Psychology 302 -- Research Methods in Psychology
Course Syllabus

Instructor: Dr. Martin Acerbo.
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Class meeting time: T Th 10-11:50
Class location: Gilman 2305
Office Hours: MWF 12:00-1:30; Th 12:00-1:00
or by appointment

Course overview: This course is designed to provide you with a hands-on experience in conducting research in psychology. Several assignments and projects will be given that allow you to work directly on the types of tasks facing a modern-day research scientist. As a result, you will have the chance to build your skills and proficiency in all aspects of the research process—from generating a research question, reviewing and evaluating published journal articles, formulating hypotheses, collecting, organizing and analyzing your own data, preparing APA-style written reports of your findings, and communicating these results in the form of a conference-style presentation.

Prerequisites: Statistics 101, Psychology 301


Course work: There are no exams or quizzes in Psych 302. Your grade will be based on several assignments and projects that you complete throughout the semester, as well as your participation in class activities. Each of these is described in more detail below:

Assignments 1-6: These assignments are designed to engage you in the type of thinking that research scientists do, and to introduce you to the tools and resources they use for setting up and carrying out experiments. The art of developing good-quality research in psychology requires a lot of careful thought and hard work, and so you may find that some aspects of the assignments are quite challenging. It’s always a good idea to begin the assignments soon after they are given, just to insure that the workload does not become too overwhelming and you have enough time to ask questions if you need to. More information on these assignments will be provided as the course progresses.

Replication Project: This project is designed to familiarize you with all of the steps involved in carrying out a research study. I will provide you with two articles that have been published in psychology journals, and as a class we will re-create the experiments that are described in those articles. You will be not required to write up these experiments; however, we will write short passages describing the project and discuss them in class.

Research Project: For this project you will come up with an idea for a research project, and once that idea is approved by me, you will set up your experiment and carry it out in class using your classmates (and instructor!) as subjects. You will be required to write up your experiment in the form of a complete APA-style paper. The assignments are designed to help you
in writing the drafts of different sections of your Research Project paper (e.g., Introduction, Method, etc.) before the final draft is due. The student produced papers will be read and edited by their classmates.

**PowerPoint Presentation:** This project is designed to provide you with experience in communicating your research to others. Using PowerPoint, you will prepare a 15-minute presentation of your Independent Project to share with the class. Towards the end of the semester we will schedule the order in which students will present their talk. If a student cannot present his/her talk for a medical emergency I will consider rescheduling the talk or arranging a different time for that presentation. In any other case of a student failing to present his/her talk the score for the presentation will be zero. At the end of the presentations the class will select the best presentation and the best discussion/question. The best presentation will earn 5 extra credit points and the best discussion/question will earn 5 extra credit points.

**Class Participation:** Active participation in class activities is essential if you want to do well in the course. The hands-on nature of this course requires that you attend every class and contribute to the discussions, workshops, in-class experiments, and other activities that are intended to provide practice at the skills you will need in order to earn the grade you want. In other words, these activities are designed to make you better at the very things on which you will be graded! Therefore, make the most out of class time and share your thoughts, ask questions, and help out your fellow classmates whenever you can.

In addition to the participation in class during the semester, the participation during the power point presentation will be evaluated separately. Students will be able to earn up to 10 points for active participation during the discussion of students presentations.

All of the information for this course can be found on Blackboard. There you can find an electronic course schedule, copies of everything that has been handed out in class, and additional supplementary information.

**Evaluation:** A total of 300 points is possible in the course:

| Assignments 1-6: | 110 points (10-20 points each) |
| Research Project Paper: | 100 points |
| PowerPoint Presentation | 60 points |
| Class Participation | 20 points |
| Participation during presentations | 10 points |

Final letter grades will be determined based on the following scale:

- A: 93-100%  
- A-: 90-92%  
- B+: 87-89%  
- B: 83-86%  
- B-: 79-82%  
- C+: 75-78%  
- C: 71-74%  
- C-: 67-70%  
- D+: 63-66%  
- D: 59-62%  
- D-: 55-58%  
- F: 0-54%
**Deadlines:** Assignments will often be discussed in class on the day they are due, and many of the assignments will build off of previous ones. Therefore, assignments must be submitted on the due date. Assignments will be accepted in digital form through Blackboard only. The policy for late submission for assignments 1-6 and final paper will be a 10% off of the grade per day.

