

# PSY 201: RESEARCH METHODS IN PSYCHOLOGY

Fall 2013 \* MWF 9:00am-9:50am \* Hopkins Center 310

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*A man should look for what is, and not for what he thinks should be.*  
Albert Einstein

**Please note that all facets of the syllabus are subject to change at my discretion.**

## *Purpose*

The purpose of this course is to provide a broad overview of psychology research methodology particularly as applied to social psychology. Lectures will cover major concepts in research planning, design, analysis and evaluation. In addition, you will gain hands-on experience in searching and reviewing scientific literature, designing and conducting psychological research and communicating empirical findings in a scientific manuscript.

A research methods class is potentially the most valuable course in the psychology major. Without knowledge of research methods, we are unable to judge the validity of research findings. This may seem irrelevant, but we often hear someone quote a finding on the news (e.g., "People use 10% of their brains") or give an observation (e.g., "People who were abused as children end up abusing their own children"). Such statements are often oversimplified, inaccurate or misleading. Learning about research methods helps us to be wise stewards of the information we encounter everyday so that we are better able to critically analyze such information.

## *Required Texts*

- 1) Morling, B. (2012). *Research methods in psychology*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company. ISBN: 9780393935462
- 2) American Psychological Association. (2009). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association*, 6<sup>th</sup> ed. Washington, DC: Author. ISBN: 9781433805615. **MAKE SURE IT IS THE THIRD PRINTING.**
- 3) *Statistics help for students*: <http://statistics-help-for-students.com/> (This webpage gives instructions on SPSS, the statistics software you will use in class.)

## *Required Articles*

- 1) Lilienfeld, S.O. (2009, Winter). Tips for spotting psychological pseudoscience. *Eye on Psi Chi*, [http://www.psichi.org/pubs/articles/article\\_730.aspx](http://www.psichi.org/pubs/articles/article_730.aspx)
- 2) Biernat, M., & Crandall, C. (2001). Two journal articles retracted, professor resigns. *Dialogue*, 16, 17.
- 3) Crandall, C., & Biernat, M. (2002). Additional Ruggiero articles retracted: Office of Research Integrity finds misconduct. *Dialogue*, 17, 11.
- 4) four online articles about Diederik Stapel, the Tuskegee study, and the Guatemalan study

The books are at the campus bookstore. The articles are on Moodle  
You will also be responsible for the material covered in certain lectures from various webpages.

### *Assignments*

To receive credit for an assignment you must submit all written assignments both on hardcopy and on **turnitin.com** unless instructed otherwise in writing. **Instructions for assignments (and other course documents) are posted on Moodle.** You must complete hardcopies on a word processor, double-spaced, with 1" margins on all sides and 12 pt. font. **The turnitin.com class ID is 6850489. The password is class.** All grading will be done blind so only put your personal class ID number on each assignment and exam. As noted in parentheses, some assignments are group assignments while others are individual assignments.

