

# PSY 112M: Foundational Experiences in Psychology

Professor: Allen McConnell  
[mconnar@miamioh.edu](mailto:mconnar@miamioh.edu)

Office: 316 Psychology Building  
Phone: 513.529.2407

Student hours: Thursdays 1-2 p.m. on Zoom (see URL, below), and at other times by appointment  
<https://miamioh.zoom.us/j/88376315254?pwd=TnlrR0JMRmZmbUhrMy9OcWpY29Wdz09>

TA: Jason Folmsbee  
[folmsbjr@miamioh.edu](mailto:folmsbjr@miamioh.edu)

Course info: PSY 112M, Section A, CRN 70347  
Web-based course on [Canvas](#)

## Resources

There is no textbook, but PDF readings and other course materials are available on our course's [Canvas site](#).

## Course overview

This course introduces new psychology majors at Miami to professional development skills and exercises as they begin to study the field of psychology. PSY 112M helps psychology majors build awareness of institutional support and opportunities with the goal of developing intentional, integrated plans of curricular and co-curricular learning to enhance success at Miami and well after graduation. Through reflection, self-assessment, discussion, and exploration, each student should gain a better sense of belonging at Miami, develop plans to make the most of their education, and establish a foundation for academic and co-curricular success. Moreover, this course is taught by the chair of the Department of Psychology, and much of our class will focus on how to get the most out of being a psychology major at Miami.

This course involves psychology-specific experiences (e.g., experiential learning gained by participating in research studies, learning how the psychology major provides opportunities for professional development and career exploration) and Miami-relevant activities (e.g., community building, personal and social responsibility, academic resources and support, and engagement with diversity, equity, and inclusion).

Student learning goals for this course:

- Articulate why the processes of scientific inquiry and critical thinking are important for psychological research and practice
- Describe the process of psychological research and identify key elements of research (e.g., informed consent) and variations in research methods (e.g., qualitative vs. quantitative, experimental vs. correlational)
- Identify the core competencies (areas of knowledge, skills, and self and other awareness) of psychological scientists and relate them to academic and non-academic career paths within and outside psychology
- Recognize the implications of personal and professional ethical principles as a member of the University, professional, and global communities
- Explore topics involving power, privilege, and bias and their impact in building communities that support and foster belongingness
- Discover campus and psychology department services that can assist students in academic success
- Reflect on ways to maximize the student life experience through personal and social responsibility
- Navigate career development resources by engaging in career and major exploration

## Grades

Source	Points each	Total points
Research experience credit (6 hours across the semester)	10	60
Meeting the 6-hour research experience credit requirement	30	30
Meeting each of 3 research experience deadlines (REDs)	20	60
Mastery quizzes (10 total)	10	100
Weekly assignments (1 per week, 14 total)	10	140
On-line discussion participation (11 weeks total)	10	110
Meeting all three research deadlines on time	50	50
<b>Total Points (grading scale based on 500 points, plus 50 cushion points)</b>		<b>550</b>

Final grades will be determined by total points accumulated during the semester applied this scale:

Points	Percentages	Letter
463 - 550	93% - 110%	A
448 - 462	90% - 92%	A-
433 - 447	87% - 89%	B+
413 - 432	83% - 86%	B
398 - 412	80% - 82%	B-
383 - 397	77% - 79%	C+
363 - 382	73% - 76%	C
348 - 362	70% - 72%	C-
333 - 347	67% - 69%	D+
313 - 332	63% - 66%	D
298 - 312	60% - 62%	D-
0 - 297	0% - 59%	F

There are 550 possible points available, but the grading scale is based on 500 total points, which means there are 50 “cushion points” available. These cushion points are included to give students flexibility and peace of mind should they experience challenges or disruptions during the semester. Students are strongly encouraged to earn as many points as possible rather than “burn through their cushion points early” (i.e., do not blow off early assignments) because these 50 points are provided to help students manage unexpected situations during the entire semester (e.g., being sick, technical snafus). Students will not be given extra opportunities at the end of the class to earn bonus points. Students should view cushion points as “something to save for a rainy day” rather than “something to burn through on a sunny day.”

The professor reserves the right to adjust the above grading scheme. However, if modifications do occur, changes will only make it easier for students to get a better grade (i.e., the scale will never be adjusted against students). However, it would be unwise to anticipate that an adjustment will occur.

