

Summer 2026 - Professor Gernsbacher

PSY 225 RESEARCH METHODS



WHAT ARE THE COURSE'S OBJECTIVES?

After successfully finishing the course, you'll be able to

- [1] find, read, and understand scientific articles and synthesize scientific results;
- [2] effectively communicate ideas, critical evaluation, and research through analytic writing and engaging narrated presentations;
- [3] think critically, examine links between method and results, consider alternative explanations, and knowledgeably consume research;
- [4] generate testable hypotheses and design psychological research using different methods, data collection tools, and analysis techniques;
- [5] correctly interpret and convey statistical results via text, tables, and graphs;
- [6] use key principles of science, including use of evidence, scientific reliability and validity, and fair and thorough evaluation of research inside and outside the classroom;
- [7] understand that ethical principles, behavior, and decision-making pertain to all aspects of the research process; and
- [8] identify how psychological science can inform societal practices policies, review, and apply what you learn.

HOW WILL I LEARN IN THIS COURSE?

The pedagogy of this course is driven by empirically proven principles of learning, including the principles of

- active learning, which is more beneficial than passive learning, and
- frequent incremental practice, which is more beneficial than sporadic practice (Gernsbacher, 2014).

Therefore, in this course, you will acquire skills six days a week by completing 84 incremental assignments. You will be expected to engage with the course and with your peers (via online discussion, including synchronously text-based chat) six days a week **during the entire course**.

There are NO timed exams in this course, and you will NOT need to purchase a textbook.

All course materials are available on the open-access website: <https://online225.psych.wisc.edu>

HOW WILL I LEARN MY GRADING?

On each of the course's 84 assignments, you can earn the following final score:

3 points: If your initially submitted assignment was submitted BEFORE one week after the assignment's due date **AND** your initially submitted assignment fulfilled ALL the assignment's requirements.

2 points: If your initially submitted assignment was submitted BEFORE one week after the assignment's due date AND your initially submitted assignment fulfilled **MOST** BUT NOT ALL the assignment's requirements **AND** you corrected your initially submitted assignment to fulfill **ALL** the assignment's requirements **ANYTIME** before one week after the due date.

1 point: If your initially submitted assignment was submitted BEFORE one week after the assignment's due date AND your initially submitted assignment fulfilled **MOST** BUT NOT ALL the assignment's requirements AND you did NOT correct your initially submitted assignment to fulfill ALL the requirements ANYTIME before one week after the due date.

0 points: If your assignment was NOT submitted ANYTIME before one week after the assignment's due date OR if your assignment did NOT fulfill MOST or ALL the assignment's requirements ANYTIME before one week after the assignment's due date.

Your final course grade will be the percentage of points you earn from the available **252 total points**, using the grading scale below:

A	94.00 - 100.00%	BC ...	79.00 - 83.99%	F ...	Less than
AB	89.00 - 93.99%	C	70.00 - 78.99%		60%
B	84.00 - 88.99%	D	60.00 - 69.99%		

HOW CAN I DO WELL IN THIS COURSE?

First, work on the course six days a week. The best way to acquire any skill – be it playing acoustic guitar or speaking Portuguese – is to practice frequently. Similarly, the best way to do well in this course is to frequently work on the course.

If you've taken other online courses, you might be surprised by how this course works. In other online courses, you might have been able to hang back and then cram in a lot of work at the end of the term. That strategy won't work in this course.

Therefore, the second way to do well in this course is to keep up. You'll always

have two weeks to complete each assignment and a one-week extension after each assignment is due to complete the assignment late or to correct any errors you made in your initial submission.

But after two weeks of lead time and a one-week reasonable extension, you'll no longer be able to complete or correct the assignment. The opportunity will be gone, just like in real life.

Thus, the third way to do well in this course is to work ahead. Your working ahead is the absolute best way to protect yourself against any unexpected mishap.

What will I learn in each Unit?