- 1) ***Exercise on Within Group and Between Group Variance*** (group) – You will download a dataset from Moodle. In SPSS (a statistical software package), you will calculate some descriptive statistics from the data and answer questions on the instruction sheet on a 1 page, double-spaced, typed paper. It is worth 2% of your course grade.
- 2) ***Exercise on Central Tendency and Variance*** (group) – In class we will take down everyone's age in years. By hand or in SPSS, you will calculate some descriptive statistics from the data and answer questions on the instruction sheet on a 1 page, double-spaced, typed paper. It is worth 2% of your course grade.
- 3) ***Exercise on Measurement & Validity*** (group) – You will construct a questionnaire. You will answer questions on the instruction sheet on a 1-2 page, double-spaced, typed paper. It is worth 2% of your course grade.
- 4) ***Literature Review*** (individual) – You begin a literature review (ideally) based on intergroup relations, stigma, prejudice, and/or stereotyping. Using databases at Abell Library, you will look up relevant articles. You will need to include at least ten citations from refereed (i.e., peer reviewed), empirical journals. If you have any questions about the suitability of your articles, please ask me BEFORE you complete this assignment. **You will email the results of your online literature review to me as part of the assignment. You must use PsycInfo rather than other databases.** You will also write a literature review in which you highlight the relevance of each article to your hypotheses. This paper should be 5-6 pages long. It is worth 10% of your course grade.
- 5) ***Exercise on Sampling*** (group) – In class all students will complete a questionnaire. In SPSS, you will calculate some descriptive statistics from the data and answer questions on the instruction sheet on a 1 page, double-spaced, typed paper. It is worth 2% of your course grade.
- 6) ***IRB Proposal*** (group) – You will complete a first draft of an IRB proposal according to the requirements of the Austin College Institutional Review Board. The IRB Guidelines may be found at <http://www.austincollege.edu/wp-content/uploads/2009/11/IRBguidelines.pdf>. You must include copies of all of the materials you plan to use in your study. This first draft should be turned in to me only and not to the IRB. It is worth 5% of your course grade.
- 7) ***Exercise on Random Assignment*** (group) - In class all students will complete a questionnaire. In SPSS, you will calculate some descriptive statistics from the data and answer questions on the instruction sheet on a 1 page, double-spaced, typed paper. It is worth 2% of your course grade.
- 8) ***APA Format*** (individual and group) – I will give you a file of a paper that is not in APA format. You will convert this document into APA format. You will also convert your Literature Review into APA format. This assignment is worth 7.5% of your course grade.
- 9) ***Entering Data*** (group) – You will collect data from the middle of October through the middle of November. You will be responsible to enter your data into an MS Excel spreadsheet. If you work in a group, you all need to use the same format for entering data. This assignment is worth 5% of your course grade.
- 10) ***SPSS*** (group) – You will run analyses in SPSS and begin to interpret the results. (Much of the running of analyses will be done in your first or second meeting with me in November.) It is important to conduct the correct analyses and to have valid data. You must keep in mind what is the dependent variable, what is the independent variable and how they are measured (i.e., nominal, ordinal, interval or ratio) in order to run the correct analyses. You need to enter textboxes explaining why you ran a particular test and what the results mean. Finally, you will email me the output file of your results. This assignment is worth 7.5% of your course grade.

11) *Exams* (individual) – There are four written exams that will cover lecture material and assigned readings. Each exam will require you to answer short answer questions. Short answer questions generally require specific details or compare and contrast types of responses. The exams are weighted equally and are cumulative. If you must miss an exam because of a religious event, university function, or personal event that cannot be rescheduled (e.g., a wedding), it is necessary for you to take the exam **before** you leave. Please inform me of such absences within the first two weeks of class and remind me of your absence a week before it occurs. Each exam is worth 10% of your course grade.

12) *Research Paper* (individual and group) – You will write a formal research paper in APA format based upon the research you conducted and the specific hypotheses you proposed. Weeks 10 through 14 are dedicated primarily to working on your group project and this paper, and we will rarely meet as a class during this time. Your group must meet with me at least once during weeks 7-9 and at least once during weeks 10-12. Your paper grade will drop a full letter grade for each time you do not meet with me on time. Your group must also submit a draft of your Method section by Friday, November 15, 2013 and a draft of your Results section by Wednesday, December 4, 2013. Your paper grade will drop a full letter grade if you do not submit these drafts to me on time. The entire research paper will be worth 15% of your course grade. In addition, there will be a Research Forum on Friday, December 6 at 9am where your group will give a five-minute overview of your study. Attendance is required. The paper is due Monday, December 9 at 5pm.

### *Miscellaneous*

☒ **I generally do not offer any extra credit assignments**, so plan accordingly. I offer extra credit for participating in studies through the Psychology Department Participant Pool. In order to receive credit you must a) participate in studies through the Austin College IRB and b) turn in a sheet signed by the experimenter documenting your participation and with your brief explanation of the study. You may earn no more than two points (120 minutes) of extra credit on your final course grade. More information may be found at the Research Opportunities link on the Psychology Department webpage: <http://artemis.austincollege.edu/acad/psych/>. I also may offer extra credit through the Mythbusters contest. Incomplete grades are only appropriate when an unforeseen circumstance (e.g., an extended illness or severe accident) affects your ability to complete the assignments for this class in a timely manner. The incomplete allows you to complete the missed work at a later time; it does not allow you to retake a test solely for the reason of improving your grade.

