

PSY 303: RESEARCH METHODS IN PSYCHOLOGY: COGNITIVE / NEUROSCIENCE
University of Oregon
Spring 2017

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Office Hours: Tuesdays 10:00 – 11:00 & 14:00 – 15:00 or by appointment

Course Meeting Times

Mondays 14:00 – 15:20 in 105 Peterson (Lecture)

Wednesdays 14:00 – 15:20 in 006 Straub (Lab)

Course Materials

(1) PDF files on Canvas (required)

All required course materials (handouts, assignments) will be posted on the Canvas site.

(2) Helpful resources (recommended)

- ◆ Clark, H.H. Everyone can write better (and you are no exception). Advice to students of psychology. http://www.psychology.stonybrook.edu/sbrennan-/psy384/papers/hc_write.html
- ◆ American Psychological Association (2009). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th ed.). Washington, DC: APA. (Available at Duckstore)
- ◆ Strunk, W., Jr., & White, E. B. (2000). *The elements of style* (4th ed.). New York: Longman. (Available at Duckstore)

Course Description

This course is the final course in the 301-303 series. This course will focus on building your skills as a *producer* of quality cognitive/cognitive neuroscience research, although in the process, you will also improve your skills as a *consumer* of a wide variety of research. You and your classmates will be working together to design, analyze, and discuss your own research project. In addition, you will be individually writing up your research throughout the term in separate writing assignments. You will receive feedback on your writing, and throughout the term, you will revise your writing assignments and synthesize them into two main research papers based on a correlational research study, and a related experimental research study. You will also present your research projects to the class to gain practice communicating research effectively.

This course may be repeated for credit a maximum of one time provided there is a change in topic.

A Bit About Topic-Specific Research Methods

Each topic-specific course will focus on research production skills, but the nature of the research and the specific tools that are used will differ by topic.

For example, Research Methods in Psychology: Cognitive Psychology (this course) will emphasize asking research questions that are unique to cognitive psychology (e.g., How do we search information in short-term memory?), finding literature in cognitive psychology journals,

using research designs that are common in cognitive psychology (e.g., repeated-measures designs), collecting data typical of cognitive psychology experiments (e.g., reaction time or neuroimaging), and conducting appropriate statistical procedures (e.g., related-samples t-tests, repeated-measures ANOVAs).

As a comparison, Research Methods in Psychology: Social Psychology will emphasize asking research questions that are unique to social psychology (e.g., What factors reduce conformity? How stable are first impressions of people?), finding literature in social psychology journals, using research designs that are common in social psychology (e.g., between-subjects designs, with different “primes” used to establish experimental conditions), collecting data typical of social psychology experiments (e.g., using self-report scales with established reliability), and conducting appropriate statistical procedures (e.g., factorial ANOVAs, multiple regression).

Learning Objectives

- ◆ Review existing psychological literature: perform effective literature searches, identify key research questions and hypotheses in scientific articles, and critically evaluate the research design and quality of evidence presented.
- ◆ Conduct your own original research: generate research questions and hypotheses, evaluate ethical considerations, design materials to measure variables, and collect data.
- ◆ Analyze, interpret, and communicate your findings: choose appropriate basic statistical analysis techniques for specific research questions and specific data sets, perform basic data analyses, and summarize the results in an APA-style report and an oral presentation.

Student Workload

When you complete this course, you will earn 4 credits toward your degree. Four credits is the equivalent of 120 hours of work across the term, or 12 hours per week for 10 weeks. You will spend 3 hours in class each week. The other 9 hours will be spent completing assignments. The bulk of the work for this course will come from 7 homework assignments (about 3 hours each), six writing assignments (about 45 hours total), and the two presentations (about 20 hours). The workload will be less at the beginning of the term, increase as we tackle lengthier writing assignments, and then peak towards the end of the term when you are conducting, analyzing, writing up, and presenting your own research studies.

Expectations and Grading

Homework

There will be seven homework assignments in this course. Homework assignments will include choosing a research topic, finding relevant scientific articles, creating tables and figures, answering questions about research designs or ethics, and preparing questionnaires and experimental materials. Homework assignments are due at the start of class. Late homework assignments will be penalized by 50% regardless of when they are submitted, and because homework assignments build on each other, no homework assignments will be accepted more than 1 week late. Some of these homework assignments will be collaborative and will involve working with a small group of your classmates, and some of the homework assignments will be completed independently. Specific instructions and expectations will be provided for each assignment.

Writing Assignments

The writing assignments in this course are scaffolded, such that by the time you are writing your final paper, you will have practiced and received feedback on each of the components of an APA-style research report. There will be six writing assignments in this course, culminating in two major papers. These writing assignments include a conceptual introduction or literature review, a description of methods, a description of results, and a discussion section, each of which is a main component in an empirical research report. In addition to getting feedback on your writing from your instructor, you will exchange your writing with peer reviewers (classmates), who will provide you with written feedback. Each of the smaller writing assignments is worth between 5-10% of your grade, and the complete papers are each worth 15% (totaling 55% of your grade). Writing assignments are due at the start of class (except for the final paper). Late writing assignments will be penalized by 50% regardless of when they are submitted unless late submission is approved in advance due to special circumstances. **All writing assignments must be completed independently**, however, receiving feedback on drafts from group members, friends, tutors, and instructors is encouraged and completely appropriate. In all cases, you must not have the writing done for you.

Class Presentations

In this course, you will be conducting research with a small group of your classmates. During the first part of the course, you will be presenting a review of background literature for the correlational paper. During the last week of classes, your group will present a future directions poster based on the results of the experimental paper.