MONDAY JUNE 1	COURSE OPENS	Begin working ahead now if you can!
JUNE 15 - JUNE 17	UNIT #1	How to Think Critically about Life
JUNE 18 - JUNE 21	UNIT #2	How to Read Carefully the General Media (and Improve Your Digital Literacy)
JUNE 22 - JUNE 24	UNIT #3	How to Write Analytically about General Topics
JUNE 25 - JUNE 28	UNIT #4	How to Think Critically about Psychological Science
JUNE 29 - JULY 1	UNIT #5	How to Find and Read Psychological Science
JULY 2 - JULY 5	UNIT #6	How to Synthesize Psychological Science
JULY 6 - JULY 8	UNIT #7	How to Evaluate Descriptive and Inferential Statistics
JULY 9 - JULY 12	UNIT #8	How to Evaluate Scientific Reliability and Validity
JULY 13 - JULY 15	UNIT #9	How to Evaluate Alternative Research Hypotheses
JULY 16 - JULY 19	UNIT #10	How to Act Ethically as a Psychological Scientist
JULY 20 - JULY 22	UNIT #11	How to Design, Administer, and Analyze the Results of Reliable and Valid Online Surveys
JULY 23 - JULY 26	UNIT #12	How to Interpret and Create Informative Tables, Figures, and Charts
JULY 27 - JUL 29	UNIT #13	How to Communicate Engagingly through PPT, Video, and other Presentation Media
JUL 30 - AUG 2	UNIT #14	How to Look Backward (Review What You've Learned) and Forward (Apply What You've Learned)

WHAT IF I DON'T HAVE ACCESS TO THE INTERNET?

This is a completely online course. You're required to have access to high-speed Internet THROUGHOUT the ENTIRE TERM of the course. Not having access to high-speed Internet (because you're traveling or you forgot to pay your cable bill or your roommate is hogging all the bandwidth playing video games) will NOT be a valid excuse for not completing your work. You must have access to the Internet.

HOW MUCH TIME DO I NEED TO SPEND ON THIS COURSE?



PSY 225 "Research Methods" is a **4-credit Communication B course** at the Intermediate Level in the College of Letters & Sciences' Divisional Affiliation of Biological Sciences, with the prerequisites of Introductory Psychology and Basic Statistics.

Because Psychology 225 is a 4-credit course, you're required to spend a total of 180 hours on the course (4 course credits x 45 work hours per credit = 180 total work hours for the entire course).

If you are taking this course during the **SUMMER** term: You are required to work on ONLY this course **4 HOURS per DAY**, six days a week.

You should **NOT** register for this course if you will not be able to spend 4 hours a day, six days a week working on ONLY this course, during the course's 14 Units.

HOW DO I RESPOND TO OTHER STUDENTS' DISCUSSION POSTS?

Each response you write to another student **MUST** be at least 200 words long and must include **AT LEAST TWO** of the following:

A COMPLIMENT: I like how ... OR I like that ...

A COMMENT: I agree that ... because ...
OR I disagree that ... because ...

A CONNECTION: I have also read that ... OR I have also seen that ... OR I have also heard that ... OR I have also thought that ...

A QUESTION: I wonder why ... OR I wonder how ... OR I wonder who ... OR I wonder what ... OR I wonder when ... OR I wonder where ...

WHAT ARE THE ETHICS OF BEING A STUDENT IN THE PSYCHOLOGY DEPARTMENT?

In the Department of Psychology, acts of academic misconduct are taken seriously. Such acts diminish the educational experience for all involved – students who commit the acts, classmates who would never consider engaging in such behaviors, and instructors.

Academic misconduct includes, but isn't limited to, cheating on assignments, sabotaging the work of classmates, plagiarizing the work of classmates or published sources, and assisting fellow students in acts of misconduct. For detailed information on how to avoid plagiarism, see [this link](#).

HOW DOES UW-MADISON SUPPORT INCLUSIVE EXCELLENCE?

UW-Madison's goals are to advance success for all students; connect every student with the best support for them; ensure pathways to belonging for all students; strategically organize campus-level student support; engage in continuous assessment and improvement; and responsibly steward university resources.

UW-Madison values the contributions of each person and respects the profound ways their background, experience, status, abilities, and opinion enrich the university community. We commit ourselves to the pursuit of excellence in teaching, research, and outreach.

HOW DO I RECEIVE REASONABLE INSTRUCTIONAL ACCOMMODATIONS FOR DISABILITIES?

UW-Madison supports the right of all enrolled students to a full and equal educational opportunity. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Wisconsin State Statute (36.12), and UW-Madison policy (Faculty Document 1071) require that students with disabilities be reasonably accommodated in instruction and campus life. Reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities is a shared faculty and student responsibility.

Students are expected to inform the instructor of their need for instructional accommodations by the end of the third week of the semester, or as soon as possible after a disability has been incurred or recognized. The instructor will work either directly with the student or in coordination with the McBurney Center to identify and provide reasonable instructional accommodations. Disability information, including instructional accommodations, as part of a student's educational record is confidential and protected under FERPA.

FROM YOUR PROFESSOR

I am genuinely interested in each student succeeding in this course. If you encounter any barriers to your success, please let me know. I'm always available by email at MAGernsb@wisc.edu



WHERE DO I TAKE CONCERNS ABOUT A TEACHING ASSISTANT OR COURSE INSTRUCTOR?

