Research Methods in Psychology  
(PSYC 2301) 
January Term 2016  
SMU-in-Taos

Instructor: Lorelei Simpson Rowe, Ph.D.  
Email: lsimpson@smu.edu

Course Overview

Design and evaluation of psychological research, with emphasis on scientific method, data collection, experimentation, control procedures, validity, reliability, and report-writing skills. This is a challenging and rigorous class in research, and is required for psychology majors. At SMU-in-Taos, we will focus on applying psychological research methods to studying issues relevant to the experiences, cultures, and peoples of the American Southwest.

Prerequisites: PSYC 1300 and one additional psychology course, or instructor approval.

Course Aims and Objectives

Aims: Students will gain an in-depth understanding of a) the development of research questions and hypotheses in psychology, b) methods for testing hypotheses, including cross-sectional, longitudinal, experimental, and treatment outcome designs, c) ethical and practical concerns regarding collecting data to test psychological hypotheses, and d) interpreting and reporting the results of psychological research. In addition, students will e) learn to be critical consumers of psychological research.

This course fulfills Proficiencies & Experiences for the domains of Quantitative Reasoning, Information Literacy, and Writing.

Specific Learning Objectives:

1. As measured by exams, students will be able to describe the scientific method, describe and differentiate sampling procedures, describe and differentiate research designs, and discuss ethical considerations in psychological research.
2. As measured by in-class exercises, students will be able to apply the concepts discussed in lecture to appropriately develop research designs, and interpret study findings.
3. On written reports, students will be able to formulate research hypotheses, describe an appropriate research design, present results of data collection, and write in proper APA style.

Proficiencies and Experiences Learning Objectives:  
Information Literacy  

1. Students will be able to select and use the appropriate research methods and search tools for needed information.
2. Students will be able to evaluate sources for quality of information for a given information need.
**Quantitative Reasoning**
3. Students will be able to assess the strengths and limitations of quantitative models and methods.
4. Students will be able to test hypotheses and make recommendations or predictions based on results.
5. Students will be able to communicate and represent quantitative information or results numerically, symbolically, aurally, visually, verbally, or in writing.

**Writing**
6. Students will state and defend a thesis with adequate attention to analysis and evidence.
7. Students will demonstrate an understanding of essay and paragraph development and organization.
8. Students will craft sentences with attention to audience, purpose, and tone, as well as sentence variety and diction.
9. Students will demonstrate proper use of grammatically and mechanically correct English (or the language in which the course is taught).

**Readings**
- If you plan to go to graduate school in a field that uses APA style, it may be helpful to purchase a copy of the most recent (6th edition) APA style guide.

**Course Evaluation**

*Exams:* There will be a mid-term exam and a final exam. The mid-term will cover material from chapters 1-6, 15 and 16, and the final will be cumulative, but with an emphasis on material from chapters 7 and 9-14. Exams will cover information provided in both the textbook and class discussions, so it is important that you complete the required reading and attend class on a regular basis. Exams will consist of true-false, multiple-choice, and short answer questions. The mid-term exam will count for 100 points toward your final grade and the final exam will count for 200 points. All exams will be conducted electronically using ExamSoft.

*In-Class Exercises:* You will complete a total of 10 in-class exercises designed to help you consolidate material that we have covered and to practice applying research methods. Exercises are worth up to 20 points each, for a total of 200 points toward your final grade. If you are not able to complete the exercise within the time allotted during class, you may complete it that evening and turn it in the next morning.
**Class Project:** As a class, we will decide on a topic related to the cultures and peoples of the Southwest to target for a class project. Possible topics include cultural differences in expectations about marriage and parenting, health disparities among Hispanic and Native American groups, or the effects of discrimination faced by ethnic minorities. Once we have chosen a topic, we will review relevant psychological research literature, identify specific hypotheses to be tested, and design a study to test these hypotheses. Data collection will occur during two field trips, one to the Taos Historical District, including the Millicent Rogers Museum and Hacienda de los Martinez, and the second to Taos Pueblo. The class will decide what kind of data to collect and how to do so, using the principles and methodologies learned in class.

Individually, you will write a Project Report summarizing the results of the study. You will submit **Project Report, Part 1**, a brief (2-4 page) literature review and summary of the methodology on Friday, 1/8/16, and will receive feedback on Part 1 by Monday, 1/11/16. We will also analyze the data we collected in class on Friday, 1/8/16. You will submit the **Final Project Report** (4-6 pages) on Wednesday 1/13/16. Your final report should incorporate feedback on Part 1 and include results and discussions sections based on the analyses conducted in class on Friday, 1/8/16. Part 1 is worth 50 points and the Final Project Report is worth 100 points.

