

1-2014

## PSYX 320.01: Research Methods III

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SYLLABUS

Instructor: Dr. Nabil Haddad, Skaggs Bldg. 371 ext. 4384  
nabil.haddad@umontana.edu  
Office Hours: TR noon-1:00pm, and by appointment  
Texts: 320 Manual (The Bookstore), and APA Publication Manual – 6<sup>th</sup> Edition  
Tests: None  
Assignments: Plenty  
TAs: Brook Clark and Miriam Rosebaker (Skaggs Bldg. 368, ext. 6514)  
[brook.clark@umontana.edu](mailto:brook.clark@umontana.edu) ; [Miriam.rosebaker@umontana.edu](mailto:Miriam.rosebaker@umontana.edu)

This course is intended to give you an appreciation for conducting research and to better prepare you for graduate work in Psychology. I have two general objectives that I hope you will be able to achieve upon completing this course. I hope that you will become better consumers of psychological research and that you will learn the basics of how to conduct psychological research. In order to accomplish these general objectives, you will be required to engage in every aspect of conducting research, from the library use to final writing of research reports. In addition, this is an Upper Division Writing Course; it is designed to train you to write in the discipline-specific APA style.

**SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES**

1. Learn how to use research resources in the library
2. Learn how to evaluate and synthesize published research reports
3. Learn how to use published works to better design your own experiment
4. Learn how to conduct experiments, collect the data, and analyze them
5. Learn how to write, in APA style, research reports and research proposals
6. Learn how to design your own research proposal

In order to accomplish these specific objectives, you will have to learn how to think as a researcher. This skill can best be learned by actually engaging in the enterprise itself, as opposed to reading about it. Therefore, you will be asked to do some homework, to conduct experiments in class and to write the "articles" describing them and, finally, to provide a prospectus for an experiment of your own design. Each assignment will be discussed in class before it is made. I will also explain how each assignment meets one or more of these objectives.

**Homework Assignments – 20 points each**

There will be a number of assignments in this course. They will cover library work, journal exposure, ethics, etc. These will be handed out to you at monthly intervals. Each will have a deadline which must be met. Late papers will cost you 10% of the grade for every day you're late. You will have at least a week to turn in each assignment. Therefore, no excuses for late work will be acceptable.

**In-class Experiments – 40 points each**

We will conduct a minimum of three experiments in class. Some will be designed ahead of time for you. Others will be the product of a class effort. In all cases, you will collect the data, analyze it and write a research article on that experiment. The article must conform to the APA format. Every step of this process will be fully explained in class before you embark on it and every step will be related back to the objectives listed above. For example, before the written paper is assigned, a minimum of two class periods will be spent on instructions on how to write in APA style and on exercises designed to illustrate such writing. Each article will be graded on a 40-point scale. After grading the first article, we will hold a writing workshop in class and will go over your product. You will have an opportunity to learn from

your own mistakes and to rewrite the article—if you wish. The higher grade will count for your grade in the course. After that, each write-up will be final, no workshop will be held, and you will be responsible for seeking individual help when needed. Your TAs and I are ready to go over your initial drafts and to help you with them. Please make good use of our office hours.

The 40 points will be assigned according to the following factors:

- a) Appropriate English usage - 10 points
- b) Development of ideas - 10 points
- c) APA format - 10 points
- d) Accuracy - 10 points

These factors will be addressed in class and during the workshop; we will define the criteria for grading each factor. The assignments listed earlier are designed to help you write better reports—as in the workshop. If you take them seriously and if you start reading research articles that you are personally interested in, you should perform well.

### **Prospectus – 80 points**

You are required to submit a proposed study at the end of the quarter. The topic can be derived from any psychological area of study. However, the study must be an experiment. It cannot be a correlational study or a survey. To aid you in designing an experiment, see the "proposal" section in the manual. It includes the following:

- a) Problem identification and hypothesis testing.
- b) Independent and dependent variables.

You will be required to fill out the proposal's worksheets and turn them in. You will also make an appointment to discuss your work on the project up to that time. No student will be allowed to turn in the final project without first accomplishing these preliminary tasks. I believe—strongly—that a structured approach to designing your experiment will benefit you more than worrying, panicking, procrastinating and attempting to get it down on paper at the last minute.

Finally, you will be assigned a time (15 minutes) during the last two weeks of the semester to present your proposal orally to the class as a whole. The proposal may be altered depending on the feedback you receive at that time from your colleagues in class. The final version will be due at noon of the second day of FINALS WEEK. Like all other assignments in this course, the deadline must be adhered to. Assignments and papers that are handed in late will be penalized at the rate of 10 percentage points per day of delay.

### **Course Grades:**

- A = 90% - 100%
- B = 80% - 89%
- C = 70% - 79%
- D = 60% - 69%
- F = 0 - 59%

- NOTES:**
1. Incompletes will be given in documentable emergency situations wherein the student cannot finish the course due to unforeseen and unavoidable situations beyond the student's control. Poor performance is not an acceptable reason for an Incomplete.
  2. Students with disabilities have the responsibility to declare their disability to the instructor at the beginning of the course if they require accommodations. Such students have the responsibility to arrange for such accommodations with DSS.