

Research Methods in Psychology – PSY 303 / Winter 2009

Monday/Wednesday 12:00 – 1:20 / 229 McKenzie

Labs (180 Straub): Monday 2pm, Tuesday 10am and 4pm

Course Information & Updates: <https://blackboard.uoregon.edu>

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Graduate Teaching Assistants

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Required Texts:

Cozby, P. C. (2004). *Methods in behavioral research* (10th ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill.

Additional required readings will be posted on blackboard.

Recommended:

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

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

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, breathe in and out, 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 thus 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 course. 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

The course includes traditional lecture meetings and a weekly lab meeting. Attendance at all lectures and labs is **mandatory** and will be an *essential* part of your success in this course. In lecture, there will occasionally be small group discussions which might lead to exam material. In lab, you will often complete graded (pass/fail) exercises which are also part of your grade. 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 more sound 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 assignment deadlines or the end of the 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. This course has been designed to comply with the psychology department's guidelines for teaching and learning (<http://psychweb.uoregon.edu/guidelines/index.htm>).

Course Components

Lecture

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 small group exercises. These exercises are designed to help you think about and master important concepts, and should help you prepare for quizzes. Lecture outlines intended to assist note-taking will be posted on blackboard. These are not complete lecture notes, and it would be a mistake to use them in that way.

Lab Sessions (30 points)

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 cannot be made up for credit for any reason, and you must attend the lab session you are registered for each week. 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 activities and/or save your work.

Learning Checks (30 points)

Throughout the course, you will need to complete *at least* 8 of the 14 *multiple choice* (not true/false) chapter quizzes at www.mhhe.com/cozby10e. Under "online learning" click "student edition," choose a chapter (a *different* one each time), choose the multiple choice option under "quizzes," and complete the quiz. You need to score 100% on these quizzes for them to count. If, after submitting your answers, you missed any questions, you can go back and change any wrong answers. After getting a 100, email the results to your **TA** (not me) along with your name. I would suggest using these as a study guide for in-class exams, and you can certainly do all 14 if you like. This is a pass/fail requirement. If you complete all 8, you will get credit. If you complete only 6 of 8, you will not get credit. We will only accept 3 of these chapter quizzes in any week, so you should complete them throughout the regular 10-week term rather than in one session. No learning checks will be accepted after the date of the last exam. This will assist your learning.

Exams (500 points)

There will be 5 in-class exams during the term and no final exam. Your lowest exam grade will be dropped. Because of this, there will be no make up exams given for any reason. These exams may combine multiple-choice, fill-in-the-blanks, true/false, and short answers. Cheating on exams will not be tolerated. If you are caught cheating, your test will be taken, you will receive a zero for that exam, and there will be other academic consequences. You will feel angry and ashamed and we will feel upset and disappointed. Don't do it.

Research Project/Research Paper (350 points)

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 paper section and the final paper that puts it all together will reflect **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. To ensure that all written work is original, you may be required to submit writing assignments to SafeAssign. SafeAssign is a software tool designed to help students avoid plagiarism and improper citation. The software encourages original writing and proper citation by cross-referencing submitted materials with an archived database of websites, essays, journal articles, and other published work. The instructor or TAs may in some cases also submit your work to SafeAssign or some other plagiarism analysis and detection program. By enrolling in this course you grant us permission to do so.

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.

Homework Assignments (70 points)

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

Group & Self Evaluations/Mandatory Data Collection (20 points)

Near the end of the term, 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. Data for research projects will be collected in one large session in conjunction with another 303 class. Participation is mandatory. Think about it; if no one from their class showed up, we would not get any data. Be there.

