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Spring 1-2016

PSYX 120.50: Research Methods I

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PSYX 120 Online – Research Methods I

Instructor Information

Instructor: Zachary Ahlstrom

Email: Zachary.ahlstrom@umontana.edu

Office hours: by appointment

Required Textbook

Shaughnessy, J.J., Zechmeister, E.B., Zechmeister, J.S. (2012). *Research Methods in Psychology, 9th Edition*. McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc.

Course Objectives

1. Provide an overview of behavioral research methods
2. Expose students to behavioral research methodologies
3. Learn how to become a critical consumers of research in psychology
4. Gain insight into the process of designing behavioral research
5. Become familiar with behavioral research literature

Course Requirements

Quizzes

There will be a total of 13 quizzes throughout the semester.

Quiz format: 30 questions, including multiple and true/false questions; 30 points for each quiz.

Each quiz will open on Monday at 12am and close on Friday at 11:55pm. You will have 45 minutes to complete each quiz. You are given only 1 attempt for each quiz, so read the chapter and assigned readings ahead of time. Each quiz will cover one chapter from your textbook and assigned readings for the week. Additional readings will be available under the corresponding week on Moodle.

Lab Assignments

You will have a total of four labs due throughout the semester. The labs will incorporate material you have learned so far in the course and apply it through critical analysis and understanding of methodologies in psychological research. More detail about each lab will be given in Moodle. Please read the instructions carefully. Each lab is worth 55 points.

Discussion Forums

Every week, you will be expected to post one original discussion topic about the readings for that week. You will also be expected to post three replies to other people's topics. The only exception is spring break and finals week; you do not need to post during these weeks. Each discussion forum will open on Monday at 12am and close on Friday at 11:55pm. You must post your topic and replies during this allotted time in order to earn credit.

These discussion forums are designed to facilitate a discussion among your peers in order to assist and enhance your knowledge of research methodology in psychology. Consider these discussion forums your “attendance” in this course.

Your instructor reserves the right to not give you credit for unsatisfactory posts. An example of an unsatisfactory post would be “I agree” or “That’s interesting”. Your topics should ask open ended and thought-provoking questions that allow other students to respond. Your replies should be detailed enough for someone to read and gain further insight into your thoughts and reasoning.

Your discussion posts will be graded on 2 criteria: attendance and quality

Attendance: You must post *a minimum of 3 separate days*. This means that you cannot earn full credit for your discussion forums if you wait until Friday to post a discussion topic and 3 replies! You will earn 10 points for each day you post, for a total of 30 points on your discussion forums (topics and replies).

Quality: You will also be graded on the quality of your posts. Points will be deducted from your attendance grade for the following reasons:

- Demonstrating lack of knowledge for the week’s material
- Posts that ramble on about without a clear point
- Referencing unfounded information as if it were fact
- Posts that are so short that they provide little to no enhancement to the discussion
- Typos and grammatical errors

Special Note: 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 flaming behavior in the posts, you will get a zero for the entire assignment.

Each of these reasons for point deduction can be committed to a different degree. For example, a post that clearly shows that you haven’t read any of the material for the week, then rambles on about an off-topic idea that doesn’t relate to the course material will lose many points (about 20 points lost). On the other hand, a post that demonstrates that you have read the material and are providing thoughtful material, but includes a few typos will lose very few points (1-4 points, depending on how many typos).

A post that will earn full credit will include the following:

- Demonstrate complete mastery of the material
- Incorporate multiple viewpoints
- Show analysis and reflection on other’s posts
- Provide evidence that you read the material or other’s posts, offering interesting and thoughtful interpretations
- Knowledge of the facts is evident and you can apply them to real life scenarios
- you can handle and understand the conceptual ideas

As a general guideline, your topic should be roughly 2 -3 paragraphs. You will not be graded based on this length, but it is unlikely that you can earn full credit with less than that. Your replies should be about 1 to 2 paragraphs in order to incorporate evidence that you have read the topic, and then relay interpretations and insights of that topic.

