

PSYC 1101 HP/H – Fall 2026

General Psychology

Class Meetings: MWF 9:30-10:20, JS Coon 161

Prerequisite: None

Instructor: Paul Verhaeghen, Ph.D.

E-mail: verhaeghen@gatech.edu

Office hours: virtual and by appointment. Email me!

Teaching Assistant: None

1. Required materials: NO REQUIRED TEXT

There is no required textbook for this class. If you insist on looking through one, Schacter's is really good. Textbooks for General Psych are expensive, bloated affairs, and their contents are often interchangeable. It's impossible to cover all that is in any of these textbooks and, paradoxically, textbooks also don't necessarily cover everything an instructor might want to teach. Time permitting, there will likely be excursions into topics not covered in many of these books (e.g., eyewitness testimony, subliminal perception). I teach from PowerPoints, and those will be made available on Canvas after (and often before) every class. For the tests, only the material covered in class (at the level of detail it is covered in the class) is relevant.

2. Canvas:

Canvas will be used for announcements, uploads, but most importantly for its Discussions, in which you will post your **weekly class diaries** (see below).

Don't forget that whatever you post on the discussion board can be seen by everyone else in the class, not just to the instructor. If you want to contact me personally, contact me by email or the Canvas message option.

3. This is a Core IMPACTS course that is part of the Social Sciences area.

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

This course should direct students toward a broad Orienting Question:

- How do I understand human experiences and connections?

Completion of this course should enable 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 should help students develop the following Career-Ready Competencies:

- Intercultural Competence
- Perspective-Taking
- Persuasion

4. Course description and learning outcomes:

This course is meant to provide a survey of concepts, theories and research in psychology – the science that studies human behavior. We will cover a broad range of topics: methodology, biological bases of behavior, learning, memory, thinking, intelligence, development, personality, and social cognition. After this class you will possess a basic knowledge of general psychology, as well as critical tools to evaluate research in these areas. I try to adapt the pace of the class to the students; we might see fewer topics than advertised, or we might go off on (hopefully interesting) tangents.

5. Attendance policy: There is no attendance policy.

6. Course requirements and organization:

Evaluation of course performance is based on (a-b-c) **three examinations**, and (d) a set of **class diaries**. Each of those 4 evaluative moments will be given equal weight for the final grade.

Exams cover the readings and the topics discussed in class up from the previous exam on (or from the start of the class, for Exam 1). Exams are not cumulative. The exam is constructed such that anyone who goes to class and takes notes should be able to do well. The level at which you should study is the level at which we covered the materials in class.

6.1. Exams (each is 50 points, 25% of your grade) will consist of 25 multiple-choice questions (one point for each) as well as two short take-home essay questions (12.5 points each).

The essay questions will be distributed in the class immediately preceding the exam, and they will also be posted on the assignments tab in Canvas. Submit your answer on the day of the exam. No answers to essay questions will be accepted after the day of the exam.

The last exam is not a final exam, that is, it is not cumulative – it's just the third exam.

The exams are online, open book, not proctored, but time-limited to 50 minutes. They can be taken anytime during the 24 hours of the exam date, counting from midnight to midnight, Atlanta time. Note that the time restriction means it's a good idea to actually study for the test, take notes, and have some form of indexing system. There will be no class on the day of the exam.

6.2 A set of weekly class diaries counts for 50 points (25% of grade). You can post those on the Discussions on the Canvas site for the class (go to the site for the class, click on the Discussions tab, enter your entry in the appropriate week). A diary entry is 100 words or so (more is always welcome), and it consists of any kind of comment or questions you might have about that week or the upcoming week's classes, something you read or heard that is pertinent, etc. (you can attach files or snippets). You can bounce off each other's comments and start a conversation. Weeks are counted from Saturday, midnight to Saturday, midnight. Late entries will not be accepted. I will accept a maximum of 13 entries, so can skip a few weeks and still get 50 points. (Multiple entries within one week, though welcome, will count as one.)

People make mistakes. Once you have posted, you can still edit or delete your post. Do consider that all other class members can read your posts. Be civil. (And be smart. And have fun.)