**Academic Integrity:** Students are expected to adhere to Iowa State University’s Student Conduct Code and Regent’s Rules of Personal Conduct at all times (http://policy.iastate.edu/). Incidents of academic dishonesty (plagiarism, cheating, etc.) will be dealt with as outlined in the ISU Bulletin. Students found guilty of academic dishonesty are subject to academic penalties determined by the instructor, as well as penalties under the university student conduct regulations. Violations will be reported to the dean.

**Documented Disabilities:** If you have a documented disability and anticipate needing accommodations in this course, please make arrangements to meet with me at the beginning of the semester. You should also request that a Disability Resources staff send a SAAR form verifying your disability and specifying the accommodations you will need.

**Correspondence:** Please don’t hesitate to contact me if you are having problems with any aspect of the course. The easiest way to reach me is through e-mail, but you can feel free to call or stop by my office as well. If you need to meet with me outside of office hours, it is often best to contact me a few days in advance to set up a meeting time.

As a final note, try to enjoy your experience in this course! It is not easy to learn how to do research. However, if you have an inquisitive mind and are willing to work hard, you may find that making new discoveries can be quite exciting. I hope you will experience an excitement about the things you have a chance to discover in this course.
## Tentative Course Schedule:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Assignment due</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>15-Jan</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>17-Jan</td>
<td>Hypotheses &amp; operational definitions</td>
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<td>Student information sheet</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>22-Jan</td>
<td>Hypotheses &amp; operational definitions</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>24-Jan</td>
<td><em>Research Project idea discussion - out of town</em></td>
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<td></td>
<td>29-Jan</td>
<td>Research Project idea discussion</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>31-Jan</td>
<td>Literature searches</td>
<td>Chapter 4</td>
<td>Assignment 1: project idea</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>5-Feb</td>
<td>Parts of a journal article</td>
<td>Chapter 5</td>
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<td></td>
<td>7-Feb</td>
<td>Parts of a journal article</td>
<td>Chapter 5</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>12-Feb</td>
<td>Replication study I</td>
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<td>Assignment 2: project proposal</td>
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<td>14-Feb</td>
<td>Replication study II</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>19-Feb</td>
<td>Analyzing data</td>
<td>Chapter 8</td>
<td>Assignment 3: annotated bibliography</td>
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<td></td>
<td>21-Feb</td>
<td>Analyzing data</td>
<td>Chapter 8</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>26-Feb</td>
<td>Research ethics</td>
<td>Chapter 19</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>28-Feb</td>
<td>Research Project (RP) meetings</td>
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<td>Assignment 4: introduction</td>
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<td>5-Mar</td>
<td>Research Project (RP) meetings</td>
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<td>7-Mar</td>
<td><em>Research Project preparation - out of town</em></td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>12-Mar</td>
<td>Research Project (RP) preparation</td>
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<td>Assignment 5: method</td>
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<td>14-Mar</td>
<td>Research project (RP) data collection</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>19-Mar</td>
<td>Spring Break</td>
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<td>21-Mar</td>
<td>Spring Break</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>26-Mar</td>
<td>Research project (RP) data collection</td>
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<td>Assignment 6: results and discussion</td>
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<td>28-Mar</td>
<td>Research project (RP) data collection</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>2-Apr</td>
<td>Peer review of RP Introduction</td>
<td>Chapter 10</td>
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<td>5-Apr</td>
<td>Peer review of RP Method</td>
<td>Chapter 11</td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>9-Apr</td>
<td>Research project (RP) data analysis</td>
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<td>11-Apr</td>
<td>Peer review of RP Results</td>
<td>Chapter 12</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>16-Apr</td>
<td>Peer review of RP Discussion</td>
<td>Chapter 13</td>
<td>Final Paper</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Event</td>
<td>Chapter</td>
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<tr>
<td>18-Apr</td>
<td>Giving presentations</td>
<td>Chapter 17</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>23-Apr Student presentations</td>
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<td>25-Apr</td>
<td>Student presentations</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>30-Apr Student presentations</td>
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<td>2-May</td>
<td>Course wrap-up, evaluations</td>
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<td>6-May</td>
<td>Finals week</td>
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Please note that the course schedule is tentative and I may decide to make modifications if the need arises. I will alert you ahead of time if any changes are going to be made.