

PSY 303: Research Methods in Psychology

Winter 2008 CRN 24473(4 credits)

Tuesdays & Thursdays 4:00 – 5:20

Location: 221 McKenzie

Labs (180 Straub): Thursdays 8:30-9:50 (CRN 24478), 12-1:20 (CRN 24479), & 2-3:20 (CRN 24480)

Course Webpage available at: <https://blackboard.uoregon.edu>

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Graduate Teaching Assistants

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Office Hour: Wednesdays 3-4 and by appt.

Required Texts:

Cozby, P. C. (2004). *Methods in behavioral research* (9th ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill.

Strunk, W., Jr., & White, E. B. (2000). *The elements of style* (4th ed.). New York: Longman.

Strongly Recommended:

American Psychological Association. (2001). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (5th ed.). Washington, DC: Author.

Course Description and Goals

Welcome to Research Methods! During this course, you will learn how to evaluate and conduct scientific research in psychology. As a bonus, you will sharpen your ability to think critically and logically about important topics. If you ever watch news, read trade articles, enjoy television, surf the internet, or live anywhere except a cave, you are constantly bombarded with an often overwhelming and confusing mass of information provided by the media, corporations, sales people, the government, and other various sources that want to sell you something or convince you that their opinions are right. The research skills you will learn in this course are essential for becoming a wise consumer of that mass of information. In addition, these skills will provide you with a basic foundation in scientific methodology. If you choose to go on to graduate study in the social, behavioral, or physical sciences, you will need this! Along the way, you will find answers to such questions as:

--How do I know that the studies I've participated in for 201 and 202 were ethical?

--Why is there little point in paying attention to polls reported in *Men's Health* or *Cosmopolitan*?

--How can statistics be misused?

--When is deceiving people beneficial?

Course Pre-Requisite

Successful completion of Psychology 302 (Statistics) is a pre-requisite for this course. We will review important statistical concepts as they apply to conducting, analyzing, interpreting, and reporting research results, but this should not be 'new' material for you.

Course Philosophy and Expectations

This course consists of two components: (1) lecture and (2) lab. There will be traditional lecture meetings and a weekly lab meeting. Attendance at all lectures and labs will be an *essential* part of your success in this course. In fact, lab attendance is mandatory--attendance will be taken! In both lab and lecture there will be in-class

assignments that will contribute to your participation grade. In lecture, there will occasionally be small group discussions which might lead to exam material. Furthermore, while there is some overlap between readings and lectures, lectures will often cover material from outside the readings. You are responsible for all material (i.e., exams will include material from readings, lectures, discussions, etc).

Doing well in this class requires an **active** involvement with the course content; merely reading the material and showing up for class is not enough. Research has shown that thinking about what you are reading, watching, or discussing, and *relating* it to experiences in your own life will help you retain that knowledge. This leads to better grades and is a better strategy than just trying to cram for tests. If you find yourself not doing as well as you would like in this class, contact me or your TA *earlier* rather than later. We can help you solve many problems. If you wait until the end of term, it is usually too late for us to be of much help.

It is expected that you will come **prepared** to class. This means having done the readings for the day *prior* to coming to class, as well as having spent some time thinking about them. You will not do well on exams if you do not keep up with the reading. We also recommend that you check your email and the blackboard website often, as we will post important class information.

Course Components

Lecture Participation (3%)

During lecture, I will review selected textbook material, elaborate on some topics with information not in the text, present information relevant to the research project and paper, and give unannounced in-class exercises. Participation on in-class exercises will count for 3% of your course grade and they cannot be made up in the event of missed classes. These exercises are designed to help you think about and master important concepts, and should help you prepare for quizzes.

I will make my **lectures slides** available on blackboard each day **after** class. Note that these slides serve to outline the lecture and are by no means comprehensive. You should not rely on these slides for your course notes; rather, you should use them to organize the notes that you take during class.

Exams (50%)

There will be 3 in-class quizzes during the term and a final exam on the last day of class. Your lowest of the 3 quizzes will be dropped. As such, there will be **no make up quizzes** given for any reason. These quizzes may combine multiple-choice, fill-in-the-blanks, true/false, and short answers. The format of the final exam will be multiple-choice and a study guide will be provided! 70% of the questions on the final exam will come from topics that we cover at the end of the term and 30% of the questions will be based on the cumulative knowledge you gain *throughout the term*. The final exam will NOT include questions on specific statistical tests.

Lab Session Participation (3%)

The lab sections and lab assignments are primarily aimed at helping you successfully conduct and write about the results of your research project. A lab schedule will be passed out during your first lab section. In-class lab assignments can not be made up for credit for any reason, and you must attend the lab session you are registered for each week to get credit. Be sure to bring your textbook, paper, writing utensils, and some method of saving electronic work to each lab. You will often need these to complete the activities and/or save your work.

Lab Homework Assignments (7%)

These assignments are described to you in lab and are due in lab. Some of these assignments will be graded individually; others are pass/fail group homework assignments. Details will be discussed in labs.

Research Project/Research Paper (35%)

One of the requirements of this class is that together with other group members you will design and conduct an original psychological experiment. You will receive more information about this in labs and class. Although this project is collaborative in many aspects, each member will write **their own** research paper. This means that even

though you are pooling references, using the same design, sharing results, and discussing with your group interpretations, limitations, and future directions based on your findings, each person is responsible for writing their own paper that reflects their **individual work created solely for this class**.

Suspected plagiarism will be investigated, and a determination of plagiarism will result in a zero for the assignment and other academic consequences. Don't do it! If you have questions about what constitutes plagiarism, contact me or your TA. For more information see the section on Academic Honesty below.

