

Syllabus
Research Methods in Psychology
Spring 2026

Professor Info	Course Info
Professor: Nicholas Maxwell, PhD	Course #: PSYC 4703, Sec. 201
Office: OD 118	Time: 10:00am – 10:50am, MWF
email: nicholas.maxwell@msutexas.edu	Location: PY 102
	Office Hours: MWF: 9am – 10am; F: 2pm – 4pm

Required Texts:

Research Methods in Psychology, 5e by Beth Morling

Course Objectives:

After completing this course, you will have a greater understanding of:

1. The basics of psychological research, including common research designs and research reporting standards.
2. The role research plays in developing psychology as a science.
3. Ethical standards of research, including guidelines for best practices and current issues in research ethics.
4. Written and verbal research communication

Attendance and Missing Work Policy:

Class attendance is required. It is expected that you will be present for all class meetings unless you have a verifiable emergency (e.g., illness, serious accident, death of a family member, etc.) or valid university excuse (e.g., athletics). If you miss class, you will be responsible for the material you missed when absent.

Missing Exams, Assignments or other Class Work:

Exams: If you miss an exam, you will have the opportunity to make it up during finals week. All make-up exams will take place on Wednesday, 5/13 at 10:30am. No other opportunities will be provided for make-up exams. If you miss a make-up exam, you will not be given another opportunity (there are no make-ups for the make-up!).

Assignments: All homework or other out-of-class assignments will incur a 5% per day late penalty. This is nonnegotiable.

Excessive Absences: Students with more than five unexcused absences may be dropped from this course at the instructor's discretion.

Course Requirements:

1. **Exams (400 pts total):** Students will complete ***four*** exams during the semester. Each exam will be worth ***100*** points

2. **Class Participation (50 points):** Classes are most productive when everyone contributes. Class participation will be assessed based on a combination of attendance, your contributions to class discussions, your willingness to participate in class activities, etc.
3. **Research Project (100 points):** During the semester, students will be required to propose an original research project investigating a topic of interest. A list of example topics will be posted on D2L during the first week of the semester. For this project you will be required to do the following:
 - a. Submit a topic proposal by the end of the second week of the semester (due Friday, 1/30)
 - b. Complete the human subjects research training course (CITI training; due Friday, 2/20)
 - c. Complete the Institutional Review Board application (due Friday, 3/6)
 - d. Submit a first draft paper detailing your proposed study (due Friday, 3/27)
 - e. Submit a Final draft of your proposed study (due Friday, 5/8)

Your final project grade will be based on each of these five components. More details about the project will be announced on the first day of class. Late submissions for all project assignments will be subject to a 5% per day penalty.

Grades:

Your final grade in the course will be calculated based on ***550*** total points.

550-495:	A
494-440	B
439-385:	C
384-335:	D
< 334:	F

Email Policy:

You are required to use your MSU Texas email accounts for this class. I will not send emails to any other email accounts. I will also not send out class information to any other email address other than your university email account. ***Before emailing me about your question, make sure that your question has not been answered/addressed in the syllabus or elsewhere!*** When emailing me, please put the course number (PSYC 4703) AND section number (Sec. 201) in the subject line. This will immediately let me know which class you are in so I can respond faster. ***If you email me with no context, I will not respond.*** I also ***DO NOT*** respond to any emails during finals week asking for extra credit, additional opportunities to make up missed assignments, or additional points towards your final grade. Please keep this in mind as you go through the semester.

For all other emails, I will try my best to get back to you within 48-hours (during the week) or within 3 business days (weekends, holidays, etc.).

Cell Phones:

Unless you anticipate that you might receive an emergency communication, please turn off your cell phones in class. If you receive an ***emergency*** phone call or text in class, please excuse yourself and quietly leave the classroom to take the message.

Academic Dishonesty Policy:

Cheating will not be tolerated. Any evidence of cheating on exams or written assignments will result in dismissal from this class with a grade of ‘F’ and referral to the Dean of Students. Cheating includes, but is not limited to, using unauthorized notes of any kind during an exam, looking on another’s exam, allowing another student to look on your exam, plagiarism/self-plagiarism, and the use of LLM models such as ChatGPT to generate your assignments.

Desire-to-Learn (D2L):

This course utilizes the MSU D2L program for assignment submission. Relevant course materials will also be posted on D2L. Each student is expected to be familiar with this program as it provides a primary source of communication regarding general course information. You can log into [D2L](#) through the MSU Homepage. If you experience difficulties, please contact the technicians listed for the program.

Disability Services:

Any student who, because of a disability, may require special arrangements in order to meet the course requirements should contact the instructor as soon as possible to make necessary arrangements. Students must present appropriate verification from Disability Support Services (DSS) during the instructor’s office hours. Please note that instructors are not allowed to provide classroom accommodation to a student until appropriate verification from DSS has been provided.

Change of Schedule:

A student dropping a course (but not withdrawing from the University) within the first 12 class days of a regular semester or the first four class days of a summer semester is eligible for a 100% refund of applicable tuition and fees. Dates are published in the Schedule of Classes each semester.

Course Schedule:

Important! The reading for each day is what's expected to have been read *prior* to that date. Please note that this schedule represents *the ideal semester!* Any deviations from this schedule (particularly as they pertain to assignment deadlines and exam dates) will be announced in class AND posted on D2L.

Week	Topic	Reading	Assignment Due	Notes
Week 1: 1/19 – 1/23	Psychology is a Way of Thinking	Chapter 1		*No Class Monday 1/19*
Week 2: 1/26 – 1/30	Sources of Information	Chapter 2	Topic Proposal Due 1/30 @ 11:59pm	
Week 3: 2/2 – 2/6	Tools for Consumers of Research	Chapter 3		
Week 4: 2/9 – 2/13	Tools for Consumers of Research	Chapter 3		*Exam 1: In class Friday 2/13*
Week 5: 2/16 – 2/20	Ethical Guidelines for Psychological Research	Chapter 4	CITI Training due 2/20 @ 11:59pm	
Week 6: 2/23 – 2/27	Ethical Guidelines/Identifying Good Measurement	Chapters 4 and 5		
Week 7: 3/2 – 3/6	Identifying Good Measurement	Chapter 5	IRB Application due 3/6 @ 11:59pm	*Exam 2: In Class Friday 3/6*
Week 8: 3/9 – 3/13	*Spring Break*			*No Classes*
Week 9: 3/16 – 3/20	Surveys and Observations	Chapter 6		
Week 10: 3/23 – 3/27	Sampling	Chapter 7	First draft due 3/27 @ 11:59pm	*No Class Friday 3/27*
Week 11: 3/30 – 4/3	Bivariate Correlation	Chapter 8		*No Class Friday 4/3*
Week 12: 4/6 – 4/10	Multivariate Correlation	Chapter 9		Exam 3: In class 4/10
Week 13: 4/13 – 4/17	Simple Experiments	Chapter 10		

Week 14: 4/20 – 4/24	More on Experiments/Complicated Designs	Chapters 11 and 12		
Week 15: 4/27 – 5/1	Quasi-Experimental Research	Chapter 13		
Week 16: 5/4 – 5/8	Replication	Chapter 14	Final Paper due 5/8 @ 11:59pm	Exam 4: In class 5/8
Finals Week Wednesday 5/13 @ 10:30am	Make-Up Exams			