

PSYC 1101 · General Psychology

Course Syllabus · Fall 2026

Georgia Institute of Technology · School of Psychological and Brain Sciences

I. Course Information

Course	PSYC 1101	Meeting Times	Tue & Thu, 3:30–4:45 PM
Semester	Fall 2026	Location	Scheller College of Business, Room 200
CRN	89210	Section	A
Credits	3		

II. Instructor & Contact Information

Role	Name	Email	Office Hours
Instructor	Spencer Garcia	sgarcia71@gatech.edu	Virtual (by appointment)
Teaching Assistant	Katie Cowart	kcowart32@gatech.edu	[Day, Time · Location]
Teaching Assistant	Charlotte Huddleston	chuddleston8@gatech.edu	[Day, Time · Location]
Teaching Assistant	Mahati Hariharan	mhariharan9@gatech.edu	[Day, Time · Location]

Email is the easiest way to reach the TAs or me, and I encourage you to write whenever you have questions, comments, or concerns. Please email the TAs first, who will then loop me in when needed. When you email, include your full name and the class you are taking (day/time).

Please allow up to two business days (excluding weekends and holidays) for a response, though replies are usually faster. If you have not heard back within that window, feel free to send a friendly reminder.

III. Course Description

Introduction to Psychology is a broad survey of the major topics in psychology, including (but not limited to) research methodology, biological and social factors influencing behavior, development, learning, memory, personality, and psychological disorders. This course has no prerequisites.

IV. Course Objectives

- Demonstrate familiarity with major psychological concepts, theoretical perspectives, empirical findings, and historical trends
- Describe the basic processes underlying a variety of psychological phenomena, including development, emotion, motivation, learning, memory, and consciousness
- Discuss the ways environmental and biological processes contribute to psychological phenomena
- Identify and differentiate among the basic methods of scientific psychology
- Explain the fundamental changes in behavior and mental processes that occur across the lifespan

- Discuss how groups and individuals influence behavior and attitudes
- Identify factors that contribute to personality and attitudes
- Recognize psychological disorders and describe treatment options
- Apply psychological concepts to human behavior and to your own experiences, and communicate effectively in writing

V. Textbook & Materials

There is no required textbook for this course. If you would like a text, I recommend the free, open-access Psychology textbook from OpenStax, available online or as a low-cost print edition.

Psychology (2e) from OpenStax: openstax.org/details/books/psychology-2e

VI. Evaluation & Grading

Assignment	Points	Final Grade	Points
Four Unit Exams	500	A	≥ 900
Final Exam	250	B	899 – 800
Reflection Assignments	100	C	799 – 600
In-Class Assignments	150	D	599 – 500
TOTAL	1000	F	≤ 499

VII. Required Course Assignments

Unit Exams (4 × 125 = 500 pts): Four unit exams, each covering roughly one-quarter of the course. Each exam tests comprehension and application, not just recognition. Exams are completed in class through Canvas using the Respondus LockDown Browser, so bring a compatible laptop or device.

Final Exam (250 pts): The comprehensive final is given during the institute's scheduled exam period. The Final Exam will be completed in class through Canvas using the Respondus LockDown Browser, so bring a compatible laptop or device.

Reflection Assignments (100 pts total): Brief (about one paragraph) reflections submitted through Canvas throughout the semester, applying the week's material. There are 10 reflections, each worth 10 points.

In-Class Assignments (15 × 10 = 150 pts): Short assignments tied to the day's lecture, graded for completion and effort. A total of 15 are given across the semester, each worth 10 points.

VIII. Research Experience Requirement

Exposure to research helps you understand the scientific study of human behavior. You may fulfill this requirement by (1) participating as a volunteer in studies in the School of Psychological and Brain Sciences (sign up at gatech-psych.sona-systems.com), (2) completing a series of alternative assignments, or (3) a combination of both.

You need 4 hours of research credit, and at least half must be completed in person. At least half of your credit is due by the midpoint of the semester (Thursday, October 8); the remainder is due by the last day of class. Incomplete research credit can reduce your final grade by up to a full letter grade

(-2.5% per missing hour). Students under 18 or with a conscientious objection may use the alternative-assignment option.

IX. Essential Course Policies

Attendance: Attendance is mandatory. There is no separate attendance grade, but in-class assignments can only be completed on the day they are given.

Classroom Technology: Cell phones must be silenced and put away during class. On regular class days, the classroom is divided into a laptop-free section and a laptop-permitted section; please seat yourself accordingly. Because taking notes by hand and avoiding on-screen distractions support stronger learning and retention, students are encouraged to use the laptop-free section. Laptops are required only on exam days for the Respondus LockDown Browser.