☒ **If you miss class**, you are responsible for making up the work. Please do not ask me for lecture notes. However, you may ask your classmates. If you have questions about a classmate's notes (or in general), please ask me for clarifications. Students who have more than three unexcused absences may be reported to the Student Services Office and/or your mentor. Students who have more than four unexcused absences may be dropped from the class. As mentioned above, if you will be out of town on an exam day for an official absence, it is necessary for you to take the exam before you leave. Such absences generally do not count as unexcused absences; however, if you have already expended your allotment of unexcused absences or you are doing poorly in the class, I will determine if official absences count as unexcused absences on a case-by-case basis.

☒ **Make-up exams without a late penalty** after the scheduled exam time will **only** be offered in the case of a **documented** emergency, illness or death in the family. Make-up exams will consist of short answer questions. Notification of your absence on the exam day must be given preferably prior to but no later than the day of the exam, and prior to the start time of the exam.

☒ **Regarding reviewing your exams**, I do not give exams back to students. If you would like to review an exam you have taken (and I strongly encourage you to do so), please come to my office hours. I will keep your course materials through the end of the following semester. After that point, I will throw them out.

☒ **If you have a documented disability for which you would like accommodations**, please inform me by the second week of class. It is your responsibility to remind me of your accommodations at least a week before I distribute each assignment or exam. To arrange for accommodations, you will need to register as soon as possible at the Academic Skills Center with Laura Márquez-Ramsey, the Director of the Academic Skills Center, (903) 813-2454, Suite 211 of the Wright Campus Center. For information on this process, go to <http://www.austincollege.edu/campus-life/academic-skills-center/>.

☒ **Turn your cell phones off during class.** Please clear it with me if you feel that you have an emergency situation that requires that you put your cell phone on vibrate mode while you are in class. If you need to use your phone, please step out of class to do so.

☒ **Please be courteous in class to fellow students and to me.** This includes not holding conversations during class, not reading for other classes or for pleasure during class, not studying for other classes during class, not doing crossword puzzles in class, not playing computer games in class, not text messaging or emailing during class, not surfing the net during class, not flirting in class, etc. Please make an effort not to fall asleep in class.

☒ **The GRADING SCALE is as follows:** A+ = 97-100; A = 94-96; A- = 90-93; B+ = 87-89; B = 84-86; B- = 80-83; C+ = 77-79; C = 74-76; C- = 70-73; D+ = 67-69; D = 64-66; D- = 60-63; E = 59 or below. All grading will be done “blind,” so only put your class ID number on your assignments. I will downgrade all late work a third of a letter grade for each day late.

☒ **You are responsible for keeping track of your grades in the course.** Do not assume that you are passing the course or that the course grade will be curved so that no one fails. If you are concerned about your progress in the class, please come and see me.

☒ **Academic Honesty:** The academic process is one in which all members of the class, instructors and students alike, disseminate information and acquire knowledge with goals of both personal fulfillment and collective improvement through intellectual enrichment. Academic dishonesty completely undermines this honorable and valuable process. If I have evidence of your suspected academic dishonesty, I will report it to the Academic Integrity Council and you will have the incident noted in your file. Punishment could be as severe as failing the course. Austin College's detailed statement on academic honesty is in the Environment at <http://www.austincollege.edu/wp-content/uploads/2009/11/Environment-2012-2013.pdf>. The following are all examples of academic dishonesty (i.e., cheating or plagiarism) quoted from the Academic Integrity Survey.

Turning in work done by someone else.  
Working on an assignment with others when the instructor asked for individual work.  
Receiving unpermitted help on an assignment.  
Writing or providing a paper for another student.  
Getting Q/A from someone who has taken test .  
In a course requiring computer work, copying a friend's program rather than doing your own.  
Helping someone else cheat on a test.  
Falsifying lab or research data.  
Fabricating or falsifying a bibliography.  
Copying from another student during a test or examination without his or her knowing it.  
Copying from another student during a test with his or her knowledge.  
Copying a few sentences of material from a written source without footnoting them in a paper.

