

PSY 303 - Research Methods
Fall 1997
Tues/Thurs 11-12:20, Straub Hall 154

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Course Web Page: <http://www.uoregon.edu/~sdhodes/303.htm>

COURSE OBJECTIVES/CONTENT:

This course serves a theoretical and practical introduction to doing research in psychology. We will cover the major issues in conducting psychological research, discussing how to:

- 1) formulate a research question
- 2) design a study
- 3) conduct the study
- 4) analyze data and interpret findings
- 5) communicate the results

These topics will be covered in the text and in the lectures. In addition, you will engage in activities that will require the practical application of what you have learned, including research projects that you will conduct in small groups and individually.

Although the course is specifically designed to teach research methods in psychology, the course has been designed with an eye to teaching general research skills that can be used in other fields (e.g., data analysis, program evaluation). An even more general goal is to teach logic and critical analysis skills that will allow you to be an informed consumer of other people's research findings and claims.

COURSE PREREQUISITES:

PSY302 (Statistical Methods) or its equivalent is a prerequisite for this course. You must have a working knowledge of statistics for this course.

COURSE READINGS:

The required text for this course is Research in Psychology: Methods and Design, by C. James Goodwin. A copy of the text is on reserve at the library, but I highly recommend buying your own copy AND keeping it as a reference after this course. An optional resource that you will find highly useful, particularly if you intend to take more psychology courses and especially if you are considering graduate school in psychology, is the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (4th edition). The manual is a helpful and complete guide to writing

papers outside of psychology as well. Students who have taken this course in the past have found the manual valuable. **Even if you do not purchase this book, you are responsible for following the guidelines within it for your assignments in this class.** A copy of the manual is also available at the reference table in the Knight Library.

In addition to the text, there are three articles that you will be required to read early on in the quarter. Copies are on reserve in the reserve room at the Knight Library. You may also read these articles in the bound journals in the Knight Library.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

1) There is no substitute for attending class in this course. Most of the topics covered are understood only via a combination of background knowledge (that you will get from reading the text) and demonstration and discussion that will occur in class. However, more importantly, you will participate in several activities in class that will allow you to practice and master research skills. This practical training aspect of the class cannot be achieved without your attendance. Furthermore, because one important aspect of learning research methods is to learn how to critique research design and execution, part of your job as a member of this class is to provide suggestions and feedback to your other classmates.

I strongly recommend planning to attend EVERY class. If you miss a quiz or an in-class assignment, you cannot make it up. If you miss more than two classes, I will not use office hours to go over what you missed. (I reserve the right to grant exceptions to the two previous statements under dire circumstances, but don't count on being an exception.) If you know you must miss a class, I would appreciate you telling me in advance.

Your attendance at the scheduled exam period is mandatory. If you do not attend, you will fail the course.

If you don't already have an e-mail account, please get one, as there may be additional class information that I will distribute via e-mail. If you need help getting an account, go to the University Computing Center. **Once you have your account, or if you already have one, send me an E-mail message (sdhodes@darkwing.uoregon.edu)** so I will know you are on-line. **This is your first class assignment.** If you send me E-mail questions about the class, I will try to answer them as soon as I can; however, if they are long or complicated, it is possible (but unlikely) that you will have to wait until my next office hours for an answer. Also, from time to time I will post helpful information on the course web page.

2) All papers in this class will be typed in a readable font, double-spaced, left justified only, and with margins of one inch at the top, bottom, left side and right side (these are all consistent with the APA Publication Manual). If you foresee problems meeting these qualifications, please discuss them with me.

3) Reading assignments should be completed before lecture on the day they are listed on the syllabus. Homework assignments are due at the **beginning** of class on the day they are due. Assignments turned in after the start of class are half a day late, with a 5% penalty, up until 5 pm of the due date; papers turned in after 5 pm are 1 day late with a 10% penalty. Each subsequent day rolls over at 5 pm, with an additional 10% penalty. If you do not turn your paper in class, turn it into the Psychology office (131 Straub) and get the time stamped on it. The office closes AT 5 pm, so it is in your best interest to bring your papers by at least 15 minutes before 5:00 in

order for the staff to have time to stamp your paper. Do not plan to skip class to finish your paper--your paper will be penalized anyway, and you will miss class and get behind.

Each student gets one "bonus day late" credit that can be used on any Homework 1-4 (**not** on Homework 5, or the poster session). The bonus allows you to turn in the assignment up until 5 pm the day after the due date without penalty.