Occasionally, a student may have a concern about a TA or course instructor. If that happens, you should feel free to discuss the matter directly with the TA or instructor. If the concern is about the TA and you do not feel comfortable discussing it with them, you should discuss it with the course instructor.

Concerns about mistakes in grading should be resolved with the instructor in the great majority of cases. If the concern is about the instructor (other than ordinary grading questions), and you don't feel comfortable discussing it with them, make an appointment to speak to the Associate Chair for Undergraduate Studies, Professor Kristin Shutts.

If you have a concern about sexual harassment, you may also take your concern to Dr. Linnea Burk, Clinical Associate Professor and Director, Psychology Research and Training Clinic, Room 315 Psychology (262-9079; burk@wisc.edu).

If you have concerns about climate or bias in this class, or if you wish to report an incident of bias or hate that has occurred in class, you may contact the Chair of the Department, Professor Allyson Bennett (allyson.j.bennett@wisc.edu) or the Chair of the Psychology Department Climate Committee, Professor Martha Alibali (martha.alibali@wisc.edu). You may also use the University's bias incident reporting system, which you can reach at [this link](#).

HOW CAN I TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE FLEXIBILITY ACCOMMODATION THAT IS BUILT INTO THIS COURSE?

This course is based on the principles of Universal Design, which prescribes that **instructional accommodations should be built into the environment and available to all students** (just like elevators and curb cuts) rather than needing to be requested ex post facto or available to only some students.

Therefore, in this course, all lecture videos are accompanied by captions and written transcripts and captions; all PDFs are screen-readable (and voice-able with text-to-speech software, as well as being searchable and highlightable). There are no timed tests, no in-person lectures or labs, and no in-person attendance requirements.

The course offers nearly a hundred grading opportunities, rather than only three or four, and the course is highly structured with explicit due dates. These accommodations are all built into this course to facilitate all students' success.

Most importantly, the course has a built-in flexibility accommodation available to all students. All students have the opportunity to work ahead; to use a one-week reasonable extension on all assignments; and to miss occasional assignments and still earn a good final grade.

Flexibility is built into this course to aid all students, including students with disabilities, students with chronic health conditions, religious conflicts, care-giving responsibilities, unpredictable work schedules, and student athletes -- everyone.

To take advantage of the flexibility accommodation, you must do three things.

First, take advantage of the opportunity to work ahead. The entire course is available during course registration; all Discussion Boards open two weeks before their assignments are due.

Take advantage of the opportunity to work ahead and complete as many assignments in advance as you can. If, for example, you're a student with a chronic health condition, the work you do in advance when you're feeling well will be like money in the bank for the times later in the term when you might not be feeling well.

Second, take advantage of the opportunity to turn in work up to one week late. Every student can turn in any assignment up to one week after its due date without penalty.

It is unnecessary to ask for an extension on any assignment's due date because all students have a one-week reasonable extension on every assignment's due date.

However, it's important that you NOT treat the end of the one-week reasonable extension as the assignment's due date. It's not a due date. Each assignment's due date is its due date; the one-week reasonable extension is the extension, and, for pedagogical and practical reasons, it's the ONLY possible extension, for these reasons.

Third, take advantage of the opportunity to miss an assignment if needed.

Experiment with Canvas's "What If" grades, and you'll see that all students can miss an assignment here or there and still earn a good final grade.

Flexibility is built into this course for all students because we know how important it is for everyone to have a built-in flexibility accommodation. Take advantage of it!

WHEN ARE MY ASSIGNMENTS DUE?

On **MONDAYs**,
that Unit's
ASSIGNMENTS
#1 and #2
are due!

On **TUESDAYs**,
that Unit's
ASSIGNMENTS
#3 and #4
are due!

On **WEDNESDAYs**,
that Unit's
ASSIGNMENTS
#5 and #6
are due!

On **THURSDAYs**,
that Unit's
ASSIGNMENTS
#1 and #2
are due!

On **FRIDAYs**,
that Unit's
ASSIGNMENTS
#3 and #4
are due!

On **SUNDAYs**,
that Unit's
ASSIGNMENTS
#5 and #6
are due!

AM I ALLOWED TO SELL OR SHARE THE MATERIALS FROM THIS COURSE TO COURSE HERO, CHEGG, SLADER, OR SIMILAR WEBSITES?

All materials in this course are governed by a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License.

Because of the course's Non-Commercial License, materials from this course CANNOT be shared with commercial entities such as Course Hero, Chegg, Slader, or similar commercial websites.

In addition, as noted above, academic integrity means not enabling other students to commit academic misconduct, as well as ensuring the integrity of your own work.

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I'M IMPACTED BY COVID-19?