In fairness to everyone who plans their schedule appropriately and turns their work in on time (and out of respect for those who will read these papers and return them to you), late papers **without exception** will lose 10% of their grade per 24 hour period following the time they are due, not including weekends. Papers more than 4 days late will not be accepted. This policy **will** be enforced, and includes the final paper.

Mandatory Data Collection/ Group & Self Evaluations (2%)

Data for research projects will be collected in one large session in conjunction with another 303 class. The **mandatory** group data collection night scheduled for **Monday, February 11, 2008 from 7:00-9:00pm in Columbia 150**. Participation is mandatory and attendance will be taken. Think about it; if no one from the other class showed up, we would not get any data. Be there!! Your lab GTF will give you more information about how you will need to prepare for this as the date approaches. If you are **unable to attend** this event, please let me know during the first week of class. Absence from this event will be permitted **only with documentation** (e.g., work schedule), and you will be required to complete a make-up assignment to receive credit.

You will be asked to formally evaluate the individual contributions of each group member to your research project. You will also be asked to evaluate your own performance and contribution.

Extra Credit (2%)

Credit to improve your overall grade by up to 2% can be earned by participating in Psychology Department research through the Psychology Department Human Subjects Pool. For each hour of participation you can earn a 1% improvement to your mark as long as you *assign your extra credit to Research Methods 303*. Half-hour (or half credit) studies will count as half a percentage point. The coordinator of the Human Subjects Pool, Jeff Loucks, can provide you with a handout containing details regarding your possible participation, and you can also gain information by going to the HSP website at <http://darkwing.uoregon.edu/~hscoord>. If you have an account on Sona from prior classes (e.g., Psych 201 and Psych 202), you should use the same login information that you used for this class.

Grading & Point System

A+ = 99-100%	A = 93-98%	A- = 90-92%	B+ = 87-89%	B = 83-86%	B- = 80-82%
C+ = 77-79%	C = 73-76%	C- = 70-72%	D+ = 67-69%	D = 63-66%	D- = 60-62%
					F < 60%

Additional Notes

Keep up with assignments!!

Your success in this course will rely in large part on your ability to stay organized and on top of due dates. You should expect to be in frequent communication with your group-mates from lab, your GTF, and me to make sure that you are on top of responsibilities. If you are not already in the habit of checking e-mail every day, start now! Some good ideas for staying productive and in touch with your class are:

1. Save your work frequently; computer problems will not be considered a valid excuse for late work. Saving your work will also allow you to avoid that horrible feeling of loss and despair when your computer freezes, depriving you of hours worth of writing.
2. Save copies of sent e-mails, and be on the lookout for notices of "failed delivery."

3. Use blackboard as a means to communicate to avoid typos in e-mail addresses. On the left hand side of the class site, you will see an option for “communication.” Clicking on this will allow you to select an “e-mail” option, and you will be able to select single recipients from the class list.
4. Be respectful of your fellow classmates. When you arrange meeting times out of class, make your best effort to be on time or to contact your group mates as soon as possible if a conflict arises. Avoid “social loafing”!
5. Speak up if you think a group member is not contributing his/her fair share. If you see a problem developing, respectfully bring your concerns to the awareness of your group mates. Dialogue with your group mates should be the first option for a solution, but if this fails, do not hesitate to bring your concerns to your GTF and to me.

Academic Honesty

All work submitted in this course must be your own and *produced exclusively* for this course. Members of the university community are expected to be honest and forthright in their academic endeavors. To falsify the results of one's research, to present the words, ideas, data, or work of another as one's own, or to cheat on an examination corrupts the essential process by which knowledge is advanced. It is the official policy of the University of Oregon that all acts of alleged academic dishonesty by students be reported to the Director of Student Judicial Affairs in the Office of Students Life.

Specifically for this course: Group discussion outside of class is (of course!) encouraged. Some assignments can be done in groups, such as locating articles for your introductions. Some assignments *must* be done in groups, such as devising hypotheses and operationalizing your IVs and DVs. However, **unless you are specifically told that an assignment can be done with other group members; all written assignments must be done independently including draft sections and the final research paper.** If we receive papers that have substantial portions matching in text, if one paper appears to have text from another paper with only minor modifications, or if your paper has portions of text that have been taken from published sources without proper acknowledgment, you will be in danger of failing the course and reported to Student Judicial Affairs. We will be reading your papers very closely because it is our goal to note formatting details and responsiveness to draft suggestions; therefore, this is definitely not the class where you would want to take the risk of turning in work that is not your own! **Be extra cautious. Do NOT send your drafts to your group mates! You can discuss drafts and feedback, but do not give your paper drafts to anyone.**

Additional Resources

We strongly encourage everyone to use the resources at Knight Library for help conducting library searches using PsycINFO. This is an essential skill in conducting research and writing an APA research paper.

Students with Disabilities

If you have a documented disability and anticipate needing accommodations in this course, please make arrangements to meet with the instructor during the first week of classes. Please request that the Counselor for Students with Disabilities send a letter verifying your disability. Students without a documented disability who are experiencing learning difficulties are encouraged to consult Disabilities Services (164 Oregon Hall; 346-1155; disabsrv@uoregon.edu; <http://ds.uoregon.edu/>)

Students for Whom English is Not Their Native Language

Foreign language dictionaries are permitted during quizzes. Quizzes and the exam will be designed to take approximately one hour to complete within an hour and twenty minute class period; therefore, it is unlikely that you will need additional time. However, if you find that you do need additional time to complete the quiz, please make arrangements to stay after class so that you can finish.