missed the cutoff. All grades are final.

Graded Assignments

Tests will comprise 64% of the course grade. We'll have three midterm tests and a cumulative final exam. Midterm tests will each be 50 questions and worth 200 points. Your lowest midterm test score will be dropped, giving you both an opportunity and an incentive to make up for any disappointments. The final exam will have 60 questions and is worth 240 points. Most test questions will be multiple-choice, with a focus on applied questions, and will cover material from class and the textbook. Up to four questions on each test will not be multiple-choice (e.g., fill-in-the-blank, select-all-that-apply, or short-answer).

Tests will be taken in our regular classroom during the scheduled class time, or in the ODS Testing Center by appointment for students with ODS accommodations. Tests will be on Canvas Quizzes, using Honorlock for identity verification and browser lockdown. Members of the instructional team will provide in-person proctoring.

There are four other grade components that contribute 36% to the course grade. InQuizitive and ZAPS are two types of online homework assignments.

InQuizitive Homework (8% of the grade) is a form of adaptive self-testing over the textbook material that familiarizes you with the ideas, concepts, and research findings you need to master. If you keep working on an InQuizitive activity until you have answered the minimum number of questions required and have also achieved the target score by the deadline, then you will earn 100% for that activity.

ZAPS Homework (12% of the grade) is a lab simulation of various psychological studies. You will sometimes be the researcher (e.g., training a virtual mouse via classical conditioning techniques). Other activities require you to do various tasks as the subject of the study (e.g., the first ZAPS assignment on the Stroop Effect asks you to call out the color of each word). You are required to do twelve of the 22 ZAPS assignments. If you do more than twelve ZAPS, then the top twelve scores will be counted toward the homework. Unlike InQuizitives, some ZAPS activities may need more than perseverance to earn 100%, depending on the task and your specific abilities.

A variety of **In-Class Assignments (ICAs)** (10% of the grade) will be **unscheduled and worth a variable number of points**, to encourage attendance, class participation, and student engagement with the material and with one another. Some ICAs will be individual assignments, and some will be group assignments.

Departmental Research Requirement (10% of the grade)

The psychology we teach is based on scientific research, so our students must experience how psychological research is conducted. To this end, the psychology department requires that all students taking General Psychology (PSYC 1101) be exposed to the methods used to explore human behavior. Students must **earn four research credits** by participating in research studies or alternative assignments. Research participation in our department is via the SONA website. Researchers post available studies, and students sign up to participate for credit. Each hour of participation earns 1 credit; 4 credits are required to meet the departmental requirement

Information about alternative assignments will be posted on our Canvas site for students who are unable or unwilling to participate in SONA studies.

Extra Credit

You can earn up to 3% extra credit in this course, 2% by your individual effort ("earned extra credit" assignments), and 1% as a group effort.

See the Grading Document for details on how the grading is calculated.

Select "Syllabus" on the course navigation menu or click the button on the Home page labeled "Grading" for a spreadsheet where you can enter your earned points. You can track your progress throughout the semester by downloading the document and calculating your grade as needed. (No, it doesn't have approved formulas that do it automatically.)

Attendance policy:

Students are expected to attend class and participate in In-Class Activities (ICAs). We will have individual assignments or group tasks in Zoom breakout rooms at variable times during class throughout the semester. The assignments will be due on that same day, encouraging you to attend class to earn ICA points. Missed ICAs can only be made up with an Institute-approved absence or an official letter from the Dean of Students and must be completed within 7 days of the original in-class activity day.

Academic honesty/integrity statement:

Students are expected to maintain the highest standards of academic integrity. All work submitted must be original and properly cited. Plagiarism, cheating, or any form of academic dishonesty will be reported to the Office of Student Integrity and result in consequences as outlined in the university's academic integrity policy. Please familiarize yourself with the following sites for more detailed information.

Honor Challenge — <https://osi.gatech.edu/students/honor-code>

Office of Student Integrity — <http://www.osi.gatech.edu/index.php/>

Core IMPACTS statement(s) (if applicable):

This is a Core IMPACTS course in the Social Sciences area.

Core IMPACTS refers to the core curriculum, which provides students with essential knowledge in foundational academic areas. This course helps students master course content and supports students' broad academic and career goals.

This course directs students toward a broad orienting question: How do I understand human experiences and connections?

Completion of this course enables students to meet the following learning outcomes:

Students will effectively analyze the complexity of human behavior, and how historical, economic, political, social, or geographic relationships develop, persist, or change.

Course content, activities, and exercises in this course help students develop the following career-ready competencies:

- Intercultural Competence
- Perspective-Taking
- Persuasion