Students should continually monitor themselves for COVID-19 symptoms and get tested for the virus if they have symptoms or have been in close contact with someone with COVID-19.

Because we believe it is unnecessary for students to be required to share their trauma with their instructors or TAs, if you are impacted by COVID-19 due to isolation, quarantine, or other factors, there is no need to contact Professor Gernsbacher or the TAs.

Instead, take advantage of the course's built-in Flexibility Accommodation, including working ahead, which is your best safety net for COVID-19 related problems and other unpredictable events in your life!

HOW DOES THIS COURSE MEET THE UNIVERSITY'S COMMUNICATION B (COMM B) COURSE REQUIREMENTS?

Courses Satisfying Part B of the University of Wisconsin-Madison General Education Communication Requirement (AKA: CommB Courses) must include the following components:

- critical reading, logical thinking, and the use of evidence
- use of appropriate style and disciplinary conventions in writing and presenting
- productive use of core library resources specific to the discipline

More than 30 assignments in this course require students to engage in critical reading, logical thinking, and the use of evidence (e.g., *Unit 1: Assignments #3 and #5; Unit 2: Assignments #1, #2, #3, #4, and #5; Unit 3: Assignment #5; Unit 4: Assignments #1, #2, #3, #4 and #6; Unit 7: Assignments #2, #3, and #4; Unit 8: Assignments #1, #2, and #3; Unit 9: Assignments #1, #2, #3, #4, #5, and #6; Unit 10: Assignments #3, #4, and #6; Unit 12: Assignments #1 and #6*).

More than 30 assignments in this course enable students to develop appropriate style and disciplinary conventions in writing and presenting (e.g., *Unit 1: Assignment #6; Unit 2: Assignment #5; Unit 3: Assignments #1, #2, #3, #4, and #5; Unit 4: Assignments #1 and #5; Unit 6: Assignments #1, #2, #4, and #5; Unit 7: Assignment #1; Unit 10: Assignments #1 and #2; Unit 11: Assignments #2, #3, and #6; Unit 12: Assignments #2, #3, #4, and #5; Unit 13: Assignments #1, #2, #4, and #5; Unit 14: Assignments #1, #4, and #5*).

More than 10 assignments in this course require students to make productive use of core library resources specific to the discipline (e.g., *Unit 5: Assignments #1, #2, #3, #4, and #6; Unit 6: Assignments #3 and #6; Unit 11: Assignments #1 and #5*).

Furthermore, this course includes numerous assignments, spaced through the term, that culminate, after feedback, in written and non-written presentations. Across the term, students submit more than 20,000 words of writing, including a dozen five-paragraph essays of 400-500 words; students create, practice, receive peer and instructor feedback, and deliver two formal presentations totaling six minutes; students teach over a dozen non-classmates important lessons on critical thinking, disciplinary conventions in writing and presenting, and library research, during one-to-one teaching sessions; and students read over 100 articles.

In addition, students research, draft, and submit seven literature reviews and two formal research proposals, all using APA style. Students are also responsible for learning from multiple hours of video. For every assignment, students receive immediate feedback and are provided with the opportunity to revise their work for improvement. Students also frequently engage in peer feedback (e.g., *Unit 3: Assignment #6, Unit 7: Assignment #6, and Unit 13: Assignments #3 and #6*).

Lastly, each student has at least three individual interactions with Professor Gernsbacher (via video conference, phone, text-chat, or email), during which she provides individualized feedback to the student on their communication skills. Students also have multiple individual interactions with each of the Teaching Assistants and with their peers in class sections of 10 or fewer students and in small discussion groups of two to three students who are responsible for arranging and conducting ten one-hour text-based synchronous group chats.



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WHAT CAN I EXPECT FROM PROFESSOR GERNSBACHER AND THE TAs?

Professor Gernsbacher and the TAs of this course will always abide by the “Seven Principles of Good Practice in Undergraduate Education.”

1. They will educate using the methods of active learning.
2. They will emphasize your spending time on task.
3. They will provide rapid feedback to you.
4. They will encourage you to cooperate and reciprocate with other students.
5. They will communicate high expectations.
6. They will try to respond to your messages within 24 hours.
7. They will respect your individual talents.

WHO SHOULD I CONTACT IF I HAVE A QUESTION?

Whenever you have a question, you should feel free to email Professor Gernsbacher [MAGernsb@wisc.edu].

Use, as the subject of your email message,
PSY 225: Question

Send your email message from your wisc.edu email address.

If you want to meet with Professor Gernsbacher synchronously (via phone, video conference, or text chat), simply email her to set up a time!

Please do NOT directly email the TAs, although you can communicate with them through Canvas Gradebook Comments.