

Methods in Psychology

Instructor: Eric Amsel
Office hour: After Class

E-mail: eamsel@weber.edu
Class website: weber.edu/eamsel/classes

Office: SS 370a
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 9-13, at which time we will consider more complex hypotheses regarding the data we had collected. Weeks 13-15 will focus on other designs, including survey, observational, and quasi-experimental designs.

Textbooks: There are two required textbooks for the class.

Bordens, K.S. & Abbott, B.B. (2006) *Research design and methods: A process account* (6th Ed.). Mountain View, CA: Mayfield Publishing Company.

Stanovich, K. (2007). *How to think straight about psychology* (8th Ed.). New York, NY: Harper Collins.

Grading:

You will be required to write up (in APA style) the research project we complete. A first draft will be due about 2/3rds of the way through the course, a second draft 5 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. You will also be required to write reviews 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 first will be after approximately 5 weeks and will cover chapters 1-9 of the Stanovich book and the first 6 chapters of the Bordens & Abbott text. A take-home final exam, given during exam week, will cover chapters 7-10 and 12-14. Finally, class participation and attendance records will be kept (by your completion of 6 in-class exercises and a quiz) and will contribute to your final grade.

Distribution of Grades

Oral Presentation.....	5%
Papers.....	55%
Proposal.....	15%
Summary and Analysis.....	10%
Research Paper.....	30%
Exams (2).....	30%
Exam 1.....	20%
Exam 2.....	10%
Attendance & Participation.....	10%

Class Policies: The class policies are available on the class web site.

CALENDAR

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
	8/25 Stanovich 1 Syllabus quiz dist'b		8/27 Stanovich 2-3	
	9/1 Stanovich 4-6 Syllabus test due		9/3 Stanovich 7-9 Assign 1 Dist'b	
9/7 Labor Day	9/8* Lecture 1		9/10 Lecture 2 Assign 2 Dist'b	
	9/15 Lecture 2		9/17 Lecture 3 Assign 3 Dist'b	
.	9/22 Lecture 4 Proposal Review Dist'b		9/23 Exam Review Exam 1	Exam 1
	9/29 Lecture 5		10/1* Lecture 6 Stats Proposal due Assign 1-3 Due	
	10/6 Research Project Discussion		10/8 Research Design	
	10/13 Research Design Review is Due		10/15 Data Collection	10/16 Fall Break
	10/20* Data Entry		10/22* Data Analysis	
	10/27 APA Write Up APA test due		10/29 APA Write Up	
	11/3 Lecture 7		11/5 In class review APA paper (1st Draft) due	
	11/10 Lecture 8 APA paper (2nd draft) due		11/12* Lecture 9	
	11/17 Lecture 10		11/19 APA Awards Ceremony	
	11/24 Lecture 11		11/26 Thanksgiving	11/27 Thanksgiving
	12/2 Lecture 12 Final paper due		12/4 Review Exam 2	

* = Laptop cart /computer room being used