

## Psychology 207: Research Methods

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Fall 2014  
TR 3:30-4:45pm  
061 McKinly Lab

Instructor: Lisa Jaremka, PhD  
Email: ljaremka@psych.udel.edu  
Office Hrs: Thursday 1-3pm  
Location: 105 McKinly Lab

**Website:** <http://sakai.udel.edu/portal>

**Textbook:** Morling, B. (2012 or 2015). *Research methods in psychology: Evaluating a world of information*. New York: W.W. Norton.

NOTE: Additional readings may be assigned via Sakai and/or the library

### **Goals of the Course:**

How can we understand human behavior, satisfy our curiosity about ourselves and other people, and better understand research reported in the media? The purpose of this class is to introduce you to the research methodology, a critical thinking skills subject matter that builds your skills as a producer and consumer of research. This course will focus on the major research methods used in *psychological research*, although these same methods are used in many other fields, including sociology, political science, and communications. Psychological research is based on scientific evidence, and it relies on many tools developed to help us answer research questions and refute misunderstandings and myths along the way. This course is about understanding and employing those tools to make us better producers of behavioral research and also become a better consumer of research in your daily life.

All assignments and in-class exercises are designed to maximize your achievement of the following learning goals. By engaging fully in these activities, by the end of the semester you will be able to:

- Understand the scientific method
- Properly evaluate original psychological research reports and statements from the media
- Identify research claims from both original and media sources and classify them as Frequency, Association, or Causal claims
- Effectively design a basic study to answer a question you are interested in, including constructing a research hypothesis and selecting participants for a study
- Discriminate between experimental, quasi-experimental, and non-experimental studies, and explain which claims (Frequency, Association, or Causal) each kind of study can support
- Understand validity (specifically construct, internal, external, and statistical validity)
- Describe the basic ethical guidelines that apply to research in psychology
- Use two important tools important to the discipline of psychology: the PsycINFO literature

search engine, and APA style for writing and citing research papers.

**Elements of Your Grade:**

Grades in this course will be based on your performance on exams, in-class activities, HW assignments, and a final project. Good performance on each assignment and exam is important to your overall success in this course. **Final grades** are non-negotiable - grade changes will be made only to correct clerical errors. Your *total points* will be based on the following components:

Exam #1	25%	} Best 3 out of 4 grades will be used
Exam #2	25%	
Exam #3	25%	
Exam #4 - Final	25%	
In-class activities	5%	
HW assignments	10%	
Final Project	10%	

**Grading cutoffs:**

A	93%	C	73%
A-	90%	C-	70% (Note: You need at least a C- for the major)
B+	88%	D+	68%
B	83%	D	63%
B-	80%	D-	60%
C+	78%		

**Exams:**

There will be four closed-book, closed-note exams. All exams will be multiple-choice with a few short answer questions. The first three exams will not be cumulative. However, the final exam will cover material from the entire course. The top three of your exam scores count for your grade (you can drop your lowest score).

Questions will be based on both the lectures and readings - ANY material covered in the lectures or reading may appear on the exam. Some of the material in the reading will not be covered in the lecture and vice versa. You are responsible for both!

Contesting your grade on an exam: You will have a separate sheet of paper at each exam to write down and explain anything you feel is ambiguous on the exam (for example, you think two answers are accurate but you can only choose one), or if you want to justify your answer for any reason. You must turn this sheet in at the end of the exam. You will only be able to contest the answer for the specific questions that you discussed on this sheet.

**Makeup Exams:** Makeup exams will only be provided in the case of a university approved excused absence. Makeup exams will not be provided for any other reason. Before we can schedule a makeup exam, you must provide a *written approval from the university excusing your absence*. These can be obtained by working with Undergraduate Academic Services. Makeup exams may take an alternative form to that taken by the rest of the class (e.g., essay exam).

### **In-Class Activities and HW Assignments:**

Five percent of your grade will be based on in-class activities and will involve short written responses to questions asked during class. The dates of these activities are not listed on the syllabus – it is your responsibility to attend class and complete the activities. If you have to miss a class due to illness or another personal emergency, you should inform the instructor *prior to, or within one day*, of the missed class. Before we can make alternative arrangements, you must provide a *university approved excused absence*. Failure to notify the instructor about a missed class will result in a failed grade on that activity. You can submit your in-class activity via Sakai if you have your laptop with you; otherwise paper and pencil is fine.

Ten percent of your grade will be based on homework assignments that will be completed outside of class. The dates of these assignments are not listed on the syllabus – it is your responsibility to attend class and check Sakai to learn about the dates for each of the assignments. Late homework will not be accepted under any circumstances. Your HW assignments will be submitted via Sakai.

