



PSYC 100

MWF
1:10 pm

MWF
2:20 pm

THEATR 202

Fall 2026

INTRODUCTION TO PSYCHOLOGY

FALL 2026

YOUR INSTRUCTORS

Course Overview

This course introduces the major ideas, controversies, and research in psychology. Through readings, class activities, discussions, writing, and projects, you'll explore the biological, cognitive, social, developmental, and cultural factors that shape human thought and behavior. Because this is an introductory course, we'll cover many topics quickly. If a particular area interests you, I encourage you to explore it further in one of the department's intermediate or advanced courses!

Laboratory Component

This course has a lab component. You will meet in a separate lab section for an additional 1½ hours per week. This is a wonderful opportunity to gain hands-on experience with psychological research. The lab section has its own syllabus and requirements. Lab and class are designed to complement one another. Sometimes the ideas

you investigate in lab will reinforce concepts we've recently explored in class. Other times, lab will introduce ideas before we encounter them in class. This sequencing allows you to experience psychological concepts from multiple perspectives.

Course Goals

As an active participant in this course, you will:

- Identify the major pillars of psychology and summarize the major research findings in each of these subfields.
- Learn how to think like a psychologist and use some of the methods that psychologists use to answer questions about human thought and behavior.
- Become an informed consumer of research claims.
- Achieve a greater understanding of yourself and others by applying psychological findings to everyday life.



Cari Gillen-O'Neel

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Lab Instructor

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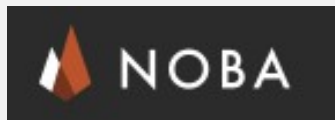
Course Readings

Required Readings

There is nothing to purchase for this course. Required readings are all articles and chapters, and they are linked from our course Moodle page or accessible from the Macalester Library.

Optional Readings

You have access to a free e-textbook—*Introduction to Psychology: The Full Noba Collection*. You can find the link to this textbook on our course Moodle page. The textbook is not required, but it is available to you if you need an additional study resource (e.g., help with quizzes, your psych mystery project, or your general understanding of course material).



Meet with me!

Student hours are

**Mondays 3:30 - 4:40 pm, Tuesdays 10 - 11 am,
& by appointment
OLRI 322 or Zoom**

Student Hours: During student hours, stop by my office (first come, first served). If you'd prefer to meet on Zoom, email me and I'll send you a link. Outside of student hours, feel free to stop by my office whenever the door is open. If it's closed, I'm unavailable.

Appointments: Check my Google Calendar (cgilleno) for my availability, then email me a few weekday work times (between 9 am and 5 pm) that work for you. I'll confirm one of them.

Email: Email is the best way to reach me outside of student hours. I generally respond during weekday work hours, when I'm not spending time with my friends and family.



A Letter from Your Professor

Hi! And welcome to a new semester!

I am excited to spend the next 15 weeks sharing psychology with you. When I started undergrad, I was under the delusion that I wanted to be an engineer. Three semesters later, I was considering dropping out. Although I loved the math and science of my engineering curriculum, I wanted to spend more time reading, writing, and thinking about people. In my sophomore year, I took Intro Psych and fell in love! For me, psychology was the perfect mix of science and humanity that I was looking for. Since then, I have spent most of my life involved in psychology in some way, and I am still passionate about the field.

Intro Psych is one of my favorite classes to teach. I actually spent a good chunk of my summer redesigning and refreshing this class, and I had a great time doing it! I can't wait to delve into the mysteries of human behavior with you. There are so many fascinating (and often counter-intuitive) findings that the science of psychology has to offer, and I can't wait for you to discover them. I'm looking forward to a great semester with you!

-Cari

Course Requirements

Your final grade will be determined by your performance on:

Class Attendance & Participation	required
Unit Quizzes	30%
Psych Mystery Project	40%
Final Exam	15%
Lab Grade & Research Participation	15%



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This course satisfies two of
Macalester's General
Education Requirements:

Writing (WP)

Quantitative Thinking (Q1)

Class Attendance & Participation

Attending class and actively participating are the best ways to succeed in this course. Attendance is one of the strongest predictors of college success—even stronger than ACT scores, high school GPA, and study habits (Credé et al., 2010). This is especially true in this class because there's no required textbook. Much of what you'll learn comes from our class activities, discussions, and out-of-class videos. To get the most from this course (and do well on the assessments), I encourage you to:

- Arrive on time
- Come prepared by completing assigned work before class
- Participate actively by taking notes, asking and answering questions, contributing to discussions, and completing in-class activities
- Engage thoughtfully with the assigned VoiceThread videos by watching without distractions, taking notes, and jotting down questions or connections

If you're sick, please stay home. You can catch up on the material you miss by getting notes from a classmate or contacting me in advance so we can discuss options (e.g., joining by Zoom or accessing a recording, when feasible).

