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PSYX 120.50: Introduction to Research Methods - Online

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PSYC 120: Introduction to Research Methods

Autumn 2013, Section 50

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Office Hours: by appointment

Course Description:

Psychology is the science of human and non-human animal behavior as well as mental, perceptual, and biological processes. As a survey course, Introduction to Research Methods provides an overview of the scientific approach to studying those various topics. By understanding basic research methods of psychology, you will learn to approach the world in a more systemic and scientific manner. The course primarily employs an online discussion format. Throughout the course of the semester, you will be asked discussion questions, and it is expected that you will interact with your instructor and classmates by responding to the questions posed. Furthermore, at various points in the semester you will be asked to use your understanding of research methods to critique and comment upon actual published research studies. It is anticipated that by the end of the semester you will have a basic understanding of research methodology that will enable you to consume psychological literature.

Required Texts: Elmes, D., Kantowitz, B., & Roediger, H.). *Research Methods in Psychology, 9th Edition*.

Course Requirements

Exams

There will be two non-cumulative exams in this course. Each exam is worth 150 points. The format of the exams will include 75 multiple-choice/true-false questions with each question being worth 2 points. The first exam (midterm) will contain questions with assigned readings through chapter 6. The second exam (final) will contain questions with material from chapters 7-13 (excluding chapter 12). You will have 120 minutes to complete each exam. Please do not wait until the last minute to submit the exam because you may not submit it before time runs out. If you fail to submit the exam in the allotted time, you will receive a zero on the exam. No exceptions will be made, so please plan accordingly.

Quizzes

Over the course of the semester we will have a total of 13 quizzes which will cover material from the week's reading. Each quiz will have 15 questions with each question being worth one point. The quizzes are meant to serve a multitude of purposes. They should key you in on what I feel is important from the material we cover in class. Quizzes will be multiple choice/true false. Each quiz will be open to take from 12 AM until 11:59 PM on the Friday of that week.

Discussion Forums

Each week throughout the duration of the semester, two discussion forums will be created based on the week's readings. The first discussion forum will be opened at the beginning of the week (Monday at 12 AM) and will close on Wednesday at 12 PM, noon. The second weekly discussion forum will be opened at 1 PM on Wednesday and will close at 10 PM on Friday. Students will be expected to make an original post and one reply (to another student's post) in each discussion forum. Please attend to the quality of your discussion post because the instructor reserves the right to not give you credit for unsatisfactory posts. For example, simply stating "I agree" or some variation is not a satisfactory reply to another student's post.

Responses to discussion posts are expected to help you explain, analyze, synthesize and evaluate basic concepts in psychological research methods. Additionally, through interacting with your peers it is anticipated that you will develop a better understanding of the material covered. You will be expected to make 28 original posts and 28 replies throughout the semester. Each original post is worth 5 points and each reply is worth 2.5 points for a total of 15 points a week.

Homework Assignments

There will be four homework assignments throughout the course of the semester. They will ask you to apply the material that you have learned to critiquing and commenting original research articles. For the first three assignments you will be provided with an article and asked to address specific questions about the research study. The fourth assignment will require you to find your own peer-reviewed original research article. An explanation for each HW assignment will be posted as a resource on the course page at least two week prior to its due date.

Course Grades

Course grading is based on a total of 735 points. Points are awarded as follows:

<i>Participation</i> (Discussion Posts)	14 @ 15 points each (210 points)
<i>Quizzes</i>	12 @ 15 points each (180 points)
<i>Research Assignments</i>	3 @ 25 points each (75 points)
	1 @ 35 points
<i>Exams</i>	2 @ 150 points each (300 points)

800 points are possible for this course with standard plus/minus grading

A	=	100 - 93%	C	=	77 - 73%
A-	=	92 - 90%	C-	=	72 - 70%
B+	=	89 - 88%	D+	=	69 - 68%
B	=	87 - 83%	D	=	67 - 63%
B-	=	82 - 80%	D-	=	62 - 60%
C+	=	79 - 78%	F	=	59% and below

Make Up Policy:

To make up a missed quiz or exam, you must meet the following criteria:

- Notify your Instructor **before** the time of the exam and bring proper documentation.
- You must have legitimate documentation verifying the reason for your absence. Examples of documented circumstances that may merit approval include the following:
 - illness or accident
 - death or family emergency
 - University-sanctioned activity

Academic Misconduct

All students must practice academic honesty. Academic misconduct is subject to an academic penalty by the course instructor and/or disciplinary sanction by the University. All students need to be familiar with the Student Conduct Code. The Code is available for review online at: <http://www.umt.edu/SA/VPSA/index.cfm/page/1321>

Disabilities And Special Learning Needs:

It is your responsibility to inform your Instructor, at the outset of this course, of any disability and the ways that you and the DSS have determined are necessary to accommodate your needs.

Announcements:

Students are responsible for any announcements made throughout the duration of this course. Announcements will be located on the course page, and may include changes in policy, due dates, or assignment requirements.

Course Schedule

Week/Dates	Readings	Topic(s)
Week 1 – Aug. 26-30	Syllabus, Attached Reading	Introduction to online courses
Week 2 – Sept. 2-6*	Chapter 1	Overview of psychological research
Week 3 – Sept. 9-13	Chapter 2	The scientific method
Week 4 – Sept. 16-20**	Chapter 4	Ethical issues in the conduct of psychological research 1st HW assignment due (9/20)
Week 5 – Sept. 23-27	Chapter 5	Observation
Week 6 – Sept. 30-Oct. 4	Chapter 6	Relational research
Week 7 – Oct. 7-11	Midterm Week – review past readings	Midterm (10/11) 2nd HW assignment due (10/11)
Week 8 – Oct. 14-18	Chapter 7	Basics of experimentation
Week 9 – Oct. 21-25	Chapter 8	Validity and reliability
Week 10 – Oct. 28- Nov. 1	Chapter 9	Experimental design
Week 11 – Nov. 4-8	Chapter 10	Complex design
Week 12 – Nov. 11-15***	Chapter 10 (cont.)	No discussions this week 3rd HW assignment due (11/12)
Week 13 – Nov. 18-22	Chapter 11	Small-n design
Week 14 – Nov. 25-29****	Chapter 13	Interpreting research
Week 15 – Dec. 2-6	review past readings	4th HW assignment due (12/6)
Week 16 – Dec.9-13	Finals week	Final Exam (12/10)

* Labor day Sept. 2nd

** Last day to cancel courses Sept. 18

*** Veterans day Nov. 11th

**** Thanksgiving break and travel day Nov. 27th-29th