Contesting your grade on an in-class activity or HW assignment: If you wish to contest a grade, the only option is to have the *entire* assignment re-graded. This can result in either improving or reducing your grade. You will receive the new grade, even if it is lower than the original grade. You have a maximum of 2 weeks to contest your grade.

### **Final Project**

You will complete a final project that involves multiple steps, resulting in an APA-style report. Details will be discussed in class and posted on Sakai. This project will be worth 10% of your final grade. Your final project will be submitted via Sakai.

### **Email Policy**

I will respond to emails from students once per day, so you may not hear back from me for up to 24 hours. All emails regarding exam-related questions must be sent by 5pm the night prior to each exam. Any emails sent after 5pm will be disregarded. I will only respond to very specific questions regarding course content. Any broader questions are best addressed in-person, either during office hours or in class. There is also a section on Sakai to post anonymous questions that I will address in the next class.

### **Academic Integrity:**

Academic dishonesty is unacceptable under all circumstances. All exam work in this class is to be your own. All written work is to be your own. You are responsible for keeping drafts, references, and backup copies of all of your written assignments, to turn in upon my request until final grades are completed. If I discover that you have copied all or part of an exam or written assignment from another source (including another student, a web page, a textbook, or other published source), you will be reported to the Office of Student Conduct for disciplinary action (I usually recommend an F grade in the course). To avoid plagiarizing, you must educate yourself about appropriate citation procedures and follow them carefully. When in doubt, ask. Please do not put your college career at risk!

### **Students with Disabilities:**

If you need special academic accommodations due to a documented physical or sensory disability, please contact the Office of Disability Support Services at [www.udel.edu/DSS/](http://www.udel.edu/DSS/) during the first two weeks of class. The office provides academic support services to eligible students with temporary and permanent disabilities.

### Lecture Schedule and Reading Assignments

(Note that the page numbers are dependent on whether you have the blue (1st edition) or pink (2nd edition) colored book - the content is the same)

Class	Day	Date	Topic	Reading
1	T	8/26	Class overview and introductions	N/A
2	R	8/28	The Science of Psychology - Part 1	Blue: Pages 8-13, 23-38 Pink: Pages 8-13, 23-38
3	T	9/2	The Science of Psychology - Part 2	Blue: Pages 38-45 Pink: Pages 39-46
4	R	9/4	The Science of Psychology - Part 3	Blue: Pages 57-74 Pink: Pages 60-77
5	T	9/9	Variable Measurement	Blue: Pages 55-56, 114-120, 126-135 Pink: Pages 57-59, 122-130, 136-146
6	R	9/11	Participant Selection	Blue: Pages 164-175 Pink: Pages 182-197
7	T	9/16	Ethics in Psychological Research	Blue: Chapter 4 - all Pink: Chapter 4 - all
8	R	9/18	Review for midterm	N/A
9	T	9/23	EXAM #1	N/A
10	R	9/25	Overview of Research Designs	N/A
11	T	9/30	Non-experimental Designs - Part 1	Blue: Chapter 7 - all, pages 215-219 Pink: Chapter 8 - all, pages 242-246 (top)

12	R	10/2	Non-experimental Designs - Part 2	N/A
13	T	10/7	Experimental Designs - Part 1	Blue: Pages 241-253 Pink: Pages 271-284 (top)
14	R	10/9	Experimental Designs - Part 2	Blue: Pages 277 - 293, 253-264 Pink: Pages 307 - 323, 284-294
15	T	10/14	Experimental Designs - Part 3	Blue: Pages 265-271 Pink: Pages 295-302
16	R	10/16	Experimental Designs - Part 4	Blue: Chapter 11 - all Pink: Chapter 12 - all
17	T	10/21	Review for Exam #2	N/A
18	R	10/23	EXAM #2	N/A
19	T	10/28	Quasi-experimental and developmental designs - Part 1	Blue: Pages 211-215, 346-360 Pink: Pages 237-241, 382-398
20	R	10/30	Quasi-experimental and developmental designs - Part 2	N/A
21	T	11/4	University Holiday - No Class	N/A
22	R	11/6	Moderation versus Mediation	Blue: Pages 202-204, 229-231 Pink: Pages 227-230, 257-259
23	T	11/11	Psychological Statistics	N/A
24	R	11/13	Replicability, Meta-Analyses, and Generalizability	Blue: Chapter 13 - all Pink: Chapter 14 - all

25	T	11/18	Review for Exam #3	N/A
26	R	11/20	EXAM #3	N/A
27	T	11/25	No Class - Use Time to Prep Final Project	N/A
28	R	11/27	University Holiday - No Class	N/A
29	T	12/2	Review for final	Final project due
			EXAM #4 - FINAL EXAM	

\*Schedule and readings subject to change