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### PSYX 120.02: Introduction to Psychological Research Methods I

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## Psychology 120 (Section 1)—Research Methods I

Fall 2014

### Course Location and Time

MCG 210  
Monday, Wednesday, Friday 10:10 – 11:00am

### Instructor Information

Instructor: Nicole McCray, Ph.D.  
Office: Skaggs Bldg. 203  
Phone: 406.243.4527  
Email: [nicole.mccray@umontana.edu](mailto:nicole.mccray@umontana.edu) (the best way to contact me)  
Office hours:

Teaching Assistant:  
Teaching Assistant's email:

### Course Objectives

The primary purpose of this course is to provide students with an overview of the research methods used in psychological research. Throughout the course of the semester students will learn to develop research studies to examine topics of interest and to present results in written form. Students will also learn to become critical consumers of research. Specific topics to be covered include the foundations of research, sampling, measurement, research design, and analysis. Students are expected to think critically about the issues and to actively participate in class discussions and activities. The format of the course will rely on both lecture and discussion.

In order to accomplish this objective, it is expected that students will exhibit professional behavior throughout the course. This includes, for example, student attendance, preparedness, and active participation and involvement in class. Students not exhibiting professional behavior may be asked to leave.

### Required Text

Shaughnessy, J.J. and Zechmeister, E.B. (2012). *Research Methods*. Boston, MA: McGraw-Hill.

### Grading

Your final course grade will be based upon a total of 220 possible points that will be distributed as follows:

- 3 Exams (50 points each): 150
- Assignment: 50
- In-class Assignments: 20

Course grading will be based on the following point scale:

A= 198-220 (90-100%)

|    |         |           |
|----|---------|-----------|
| B= | 176-197 | (80- 89%) |
| C= | 154-175 | (70-79%)  |
| D= | 132-151 | (60-69%)  |
| F= | 0-131   | (0-59%)   |

## Exams

Three exams will be given during the semester, each worth 50 points. The exams will test your knowledge of topics covered in lecture. **A cumulative final exam will be an option** during final exam week. Students choosing to take the cumulative final may drop their lowest test score.

- Exam format: Multiple choice and short answer.
- Exam make-up policy: When possible, give advanced notice of a missed exam. Be prepared to provide reasonable evidence for missing an exam. Make-up exams may be in a different format than the original exam.
- Missed exam: If you miss an exam and do not make arrangements for a make-up exam, you will receive a zero as your grade for that exam.

## Assignment

You are required to complete one assignment designed to increase your understanding of research methods. A total of five options will be made available and you will be required to pick one of the three to complete as your assignment. Assignments handed in after the due date will have ten points deducted for each day late (including weekend days). This assignment will make up 50 points contributing to your final course grade.

## In-Class Assignments

A variety of in-class assignments will be given throughout the semester. These assignments will vary depending on the topic discussed in class that day. For example, students may be asked to reflect upon a particular issue in research and turn in a brief written response. Assignments are designed to increase students' ability to apply concepts from class. There are no make-ups for in-class assignments (except in the case of a documentable emergency) but there will be a variety of opportunities to earn these points.

## Course Guidelines and Policies

### Disability Modifications

The University of Montana assures equal access to instruction through collaboration between students with disabilities, instructors, and [Disability Services for Students](#). If you think you have a disability adversely affecting your academic performance, and you have not already registered with Disability Services, please contact Disability Services in Lommasson Center 154 or call 406.243.2243. I will work with you and Disability Services to provide an appropriate modification.

### Attendance

Attendance is not mandatory and role will not be taken. However, your course grade is mostly determined by exams (which will include material from lecture as well as the text). **Course notes are not posted – if you miss class, you are responsible for the material covered.**

### Cell Phones

Cell phones are to be turned off during class, please.

**Courtesy**

Courtesy is expected. Come to class on time and stay for the entire session. If you have an emergency and must come in late or early, please do so quietly. Be respectful of the instructor and classmates, do not be a distraction to others. Please familiarize yourself with the [Student Conduct Code](#).

**Course Withdrawal**

April 7 is the last day to drop classes with an add/drop form. After that date, no petitions to drop the course will be signed and no Incompletes will be given except in documentable emergency situations.

**Syllabus**

The instructor reserves the right to change the syllabus if necessary.

