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PSYX 120.50: Introduction to Research Methods – Online

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Psyx 120: Introduction to Research Methods – Online

Fall 2022

Instructor Information

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Phone: 406-243-4986

Required Text

Research Methods in Psychology: Evaluating a World of Information (Fourth Edition)–Morling

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 psychology. 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 professor 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.

Course Objectives

There are three primary goals for this course: 1) provide an introduction/re-familiarization with the basic tenets of the scientific method, 2) introduce common research methods as they relate to psychological research, and 3) provide the tools to become a “critical” consumer of psychological research. Major topics will include an introduction to the scientific method, searching scientific literature, research ethics, various methods (observational, relational, experimental, small-n, & quasi-experimental), validity and reliability, and interpretation of results.

Course Assignments & Grading Criteria

Quizzes

Over the course of the semester we will have a total of 14 quizzes that will cover material from the week’s reading. Each quiz will worth 20 points and have 30 questions with each question being worth .67 point. Quizzes will be multiple choice.

Each quiz will be open to take from 7 AM on Saturday until 11:59 PM on Friday (you will have 7 days to complete the quiz) and the quiz cannot be made-up after this time. You will have a time limit of 45 minutes to complete the quiz once you open it.

Quizzes are administered using the adaptive mode that allows multiple attempts at each question before moving on to the next question but subtracts a penalty for each wrong attempt. For example,

choosing the correct answer on the first attempt would earn .67 point, second attempt would earn 0.45 points, third attempt would earn .22 points, and fourth attempt would earn 0.00 points. **It will be not sufficient to look up the answers during the quiz as you won't have time to complete all of the items. I strongly recommend you learn the material prior to attempting the quiz.**

You will not have quizzes on weeks 13 and 16 because of Thanksgiving break and finals week.

Discussion Forums

Every two weeks throughout the duration of the semester, **one discussion forum** will be created based on previous weeks' readings. **Discussion forums will be opened Saturday at 7 AM and will close on Friday at 11:59 PM.**

Students will be expected to make 1 original post and 3 replies (to other student's posts) in each discussion forum during that allotted time. In other words, you cannot wait for the end of the semester to make 8 posts and 24 replies; **you must submit one post and three replies every week if you want the credit.** 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. If you are ever unsure, feel free to check with me.

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. Each discussion is worth 40 points. You will not have mandatory discussion posts on weeks 14 and 16 because of holiday break and finals week.

Grades are based on (1) **attendance** and (2) **quality of posts** and do not include any posts made in the "Q & A" or "Welcome" Discussions. Full credit requires high quality and maximum frequency posts. The two charts below explain how your discussion posts are graded.

<i>ATTENDANCE GRADING FOR ONLINE POSTS(40 points possible)</i>		
Students must post (respond) a <u>minimum of two separate days per week</u> . You can post more, but at a minimum, you must post on two separate days.	2 days	40 points
	1 day	20 points
	0 days	0 points

Once the number of days is calculated, students are then graded based on their contributions to the discussion. The following points are deducted, not added, from the points earned above, to yield a final weekly "attendance" score. (Students cannot earn negative points. The lowest possible score is zero.)

Students must make a post to the discussion question in the weekly discussion forum. Each weekly discussion question post will be due by Friday at 11:59 pm	Each day late	5 pts lost
	3 peers	0 pts lost
	2 peers	5 pts lost
Students must post (respond) to a <u>minimum of three of their peers</u> . You can post to more than three, but at a minimum, you must reply to three of your peers.	1 peer	10 pts lost

Students must make a post to the discussion question in the weekly discussion forum. Each weekly discussion question post will be due by Friday at 11:59 pm	Each day late	5 pts lost
	0 peers	15 pts lost

Once I have calculated your final weekly “attendance” score, then I grade the quality of your posts, as explained below. Again, the following points are deducted, not added, from the final weekly “attendance” score, to yield a final weekly “Discussion” score. (Students cannot earn negative points. The lowest score is a zero.)

<i>POST QUALITY GRADING</i>		
Students must make detailed and thoughtful posts that reflect an appropriate application of emerging knowledge and vocabulary in the topic area. Each post must add value to the discussion and be related to the required readings for the week. Below are additional details of how I grade the quality of your posts.	Superior	0 pts lost
	Above Average	0 pts lost
	Average	10 pts lost
	Below Average	20 pts lost
	Unacceptable	30-40 pts lost

Superior: Your contributions demonstrate a complete mastery of the materials assigned. Your responses might integrate multiple views and/or show strong analysis and reflection on topics and other student’s posts. You provide evidence that you are reading the assigned materials and other student postings and are responding accordingly, bringing out interesting interpretations. You know the facts and are able to analyze them, apply them to real life scenarios and handle conceptual ideas. It is highly unlikely that you could get full credit in less than two paragraphs.

Above Average: Your responses build on the ideas of other participants and dig deeper into assignment questions or issues. When you make intelligent posts during the week, including some good critique of the course material, then you have demonstrated you have an understanding of the material, are reading posts of your colleagues, and are contributing to the class. Your posts demonstrate confidence with the materials, but may be just a bit off target in one area or another. It is highly unlikely that you could get full credit in less than two paragraphs.