Final Exam Date & Time: Tuesday, December 15, from 2:40 PM – 5:30 PM

Late Work: Reflections and in-class assignments cannot be submitted late and have no make-ups.

Extra Credit: No extra credit is offered in this course. Final grades are based solely on the assignments described above.

Grade Disputes: If you believe a grade is in error, first contact the teaching assistants in writing within one week of the grade being posted, briefly explaining your concern. If the matter is not resolved, you may then bring it to the instructor. Regraded work is reviewed in full and may result in a higher or lower score.

Missed Exams: Make-up exams are offered only as permitted by institute policy (university-excused absences, religious holidays, major illness). Contact me before the exam when possible, or within 24 hours of missing it. Make-ups must be completed within one week of being cleared to return.

Academic Integrity: Students are expected to uphold the Georgia Tech Academic Honor Code. Suspected violations will be reported to the Office of Student Integrity. Information on the Academic Honor Code is available at <https://catalog.gatech.edu/policies/honor-code/>.

Student-Faculty Expectations: Georgia Tech strives for an atmosphere of mutual respect, acknowledgment, and responsibility between faculty and students. The Student-Faculty Expectations Agreement, which outlines these mutual responsibilities, is available in the Georgia Tech Catalog at <https://catalog.gatech.edu/rules/21/>.

Accommodations: Students who need accommodations should contact the Office of Disability Services (404-385-2593) as early as possible to obtain an accommodations letter, then email me so we can arrange support.

X. A Note About Artificial Intelligence (AI)

In this class, we treat AI-based assistance (such as ChatGPT) the same way we treat collaboration with other people: you are welcome to discuss your ideas with others and with AI tools. However, all work you submit must be your own, and anything you did not write must be properly cited. Submitting uncited AI-generated content is treated as academic misconduct.

Two practical rules: (1) Never copy text directly out of an AI conversation into your assignment; use the interaction to learn, then write in your own words. (2) Don't have your assignment and the AI tool open at the same time. Following these rules will keep your use of AI consistent with the Academic Honor Code.

XI. Syllabus Change Policy

This syllabus is a guide. While every attempt is made to keep it accurate, circumstances may require changes during the semester. Any changes are at the instructor's discretion and will be announced with clear notice.

XII. Core IMPACTS

This is a Core IMPACTS course in the Social Sciences area. It addresses the orienting question, “How do I understand human experiences and connections?” Students will analyze the complexity of human behavior and how historical, economic, political, social, or geographic relationships develop, persist, or change, while building career-ready competencies in intercultural competence, perspective-taking, and persuasion.

XIII. Course Calendar

Date	Topic	Assignment Due
Tue 8/25	Welcome, Syllabus & History	
Thu 8/27	Psychological Research	
Tue 9/1	Biopsychology	Reflection 1
Thu 9/3	Sensation & Perception	
Tue 9/8	States of Consciousness	Reflection 2
Thu 9/10	EXAM 1	
Tue 9/15	Learning I: Classical & Operant Conditioning	
Thu 9/17	Learning II: Observational & Cognitive Learning	Reflection 3
Tue 9/22	Thinking & Intelligence	
Thu 9/24	Artificial Intelligence	Reflection 4
Tue 9/29	Memory I: Foundations & Systems	
Thu 10/1	Memory II: Forgetting & Constructive Processes	Reflection 5
Tue 10/6	No Class: Fall Break	
Thu 10/8	EXAM 2	Half of research credits due
Tue 10/13	Lifespan Development I: Early Childhood	
Thu 10/15	Lifespan Development II: Adolescence–Adulthood	Reflection 6
Tue 10/20	Motivation & Emotion	
Thu 10/22	Personality I: Major Theories & Trait Models	Reflection 7
Tue 10/27	Personality II: Assessment & Individual Differences	
Thu 10/29	Social Psychology I: Social Thinking & Attitudes	Reflection 8
Tue 11/3	Social Psychology II: Social Influence & Groups	
Thu 11/5	EXAM 3	
Tue 11/10	I-O Psychology I: Industrial	
Thu 11/12	I-O Psychology II: Organizational	Reflection 9
Tue 11/17	Stress, Lifestyle & Health	
Thu 11/19	Psychological Disorders	Reflection 9
Tue 11/24	No Class: Mental Health Day	
Thu 11/26	No Class: Thanksgiving Break	
Tue 12/1	Therapy & Treatment	Reflection 10
Thu 12/3	Positive Psychology	
Tue 12/8	EXAM 4	
Tue 12/15 (2:40 PM – 5:30 PM)	Final Exam (comprehensive)	During the institute final exam period

Assignments are due on Canvas at 11:59 PM unless otherwise specified. The course calendar is subject to change at the instructor's discretion.