Unit Quizzes

One of the best ways to learn is to practice retrieving information from memory. Research shows that testing doesn't just measure learning—it improves it (Roediger & Butler, 2011). To take advantage of this effect, you will complete six in-class quizzes throughout the semester. Approximately every other Wednesday, you'll take a 30-minute multiple-choice quiz covering the material from that unit. If you have accommodations for extra time or a distraction-free test taking environment, you may arrange to take your quiz at the testing center. We'll discuss the logistics in class.



Psych Mystery Project

Throughout the semester, you'll work with a team to investigate one of human nature's biggest questions (e.g., *Why do people procrastinate?* or *Why do people become prejudiced?*).

Rather than simply finding an answer, you'll work and think like a psychologist by exploring your mystery from multiple psychological perspectives to build an integrative explanation. This portion of your grade will be assessed holistically using contract grading, which emphasizes consistent engagement, collaboration, and high-quality work rather than accumulating points. See the Semester Mystery Project handout for project details and the grading contract.

Final Exam

During our scheduled final exam period, you will complete a paper-and-pencil essay exam consisting of two questions. One question will ask you to reflect on and extend your Semester Mystery Project, and the other will ask you to integrate and apply ideas from across the course. I'll provide more details and guidance on how to prepare as we approach the end of the semester. *Please do not make winter break travel plans that conflict with our scheduled final exam.*

Lab Grade & Research Participation

See the syllabus for your lab section!

Course Policies

Grade Scale

Your grade will be determined according to the scale shown in the table below. There is no “curve” (grades are not adjusted relative to your peers); your final percentage determines your final grade. During the semester, I will do everything I can to help you learn the material, improve your work, and earn the best grade that you possibly can. After the class is over, I will not change the grade you have earned.

A	93–100%	C	73–76.5%
A-	90–92.5%	C-	70–72.5%
B+	87–89.5%	D+	67–69.5%
B	83–86.5%	D	63–66.5%
B-	80–82.5%	D-	60–62.5%
C+	77–79.5%	F	0–59.5%

PowerPoint slides

I will post lecture slides on Moodle after class. If I forget, please email me with a polite reminder.



Internet-Free Zone

Our brains were not built for the level of distraction our devices create. The temptation to check notifications constantly pulls our attention, and over time, all of this task-switching isn't great for our learning or for our well-being (Ward et al., 2017). This isn't about willpower; the best way to protect attention is to remove the distraction (Duckworth & Gross, 2020). I also want this class to feel like a real community. In small pockets of downtime (e.g., waiting for class to start), most of us default to our phones. But research suggests that brief, low-stakes interactions (even slightly awkward ones!) actually increase connection and happiness (Epley & Schroeder, 2014). An internet-free classroom makes those moments more likely.

To help us stay focused and connected, please keep laptops, tablets, and phones in your bag (even before or after class) unless you have an accommodation that requires a device or we're using one for a class activity. If you need to use your phone during class, please step out and rejoin us when you're done.

Course Schedule

Please see Moodle for our full course schedule, including all deadlines.



Late Quizzes

If you do not take a quiz during the scheduled class period, you will initially receive a score of zero. You may replace that score by attending the appropriate scheduled makeup session.

Incompletes

Macalester College strongly discourages assigning incomplete grades. Unless a majority of assigned work has already been submitted (typically over 75%), an incomplete will not be given. If extenuating circumstances arise, I will direct you to the Dean of Students, and I will consider the Dean's advice when making decisions about incompletes.

Academic Integrity

Academic honesty is essential to learning. Cheating can be blatant, such as presenting someone else's words, ideas, or work as your own (including work generated by AI), or more subtle, such as failing to properly cite the ideas of others. Either way, academic dishonesty undermines the integrity of our classroom and deprives you of the opportunity to develop the knowledge and skills this course is designed to teach. If you're struggling with the course, please reach out to me. I'd much rather help you develop a plan for success than have you make a choice that could result in an academic integrity violation. If you're ever unsure whether something counts as cheating (e.g., plagiarism or appropriate use of generative AI), please ask. I'm always happy to have that conversation before you submit your work.

www.macalester.edu/academicprograms/academicpolicies/academicintegrity/

Communities of Care

This class has several resources and systems of support so that we can collectively work toward everyone's success.