Average: You have meaningful interaction with other participants’ postings. Posts that state, “I agree” or “I disagree” and include a detailed explanation of what is disagreed or agreed upon and why, or introduce a perspective or concept that adds to the discussion. However, you may have rambling, lengthy posts with no clear point, your writing has a lack of clarity and comprehension, not enough content, or there are considerable typos and grammatical errors.

Below Average: You answer questions asked by me or other students but do not expand upon your response or you answer questions based only on your opinion, rather than on research or proper evidence. Your posts are unusually short (one paragraph or less) and you fail to demonstrate a clear working knowledge of the material covered for the week.

Unacceptable: You will receive little credit in the week’s discussion by just showing up and making trivial comments, without adding any new thought to the discussion. At the low end of the spectrum, no participation gets a “0.” Comments such as “I agree” or other one-sentence responses will result in 0 points. Copying and pasting from a website without providing your own substantial insight is also an unacceptable post (even if you have properly cited your sources). This assignment is an assessment of your understanding of the information covered in this class. Copying and pasting from websites does not demonstrate a working knowledge of the material.

I check very carefully for plagiarism in the discussion posts. If you have plagiarized, you will get a zero for the entire assignment. If you plagiarize a second time, you will fail the course. If you engage in hostile behavior in the posts, you will get a zero for the entire assignment.

Lab Assignments

There will be four lab 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, as well as identifying and responding to methodological scenarios. They are described in full detail under “Labs” and are available for review before the week that they are due.

There are four lab assignments across the semester, and they are worth 40 points each. See course schedule for due dates.

Course Grading

Your final grade for the course will consist of scores on weekly quizzes, discussion posts, and lab exercises. Your final grade is the percentage of the total points earned divided by total possible points. There is no course curve in this class.

The following chart breaks down the points for each assignment type.

Criteria	Points possible
Discussion Posts (8, at 40 pts each)	320 points possible
Quizzes (14, at 20 pts each)	280 points possible
Lab Exercises (4, at 40 points each)	160 points possible
Total Points	760 points possible

The following chart shows the Grade scale for the Final Course grade.

Final Course Grade	# Points	Percentage
A	684-760	90% - 100%
B	608-683	80% – 89.9%
C	532-607	70% – 79.9%
D	456-531	60% – 69.9%
F	0-455	< 60%

Extra Credit

Research Experience. Up to 15 extra credit points (2%) can be earned by participating in psychology research through SONA. Each SONA credit is worth 5 extra credit point. Two options:

1. Participation in original research: In this option, you will sign up to participate in actual psychology experiments. Individual experiments may range in credits they award. Typically, each credit takes about 30 minutes. Participate in psychology research through SONA. Each SONA

credit is worth 5 points. Be sure to assign SONA credits to PSYX 120-50 in order to receive extra credit. Additionally, make yourself aware of SONA deadlines, as the website closes prior to the end of the semester. For detailed instructions, visit:

<https://www.umt.edu/psychology/undergraduates/sona.php>

2. Alternative option: Read and summarize original research. In this option, you will find, read, and summarize an original, peer-reviewed research article in Psychology. Each summary should be 1 page long. Each summary is worth 7.5 pts (so you can do 2 of these). To get credit, email it to me before December 2nd.

Course Guidelines and Policies

Contacting me

Please email me with questions/concerns. I will do my best to respond to you as quickly as possible, but please allow up to, but no later than, 48 hours for me to respond. I humbly ask you to double-check the syllabus and Moodle content to see if there is an answer to your question there prior to reaching out. Also, I am always happy to find a time to meet if my office hours do not work for you. Happy to meet in-person or via zoom.

Announcements

Students are responsible for staying up-to-date on all announcements made about class. These may include changes in policy, due dates, or assignments requirements. Announcements are posted in the announcements section of the Moodle or are directly emailed to students.

Technology Policies & Alternatives

[Please contact UM Online](#) if you experience technical difficulties. Though I would love to be able to help, I am not qualified to do so. *Critical note: Technical issues are not sufficient reasons for late or incomplete work.* To ensure your protection, please do not wait until the last minute to complete your work each week!

umonline-help@umontana.edu

(406) 243-4999

Also, keep in mind your technical alternative if you have computer difficulties. If you live near the University, campus computers are an option. Otherwise, consider the public library, an internet café, a computer at work, or a friend or family member's computer. Have a plan of action in mind so that you can complete the required work each week if an issue arises. Happy to help problem-solve!

Assignment Due Dates, Late Work, and Make-up Work

Discussions, quizzes, and lab assignments are due on Fridays by 11:59 pm MST. Please be sure to start your assignments early enough to complete them by the time the week closes.

I do not accept late work or allow make-up work, except for one "freebie." No reason is required to take advantage of this opportunity (life happens!), and it is the student's responsibility to contact me to make this happen. Students have 24 hours to make up the work from the time I send the make-up assignment email, and students are not permitted to use the "freebie" at any time during finals week. Students cannot make up the discussion posts assignment. Due to the interactive nature of this assignment, students must be engaged in this process throughout the week each week in order to receive credit.

