

Research Methods in Psychology

Instructor: Eric Amsel	E-mail: eamsel@weber.edu	Office: SS 370a
Office hour: before class	Web Site: http://weber.edu/eamsel	Phone: 626-6658

Course Outline: This course concerns how psychologists go about the business of collecting data and testing hypotheses about behavior. Lectures will focus on designs for collecting, procedures for analyzing, and standard practices for reporting research data. But at its heart, this is a "hands on" course, meaning that you will learn about research by working on a research proposal, conducting a research project, analyzing data, and writing up results.

Course Objectives: There are three major objectives.

1. Students will acquire conceptual and procedural knowledge about methodological, measurement, statistical, and presentational issues associated with research in psychology.
2. Students will apply knowledge about research issues to the problem of designing, carrying out, analyzing, and writing up a research project.
3. Students will develop a conceptual and first-hand understanding of problems faced and decisions made by researchers, thereby becoming more critical consumers of scientific research in psychology.

Course Structure: During the first four weeks, we will examine conceptually and procedurally the issues associated with doing research in psychology. During weeks 5-9, we will discuss simple research designs, evaluate papers employing such designs, and run our own study that tests a simple hypothesis. A similar discussion, addressing complex multiple independent variable designs will take place during weeks 10-12, at which time we will consider more complex hypotheses regarding the data we had collected. Weeks 13-14 will focus on other designs, including case study, observational, quasi-experimental, and survey designs.

Textbooks:

Bordens, K.S. & Abbott, B.B. (2011) Research design and methods: A process account (7th Ed.). Mountain View, CA: Mayfield Publishing Company.

Stanovich, K. (2011). How to think straight about psychology (9th Ed.). New York, NY: Harper Collins.

Grading: You will be required to write an **APA paper** based on the research project we complete. A first draft will be due about 2/3rds of the way through the course, a second draft 10 days later, and the final draft during the second-of-last week of class. The first draft of each person's paper will be evaluated by other members of your working group (formed on the first day of class) for content and whether it conforms to APA style. Then, I will evaluate each subsequent draft. Only the final grade on the APA Research Paper will count towards your grade. You will also be required to write a **Research Review** of the journal articles which are relevant to the research study we will be doing. Individuals will also work in their groups to complete a group **Presentation** (based on one chapter from the Stanovich book) and a group **Research Proposal**. There will be two exams. The **Midterm Exam** will be given after the 5th week of class and will cover the Stanovich book and the first 7 chapters of the Bordens & Abbott text. A **Take-home Final Exam**, given during exam week, will cover chapters 8-11 and 13-16. Finally, a record of students' weekly activities including **Online Discussions, Quizzes, and Class Participation/Attendance** will be kept and will contribute to your final grade.

Distribution of Grades

Oral Presentation.....	05%
Papers.....	45%
Proposal.....	15%
Research Reviews.....	10%
APA Research Paper.....	20%
Exams (2).....	30%
Midterm.....	20%
Final.....	10%
Quizzes.....	7.5%
Online Discussions.....	7.5%
Attendance & Participation.....	5%

Class Policies: For a review of class policies go to the class web site.