Psychology 302 Syllabus, Summer 2011
Research Methods in Psychology
MTWRF: 1:20 – 2:40 PM
Science 2 119

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Course rationale: This course is designed to provide you with opportunities to hone your research skills. Research begins with a critical evaluation of existing knowledge and proceeds with finding empirical answers (to relevant questions). The seemingly simple process entails numerous, intricate steps – each of which requires critical thinking and analysis. Effective communication of ideas is another skill that is essential to doing research. Through in-class discussions, assignments and projects, you will get a chance to enhance these skills. Essentially, you will be able to become a better thinker and communicator. This course is also designed to help you appreciate the parallels between research and people’s day-to-day life – whether you are interacting with other people, analyzing information you see in advertisements, or deciding the credibility of scientific research you come across. So, whether you do research in psychology, some other field, or never conduct research again, you could benefit from this class. Because the course is primarily designed for students in psychology, the context of research in psychology will be utilized.

Prerequisites: Psychology 301

Instructional Goals: During the class, you will get a comprehensive experience of the research process. You will

1. Learn to use relevant databases to locate articles in scholarly journals
2. Practice identification of gaps in literature/research understanding
3. Develop a rationale or logical premise for doing a study (writing an introduction section)
4. Design a study: practice selection of methodology, statistical tools
5. Run a study
6. Practice analysis/interpretation of data
7. Write a manuscript describing the research you conducted
8. Practice editing manuscripts
9. Create a poster/article
10. Give a talk on your research
11. Write an article for a more general (e.g., non-research, non-psychologically trained) audience

Textbook: There is no required textbook for this course. Necessary reading material will be provided by the instructors.
Course Evaluation:  The course grade will be based on performance on assignments, papers, presentation, and quizzes. The following letter-grading scheme will be used.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>279–300</td>
<td>93-100</td>
<td>A</td>
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<tr>
<td>270–278</td>
<td>90-92</td>
<td>A-</td>
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<tr>
<td>261–269</td>
<td>87-89</td>
<td>B+</td>
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<tr>
<td>249–260</td>
<td>83-86</td>
<td>B</td>
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<tr>
<td>237–259</td>
<td>79-82</td>
<td>B-</td>
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<tr>
<td>225–236</td>
<td>75-78</td>
<td>C+</td>
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<tr>
<td>213–224</td>
<td>71-74</td>
<td>C</td>
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<td>201–212</td>
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<td>189–200</td>
<td>63-66</td>
<td>D+</td>
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<td>177–188</td>
<td>59-62</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>165–176</td>
<td>55-58</td>
<td>D-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt;164</td>
<td>Below 55</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Grade Breakdown
- Quizzes: 8 quizzes X 10 points = 80 points
- Homework: 10 assignments X 10 points = 100 points
- Group Project Paper: 25 points
- Individual Project Paper: 50 points
- Individual Project Presentation: 45 points
- Total Points Possible: 300 points

Academic dishonesty: The course has been designed so that you will not be able to proceed with the course unless your work is original. As a result, the course lends itself very easily to cheating for academic dishonesty. Plagiarism and the use of unauthorized help from others hamper the educational process. Any such activity will be dealt with according to the policies outlined by the University.

Accommodations: If the usual instructional approaches or assessment are not conducive to your learning style or your learning needs, accommodations can be made for you. Please get in touch with us during the first week of class. You will also need to contact the Student Disability Resources (SDR) office, located on the main floor of the Student Services Building, Room 1076, 515-294-7220 to obtain a Student Academic Accommodation Request (SAAR) that describes the needed accommodations.

Attendance and Late Work: Everyone is expected to attend class meetings regularly. This is especially important for two reasons: (1) There are several editing and peer feedback activities for which your presence is essential. (2) Mastery of statistical analyses and interpretation requires recurrent experience of conducting these statistical operations which will not be possible if you are not regular. Furthermore, success on papers, exercises, and homework will depend on satisfactory completion of weekly activities in class. However, it is recognized that life can interfere with your course schedule. You are expected to handle these situations responsibly. If you have to make-up any assignments, papers, or presentations, please make sure that we have written documentation AHEAD OF TIME so that we can make appropriate arrangements for you to take the assessment in a timely fashion. Talking to one of us in person about the reason for the absence is the ideal approach, but any contact (e-mail, phone call) is better than none at all. If we do not know that you will be missing an assignment, paper, or presentation, you may not have the option to make it up. Also, no make-ups will be allowed for classroom participation barring proper documentation.
Correspondence: You should not hesitate to contact us if you are having problems with any aspect of the course. The easiest way to contact us is via e-mail. But it is fine to call or stop by the office. If you need to meet outside of office hours, it is often best to contact us a few days in advance to set up a meeting time.

As a final note, we hope that you will enjoy your experience in this course! It is not easy to learn how to do research, especially during one course. However, with an inquisitive mind and the willingness to work hard, you will be able to enjoy learning how to conduct research.

Tentative Schedule:
We hope to follow the schedule given below. Although changes may sometimes be necessary, all such changes will be communicated in advance.

INSTRUCTOR: KYLE SCHERR

Week 1 (May 16 - May 20)
Monday: Class Introduction/Theory Discussion/Class Project Discussion
Tuesday: Stats Review – Basic definitions and concepts
Wednesday: Stats Review – Descriptive/Inferential
Thursday: Writing APA Format – Methods/Reference Sections
Friday: Group Project Discussion/Relevant Theories/Articles

Week 2 (May 23 - May 27)
Monday: Stats Review – t-tests
Tuesday: Finding Articles
Wednesday: Writing APA Format – Introductions
Thursday: Stats Review – Correlations
Friday: Stats Review – Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)

Week 3 (May 30 - June 3)
Monday: UNIVERSITY HOLIDAY
Tuesday: How do I analyze my data? Discussion of analyses for class research questions
Wednesday: Group Project Workday – Data entry
Thursday: Group Project Workday – Data analysis
Friday: Group Project Workday – Output interpretation

Week 4 (June 6 - June 10)
Monday: Writing Results/discussion
Tuesday: Group Project Workday – Writing Group Paper
Wednesday: Peer Review
Thursday: Final Group Project Questions/Work Day on Final Revisions
Friday: Group Presentation and Stats Extra – Effect sizes, CIs, and Mediation
INSTRUCTOR: OMESH JOHAR

Week 5 (June 13 – June 19)
Monday: New Research Topics
Tuesday: Individual Research Ideas
Wednesday: Library Day
Thursday: Stats Review: Day 5 (regression)
Friday: Individual Research Proposals

Week 6 (June 22 – June 24)
Monday: Stats Review: Day 6 (factorial designs)
Tuesday: Data entry and descriptive statistics
Wednesday: Stats Review: Day 7 (chi-square)
Thursday: Data Analysis Plan/SPSS analysis
Friday: SPSS analysis day

Week 7 (June 27 – July 1)
Monday: SPSS analysis day
Tuesday: Writing: Introduction
Wednesday: Writing: Methods/Results
Thursday: Writing: Discussion
Friday: Writing Day: Left over from Week 7

Week 8 (July 4 – July 8)
Monday: UNIVERSITY HOLIDAY
Tuesday: Peer Review
Wednesday: Class Presentations: Day 1
Thursday: Class Presentations: Day 2
Friday: Class Presentations: Day 3