Student Groups

We will form small groups (3-4 students) to serve as both group project teammates and communities of care. You will likely be placed with people who you don't yet know very well. The ethic of these communities is that you are all invested in one another's learning and well-being in this class—you will look out for your teammates, and they will look out for you! Group members will check-in with one another and work together on the Psych Mystery Project. If someone in your group misses class, you can share your notes with them and help them catch up (in the past, some groups have even collaborated on a shared Google Doc of class notes). There will also be opportunities for team-building and fun with your group.



Preceptors

Two students who previously did very well in Intro Psych will serve as course preceptors. In addition to helping facilitate our classroom activities, the preceptors are there to answer your questions and support your learning. They are available by email and during their office hours (see Moodle).

Anna

(she/her)

akraus@macalester.edu



August

(they/them)

agoldst1@macalester.edu



Professor Cari

I am available as a resource and source of support as well! Both your learning and your overall well-being are important to me! Please reach out with any questions or concerns you have.



Accessibility Commitment

www.macalester.edu/disabilityservices/

I am committed to creating an accessible and inclusive class where every student can participate fully in course activities and benefit from course materials. I am happy to talk with you about how to maximize your experience in this class and to discuss how you learn best. Please don't hesitate to be in touch with your requests and suggestions.

What I will do for every student

- Post assignments at least two weeks in advance of when they are due
- Share PowerPoints and other materials used in class lectures
- Meet with you individually during student hours for extended study or discussion
- Facilitate your connection to the Academic Success Center or other sources of support on campus

- Submit an Early Academic Warning and/or contact the Dean of Students if your performance slips or I notice a pattern of frequent absences
- Be as flexible as possible in the event of a crisis or emergency (provided that you have also spoken to someone in the Dean of Students office)

What you can do if your needs are not met by the above

If you know you have a disability that affects your learning process, I encourage you to meet with Macalester's Disability Services. This will allow you to receive accommodations. The website above is your best guide to this process. Disability Services will send me a confidential letter detailing your accommodations. Meet with me after you've met with Disability Services so we can work together to ensure that your needs are met.

If you are not registered with Disability Services

Please don't wait until you're struggling to seek support; I cannot accommodate you retroactively. Without a letter from Disability Services:

- I cannot offer a flexible schedule of assignment deadlines
- I cannot offer a flexible attendance policy



Shammah Bermudez

Director of Disability Services

disabilityservices@macalester.edu

Kagin Commons



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Academic Success

Macalester has many resources to support academic success. Seeking help is a sign of strength and maturity, and everyone is encouraged to take advantage of the resources that are available. In this course, two programs might be especially helpful...

The Writing Center

provides one-on-one support at any stage of the writing process for any writing-related projects.

www.macalester.edu/academic-success/writing-center/

Academic Coaching

assists students as they experiment with and implement strategies for getting started and making progress on large projects, organizing time to meet due dates and commitments, reading textbooks and academic articles effectively, reducing procrastination, studying for exams, taking notes, and more!

www.macalester.edu/academic-success/academic-coaching/

Other Course Policies

Generative AI tools (ChatGPT, Gemini, etc.)

Generative AI, like all technologies, will change the way we work and think. José Antonio Bowen (2024) offers the differences between maps and GPS as a helpful analogy. Maps actually make you smarter; they help you build mental models and navigation skills that persist even after you put the map away. GPS, by contrast, gets you where you want to go without helping you learn anything or develop any skills. If you take the GPS away, you're just lost.

In this course, choosing not to use generative AI is perfectly fine. If you do use it, I encourage you to use it in "map" ways rather than "GPS" ways. Use AI to deepen your thinking, spark ideas, challenge your assumptions, and strengthen your skills—not to do your thinking and writing for you. My goal is to help you develop the critical thinking, creativity, communication, and problem-solving skills that will continue to serve you long after this course ends.