Extra Credit (30 points)

You may earn up to 3% extra credit for participating in studies run through the Human Participant Pool (1% per hour study). This is meant to be educational, so you must also write a very short (1/2 - 1 page) description for each study you participate in. If you do not turn in a description, you will not get credit. This description should identify the hypothesis of the study, the basic design (experimental, correlational, etc.), the independent and dependant variables (if any), and should also address what the real-world implications of the research are (if any). If you are interested in doing this, you will need to set up an account through the Sona system. You can go here to do so: <https://uopsych.sona-systems.com/>. Please talk to the instructor if you need help doing this, or if you are interested in getting extra credit in a different way.

You may also earn extra credit by writing a similar response to three journal articles of your choice. All requirements are the same, but you write one response for each of the three articles and turn your description along with the article.

Grading & Point System

A+ = Reserved for exceptional performance

A = 93-99% A- = 90-92.9% B+ = 87-89.9% B = 83-86.9% B- = 80-82.9%
C+ = 77-79.9% C = 73-76.9% C- = 70-72.9% D+ = 67-69.9% D = 63-66.9% D- = 60-62.9% **F < 60%**

4 Exams (300 points); 5 Paper Sections and Final Paper (210 points); Homework (42 points); Learning Checks (18 points); Lab Exercises (18 points); Evaluations/Data Collection (12 points); Total points = 600.

Additional Notes

General Advice

This is a fast-paced and work-intensive course. As such, procrastination is not your friend. It is my official advice that you keep up with your reading and not wait until the last minute to write papers or study for exams. Cramming does not advance learning very well and is a poor strategy for doing well on exams. A better idea is to keep up with reading, *think* about the material you are taking in and try to link it to experiences and feelings in your own life. Write paper sections early, leaving

time for peer review, revision, etc. In this way, you can integrate the facts you learn into your life, creating a lifetime of knowledge - and as a byproduct, get better grades.

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/>)

Academic Honesty Revisited

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.

Using Blackboard

The web site for this course was constructed using "Blackboard" software. This allows the web site to be extensive and interactive. On the web site, you will find general announcements for the class, all documents for the course (including this syllabus), on-line discussions, links to relevant web sites, and more. We hope that this web site will be a useful tool for you in learning the material for this class, and in further exploring topics you find interesting. <https://blackboard.uoregon.edu/>

Tentative Lecture/Readings/Exam Schedule

(unless marked, readings are from Cozby; S&W = Strunk & White; Bem = Bem, D. J. (2003), “Writing the Empirical Journal Article”)

Date	Topics	Readings
Week1		
January 4	Course Introduction, Scientific Methods	Ch. 1
January 6	Scientific Methods, Conducting Research	Ch. 2
Week2		
January 11	Studying Behavior, Experimental Design Basics	Chp. 4
January 13	<u>EXAM 1</u>	
Week3		
January 18	MLK HOLIDAY – NO CLASS!!	
January 20	Survey Research, Scientific (and other) Writing	Chp. 7, & <i>Writing Handout 1</i>
Week4		
January 25	Experimental Designs	Chp. 8 & <i>Bem, pp. 7-8 (methods)</i>
January 27	<u>EXAM 2</u>	
Week5		
February 1	Conducting Experiments	Chp. 9, <i>Writing Handout 2</i>
February 3	Complex Designs	Chp. 10
Week6		
February 8	Ethics in Research	Chp. 3
Monday February 8th, <u>Mandatory</u> Data Collection Night, 6-9 p.m., Location TBA		
February 10	<u>EXAM 3</u>	
Week7		
February 15	Measurement	Chp. 5
February 17	Statistics – Data Description	Chp. 12, & <i>Bem, pp. 8-10 (results)</i>
Week8		
February 22	Statistics – Description and Inference	Chp. 13 & Appendix B (pp. 337-358)
February 24	<u>EXAM 4</u>	
Week9		
March 1	Generalizing Results	Chp. 14
March 3	Observational Research	Chp 6, Appendix A, 287 -320
Week10		
March 8	Other Research Designs	Chp. 11
March 10	<u>EXAM 5</u>	

Monday-Tuesday, March 15th & 16th , Final Paper Due by 5:00! Email to *Allison*