To make up other missed assignments (not the freebie) it is mandatory that you 1) notify your instructor before the time of the assignment and 2) provide proper documentation verifying the reason for your absence. Examples of proper documentation include a medical note or a death or family emergency. You can provide documentation by 1) scanning and emailing documents, 2) mailing the documents, or 3) bringing them by my office.

Grades of Incomplete

Departmental and university policies regarding incompletes do not allow changing “incomplete” grades after one year has passed since the “I” was granted. Please see [academic policy](#) for more information on the conditions that must be met to receive a grade of “incomplete.”

Academic Misconduct

All students must practice academic honesty. Academic misconduct is subject to an academic penalty by the course instructor and/or a disciplinary sanction by the University. All students need to be familiar with the [Student Conduct Code](#).

Plagiarism

The Student Conduct Code discusses plagiarism. However, it is a serious offense worth re-mentioning. This course requires students to adhere to APA format when citing, paraphrasing, or referencing sources. If you have plagiarized, either intentionally or accidentally, you will receive a zero on the entire assignment. If you plagiarize a second time, you will fail the course.

Professional Online Communication

Students must engage in proper professional online communication (see “Online Communication Guidelines” on Moodle). Failure to engage in proper professional online communication will result in earning a zero for each assignment where an incident has occurred.

Disability Modifications

The University of Montana assures equal access to instruction through collaboration between students with disabilities, instructors, and [Office for Disability Equality](#) If you think you may have a disability adversely affecting your academic performance, and you have not already registered with the Office for Disability Equality (ODE), please contact ODE in Aber Hall 1st Floor or call 406-243-2243. I will work with you and Disability Services to provide an appropriate modification.

Dropping/Adding/Changing grade option

Please refer to the [Registrar’s Office webpage](#) for information and policies.

Mandatory Employee Reporting of Sex-based Discrimination, Sexual Harassment, and Sexual Misconduct Involving Students

In order to enable the University to respond effectively and to stop instances of sex-based discrimination, sexual harassment and sexual misconduct involving students at the University proactively, all University employees must, within 24 hours of receiving the information, report information they have about reported sex-based discrimination, sexual harassment, and sexual misconduct involving students to the EO. The information given to the EO must include all relevant details needed to determine what occurred and to resolve the situation. This includes the names of the

respondent (if known), the complainant, other students involved in the incident, as well as relevant facts, including the date, time, and location. SARC is NOT subject to mandatory reporting:
<https://www.umt.edu/student-advocacy-resource-center/>

Tentative Course Schedule

Week + Topic	Readings	Quizzes & Discussions	Lab Assignments
Week 1 (8/29 – 9/2) How to be an Online Student & Overview	Online Guidelines Psychology is a Way of Thinking, Chapter 1	Week 1 Welcome Discussion 1 Week 1 Quiz	
Week 2 (9/5 - 9/9) Scientific Reasoning	Sources of Information, Chapter 2	Discussion 2 Week 2 Quiz	
Week 3 (9/12 -9/16) Research Foundations	Ethical Guidelines, Chapter 4	Week 3 Quiz	
Week 4 (9/19 - 9/23) Scientific Reasoning	Interrogation Tools, Chapter 3	Discussion 3 Week 4 Quiz	Lab #1 due Friday at 11:59 pm
Week 5 (9/26 – 9/30) Research Foundations	Identifying Good Measurement, Chapter 5	Week 5 Quiz	
Week 6 (10/3 - 10/7) Methods: Frequency	Surveys and Observations, Chapter 6	Discussion 4 Week 6 Quiz	
Week 7 (10/10 - 10/14) Methods: Frequency	Sampling, Chapter 7	Week 7 Quiz	
Week 8 (10/17 – 10/21) Methods: Association	Correlational Research, Chapter 8	Discussion 5 Week 8 Quiz	Lab #2 due Friday at 11:59 pm
Week 9 (10/24 – 10/28) Methods: Association	Correlational Research (con't), Chapter 9	Week 9 Quiz	
Week 10 (10/31 – 11/4) Methods: Causal	Simple Experiments, Chapter 10	Discussion 6 Week 10 Quiz	
Week 11 (11/7 – 11/11) Methods: Causal	Confounding Variables, Chapter 11	Week 11 Quiz	
Week 12 (11/14 – 11/18) Methods: Causal	Complex Experiments, Chapter 12	Discussion 7 Week 12 Quiz	Lab #3 due Friday at 11:59 pm
Week 13 (11/21 – 11/25) Holiday week			
Week 14 (11/28 – 12/2) Methods: Quasi-Experiments and Small N	Quasi-Experiments and Small-N Designs, Chapter 13	Week 13 Quiz	
Week 15 (12/5 – 12/9) Replication & Real-World Importance	Real-World Importance, Chapter 14	Discussion 8 Week 14 Quiz	Lab # 4 due Friday at 11:59 pm
Finals Week (12/12 – 12/16)	Wrap-up		