Course Grading

Quizzes (30 points each): 390 points

Discussion forums (30 points each): 390 points

Lab Assignments (55 points each): 220 points

Total: 1000 total points

Grades will be assigned using the adjacent performance criteria for all exams and final course grade. I will NOT be using the “+/-” grading system. All grades of “Incomplete” will adhere strictly to university [Academic Policies and Procedures](#).

Grade scale

Grade	Total points
A	900-1000
B	800-899
C	700-799
D	600-699
F	Below 600

Course Guidelines and Policies

General Behavior

As a university student, certain behavior is expected of you. Most importantly, it is your responsibility to meet the requirements of this course.

Students must engage in proper “netiquette.” Netiquette or “network etiquette” is a professional and mannerly way of communicating with others in the online medium. Failure to engage in proper netiquette will result in earning a zero for each assignment where an incident has occurred.

Electronic Devices

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: I do not allow technical issues for not having the proper software as reasons for late or incomplete work. To ensure your protection, please keep technical support contact information available offline and please do not wait until the last minute to complete your work each week! To access technical support (and save their contact information offline) please click on the “Tech Support” link to the left of the page.

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.

Academic Misconduct and Plagiarism

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. The Code is available for review online at [Student Conduct Code](#).

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.

Dropping/Adding/Changing grade option

Please refer to the Registrar's [Drop/Add Policy](#) and the [Official Dates & Deadlines Calendar](#) for all questions related to dropping or adding or changing grade option for a course.

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 may 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.

Tentative Course Schedule

DATES	MATERIAL	MATERIAL DUE
Jan 25 – 29 Part 1: General Issues	Syllabus Chapter 1 Introduction	1 post, 3 replies Quiz 1
Feb 1 – 5 Part 1: General Issues	Chapter 2 The Scientific Method	1post, 3 replies, Quiz 2
Feb 8 – 12 Part 1: General Issues	Chapter 3 Ethical Issues in the Conduct of Psychological Research	1 post, 3 replies Quiz 3, Lab #1
Feb 15 – 19 Part 2: Descriptive Methods	Chapter 4 Observation	1 post, 3 replies Quiz 4
Feb 29 – Mar 4 Part 2: Descriptive Methods	Chapter 5 Survey Research	1 post, 3 replies Quiz 5
Mar 7 – 11 Part 3: Experimental Methods	Chapter 6 Independent Group Designs	1 post, 3 replies Quiz 6
Mar 14 – 18 Part 3: Experimental Methods	Chapter 7 Repeated Measures	1 post, 3 replies Quiz 7, Lab #2
Mar 21 – 25 Part 3: Experimental Methods	Chapter 8 Complex Designs	1 post, 3 replies Quiz 8
Mar 28 – Apr 1 Part 3: Experimental Methods	Chapter 9 Single-Case Designs and Small – n Research	1 post, 3 replies Quiz 9
Apr 4 – 8	Spring Break! Enjoy your break!	Nothing Due

DATES	MATERIAL	MATERIAL DUE
Apr 11 – 15 Part 4: Applied Research	Chapter 10 Quasi-Experimental Designs and Program Evaluation	1 post, 3 replies Quiz 10
Apr 18 – 22 Part 5: Analyzing and Reporting Research	Chapter 11 Data Analysis and Interpretation: Describing Data, Confidence Intervals, Correlation	1 post, 3 replies Quiz 11, Lab #3
Apr 25 – 29 Part 5: Analyzing and Reporting Research	Chapter 12 Data Analysis and Interpretation: Tests of Statistical Significance and the Analysis Story	1 post, 3 replies Quiz 12
May 2 – 6 Part 5: Analyzing and Reporting Research	Chapter 13 Communication in Psychology	1 post, 3 replies Quiz 13
May 9 – 13	Finals Week	Lab #4