**Design an Experiment:** On Monday, 1/11/16, you will work in small groups to design brief experiments and administer them to each other. You will write a brief summary (1-2 pages) of your experiments and the results to submit by the end of class that day. This assignment is worth 50 points.

**Grades:** All grades will be posted on Blackboard.

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<th>Possible Points per Assignment</th>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mid-Term Exam 100</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>93-100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam 200</td>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-92</td>
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<td>In-Class Exercises 200</td>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87-89</td>
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<td>Design an Experiment 50</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>83-86</td>
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<td>Project Report, Part 1 50</td>
<td>B-</td>
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<td>Final Project Report 100</td>
<td>C+</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong> 700</td>
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Grades: All grades will be posted on Blackboard.
Course Policies

Attendance: Attendance is required and is necessary to succeed in this course. If you miss class, you will miss important information as well as graded activities.

Office Hours: I will meet with you as needed before and after class to address any questions about the material.

Electronic Devices: The use of electronic devices for purposes not related to class material (e.g. phone calls, text messages, surfing the web, email, etc.) is not allowed during class. Make sure that all cell phones are turned off or placed on silent during class. Do not leave cell phones on vibrate as this is often audible and disruptive to other students. You are welcome to use electronic devices for the purpose of taking notes, but use of electronic devices during class for non-approved reasons will result in loss of points from your total grade.

Changes to Syllabus: From time to time, I may make changes to the course plan, topics, or other aspects of the course. These changes will be announced in class, posted on the website and/or sent in a class-wide email. You are responsible for keeping up with announcements of changes and other course business.

Disability Accommodations: If you need academic accommodations for a disability, you must first contact Disability Accommodations & Success Strategies (DASS) at 214-768-1470 or http://www.smu.edu/alec/dass.asp to verify the disability and to establish eligibility for accommodations. Then you must schedule an appointment with the professor to make appropriate arrangements.

Religious Observance: Religiously observant students wishing to be absent on holidays that require missing class should notify their professors in writing at the beginning of the semester, and should discuss with them, in advance, acceptable ways of making up any work missed because of the absence.

Excused Absences for University Extracurricular Activities: Students participating in an officially sanctioned, scheduled University extracurricular activity will be given the opportunity to make up class assignments or other graded assignments missed as a result of their participation. It is the responsibility of the student to make arrangements with the instructor prior to any missed scheduled examination or other missed assignment for making up the work.

Academic Integrity: Cheating and/or plagiarism will not be tolerated in this course and will be dealt with according to the University’s Honor Code. As stated by the Honor Council, “Permitting others to prepare their work, using published or unpublished summaries as a substitute for studying required materials, or giving or receiving unauthorized assistance in preparation of work to be submitted are directly contrary to the honest process of learning.” A violation of the Code will result in an F for the course. In addition, the student may also be taken before the Honor Council. If you are unclear about this please see the instructor immediately.
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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| Mon, 1/4   | Introduction to Psychological Research and the Scientific Method  
Chapter 1 and 2  
Decide Topic for Class Project | Ethics in Psychological Research  
Chapter 15 |
| Tues, 1/5  | Measuring Psychological Variables  
Chapters 3 and 4  
Design survey measures for Class Project | FIELD TRIP: Taos Historical District, Millicent Rogers Museum, and Hacienda de los Martinez (survey data collection) |
| Wed, 1/6   | Sampling and Research Design  
Chapter 5 | Descriptive Statistics and Scientific Writing  
Chapters 6 and 16 |
| Thurs, 1/7 | Exam | Correlational Research  
Chapter 7  
Design observational measures for Class Project |
| Fri, 1/8   | FIELD TRIP: Taos Pueblo (observational data collection) | Entering and analyzing data from field trips  
Project Report Part 1 Due |
| Mon, 1/11  | Experimental Methods  
Chapters 9 and 10 | Design an Experiment |
| Tues, 1/12 | Analyzing Experimental Data  
Chapter 11 | Complex Experimental Designs  
Chapter 12 |
| Wed, 1/13  | Quasi-Experimental Designs and Single-Case Designs  
Chapters 13 and 14  
Final Project Report Due | Exam |