**Class Schedule**

| <b>Date</b>                             | <b>Topic</b>   | <b>Material Assigned</b> |
|---|--|--------------------------|
| Jan. 27                                 | Course Overview                                      |                          |
| Jan. 29                                 | Introduction   | Chapter 1                |
| Jan. 31-Feb. 3                          | The Scientific Method                                | Chapter 2                |
| Feb. 5-7                                | Ethical Issues                                       | Chapter 3                |
| Feb. 10-14                              | Observational Methods                                | Chapter 4                |
| <b>Monday, Feb. 17</b>                  | <b>No Class—President’s Day</b>                      |                          |
| Feb. 19-24                              | Survey Research                                      | Chapter 5                |
| Feb. 26                                 | Exam Review  |                          |
| <b>Friday, Feb. 28</b>                  | <b>EXAM 1</b>  | <b>Chapters 1-5</b>      |
| Monday, Mar. 3                          | Literature Review/Article Finding/Paper Requirements |                          |
| Mar. 3-7                                | Independent Group Designs                            | Chapter 6                |
| Mar. 10-14                              | Repeated Measures Designs                            | Chapter 7                |
| Mar. 17-21                              | Complex Designs                                      | Chapter 8                |
| Mar. 24-28                              | Single Subject/Small N Designs                       | Chapter 9                |
| Friday, Mar. 28                         | Assignment Due                                       |                          |
| <b>March 31 – April 4</b>               | <b>Spring Break</b>                                  |                          |
| Apr. 7                                  | Exam Review  |                          |
| <b>Wednesday, Apr. 9</b>                | <b>EXAM 2</b>  | <b>Chapters 6-9</b>      |
| Apr. 11-18                              | Quasi-Experimental Designs                           | Chapter 10               |
| Apr. 21-25                              | Data Analysis & Interpretation                       | Chapter 11               |
| Apr. 28-30                              | Data Analysis Part 2                                 | Chapter 12               |
| May 2                                   | Communication in Psychology                          | Chapter 13               |
| Monday, May 5                           | Exam Review  |                          |
| <b>Wednesday, May 7</b>                 | <b>EXAM 3</b>  | <b>Chapters 10-13</b>    |
| Friday, May 9                           | Review, Evaluations, Etc.                            |                          |
| <b>Friday, May 16<br/>(10:10-11:00)</b> | <b>Optional Cumulative FINAL EXAM</b>                | <b>Chapters 1-13</b>     |

### Potential Assignments

From this list of 3, please choose one assignment to complete. Independent of choice, your assignment is due FRIDAY, MARCH 28 AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS. Late assignments will be docked 10 points each day late, including weekends. No emailed submissions will be accepted. You must specify the number of the assignment you choose when you turn your paper in.

Assignments must be well-written and complete, as grading will depend on grammar, APA style (if appropriate) and general readability. Assignments should be between 2-5 pages in length, typed, double-spaced, no weird fonts or spacing and stapled. References must be from peer reviewed journals; newspapers, websites, magazine articles, and text books are not acceptable sources for an academic paper. As always, plagiarism will not be accepted, resulting in action from the Psychology department and earning an F for the assignment.

1. Write a proposal for a research study to examine a topic of interest to you. Be sure to include a brief literature review to introduce your topic, rationale for your study, research question, hypothesis, participants, methods, measures, and implications of your proposed research. You must complete a reference list in APA format.
2. Literature Review. Choose 4-6 scholarly articles on a research topic of your choice in Psychology and complete a mini literature review (you will learn how to do this in class). You must complete a reference list in APA format.
3. Research Detective. Take a "research finding" from the popular media (TV, internet, magazines, etc.), and trace it back to the original study. You must include all of the sources you find on your way to the original research. Write a brief summary of what you find and discuss whether the original research was accurately reported as it made its way to the popular press. Be sure to summarize the report you found in the popular press as well as the original research. Discuss whether the popular press report was accurate and then talk about the implications of the research and how it was reported. You must complete a reference list in APA format.
4. Research Critique. Find a research report of a study of interest from a psychology journal. Give a brief summary of the research presented and then critique the study and report. Be sure to address whether the literature review was complete, rationale was well developed, participants and how they were selected was appropriate, any issues with methods/procedures, any ethical concerns, and whether the conclusions drawn from the study were reasonable. You must provide a reference in APA format.
5. Choose your own assignment. Must be approved by the instructor. Assignments not previously approved will not be accepted.