- ✓ use AI to brainstorm potential research questions or topics (but refine the ideas based on the literature)
- ✓ use AI to summarize research articles (and then read the articles yourself to check for accuracy)
- ✓ use AI to generate initial outlines (and then revise and fill in details with your knowledge)
- ✓ use AI for grammar and spell-checking drafts (but do the initial writing and substantive editing yourself to ensure the development of your writing skills)
- ✓ cite your use of AI



- ✗ never submit raw AI-generated text as your own → I have no interest in giving feedback to a robot
- ✗ never trust AI citations → use AI to get ideas, but check and personally read everything that you cite
- ✗ don't let AI replace the development of your reading, writing, and thinking skills → learning takes work—there's no shortcut for putting in the time and doing it yourself!

Your Health and Wellbeing

I encourage you to make your well-being a priority throughout this semester (and throughout your career at Macalester and beyond). In addition to being a student, you are a human being carrying your own experiences, thoughts, emotions, and identities. Investing time into taking care of yourself will help you engage more fully in your academics. It is important to acknowledge any stressors you may be facing, which can be mental, emotional, physical, cultural, financial, etc., and how they can have an impact on you and your academic experience. I encourage you to remember that you have a body with needs. In the classroom, eat when you are hungry, drink when you are thirsty, and step out to use the restroom, or if you are upset or need some air. Please do what is necessary so long as it does not impede your or others' ability to be mentally and emotionally present in the course. Outside of the classroom, sleeping, moving your body, and connecting with others can be strategies to help you be resilient. There is a list of physical and mental health resources on Moodle. If you are having difficulties maintaining your well-being, please contact me and/or find support from other sources.



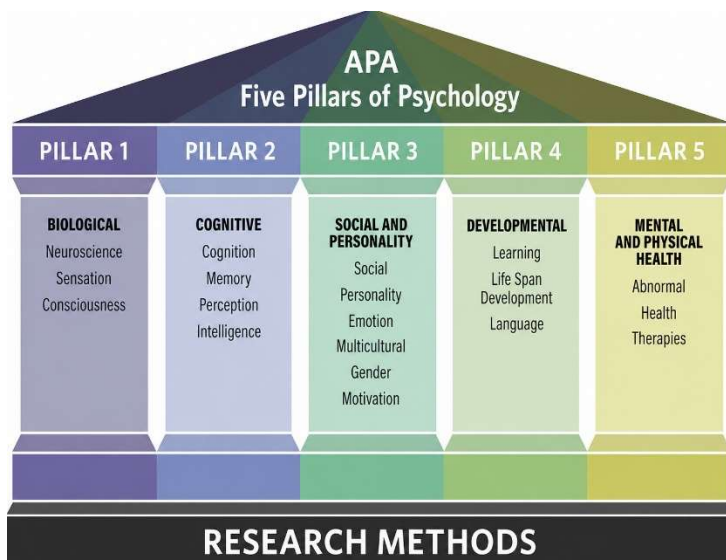
Call me "Cari"

Students sometimes wonder what to call their professors. You may call me Cari (pronounced like "carry"). If you prefer to be more formal, Dr. Gillen-O'Neel or Professor Gillen-O'Neel are also ok with me. My pronouns are she/her. Please tell me your name and pronouns too!

Course Flow

The course is organized into six units. After an introduction to psychology in general, we'll explore the field's five major pillars: Biological, Cognitive, Social & Personality, Developmental, and Clinical & Health Psychology.

Each unit will follow the same rhythm. You'll watch lecture videos before class so we can spend our time together on demonstrations, discussions, and activities. On the last Wednesday of each unit, you'll complete an in-class quiz covering that unit's material. On the last Friday, you and your team will present your latest working model for the Semester Mystery Project.



Please see Moodle for the full schedule, including all video links and assignment deadlines.

Unit	Date Range	Quiz Date	Group Presentation Date
Intro to Intro	September 8 – September 25	Wednesday September 23	n/a
Biological Psychology	September 28 – October 9	Wednesday October 7	Friday October 9
Cognitive Psychology	October 12 – October 23	Wednesday October 21	Friday October 23
Social & Personality Psychology	October 26 – November 6	Wednesday November 4	Friday November 6
Developmental Psychology	November 9 – November 20	Wednesday November 18	Friday November 20
Clinical & Health Psychology	November 30 – December 11	Wednesday December 9	Friday December 11
Final		Final Exam: Thursday December 17	Final Group Presentation: Monday December 14