Each of your diary entries will be scored on a total of 4 points, thus yielding a total maximum of 52 points (out of 50 – 2 free points!). Typically, I just count (4 points for each valid diary entry), but I reserve the right to give a preparation a lower score if it is not up to snuff; in that case, I will email you.

The goal of the diary is not to keep you busy, but to help the class. That is, it helps to move things along more smoothly if I have some idea of where you have problems or what criticisms you have. It helps prepare you for discussions, and maybe you can find something useful in other people's comments.

7. Research experience requirement

We in the School of Psychology believe that exposure to research is essential to gaining a better understanding of the scientific study of human behavior. Being involved in research is a good way to experience first-hand and learn about the scientific enterprise. There are three ways to experience research activity to fulfill the research exposure requirement for PSYC 1101:

1. experience research as a volunteer participant in studies conducted in the School of Psychology at GT. You can learn about, and sign-up for, the experiments on the experiment web site: gatech-psych.sona-systems.com
2. complete a series of alternative assignments (see below)
3. or some combination of both.

7.1 Amount of Research Participation Required

You need to participate in 6 hours of research credit, and at least half of your research credits must be completed in-person (in other words, you can only complete a maximum of 50% of the requirement through online studies. Studies will be labeled in SONA as Online studies or Standard (lab) studies. For every 1 credit you earn in an online study, you must earn at least 1 credit in a standard study. You may complete as many credits through standard studies as you would like (i.e., you can complete the entire 6 credit requirement with standard, in-person studies).

7.2 Deadline for Research Participation

At least half of your credit must be completed by the midpoint of the semester (see course calendar for details), and you have until the last day of class (prior to the reading and exam periods) to complete the rest of your research credit.

Penalty for Incomplete Research Credits

Unsuccessful completion of all research credits can result in up to a letter grade reduction toward the final grade in the course. You will not technically earn points for participating in research hours. By doing 6 hours of research, you get to keep the points you have earned throughout the semester. The breakdown for partial completion is as follows:

- Only 5 hrs completed: -1.7% from total course grade
- Only 4 hrs completed: -3.3% from total course grade
- Only 3 hr completed: -5% from total course grade
- Only 2 hr completed: -6.7% from total course grade
- Only 1 hr completed: -8.3% from total course grade
- 0 hrs completed: -10% from total course grade

7.3 Penalty for No-Showing to Studies

When students sign up for studies, it is important that they show up at the appointed time or cancel their appointments 24 hours in advance. Missed appointments are problematic because of the time and opportunities lost such as depriving other students from taking that spot and the lost time of the researchers. If there are three unexcused missed appointments during the semester, the student will no longer be able to sign up for studies. In this case, the remaining requirement must be fulfilled using Option 2. Arriving late to an appointment may constitute a missed appointment if the researcher is not able to accommodate the student in the remaining time.

7.4 Alternative Research Options for Minors and Objectors

This information is for people who are not yet 18 years of age and for people that have a conscientious objection to participating in experiments or research studies.

Periodically throughout the semester, the School of Psychology will host Research Review sessions. Students may attend these sessions to earn up to two (2) research credits toward their PSYC 1101 requirement (per session attended). Students who wish to complete all of their research participation requirement through Research Review sessions will need to attend at least three sessions to fulfill their requirement.

During Research Review sessions, students will be provided with a research article and asked to summarize the major theoretical foundations, hypotheses, methodology, and findings of the study. **Research summaries will be completed on paper (i.e., you may not use laptops, tablets, etc. during Research Review sessions).** If you have accommodations on file with Disability Services indicating you are unable to complete this assignment, please contact your instructor for alternative options.

For dates, times, and locations of the Research Review sessions, please check Canvas for an announcement from your instructor during the first few weeks of the semester.

8. Important note: **There are no 'stupid' questions/comments.** If you do not understand something, or have no idea why we are talking about it, chances are somebody else has the same problem. Things that are not clear are always the fault of the instructor, except at exam time, so please ask any questions about the materials before the exams.