Final grades are based on the total points earned applied to the above scale, no exceptions. There is no end-of-semester negotiation period where students beg for better grades. Students who are dissatisfied with their performance should discuss the situation with the professor early in the semester. All weekly assignments (i.e., quizzes, activities, on-line discussion participation) are due before Saturday evening at 6 p.m. (US Eastern Time) for the week associated with the work. Late work, regardless of the circumstances, will not be accepted (remember, students have 50 points of grade cushion). Please submit assignments on time, and work ahead so that deadlines are not an issue!

## Weekly class presentations (WCPs)

Students should begin each week by viewing weekly class presentations (WCPs), which are videos from the professor posted to frame each week's Canvas module by noon on Mondays (if not sooner). WCPs serve as the lecture portion of the class. Also, the professor is available weekly on Thursday afternoons (1-2 p.m.) on Zoom during student hours to answer questions (not only about course content, but about psychology more broadly). Please attend student hours to chat with the professor. If students cannot meet during weekly student hours, please email the professor to find an alternative meeting time. In addition, the professor will hold occasional "town hall meetings" in the evenings for students to attend and ask interactive questions. Although this is a large class (>250 students), students have many opportunities for one-on-one chats and group interactions with the professor (who is also chair of the department), so please take advantage of them!

## Research experience

The major experiential component of this course is the research experience, which typically involves student participation in the Department of Psychology human subject pool. The subject pool allows PSY 112 students to sign up for psychology studies conducted by Miami professors and students. By participating in the subject pool, students learn directly about different areas in psychology directly, about the scientific method, and about research ethics. *Each* hour of subject pool participation (individual research studies can range from .5 hours of credit to 1 hour of credit to even 2 hours of credit or more, depending on study length) is worth 10 points, and students should complete 6 hours of research experience credit during the semester. Students who complete all 6 hours before the end of the semester will receive 30 additional points. Although it is anticipated that most studies will be conducted in person, some studies will be conducted on-line too. Students who prefer to not participate in the subject pool can earn research experience points by reading scientific papers and writing reports about them (details below). Most students find it far more interesting and easier to participate in subject pool studies for the research experience requirement, but the choice is yours.

Students in PSY 112 need to register for the human subjects pool by signing up on the SONA, which is the web-based system that administers Miami's subject pool (<https://miamioh.sona-systems.com/>). In fact, the first weekly activity is to view a video on the value of the subject pool and to sign up on SONA. To encourage timely completion of research hours, three deadlines (for each of the three sections of the semester: A, B, C) exist for students to complete at least one-third of their research hours. Students can (and are encouraged to) complete their research hours well ahead of these deadlines, but they exist to make sure that students spread participation out across the semester (i.e., if everyone waits until the last week to complete 6 research hours, there won't be enough studies available). Each time a student completes a deadline, they earn 20 points. If students meet *all* three deadlines on time, they earn yet another 50 points (in addition to the 60 points). Thus, meeting *all three* deadlines *on time* is worth 110 points, which is 22% of one's overall grade (two letter grades)!

<u>Section</u>	<u>Day and time of deadline</u>	<u>Minimum subject pool credits hours required</u>
A	Saturday, September 25, 2021, 6 p.m.	waived
B	Saturday, October 30, 2021, 6 p.m.	at least 3 hours total
C	Saturday, December 4, 2021, 6 p.m.	at least 6 hours total

Students, in lieu of participating in human subject studies, can earn research experience points by submitting research article write-ups. Students do not have to submit any write-ups at all (i.e., they can simply complete the 6 hours of research participation, as described above), but they can replace 1 hour of research credit by reading a scientific article, summarizing it, and uploading their 500-word summary (see Canvas for details). Each completed write-up is worth 10 points (the same as 1 hour of research credit), and students can submit up to three write-ups during each of the three sections outlined above (e.g., Section A runs from the beginning of class until September 25), but they cannot submit more than three write-ups in any single section (e.g., a student cannot submit 6 papers in early December to fulfill the research experience requirement). Write-ups will be graded in an all-or-nothing fashion (assignment details on Canvas). Students can mix-and-match subject pool hours and research article write-ups to meet requirements (which may be necessary if students wait too long to sign-up for studies near a deadline and find all studies are filled -- please don't procrastinate!).

## Overview of course organization and activities

The semester is divided into three sections (Sections A, B, and C) -- see last page of syllabus. Each week of the class is one module within a section on the Canvas site. For example, Section A encompasses the first five weeks of the semester, and each one of those weeks has its own module. Each module contains a weekly assignment and other activities (e.g., on-line discussion posts, mastery quizzes). All assignments are due by Saturday at 6 p.m. -- no late assignments are accepted, *regardless of circumstances*. Please work ahead to avoid missing deadlines (and to avoid spending Saturdays completing assignments)!

