

Research Methods in Psychology

Psy 3610, Spring 2010

MWF 7:10a-8:20a, Social and Behavioral Science 317

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Office Hours: By Appointment

Required Texts: Understanding Research Methods in Psychology, Jennie Brooks Jamison
The Basics of Social Research, 5th Edition, Earl Babbie

Course Overview:

The purpose of this course is to offer students an introduction to experimental designs, and design of experiments in the social sciences. Course topics will include selection of appropriate research questions, sampling, research study methods and data collection techniques, data analysis, and critical synthesis and evaluation of materials.

The course will be broken into two main components. The first component (MW classes) will consist of introduction of concepts and examples of psychological research. During the second component (F classes), students will be expected to critically evaluate psychological research as well as participate in conducting research of their own.

Blackboard: All tests and assignments will be submitted through use of Blackboard using the University browser: <https://online.weber.edu/>

Attendance:

Due to the applied nature of this course, attendance is required. Students are allowed **two (2)** unexcused absences during the semester without penalty. From the third absence on, **2pts** will be deducted from a student's grade for every day absent. Students absent more than **six (6)** days in the semester will be required to meet with the instructor, at which point it will be suggested that the student drop the class.

Academic Integrity and Honesty Policy:

Any academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. If a student is caught engaged in academic dishonesty in this course, he or she risks failing the course and being subject to academic discipline including the imposition of university sanctions. For more information, please see the university policy on cheating, which can be found in the WSU Student Code, Section IV, Part D, Paragraph 2.

Contacting the Instructor:

If at any point any student has questions or problems during the course of the semester, please feel free to contact the instructor. Use of the Blackboard email system as the initial contact point for the instructor is recommended. Please allow 24-48 hours for a response. If for some reason you don't receive a response from me through Blackboard, my e-mail address is always an option, but please out of courtesy, use Blackboard first. This assures that your email will not go unnoticed or get misplaced in the day-to-day shuffle of emails.

ASSIGNMENTS & GRADING

Data Analysis Assignment (25 pts):

Toward the end of the semester as more emphasis is placed on data analysis and discussion of results, students will be given one data analysis assignment. This assignment will require use of a data analysis program such as Excel or SPSS. This assignment will be similar in expectation to the Content Exams, but will focus on application of techniques learned rather than discussion of thematic topics.

Class Research Project (100 pts):

The class research project will be done over a series of small assignments. Much of the work will be done in class, with students expected to take what is covered in class and summarize this. Any student not turning in any portion of the research project will get no better than a “C” grade overall for the project. Students missing **two (2)** or more pieces of the final project will receive no more than half credit for the project.

Research Questions (10pts)

Length: 5 Questions Each

Students are required to come up with a list of research questions. We will go over these questions in class and discuss pros and cons of each.

Outline/Problem Statement (10pts)

Length: 1-2 pages

As a class, we will outline our research project and begin discussion of how to write the problem statement/introduction. Students will be expected to participate and will be expected to write up a draft problem statement based on class discussion.

Literature Review/Article Critique (15pts)

Length: 2 pages

In order to have a good final project, we must have a good understanding of the background surrounding our research project. This requires careful analysis of previous research on the topic. Students will be required to read **one (1)** article related to the class project and provide a critical evaluation and summary of the components of the article. This summary will then be used to write a literature review to accompany the class project.

Data Collection (15pts)

Length: 1-2 pages

Students will be required to gather data related to the class project. This data will be the basis of the next two sections of the report: the data analysis and results sections. Any student suspected of falsifying data will receive zero points for the class project.

Data Analysis (10pts)

Length: 1 page

We will analyze data collected in class, but students will be required to coherently summarize the data analysis technique outlined in class in the appropriate format according to APA guidelines.

Results/Discussion (10pts)**Length: 2 pages**

We will interpret our results in class, but students will be required to summarize this information in the appropriate format according to APA guidelines. Students will also be required to interpret these results in a real-world manner fitting of a Discussion section.

Final Written Report (30pts)

The final written report will be a compilation of all prior assignments related to the class project. In essence, students will make changes to the above assignments as directed via instructor comments and resubmit the document as one coherent piece. Student should submit this in a paper format (in class), with graded sub-components attached to final product. More instructions will be given toward the end of the semester.

Individual Research Proposal (100 pts):**Length: 10 pages, excluding title page**

Students will be expected to complete a research proposal on their own throughout the semester. In short, students will come up with one research question that they wish to explore further and will then need to gather literature to support and set up a study surrounding this question. The proposal will consist of the problem statement, literature review, and research questions portion of a research article/research project. Details of the format for the proposal will be provided throughout the course.

Content Exams (50 pts each):

There will be two (2) exams in the form of essay questions during the semester. The purpose of these exams is to ensure that students are able to discuss in their own words the research process, not remember facts in a set amount of time. Thus the take-home format will be utilized. Despite this open format, students are expected to complete the exam on their own without input from other members of the class.

Extra Credit Opportunity (up to 10 pts):

Students are encouraged to participate in ongoing research projects within the department of Psychology or around the university as a whole. In order to receive the extra credit, students will need to participate in some level of research at the university. This could include participating in a survey or other data collection step, helping to collect data, or helping with the other aspects of research such as data analysis or reviews of literature. After completion of this activity, students must write up a two page summary of the experience and submit it via e-mail to the instructor. Extra credit points will be awarded based on the level of engagement.

Grading Scale:

A	93-100%	C	73-75%
A-	89-92%	C-	69-72%
B+	86-88%	D+	66-68%
B	83-85%	D	62-65%
B-	79-82%	F	Below 62%
C+	76-78%		

COURSE CALENDAR

Date	Babbie	Jamison	Assignment Due
Jan 3	Ch1, Ch2	Ch1	
Jan 5	Ch1, Ch2		
Jan 7	Ch1, Ch2		
Jan 10	Ch3	Ch3	
Jan 12	Ch3, Ch15	Ch10	
Jan 14	Ch15		
Jan 19	Ch15		
Jan 21	Ch4, Ch5		Research Questions DUE
Jan 24	Ch4, Ch5		
Jan 26	Ch4, Ch5		
Jan 28	--		Article 1 (In Class)
Jan 31	Ch7	Ch2	
Feb 2	Ch7		
Feb 4	Ch7		Outline/Prob Statement (In Class)
Feb 7	Ch8		
Feb 9	Ch8		
Feb 11	--		Article2; Project Article Summary DUE
Feb 14	Ch8		
Feb 16	Ch9	Ch9	
Feb 18	Ch9		Lit Review (In Class)
Feb 23	Ch10	Ch5, Ch7	
Feb 25	--		Article3 (In Class)
Feb 28	Ch10		Exam 1 DUE
Mar 2	Ch10		
Mar 4	Ch10		Data Analysis (In Class)
Mar 7	Ch11	Ch6, Ch8	
Mar 9	Ch11		
Mar 11	--		Article4 (In Class)
Mar 21	Ch14		
Mar 23	Ch14		
Mar 25	Ch14		Results, Discussion (Partial In Class)
Mar 28	descriptives		
Mar 30			
Apr 1	--		Article5 (In Class)
Apr 4	t-tests		
Apr 6			
Apr 8			Class Project DUE
Apr 11	correlation		
Apr 13			
Apr 15			Analysis Assignment DUE; Proposal DUE
4/18-4/22			Final Exam -- Essay

Changes in Course Assignments and Schedule:

The instructor reserves the right to adjust course readings, assignments, and test dates to best attain the objectives of the course. Any changes will be announced in class.