9. If you require **special accommodations**, contact the Office of Disability Services at (404) 894-2563 or <http://disabilityservices.gatech.edu/>, as soon as possible, to make an appointment to discuss your special needs and to obtain an accommodations letter. Please also e-mail me as soon as possible in order to set up a time to discuss your learning needs.

10. Make-up exams are given only in case of proven emergency and at the discretion of the instructor. Please remember that being granted a make-up exam is a privilege, not a right. If a foreseeable conflict arises, please notify the instructor **before** test time. If an emergency arises, **provide documentation** of the emergency through the Office of Student Life. If something goes wrong during your test-taking session, document it as well (screenshots, pictures, video, etc.) and alert me as soon as possible.

11. Georgia Tech aims to cultivate a community based on trust, **academic integrity, and honor**. Students are expected to act according to the highest ethical standards. For information on Georgia Tech's Academic Honor Code, please visit <http://www.catalog.gatech.edu/rules/18/>. Any student suspected of cheating or plagiarizing on a quiz, exam, or assignment will get a score of zero for that exam or project and will be reported to the Office of Student Integrity, who will investigate the incident and identify the appropriate penalty for violations. This includes using AI (like ChatGPT) to answer your essay questions.

12. Grading:

The traditional dividing line of 90/80/70/60 for the A/B/C/D range of grades will be used. The instructor reserves the right to alter criteria if necessary (popularly known as 'grading on the curve'), with the restriction that alterations will always be to the advantage of the students. *All grades are final*. If you are one point short of a particular grade, you are one point short of that particular grade. PLEASE DO NOT CONTACT ME TO ASK FOR AN EXCEPTION (I will not reply).

Campus Resources for Students

In your time at Georgia Tech, you may find yourself in need of support. Below you will find some resources to support you both as a student and as a person.

Academic support

- Center for Academic Success <http://success.gatech.edu>
 - 1-to-1 tutoring <http://success.gatech.edu/1-1-tutoring>
 - Peer-Led Undergraduate Study (PLUS) <http://success.gatech.edu/tutoring/plus>
 - Academic coaching <http://success.gatech.edu/coaching>
- Residence Life's Learning Assistance Program <https://housing.gatech.edu/learning-assistance-program>
 - Drop-in tutoring for many 1000 level courses
- OMED: Educational Services (<http://omed.gatech.edu/programs/academic-support>)
 - Group study sessions and tutoring programs
- Communication Center (<http://www.communicationcenter.gatech.edu>)
 - Individualized help with writing and multimedia projects
- Academic advisors for your major <http://advising.gatech.edu/>

Personal Support

Georgia Tech Resources

- The Office of the Dean of Students: <http://studentlife.gatech.edu/content/services>; **404-894-6367**; Smithgall Student Services Building 2nd floor
 - You also may request assistance at https://gatech-advocate.symplicity.com/care_report/index.php/pid383662?
- Counseling Center: <http://counseling.gatech.edu>; **404-894-2575**; Smithgall Student Services Building 2nd floor
 - Services include short-term individual counseling, group counseling, couples counseling, testing and assessment, referral services, and crisis intervention. Their website also includes links to state and national resources.
 - *Students in crisis may walk in during business hours (8am-5pm, Monday through Friday) or contact the counselor on call after hours at 404-894-2204.*
- Students' Temporary Assistance and Resources (STAR): <http://studentlife.gatech.edu/content/need-help>
 - Can assist with interview clothing, food, and housing needs.
- Stamps Health Services: <https://health.gatech.edu>; **404-894-1420**
 - Primary care, pharmacy, women's health, psychiatry, immunization and allergy, health promotion, and nutrition
- OMED: Educational Services: <http://www.omed.gatech.edu>
- Women's Resource Center: <http://www.womenscenter.gatech.edu>; **404-385-0230**
- LGBTQIA Resource Center: <http://lgbtqia.gatech.edu/>; **404-385-2679**
- Veteran's Resource Center: <http://veterans.gatech.edu/>; **404-385-2067**
- Georgia Tech Police: **404-894-2500**