

# Psychology 303: Research Methods in Psychology

--Spring 2009--

Monday/Wednesday 10:00-11:20 am, Deady 208

**Instructor:** Kimberly Angelo  
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Office: 329 Straub Hall  
Office Hours: Tue 12-1 & Thu 2-3

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## **Required text:**

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

## **Recommended texts:**

American Psychological Association (2001). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (5<sup>th</sup> ed.). Washington, D.C.

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

## **Course Description:**

Welcome to Research Methods! This course provides you with a unique opportunity to learn new skills in conducting and evaluating scientific research in psychology. The material you learn in this class will sharpen your ability to think critically and logically about important topics, both inside and outside of psychology. This class will help you understand psychological research, whether you decide to continue with a career in psychology or not. The research skills you learn in this course are essential for becoming a wise consumer of the often overwhelming and confusing mass of information provided by the media, corporations, sales people, the government, and other various sources. In addition, these skills will provide a basic foundation in scientific methodology if you choose to complete an honor's thesis in your junior or senior year or go on to graduate study in psychology.

## **Course Prerequisite:**

Successful completion of Psychology 302 (Statistics) is an absolute pre-requisite for this course. We assume you have a working knowledge of basic statistics. 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:**

The course includes traditional lecture meetings and a weekly lab meeting. Attendance in lectures will be an essential part of your success in this course, as topics will be covered in class that are not in the textbook. Small group discussions will be a component of class lectures, along with several non-graded (pass/fail) exercises that make up part of your grade. In addition, lecture will often cover material from outside of the readings. You are responsible for all material, (e.g., exams will cover all material from readings, lecture, group 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. It is important to *think* about what you are reading, watching, and discussing, and *relate* it to experiences in your own life, rather than just remembering facts. As a 4-credit class, you are expected to spend 12 hours per week *outside of class* working on relevant material.

It is also 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 reflecting on them. You will not do well on exams and writing exercises if you do not keep up with the reading. We also recommend that you check your UO email and the blackboard website often, as we may post important class information. This course has been designed to comply with the psychology department's guidelines for teaching and learning. Please review these guidelines at <http://psychweb.uoregon.edu/guidelines/index.htm>

## **Course Components and Requirements:**

### **Lecture:**

The lecture sessions will include review of selected textbook material, information relevant to the research project and paper, elaboration of some topics with information not provided in the textbook, and in-class small group exercises. In-class exercises are designed to help you master important concepts and prepare for exams. Attendance will not be taken, so you are expected to take responsibility for what is covered in class. The most important way to do this is to show up and be an active participant in lecture. Lectures slides will be posted on Blackboard. 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.

### **In-class Scheduled Exams (60% of final grade)**

Quizzes will be used to assess your mastery of the lecture and reading material. Quiz format will be multiple-choice. There will be 4 quizzes in the course, and the lowest grade will be dropped. Because of this, makeup exams will only be held in extreme circumstances, with proper documentation (e.g., doctor's note), and will be given at the discretion of the instructor. If you are sick and have to miss an exam, that should be the one that you drop. The make-up exam will be different from the exam administered to the rest of the class and may include short answer/essay style questions. There is no final exam in this course; the last quiz will be administered on the last day of class. There is, however, a final paper that will be due during finals week (see below).

### **Lab sessions and homework (5% of final grade):**

This course includes traditional lecture meetings and a weekly lab meeting. Attendance at all labs is **mandatory** and will be an essential part of your success in this course. Please see the lab syllabus for more detailed information.

Lab sessions will focus on the steps of the research project. The lab sessions will be conducted by a graduate student serving as a teaching assistant for this course. You cannot make up missed labs for credit, and you must attend the lab session you are registered for each week. If an emergency prevents you from attending your scheduled lab, talk to your TA as soon as you can. In cases where you can document the reason for your absence (e.g., doctor's note), credit will be given to students who are unable to attend their scheduled lab but make arrangements to attend a different section. Unless otherwise stated, assignments and draft sections are due at the *beginning* of lab. Late lab assignments will be penalized 10% every day past due, not including weekends. Assignments four days past their due date will not be graded.