## Weekly assignments

Every week, students should complete the weekly assignment, which represents “the main homework” for the week. These assignments range from setting up one’s human subjects account on SONA (week 1) to Bystander Intervention training to writing their resume (last assignment). Weekly assignments are typically graded by the professor or TA in an all-or-nothing fashion (10 points each), and they must be completed no later than Saturday at 6 p.m. Late assignments are not accepted and will receive zeros.

## Weekly on-line discussions (WODs)

Students will participate in weekly on-line discussion sessions (11 throughout the semester), where they post a response to a provided prompt before Saturday at 6 p.m. on that week. In addition to grading discussion contributions in an all-or-nothing fashion (10 points each), the professor will review comments for material to cover in future weeks (thus students’ posts help shape the content of the course, including future WCPs).

## Mastery quizzes

Throughout the semester, students will complete 10 mastery quizzes to assess their learning of key concepts. Each quiz is composed of 10 multiple-choice items (each question is worth 1 point), randomly selected from a larger pool of items. Mastery quizzes are open-book, open-note activities, and they serve to provide students with feedback on how successfully they are mastering concepts in the course. During weeks where quizzes are assigned, they must be completed by Saturday at 6 p.m. of that week. Because quizzes cover material from the entire week (e.g., WCPs, assignments, other activities in the module), it is recommended that students complete quizzes as the *last activity* of the week. There are no exams (and no final exam) in this course.

## Academic integrity

Both Miami University and the Department of Psychology are dedicated to providing a learning environment based not only on academic excellence but on academic integrity as well. In this course, it is expected that students will adhere to all Miami University guidelines regarding academic misconduct and academic integrity (<https://miamioh.edu/policy-library/students/undergraduate/academic-regulations/academic-integrity.html>).

Academic misconduct includes, but is not limited to:

- Submitting work (homework, papers, etc.) conducted for another course without professor approval
- Submitting the work of another individual or party (whether in part or in whole) as one’s own, including work from another student, a website, a book, or failing to provide appropriate citations for others’ ideas
- Allowing other students to submit one’s work as their own
- Providing or receiving assistance from another student without the professor’s permission

All submitted work is analyzed by Turn It In plagiarism software, which not only compares each assignment to all of the content of the internet (e.g., Wikipedia, published research), but to other students’ assignments in the class (past and present) and to assignments from paid services. Turn It In is *very good* at its job, so please do not cheat! Engaging in academic misconduct can result in penalties ranging from a *minimum* of an F on the assignment to an F in the course, an “AD” signifying academic dishonesty on Miami transcripts, academic suspension, and expulsion from Miami University. Misunderstanding appropriate academic conduct will not be accepted as an excuse for academic misconduct (see *Miami Student Handbook*, Chapter 5). Please speak to the professor for clarification regarding any of the above policies -- they will be strictly enforced!

## Class policies

**RTFS:** Countless hours have gone into crafting this detailed syllabus. Before asking a question, please read the syllabus! Most questions (e.g., “Is there a final exam?” [no], “I know I missed the weekly assignment due date, can I turn it in late and get some points?” [no]) are easily answered by reading this syllabus. Also, the first mastery quiz assesses understanding course policies, providing another reason to study this syllabus.

**Activities:** All work assignments (i.e., weekly assignments, on-line discussion participation, mastery quizzes) are due *before* Saturday evening at 6 p.m. (US Eastern Time). There are also three research participation deadlines (see dates and details, above). Late work (even 1 minute late), regardless of the circumstances, will not be accepted (Canvas prevents late assignment submission). Any changes to the schedule will be announced in Canvas and WCPs, and it is each student’s responsibility to attend to these announcements.

**Writing competency:** Writing competency is expected in all assignments. Students needing assistance with their writing skills should contact the Howe Center for Writing Excellence (<http://miamioh.edu/hcwe>).

**Special considerations:** In situations where special, documented circumstances exist (e.g., official university obligations, religious observances), special arrangements can be made with the professor. However, students must make these arrangements before the end of the second week of the semester and provide documentation for them. Also, please note that assignments can be completed in advance, thus the majority of conflicts with a due date do *not* require accommodation (e.g., a religious observance falling on a Saturday due date is not a problem because the work can simply be submitted before that due date).

