

COURSE SYLLABUS
PSYCH 302, Spring 2005
Research Methods in Psychology

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Course Description: The purpose of this course is to acclimatize psychology students to the psychology research process, and to give them experience conducting psychological research. This course has several objectives. Specifically, this course aims to give students experience with: 1) searching the psychological literature to obtain research articles, 2) critically evaluating research articles, 3) generating research questions and hypotheses 4) designing and conducting their own research studies, 5) analyzing, interpreting, and presenting data, 6) writing an APA-style research manuscript on the research conducted this semester, and 7) presenting the research to others in a poster format. This will be a hands-on, laboratory type of class, which means that there will be very little lecturing, and a lot of in-class activities providing you with hands-on experience in research design, data analysis, and writing. It also means that attendance will be absolutely critical to doing well in this class.

Required Texts:

- 1) Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 5th Edition
- 2) A Short Guide to Writing about Psychology, Dana Dunn

In Addition to the Texts: You will need to be prepared to make copies of articles at the library and/or to make print-outs of articles that are digitally available, as finding and reading research articles will be a major component of this class. You will also be receiving a fairly large number of hand-outs in this class; therefore, it is strongly suggested that you invest in a 3-ring binder for keeping track of the various hand-outs that you receive throughout this course.

Grading: There will be 500 total possible points in this class. The majority of these points will come from in-class activities and from homework assignments. In all, 230 points will come from homework & in-class assignments; 100 points will come from the

first-draft of your APA-style manuscript, which will be done in separate sections due at various points throughout the semester (each section—intro, method, results, discussion—is worth 25 points); 100 points will come from the final, revised draft of your full manuscript, to be handed in at the end of the semester; finally, 70 points will come from your poster presentation given at the end of the semester.

GRADING SCALE

| Total Percentage | Final Grade |
|------------------|-------------|
| 92.5 - 100% | A |
| 90 - 92.4 % | A- |
| 87.5 - 89.9 % | B+ |
| 82.5 - 87.4 % | B |
| 80 - 82.4 % | B- |
| 77.5 - 79.9 % | C+ |
| 72.5 - 77.4 % | C |
| 70 - 72.4 % | C- |
| 67.5 - 69.9 % | D+ |
| 62.5 - 67.4 % | D |
| 60 - 62.4 % | D- |
| 59.9 - 0% | F |

Attendance: Because this class centers on group activities and hands-on research experience, attendance is absolutely mandatory. Attendance will be taken at every class, and there will be a substantial penalty for missing class. For every “unexcused” absence after your first one, your final course grade will be lowered by one unit. DO NOT ASSUME that a given reason for missing class will be excused or unexcused—that decision will be up to me. All absences will be considered “unexcused” until you talk to me about it: It is your responsibility to inform me about why you are going to be absent, and it is definitely better to talk with me BEFORE rather than AFTER the absence.

Papers: A major focus of this class is on learning to write APA-style research reports. Therefore, throughout this course, you will be working on various parts of an APA-style manuscript with the goal of eventually completing a full, well-written, APA-style manuscript on the research project you conducted this semester. Throughout the semester, you will separately complete a first draft of the Introduction, the Method, the Results, and the Discussion sections. The first draft for each of these sections will be done separately, starting with the introduction relatively early on in the semester, followed later by the method, which will then be followed by the results and discussion sections. Each of these drafts will be worth 25 points (totaling 100 points for all four

completed drafts). You will receive feedback on each of these drafts, and will be expected to use this feedback in revising and putting together your final manuscript. Your final manuscript will include revisions of these four sections, in addition to all of the remaining parts of a manuscript (e.g., abstract, full references, etc.), and will itself be worth 100 points.

Assignments: Because this is a lab class, there will be many in-class assignments as well as homework assignments to do outside of class. As mentioned, the majority of the points earned in this class will come from assignments, totaling 230 points altogether. On average, there will be about 20 points per week coming from assignments, some of which will be in-class projects, and some of which will be short take-home assignments. Being sure to attend every class is good way to help ensure that you get as many assignment points as possible.

Poster: Part of the research process is being able to present one's research to others, not just in written article format, but also in person, such as in conference settings. The last two weeks of this class will be devoted to learning how to present your research to others in the form of a poster. For this, you will learn how to use PowerPoint to create a poster presentation of your research, and to then present your poster during a class poster session. This poster project will be worth 70 points.

Students having Special Needs: If you have a documented disability and anticipate needing accommodations in this course, please make arrangements to meet with me soon. Please request that a Disability Resources staff member send a Student Academic Accommodation Request (SAAR) form verifying your disability and specifying the accommodations that you will need. The Disability Resources Office is located in the Student Services Building, Room 1076. Their phone number is 515-294-6624. TDD 515-294-6335.

TENTATIVE CLASS SCHEDULE*

| <u>Week</u> | <u>Topic/Focus</u> |
|--------------------|--|
| Week 1 | Introduction to the class; Conducting a literature search; Library workshop on searching the psychological literature; citing references in an APA-style bibliography. (Ch 1, 2 & 7 from Short Guide). |
| Week 2 | Reading & evaluating research articles; writing a research article APA-style; parts of a manuscript; Begin comparing methods of conducting research. (Ch 3-5 from Short Guide; Ch 1 of APA Manual). |
| Week 3 | Methods of conducting research continued; groups |

meet to discuss possible research topics; identifying viable research topics; generating hypotheses (Ch 6 & 8 of Short Guide).

Week 4 Methods of conducting research continued; groups narrow down topics to one topic of investigation per group; writing an introduction.

Week 5 Designing an experiment; writing a method section; ethical considerations; groups work on designing a study on their chosen topic.

Week 6 Analyzing data; groups continue to refine proposed studies & identify manipulations, measures, and appropriate means of data analysis; writing a results section.

Week 7 Introduction to more complex experimental designs; groups work on gathering/constructing materials needed for carrying out proposed research studies.

Week 8 Groups begin data collection using the class as participants.

Week 9 Data collection continued.

*****SPRING BREAK WEEK*****

Week 10 Any remaining data collection; Data analysis using SPSS

Week 11 Groups meet to discuss the data, the outcomes of the analyses, how to interpret & present the data and write up the results, what the results mean; writing a discussion.

Week 12 Writing/Peer reviews

Week 13 Working on poster presentations

Week 14 Poster presentations

Week 15 Final papers due.

*This schedule is subject to change depending on the needs of the group as a whole. I will let you know of any changes.