Some assignments in the course are ongoing, and are not listed specifically on the syllabus (for example, collecting data for your observational study and final project). You will be reminded about these activities in class periodically, but it will be your responsibility to pace yourself.

4) As part of the course, you will use the Social Sciences Instructional Lab (SSIL) to learn how to analyze data using SPSS for Windows, a computer statistics package. **You must pay a \$10 fee to use the lab** (not optional). Pay this fee at the cashier's office in Oregon Hall by **Oct. 14** and bring the stamped card back to me. As soon as you have paid the fee, you can start using the lab. In exchange for paying the fee, you will have access to the lab the entire quarter (you will use it to analyze your data for your project).

5) Grading will be broken down as follows:

5 quizzes, dropping the lowest one, leaving 4 quizzes @ 30 points each	= 120 points
Homework 1 (Introduction)	= 25 points
Homework 2 (Reference section and summary)	= 25 points
Homework 3 (Midterm--Intro and methods for final project)	= 75 points
Homework 4 (Observational study)	= 60 points
Homework 5 (Results and discussion for final project)	= 50 points
Final Project (Poster and presentation)	= 100 points**
Participation/Class exercises	= 45 points
Total = 500 points	

**The project is worth 100 points. However, if you do not attend the final poster session (during the scheduled exam for this course), you will receive a failing grade for the course.

Final grades MAY be curved upwards. Extra credit options totaling no more than 5% of a student's grade (25 points) may be offered throughout the quarter. Detailed instructions for the homework assignments and the final project will be distributed in class. Quizzes will be short (approximately 15 minutes) and will cover class material and reading since the last quiz (i.e., they are not cumulative, although later concepts that build on earlier ones are fair game). In a sense, homework assignments relating to your final project (2, 3, & 5) ARE cumulative. You will need to turn in either the original or a copy of Homework 3 with Homework 5.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES: If you have a documented disability and anticipate needing accommodations in this course, please make arrangements to meet with me soon. Please request that the Counselor for Students with Disabilities send a letter verifying your disability.

NONNATIVE ENGLISH SPEAKERS: If you have been speaking English for a limited time, and anticipate that your English abilities may interfere with your progress in this course, please arrange to see me. I can advise you on available resources and discuss possible accommodations.

COURSE SCHEDULE:

Note: Readings and assignments due are to be **completed** by the beginning of class on the date listed below. This schedule will be adhered to as closely as possible. Should changes occur, you will be notified.

Goodwin = C. James Goodwin, Research in Psychology: Methods and Design.

Date	Reading To Be Completed	Probable Class Topic	New Assignment	Assignment Due
Tues Sept 30		Introduction to course		
Thurs Oct 2	Goodwin Chs. 1 & 3: Scientific Thinking in Psychology and Developing Ideas for Research in Psychology	Scientific method IV's & DV's Operational Definitions		
Also, read the course syllabus				
Tues Oct 7	Goodwin Ch 2: Ethics in Psychological Research (Also start reading inadmissible evid. articles for HM1)	Library Trip Writing introductions	HM1-Writing an introduction Library Worksheet	
Thurs Oct 9	Goodwin Ch 4: Measurement, Sampling and Data Analysis (Continue reading inadmissible evid. articles for HM1)	Citations Ethical issues Begin Measurement	HM2-Reference section/Article summary	
Tues Oct 14		Quiz 1 Measurement (cont.)	HM3 (midterm) Intro & methods for final project	Bring paid/stamped SSIL card

Date	Reading	Probable Class Topic	New Assignment	Assignment Due
Thurs Oct 16	Goodwin Appendix A: Communicating Results	Writing methods sections Statistical power, Signif testing		HM1
Tues Oct 21	Goodwin Ch 11: Other Research Methods	Observation	HM4- Observational study	HM2
Thurs Oct 23	Goodwin Ch 5: Introduction to Experimental Research	Quiz 2 Groups for obs. study		
Fri Oct 24, by 5pm -- Group observational study proposals due to either Anne DePrince's or Gale Pearce's mailbox				
Tues Oct 28	Goodwin Appendix B: Using Statistics	Experiments Which stat test to use Writing up results		
Thurs Oct 30	Goodwin Ch 6: Control Problems in Experimental Research	Experimental confounds Within subjects, longitudinal designs	Project worksheet	HM3 (Midterm)
Tues Nov 4	Goodwin Ch 7: Experimental Design	Quiz 3 Experimental design Counterbalancing		
Thurs Nov 6	Goodwin Ch 8: Correlational Research	Correlation and causality		Project worksheet
Tues Nov 11		Data analysis		