**Accommodations:** Students with a disability who feel that they may need a reasonable accommodation to fulfill the essential functions of the course listed in this syllabus, or students with physical, medical or psychiatric disabilities, or students with AD(H)D or specific learning disabilities are encouraged to contact the Miller Center for Student Disability Services (<https://miamioh.edu/student-life/sds/>; 513.529.1541, V/TTY).

**Course materials, recordings, and legal disclaimers:** Engaging with course materials, obtaining course materials, and taking notes (on WCPs and course materials) are each student’s responsibility. The professor will not lend out notes or materials not provided on Canvas under any circumstances. Students may lend notes to fellow students as long as they do not financially profit from doing so (i.e., the commercialization of class notes or class-related materials is strictly prohibited).

**Uploads and electronically-submitted assignments:** Most assignments require uploading documents to Canvas. Uploaded documents must in one of three formats: PDF (Acrobat’s Portable Document Format), DOC (Microsoft Word’s Document format), or RTF (Rich Text Format). Uploads in other formats (e.g., Mac Pages, JPEGs from phones) will receive zeros (Canvas cannot process them). All documents will be scanned to ensure authentic scholarship (see academic integrity, above). Students with questions (e.g., how to upload documents, questions about academic integrity) should ask the professor well in advance before assignments are due (e.g., problems with uploading or uncertainty about how to use Canvas will not excuse late assignments). If Canvas is unavailable immediately before a deadline, email the assignment to the professor to ensure it is not late (but only do this if Canvas is down, and make sure you have tried Canvas multiple times on the due date; your email timestamp will serve as the indicator of whether the work was completed on-time, and emailed assignments after the due date will not be considered -- do not procrastinate!). Once students have uploaded an assignment to Canvas, they should then double check to make sure it was received and posted correctly. Failure to double-check that an uploaded assignment was correctly posted is the student’s responsibility. Canvas does not “lose things,” so statements such as, “really, I uploaded it, I don’t know what happened” will not excuse missing assignments. Students spend a lot of time on their coursework, so it’s important that they spend an extra moment to *confirm* that an uploaded assignment was received and posted correctly.

*Illnesses and significant health disruptions:* Should a student become seriously ill and unable to complete assignments for a sizable portion of the class because of illness, the student should contact the professor immediately by email to determine how alternative arrangements might be made. Students are ultimately responsible for the material covered in class, regardless of whether the student is absent or present. If a student's absences are of significant duration or severity, the professor will advise them about available options, including assigning an incomplete grade (see below) or requesting a medical withdrawal.

*Incompletes:* Except for documented medical (see previous point) or family emergencies, incompletes will not be given. There is no need for students to do badly in this class: the professor will be available for student hours and will answer e-mail questions promptly. Points are earned in small, multiple increments rather than in a couple of monolithic assignments. There are 50 cushion points built into class, providing students with flexibility to handle adversity during the semester. Deadlines for dropping classes and withdrawals are provided by the Office of the Registrar. Students who miss these deadlines assume responsibility for the consequences. Please consult Miami's official websites regarding deadlines and university policies.

*Classroom conduct, respecting others, and valuing diversity:* Students are expected to conduct themselves in a respectful and civil manner in our course, and they are encouraged to express their opinions and beliefs. It is another thing, however, to be disrespectful or rude to students or to the professor. It is fine to disagree with others and to express non-politically-correct views. However, bigotry or disrespectful behavior is unacceptable.

Disruptive conduct is unacceptable and students who disrupt class (for students or for the professor) will be asked to leave a class activity. Further, even though this course is delivered on-line, students should treat each other with respect even if, at times, the forms of communication may seem less formal (e.g., posting a comment in an on-line discussion should not be viewed as less formal than saying something aloud in the presence of others). Please be courteous and respectful in all forms of communication and interaction in our course.

The Miami Department of Psychology is strongly committed to diversity and inclusion (for details, visit <https://www.miamioh.edu/cas/academics/departments/psychology/about/diversity-inclusion/index.html>). Here is a statement adopted by the Department of Psychology on diversity and inclusion:

We, members of the Department of Psychology, value diversity and inclusion because the goal of psychology is to improve understanding and outcomes for all individuals. We value persons of all identities, including dimensions such as age, culture, national origin, ability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, language, race, religion, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, and others. As psychologists, we understand that diverse groups bring diverse perspectives; this diversity produces better outcomes in a variety of contexts, including learning and decision making, and our ability to work with one another. Consistent with these values, our department actively seeks opportunities to increase and improve understanding of diversity. These enduring efforts include conducting research with diverse populations on topics related to intergroup understanding and asking questions that are relevant to different groups. We promote the academic and professional development of students, faculty, and staff from different backgrounds and provide education to improve intercultural knowledge, skills, and attitudes for all members of our academic community. We endeavor to actively engage in positive behaviors in order to achieve these goals. In sum, we value diversity because multiple perspectives improve our ability to understand psychological processes and to understand and contribute to the communities we serve.