Literature review presentation: Your presentation should include background information from two articles relating to the correlational topic. It should emphasize the specific findings from the background literature and show how they may relate to the specific hypotheses of the correlational study.

Future Directions Poster Presentation: Your presentation should include relevant background information, details about the methods, your results, a discussion of the significance of the results, and ideas for future research or improving upon your research study including hypotheses, proposed methods, and predictions.

The first presentation is worth 7% of your grade, the poster presentation is worth 8%.

Class Attendance and Participation

Regular attendance is essential for doing well in this course. Much of what you learn in this course will come from hands-on experiences and activities in the classroom. I will often ask you to complete short exercises in class, and your participation and engagement in these exercises will be recorded as your class participation grade.

Final grades in this course will be determined by the following:

- ◆ Homework: 25%
- ◆ Writing assignments: 55%
- ◆ Class presentations: 15%
- ◆ Participation: 5%

***The 2 papers and 2 presentations will take place of "traditional" midterm and final exams.*

***Assignment grades on Canvas correspond to total class percentage points (e.g. an assignment worth 1 pt on canvas is the equivalent of 1% of your total grade).*

Grades will be distributed as follows:

A+	97-100%	B+	87-89%	C+	77-79%	D+	67-69%	F	0-59%
A	93-96%	B	83-86%	C	73-76%	D	63-66%		
A-	90-92%	B-	80-82%	C-	70-72%	D-	60-62%		

Please see the psychology department guidelines for a description of the type of achievement that each grade signifies: <http://psychology.uoregon.edu/courses/department-grading-standards/>

Academic Honesty

All work submitted in this course must be your own. Violations will be taken very seriously and are noted on student disciplinary records. If you have any questions about what constitutes academic dishonesty, please ask me. For more information, see the UO website regarding academic honesty at:

<http://uodos.uoregon.edu/StudentConductandCommunityStandards/AcademicMisconduct.aspx>

Special Accommodations

Accessible Education Center (AEC)

If you have a documented disability and anticipate needing accommodations in this course, please make arrangements to meet with the instructor as soon as possible. Also, please request that a counselor at the Accessible Education Center (uoaec@uoregon.edu, tel. 541-346-1155) send a letter verifying your disability. For a list of resources provided by the Accessible Education Center, please see <http://aec.uoregon.edu>.

Students for Whom English is a Second Language

If you are a non-native English speaker and think you may have trouble in this course due to language difficulties, please see the instructor as soon as possible to make any necessary special arrangements.

Course Schedule

HW = homework assignment; WR = writing assignment, PRES = presentation

Wk	Date	Topic	Skill Practice	DUE
1	Day 1	Course introduction, Choosing a research topic, Generating RQs, intro to the introduction section	Generating a research question	
	Day 2	How to find research articles, Choose groups based on topics	Using PsycINFO and Google Scholar, Interpreting Tables and Figs.	HW1: Choosing a research topic
	End of Week 1			HW: 2 Finding research articles (list of 7, choose 2 to present)
2	Day 1	Presentation overview + how to write for science	Quoting & paraphrasing, APA writing style and Citations	
	Day 2	Connecting Theory & Data: How data help us answer a research question	Identifying variables; descriptive data analysis & interpretation	WR1: Introduction draft
	End of Week 2			
3	Day 1	PRES1: Presentation of Literature	Summarizing and communicating scientific findings	WR2: Slides from presentation
	Day 2	Survey Design, Ethics of Research	Writing an IRB proposal, designing ethical research	
	End of Week 3			
4	Day 1	Design options*, Correlational Research, Ethics of Research and Data Handling	Designing studies to test hypotheses	
	Day 2	IRB role play	Evaluate ethical considerations, evaluate methods	HW3: IRB proposal & Eval, inc. draft of questionnaire
	End of Week 4			
5	Day 1	Refining surveys, consent, and debrief	Iterative refinement of ideas and methods	
	Day 2	Method section workshop	APA style, writing methods	HW4: Finalized Surveys
	End of week 5	Surveys available online		WR 3: Draft Intro, method for peer edit
6	<i>Beginning of Week</i>	<i>Surveys closing online</i>		DATA: collected by Saturday eve
	Day 1	Tables & Figs., Extra time for fun cognitive neuroscience stuff	Generating appropriate figures.	

	Day 2	Correlational data analysis	conducting statistical tests, working with SPSS	
	End of Week 6			HW5: Peer edit due
7	Day 1	Correlational data interpretation, how to write discussion sections	Interpreting data, APA discussions	
	Day 2	Fine-tuning figs and tables/ Intro to Experimental topic.	APA style figs and table generation	
	End of Week 7			WR4: Correlational Paper (at least 5 refs)
8	Day 1	Experimental Designs, How factorial data help us answer research questions	Exploring Experimental Design options	HW6: Reference and abstracts for experimental paper
	Day 2	Experimental Research question and Writing Introduction + Poster presentation rubric	APA style introductions	
	End of week 8			WR5: Intro and method (peer edit)
9	Day 1	NO CLASS – meet as a group sometime this week to plan poster presentations!!		
	Day 2	Factorial Data Set analysis and interpretation, Future directions discussion	Interpreting interactions, planning follow-up studies	HW7: Peer Response to WR5 Due
	End of Week 9			
10	Day 1	PRES2: Future directions poster session	Presenting research in poster form, communication of science	HW 8: Posters in electronic form turned in
	Day 2	Writing Workshops for Individual Feedback		
	End of Week 10			
11	Finals Week			WR6: Final Paper due Monday of Finals Week
				EXTRA: End-of-term assessment due Friday of Finals Week