

1-2014

## PSYX 120.50: Research Methods I

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## **PSYC 120: Introduction to Research Methods**

### **Autumn 2013, Section 50**

**Instructor: Brandon Rennie**

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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 basics 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*, 9<sup>th</sup> Edition.

### **Course Requirements**

#### **Exams**

There will be two non-cumulative exams in this course. Each exam is worth 75 points. The format of the exams will include 75 multiple-choice/true-false questions with each question being worth 1 point. 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, there will be either one or two discussion forums based on the week's readings. On the weeks for which there are two discussion forums, 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 Saturday. Students will be expected to make an original post and one reply (to another student's post) in each discussion forum. The weeks during which there is only one discussion, it will open on Monday and close on Saturday. You will be expected to make at least one original post (two is also acceptable) and replies such that you total four posts. THE SAME TIMELINE APPLIES, so that you need to post twice by mid-day Wednesday and twice again by Saturday at 10 PM. 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. Discussions are worth 15 points a week (either 10 for the first post, 5 for the second; or, 5 for the first post, 2.5 for the second).

## **Homework Assignments**

There will be three 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 two assignments you will be provided with an article and asked to address specific questions about the research study. The third 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 565 points. Points are awarded as follows:

<i>Participation</i> (Discussion Posts)	11 @ 15 points each (165 points)
<i>Quizzes</i>	11 @ 15 points each (165 points)
<i>Research Assignments</i>	2 @ 25 points each (85 points)
	1 @ 35 points
<i>Exams</i>	2 @ 75 points each (150 points)

565 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 – Jan. 27-Feb. 1	Syllabus, Attached Reading	Extra credit discussion – no quiz Introduction to online courses
Week 2 – Feb. 3-8	Chapter 1	Overview of psychological research
Week 3 – Feb. 10-15	Chapter 2	The scientific method
Week 4 – Feb. 17-22** (short week)	Chapter 4	Ethical issues in the conduct of psychological research <b>1<sup>st</sup> HW assignment due (2/21)</b>
Week 5 – Feb. 24-Mar. 1	Chapter 5	Observation
Week 6 – Mar. 3-8	Chapter 6	Relational research
Week 7 – Mar 10-15	<b>Midterm Week</b> – review past readings	<b>Midterm (3/14)</b>
Week 8 – Mar. 17-22	Chapter 7	Basics of experimentation
Week 9 – Mar. 24-29	Chapter 8	Validity and reliability
	SPRING BREAK!	
Week 10 – Apr. 7-12	Chapter 9	Experimental design <b>2<sup>nd</sup> HW assignment due (4/11)</b>
Week 11 – Apr. 14-19	Chapter 10	Complex design
Week 12 – Apr. 21-26**	Chapter 11	Small-n design
Week 13 – Apr. 28-May 3	Chapter 13	Interpreting research
Week 14 – May 5-10	None	Review and finish assignment <b>3<sup>rd</sup> HW assignment due (5/9)</b>
Week 15 – May 12-17	Finals week	<b>Final Exam (5/13)</b>