Nov 12 is data collection night, from 7-10 pm, probably in Straub 146

Date	Reading	Class	New Assignment	Assignment Due
NOTE special class meeting time below. Schedule will be explained in class.				
Wed Nov 12 - 2:30-4:00/ Thurs Nov 13- regular class time		SSIL/data analysis	SSIL worksheet	HM4 (Observational study)
Tues Nov 18 Goodwin Ch 10: Small N Designs	Quiz 4 Interactions Small N Designs	HM5-Results and discussion Interaction worksheets		
Thurs Nov 20	Small N Designs (cont.) Writing results and discussion			SSIL worksheet Interaction worksheet
Tues Nov 25 Goodwin Ch 9: Quasi-Expt'l Designs and Applied Research	Quasi expt'l designs Time series designs			
*** Bonus for turning in HM 5 before Thanksgiving - TBA! ***				
Thur Nov 27	Thanksgiving - NO CLASS			
Tues Dec 2 Goodwin Ch 12: Epilogue	How to prepare posters			HM5 (no late bonuses allowed)
Thurs Dec 4	Quiz 5 How to prepare posters (cont.) Wrap-up			

***Fri. Dec. 5: Results and discussions should be graded by 5 pm (check your e-mail). You can pick them up in order to use them in preparing your poster.

***Mon Dec 8, 10:15 am, EMU Fir Room--Exam period: Presentations of final projects in the form of a poster session.

Homework 1- Reviewing the literature and writing introductions
Due at the beginning of class, Tuesday, October 16

******Important Instructions:** Your introduction should be typed and double-spaced with one inch margins all around.

First, read the following three articles (they are on reserve at the Knight Library; you can also read them in the original journals):

Golding, J. M., & Hauselt, J. (1995). When instructions to forget become instructions to remember. Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 20, 178-183.

Johnson, J. D., Whitestone, E., Jackson, L. A., & Gatto, L. (1995). Justice is still not colorblind: Differential racial effects of exposure to inadmissible evidence. Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 21, 893-898.

Sue, S., Smith, R. E., & Caldwell, C. (1973). Effects of inadmissible evidence on the decisions of simulated jurors: A moral dilemma. Journal of Applied Social Psychology, 3, 345-353.

Second, imagine you are researcher who has hypothesized that people are more likely to allow inadmissible evidence to affect their decisions when the inadmissible evidence is consistent with other information that they received, and less likely to allow inadmissible evidence to affect their decisions when it is not consistent with other information they have received. Using these three articles, write an introduction for the study in which you will test this hypothesis. Your introduction should introduce your topic, tell why it is important and interesting to study, and summarize relevant previous findings. Note that you do not have to say how you will test your hypothesis, or anything about the methodology to be used in your study. If this were an introduction to a study you were actually doing (and you will write such an introduction later in this course), you would also foreshadow or overview your own study in your introduction, but this time all you have to lead up to is your hypothesis.

Think about your introduction as focusing your reader toward the problem you are studying. First, you use the introduction to bring the reader quickly up to speed--if this were really your area of research, you want to introduce the reader to an area you may have been immersed in for weeks or months (or years!). Give the readers your context, and define any important terms that they will need to understand what you are talking about. (Helpful hint: Remember, each of the 3 articles you are reading has an introduction--you can use them as models.)

In a sense, an introduction is persuasive writing--you must convince readers that they want to continue reading your work by persuading them your problem is important, and that your logic about what you are testing is sound. You don't want to bore readers with a lot of findings that are not directly related to your study, even if you read a lot of articles that are somewhat related or have the same words in their title as the title of your paper. At the same time, you can't skip important steps in how you arrived at your hypothesis. Think about everything that goes in your introduction as being like a step in a path towards your hypothesis. Read what you have written and ask yourself, "Have I wandered off the path? Or have I left big gaps where the reader won't be able to follow the path?" Your goal is the shortest, most direct path to your hypothesis, broken down into simple, easy-to-take steps..

When you come up with a hypothesis, that is your idea (although in this assignment, your hypothesis has been given to you). However, in scientific writing, you must justify why you think your idea is a good one with previous works, rather than simply using compelling rhetoric (although using compelling rhetoric in addition to citing previous works generally doesn't hurt!). Provide a citation for