

COURSE INFORMATION

Psychology 303: Research Methods

Instructor: Dr. Hill Goldsmith, Associate Professor
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Content: Course surveys major research methods in contemporary psychology. Topics include nature of scientific inquiry, psychological theory, experimental design, correlational studies, surveys, and scientific writing.

Format: Primarily lectures, with class discussions.

Required Text: *Experimental Psychology*, by D. H. McBurney
Published by Wadsworth (1990).

Course Requirements:

Regular class attendance is essential.

Grading:

1. (60 pts.) Weekly quizzes (on Tuesdays)
2. (90 pts.) Weekly homework assignments (due on Thursdays)
3. (80 pts.) A comprehensive final exam.

Total points possible: 230

Grading Policy: Letter grades based on total points. Student with highest point total and others within 90% of top point total earn As. Bs go to those with point totals above 80% of top point total, Cs for those within 70% of top score, Ds = 60% of top score, Fs = less than 60% of top score. Any form of academic dishonesty will be dealt with according to official university procedures. Course policy is that cheating on exams results in grade of F for course.

Quizzes: Quizzes will last 10-15 minutes and will be given at the beginning of class. The lowest 2 quiz grades (out of 8 total quizzes) will be dropped when figuring course grades. Missed quizzes result in a grade of 0 (zero). There will be no make-ups for quizzes. Quizzes will be given only at the beginning of class. It should be possible to score 100% on quizzes by carefully reading the assigned chapter, without detailed study.

Homework Assignments: Homework will usually be assigned one week before it is due. Full credit for a homework assignment is 15 points. Homework is due at the beginning of class on Thursdays. Homework can be handed in late, but there is a

penalty of 1 point for late homework turned in on Thursday after class, and 2 penalty points are assessed for each day the assignment is late. For example, if an assignment is turned in Monday after being due the previous Thursday, the maximum grade will be 9 (15 minus 6 penalty points). The lowest homework grade will be dropped when figuring course grades.

Final Exam: The final exam will be comprehensive. Its content and format will be discussed in class.

PSYCHOLOGY 303 SYLLABUS

Date	Topic	Reading	Quiz	Assignmt Due
Tu, 9/25	Course Policies, Introduction	None	None	
Th, 9/27	Psychology as Science	Ch1		None
Tu, 10/2	Theory	Ch2	#1-Ch2	
Th, 10/4	Library Research (*)			Assgn1
Tu, 10/9	Research Articles	Ch10	#2-Ch10	
Th, 10/11	Observations			Assgn2
Tu, 10/16	Surveys & Polls	Ch3	#3-Ch3	
Th, 10/18	Surveys & Polls(*)			Assgn3
Tu, 10/23	Variables	Ch4	None	
Th, 10/25	Correlational Research	continue Ch4		Assgn4
Tu, 10/30	Reliability & Validity	Ch5	#4-Ch5	
Th, 11/1	Validity			Assgn5
Tu, 11/6	Control	Ch6	#5-Ch6	
Th, 11/8	Control	Ch6		Assgn6
Tu, 11/13	True Experiments		#6-Ch7	
Th, 11/15	True Experiments	Ch7		Assgn7
Tu, 11/20	True Experiments	conCh7	#7-Ch7	
Th, 11/22	HOLIDAY			
Tu, 11/27	Quasi-experiments	Ch8	#8-Ch8	
Th, 11/29	Quasi-experiments	Ch11		None
Tu, 12/4	Biases & Limitations			
Th, 12/6	Review	Ch11		None

FINAL EXAM: Thursday, December 13, 10:15-12:15 am--NO EARLY EXAMS

Some Advice about this Course

1. **ATTEND AND PREPARE FOR CLASS-** Do the assigned reading before class. Although the textbook is clear and easy to read, the class material will often supplement or diverge from the book. Attending class will make it much easier to achieve the good grade you desire.
2. **TAKE CAREFUL NOTES-** Obviously, merely dragging your body to class will not insure you a good grade. Because the tests will be straightforward, taking good notes will make the exams seem almost easy (not to mention helping you feel that you mastered the difficult material).
3. **TAKE TIME TO PREPARE YOUR ASSIGNMENTS-** At least start the assignment at least a couple of days before it is due. This will allow you sufficient time to rework, edit, and proofread your work or ask questions if you get stuck. Correct spelling, punctuation, and grammar has never hurt a grade.
4. **TYPE YOUR ASSIGNMENTS-** I encourage you to type your assignments. Furthermore, using a word processor will help make editing and proofreading easier. However, if using a typewriter or computer is impossible or burdensome, handwritten assignments which are extremely neat and legible will be accepted.
5. **COME TO OFFICE HOURS IF YOU'RE HAVING TROUBLE-** That's why I'm here. If the class material isn't as clear for you as you'd like, or if an assignment is giving you trouble, please come in for help before it starts affecting your grade. However, if you do come in for help on an assignment, bring in what you have already done
6. **SAVE YOUR PAPERS-** Either photocopy your paper or save it on disk before you hand it in, just in case it gets misplaced before the grade is recorded. With the number of assignments required in this course, it is not unusual for a couple of papers to be misplaced by the instructor, the TA, or you during the term. So, protect yourself. Also, make sure to save your papers after they are returned to refer to later.

Assignment #1

Psychology 303

Alternative Explanations of "Facts"
Reported and Explained in the Media

Due Thursday, October 4

15 points

Objective: Learn to think critically about social science-related reports in the media.

In class, Dr. Goldsmith discussed several psychologically related "facts" reported in the media and explained alternative interpretations of these facts (example: the Pepsi Challenge). Between now and the time the assignment is due, collect 2 similar examples from the media, record them, document the source date, and provide alternative explanations. For sources, you may use newspapers, magazines, radio, or television. Because we expect each student to gather different facts, please avoid using the *Emerald*. Grading of the assignment will be based on the quality of the alternative interpretations. Turn in copies of the "facts" you collect. Your two alternate explanations should require no more than 1.5 typewritten pages.

Assignment #2

Psychology 303
Due Thursday, October 11

APA Reference Section
15 points

Objective: After completing Assignment #2, students will be familiar with literature search techniques commonly used in Psychology. Students will have experience creating a Reference Section in standard APA format.

1. Choose one of the following topics that interests you:

depression stress temperament memory aggression empathy

Go to the library and use *Psychological Abstracts* 1975 to 1987 to find 4 empirical studies on your topic. Do not use popular magazines (e.g., *Time*, *Newsweek*, *Psychology Today*). Studies should be from journals or from books. Write down the author(s), date of publication, title of article, title of journal, journal volume number (but not the issue number), and page numbers.

2. Find one of your articles in the journal in which it is published and turn to the Reference Section. Here you will find previously published articles on the same subject. Write down the same information that you did in Section #1 for one of the articles in this Reference Section that looks interesting to you.

3. Using the Social Sciences Citation Index, find one article that cites one of your articles in Section #1. The article you find in the SSCI will, of course, have been published after the articles you found in PA. Write down the same information that you did in Section #1 for this article.

4. Still using the Social Sciences Citation Index, look up your topic in the Subject Index. Find the name of an author of an article on your topic and look up that article. Write down the same information that you did in Section #1 for this article.

5. Using the Social Sciences Index on the CD-ROM computer in the Reference area of the library, find one article on your topic. Write down the same information that you did in Section #1 for this article.

6. You should now have complete information on 8 articles. Create an APA style Reference Section exactly as shown in your text, pages 290-291.