## Semester schedule

Start each week by viewing the weekly class presentation (**WCP**), posted before Monday 12 Noon. All other activities are due before Saturday at 6 p.m., no exceptions, including weekly assignments (**WAs**, every week), weekly on-line discussion posts (**WODs**, 11 weeks), and mastery quizzes (**Qs**, 10 weeks). Updated 4oct2021.

### Section A, Week 1

Monday, Aug 23 **WCP** (Introduction to the course and the human subjects pool)  
 Saturday, Aug 28 **WAI** (SONA assignment), **WOD1** (opening questions), **Q1** (syllabus and SONA)

### Section A, Week 2

Monday, Aug 30 **WCP** (Learning more about the psychology, PSY, major)  
 Saturday, Sept 4 **WA2** (Exploring PSY), **WOD2** (questions about PSY major), **Q2** (PSY major)

### Section A, Week 3

Monday, Sept 6 **WCP** (Overview of the research process, design, and ethics in psychology)  
 Saturday, Sept 11 **WA3** (Analyzing research ethics), **WOD3** (Milgram study reflection), **Q3** (human ethics)

### Section A, Week 4

Monday, Sept 13 **WCP** (Ethics wrap-up, preparing for success for psychology-related careers)  
 Saturday, Sept 18 **WA4** (Rinella workshop), **WOD4** (student skill reflections), **Q4** (academic success)

### Section A, Week 5

Monday, Sept 20 **WCP** (Discussion of bystander phenomena and prosocial behavior)  
 Saturday, Sept 25 **WA5** (Bystander education), **WOD5** (bystander apathy analysis), **Q5** (responsibility)  
**Section A research experience deadline (waived this semester)**

### Section B, Week 6

Monday, Sept 27 **WCP** (Value of the PSY major and of liberal education, and the role of advising)  
 Saturday, Oct 2 **WA6** (Advising worksheet)

### Section B, Week 7

Monday, Oct 4 **WCP** (Psychology resources, APA style, information literacy and academic integrity)  
 Saturday, Oct 9 **WA7** (Mini-inquiry project), **WOD6** (missing resources), **Q6** (resources and integrity)

### Section B, Week 8

Monday, Oct 11 **WCP** (Digging deeper into PSY and how PSY departments and universities work)  
 Saturday, Oct 16 **WA8** (Faculty member profile), **WOD7** (PSY questions), **Q7** (psych departments)

### Section B, Week 9

Monday, Oct 18 **WCP** (Diversity, inclusion, and equity 1: Belonging, power, and privilege)  
 Saturday, Oct 23 **WA9** (Investigating one's privilege and implicit bias), **WOD8** (conversation challenges)

### Section B, Week 10

Monday, Oct 25 **WCP** (Diversity, inclusion, and equity 2: Impacts on academia)  
 Saturday, Oct 30 **WA10** (DE&I reflection), **Q8** (diversity awareness)  
**Section B research experience deadline (must have at least 3 hours done)**

### Section C, Week 11

Monday, Nov 1 **WCP** (Time management, extracurriculars, and experiences outside of class)  
 Saturday, Nov 6 **WA11** (Work-life balance activity), **WOD9** (challenges of working in groups)

### Section C, Week 12

Monday, Nov 8 **WCP** (Self-care and well-being)  
 Saturday, Nov 13 **WA12** (Self-care skills), **WOD10** (self-care resources), **Q9** (well-being enhancement)

### Section C, Week 13

Monday, Nov 15 **WCP** (Career planning resources in PSY, and building a roadmap through the major)  
 Saturday, Nov 20 **WA13** (Career aspirations and roadmap), **WOD11** (interest in subareas of psychology)

### Section C, Week 14 • Thanksgiving Week (no formal activities)

### Section C, Week 15

Monday, Nov 29 **WCP** (Beyond Miami, grad school, Center for Career Exploration and Success)  
 Saturday, Dec 4 **WA14** (Upload resume), **Q10** (career development and marketing)  
**Section C research experience deadline (must have at least 6 hours total)**