**Research Paper (30% of final grade: 15% drafts, 15% final paper):**

Each student will complete a group-based research project and an individually-written paper during the course. The paper will be an APA-style manuscript describing the study you have chosen to complete. A schedule of due dates will be provided to you in lab. Drafts of some sections of the paper make up a large portion of your grade; it is very important that you stay on top of draft due dates and that you are responsive to the feedback provided to you by your TAs. The final paper is also a major component of your grade. Your final paper will demonstrate your ability to integrate and apply the knowledge and skills you have gained in reading, lectures, and lab sessions.

**\*\*\*The research paper is due on Tuesday, 6/9 by 4 pm to the psychology office.\*\*\***

Late papers will be penalized 10 points per day (out of 100) past due, not including weekends. Late papers will not be accepted for grading 4 days past the due date.

**Grading:**

Your overall course grade will be based on the following components:

<b>60%</b>	in-class exams (best 3 out of 4)
<b>5%</b>	lab attendance & homework
<b>15%</b>	drafts of APA style research paper
<b>15%</b>	final APA style research paper
<b>5%</b>	gestalt: attitude, participation, overall quality of work and understanding of material

A note on the "gestalt" component of the grade: The final grade assigned for the course should reflect the student's gestalt performance in the course, as described by the following guidelines:

A	<i>excellent</i> work, complete mastery of course material
B	<i>good</i> work, grasps most of the important concepts
C	<i>average</i> work, grasps many but not all aspects of course material
D	<i>poor</i> work, insufficient understanding of material
F	failing

If, taken as a whole, a student's current letter grade does not reflect that student's understanding of the material, the instructors reserve the right to alter the final course grade by up to half of a letter grade (5%) in either direction. This percentage could be used to reflect any understanding (or lack thereof) you have demonstrated. For most students, the gestalt will not affect the overall letter grade earned, but we would like to be up-front about the fact that this class will be graded as a whole, rather than as a collection of points.

Plusses (+) will be awarded to grades at X8 or above at that letter grade (88-89, 78-79, etc). Minuses (-) will be awarded for grades X2 or lower at that letter grade (80-82, 70-72, etc.). A+ grades will be awarded to those who achieve a 98 or above (without extra credit), at the discretion of the instructors.

## **Important Additional Notes:**

### **Keeping 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. Check the syllabus and schedule often to see when assignments are due.
2. 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. Save copies of sent e-mails, and be on the lookout for notices of “failed delivery.”
3. Use blackboard as a means to communicate. 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.

### **Additional Resources**

The publisher of your text maintains an on-line learning center for students with quizzes, flashcards, chapter outlines, exercises, and additional links for relevant content. We encourage you to use the site when note-taking, studying, and preparing for exams. The address is [www.mhhe.com/cozby9](http://www.mhhe.com/cozby9)

The APA style publishing manual is the final source for APA-style formatting and protocol. If you plan on continuing in psychology, it might be worth purchasing a copy. Otherwise, your instructors have copies that you can use during office hours. We also strongly encourage everyone to utilize 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.

## **Academic Honesty:**

Group discussion outside of class is encouraged. However, all work submitted in this course must be your own and produced exclusively for this course. Copying or paraphrasing information or ideas from any source interview, print or electronic, without citation, is plagiarism. Although some aspects of the research project require group work (in-lab exercises, design, data collection and analysis), *group collaboration on the research paper is absolutely prohibited—the work you turn in on homework and drafts must be solely your own.* The use of sources (ideas, quotations, paraphrases) must be properly acknowledged and documented. For the consequences of academic dishonesty, refer to the Schedule of Classes published quarterly. Violations will be taken seriously and are noted on student disciplinary records. If you are in doubt regarding any aspect of these issues as they pertain to this course, please consult with the instructor before you complete any relevant requirements of the course.