Turning in a paper either purchased or plagiarized, in large part, from a term paper “mill” or website.  
Copying a few sentences of material from an Internet source without footnoting them in a paper.  
Using unpermitted crib notes (cheat sheets) during a test.  
Copying material almost word for word from any written source and turning it in as your own work.  
Altering graded test and submitting it for additional credit.  
Turned in a paper copied from another student.  
Using a false excuse to obtain extension on due date.  
Hiding or damaging library/course materials.  
Cheating on a test in any other way.  
Cheating on a written assignment in any other way.

**Working together on assignments:** Imagine a math problem involving a right triangle in which one leg of the triangle is 6 inches long while the other is 8 inches long. You and a friend are working on this homework problem. Your friend says, “Help me find the value of the hypotenuse.” On the one hand you could say, “It’s 10.” However, on the other hand you could

say, “It involves the Pythagorean theorem:  $A^2 + B^2 = C^2$  where A is one leg of the triangle, B is the other and C is the hypotenuse.” In my class the first response would be cheating and the second case would not. I define working together as sharing information regarding the *means* to a solution for an assignment. Sharing the solution is a form of cheating because one person’s grade is dependent upon another person’s work and unless instructed otherwise, you must produce the solutions to your assignments independently. You may share strategies and pointers (e.g., “Look at the lecture notes from last week” or “Read p. 52 in the text”). But each person must do the work to solve the problem alone unless instructed otherwise in the syllabus or a handout for the assignment.

**Working together on research:** Some of you may end up collaborating on a research project. You are allowed to work together on specified assignments and to develop a questionnaire, design a study, create an experimental manipulation and/or collect data. For your required meetings at the end of the term, you should come in together to analyze the data with me. You may collaborate in writing the Method section and the Results section of your final paper. However, all sections of the final paper besides the Method and Results should be done and submitted independently unless you have written confirmation from me stating otherwise.

**Studying Together for Exams:** I encourage you to study together for exams. Collaborative learning is beneficial in many ways. It helps you gain varied perspectives on a certain issue. There may be certain things that you have studied that remain confusing to you that other students may understand. There may be certain things that you help other students understand and in the process of explaining things to them, it helps you cement your knowledge. In preparing for exams, I strongly encourage you to study in groups.

**Plagiarism:** You will write a paper for this class and you will need citations beyond the required readings. Throughout the body of the paper, if you are summarizing findings or ideas that are not yours, you need to cite where you found that information. Not giving credit to the original authors is plagiarism. In addition, if you use more than three words in a row from a source, you need to not only cite it but you also need to use quotation marks. Typing in a sentence from a source and then changing every third word but presenting it in your paper as your own ideas and writing is dishonest (i.e., it is cheating). In addition, using work you wrote or created for another course or from a previous semester of Methods without first clearing it with me and any other professors involved will be considered plagiarism in this course.

**Research Papers and Citing Sources:** The writing assignment will require you to conduct research. This involves citing the sources for your ideas. If you use someone else’s idea, you MUST cite it. This is not only when you quote it; this is ALWAYS. In addition, you include the citation immediately after the sentence with the idea. IT IS PLAGIARISM TO USE SOMEONE’S IDEAS THROUGHOUT A PARAGRAPH AND THEN CITE THEM AT THE END OF THE PARAGRAPH. Maybe this is how some of you were taught in high school. NOT ONLY IS THAT WRONG ACCORDING TO MLA STYLE AND APA STYLE, BUT IT IS ALSO PLAGIARISM. If you think this is a trivial offense, keep in mind that in the past year several people were reported to the Academic Integrity Council for this exact type of offense. As your professor, I believe it is incumbent upon me to give you clear warnings and instructions regarding this issue. However, it is incumbent upon you to take this seriously and to work diligently not to plagiarize. Students often start papers at the last minute. Doing so may not allow you enough time to cite sources properly. Make sure you give yourself enough time to cite things properly so that you do not end up with a violation of Austin College’s Academic Integrity Policy.