## **Students with Disabilities:**

If you have a documented disability and anticipate needing accommodations in this course, please make

arrangements to meet with the instructor soon. Also please request that the Counselor for Students with Disabilities, Molly Sirois, send a letter verifying your disability. The phone number for disability services is 346-1155, and the email address is [disabsrv@uoregon.edu](mailto:disabsrv@uoregon.edu)

### **Students for Whom English is Not Their Native Language:**

Foreign language dictionaries are permitted during exams. Exams 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 exam, please make arrangements to stay after class so that you can finish.

### **Even more additional Notes:**

#### **Blackboard:**

The course blackboard site will be a critical source of information throughout the term. Any changes to the lecture or reading schedule will be posted on this site as well. In addition, slides to accompany lectures, scores, and non-textbook readings will be posted there. Please make sure you are able to view slides created in Powerpoint and .pdf documents. You may need to download a Powerpoint viewer, available free from many sites including [www.microsoft.com/downloads](http://www.microsoft.com/downloads). Adobe Acrobat provides a free downloadable reader that will allow you to open and view pdfs. Alternatively, slides and pdf documents can be downloaded and printed using public computers at the university.

You should already have a login ID and password through your university email account to access blackboard. If you are unfamiliar with blackboard or do not know your password, contact me as soon as possible.

Using blackboard for communicating with your group members and me is a good idea, because you can easily select email recipients without worrying about spelling email addresses wrong. On the green left-hand field on the 303 site, you will see a white box titled "Tools." Select "Communication" and then "Send Email."

#### **Posting of Grades:**

Scores for lab activities and quizzes will be posted on blackboard throughout the course. Please do not wait until after final grades are submitted to dispute a grade; keep track of your scores as they are posted, and alert me **in writing** (email is fine) as soon as possible if you think that there has been a mistake in grading. If the dispute involves a grade for a lab activity, please try to resolve this first with your GTF.

**Extra Credit:** Extra credit is available to improve your exam average by up to 2%.

Credit to improve your exam average 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, Adam Kramer, 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. If you do not have a Sona account, you may create one by requesting an account at <https://uopsych.sona-systems.com>.

***Studies must have been completed by the last day of classes, June 5<sup>th</sup>, in order to count toward extra credit.***

## Schedule (subject to change)

Week	Lecture date	Lecture topic	Readings (to do before class)	Lab topic
	Unit 1: Introduction to Research Methods			
1	3/30	Syllabus & Introduction	Ch 1	Group selection
	4/1	The Scientific Method	Ch 2	
2	4/6	Ethics	Ch 3	Research design
	4/8	Research Design	Ch 4	
3	4/13	Quiz 1		References & citations
	Unit 2: Correlational Design			
	4/15	Reliability and validity	Ch 5	
4	4/20	Observation	Ch 6	Introduction
	4/22	Survey research	Ch 7	
5	4/27	Description and correlation	Ch 12	Method
	4/29	Quiz 2		
	Unit 3: Experimental Design			
6	5/4	Experimental design I	Ch 8	Data entry
	5/6	Experimental design II	Ch 10	
7	5/11	Experimental procedures	Ch 9	Data analysis I
	5/13	Statistical inference	Ch 13	
8	5/18	Quiz 3		Data analysis I
	Unit 4: Etc.			
	5/20	Additional designs	Ch 11	
9	5/25	Memorial Day—NO CLASS		NO LAB
	5/27	Return to reliability and validity	Ch 14	
10	6/1	Quiz 4— “Makeup” Exam  Either Tuesday or Thursday (TBD)		Title page, abstract
	6/3			
Final Paper due Tuesday, 6/9 by 4 pm to the Psychology Office (131 Straub). Please write your lab instructor’s name on the paper.				

### Important registration dates:

Last day to drop classes without a “W”	4/6
Last day to register/add classes	4/8
Last day to withdraw from classes	5/17
Final exams	6/8-12
Grades due	6/16