**Collecting Data:** For certain assignments, you will be asked to collect data. You will be given clear instructions on how to complete this task. Do not fabricate data. This is another violation of the Academic Integrity Policy. People who fabricate data will be immediately reported to the Academic Integrity Council. If you do not understand how to complete a task, simply ask the professor. Data collected by our class may be submitted to a conference, and publishing results based upon fabricated data completely undermines the scientific process.

| WEEK               | TOPIC  | READINGS  | ASSIGNMENT   |
|--------------------|--|---|--|
| 1: Sept. 2-6       | Overview   | Chs. 1 & 2, Lilienfeld  |  |
| 2: Sept. 9-13      | Variability  | pp. A1-A34  | Variance exercise due 9/9  |
| <i>Sept. 13</i>    |  |   | <b>EXAM 1: Chs. 1, 2, pp. A1-A34, Lilienfeld</b>   |
| 3: Sept 16-20      | Ethics   | Ch. 4, Biernat & Crandall, Crandall & Biernat, four online readings                         | Central Tendency & Spread exercise due 9/16  |
| <i>Sept. 18</i>    |  | <i>Abell Library Instructional Computer Classroom, rm. 208 – lit searches in psychology</i> |  |
| 4: Sept. 23-27     | Measurement & Validity   | Chs. 3 & 5, pp. A34-A47   |  |
| <i>Sept. 27</i>    |  |   | <b>EXAM 2: Ch. 3, 5, pp. A34-A47, B&amp;C, C&amp;B, four online readings</b>   |
| 5: Sept. 30-Oct. 4 | Nonexp. Methods  | Chs. 6 & 7  | Meas./Validity exercise due 9/30   |
| <i>Oct. 4</i>      |  | <i>Bring laptop to class - IRB</i>  | Lit. Review due 10/4   |
| 6: Oct. 7-11       | Experimental Methods   | Chs. 9, 10 & 11   | Sampling exercise due 10/7   |
| <i>Oct. 11</i>     |  | <b>NO CLASS – FALL BREAK</b>  | IRB Proposal due 10/9  |
| 7: Oct. 14-18      | Experimental Methods<br>- Start collecting data <b>after</b> IRB approval from Wayne Meyer | Chs. 9, 10 & 11   | Random assignment exercise due 10/14<br>During Weeks 7-9 have first meeting with me with final IRB proposal and draft of Method section    |
| <i>Oct. 18</i>     |  |   | <b>EXAM 3: Ch. 6, 7, 9, 10, 11</b>   |
| 8: Oct. 21-25      | Additional Methods   | Ch. 8, 12 & 13  |  |
| <i>Oct. 21</i>     |  | <i>Bring laptop to class – APA format</i>   |  |
| 9: Oct. 28-Nov. 1  | Writing  | pp. A49-A87   | APA format, due 10/28  |
| <i>Nov. 1</i>      |  |   | <b>EXAM 4: Ch. 12, 13, pp. A49-A87</b>   |
| 10: Nov. 4-8       | Dealing with Data<br>- Work on your Introduction   |   | Entering data, data dictionary, etc. due 11/8<br>During Weeks 10-12 have second meeting with me at Abell computer lab to run stats in SPSS |
| <i>Nov. 4</i>      |  | <i>Bring laptop to class – data entry</i>   |  |
| 11: Nov. 11-15     | - Work on your Method  |   | - draft of Method section due 11/15  |
| 12: Nov. 18-22     | - Work on your Results   |   |  |
| 13: Nov. 25-29     | - Work on your Discussion  |   | - SPSS output due 11/25  |
| <i>Nov. 27-31</i>  |  | <b>THANKSGIVING BREAK</b>   |  |
| 14: Dec. 2-6       | - Finalize your paper  |   | - draft Results section due Dec. 4   |
| <i>Dec. 6</i>      |  | <i>Research forum on Friday</i>   |  |
| 15: Dec. 9-13      |  |   | <b>Dec. 9 @ 5pm FINAL PAPER DUE</b>  |

When we meet at Abell Library, we will meet in the Instructional Computer Classroom, rm. 208.

### DATES YOU MAY WANT TO KEEP IN MIND

|   |   |
|---|---|
| Sept 10: last day to add a course                 | Nov 11-14: Spring registration                  |
| Sept 24-26: Off-campus Jan Term registration      | Nov 30: SWPA deadline                           |
| Oct 21: last day to drop or change grading system | Dec 6: last day to drop with WP, WF or WU grade |
| Oct 21-23: On-campus Jan Term registration        | Dec 9-13: Exam period                           |