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PSYX 120.01: Research Methods I

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Psychology 120 (Section 1)—Research Methods I

Spring 2018

Course Location and Time

Monday, Wednesday, Friday 11:00 to 11:50am
ED 312

Instructor Information

Instructor: Nicole McCray, Ph.D.

Office: Skaggs Bldg. 203

Email: nicole.mccray@umontana.edu (the best way to contact me)

Office hours: Monday, Wednesday, Friday 12:00 to 1:00 and by appointment

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 develop the skills to understand and apply the basics of research design. You will learn how to read and mostly comprehend a research study. You will also learn to write about research. Another important goal of the course is to learn to become critical consumers of research. Specific topics to be covered include the foundations of research, ethics, 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 or university sanctioned activity) but there will be a variety of opportunities to earn these points. If you need to make up an assignment, you must let me know immediately and you must complete the work within one week after the missed assignment was due (unless an illness/emergency prevents you from doing so).

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/Laptops

Cell phones are to be turned off during class, please. You are welcome to use your laptop to take notes; other activities can pose a distraction to your classmates – please refrain from using laptops for anything other than note taking/class activities.

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

Apr. 2 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

Date	Topic	Material Assigned
Jan. 22	Course Overview	
Jan. 24	Introduction	Chapter 1
Jan. 26	The Scientific Method	Chapter 2
Jan. 29 – Feb. 2	Ethical Issues	Chapter 3
Feb. 5-9	Observational Methods	Chapter 4
Feb. 12-16	Survey Research	Chapter 5
Monday, Feb. 19	No Class – President’s Day	
Feb. 21	Exam Review	
Friday, Feb. 23	EXAM 1	Chapters 1-5
Monday, Feb. 26	Literature Review/Article Finding/Papers	
Feb. 28 - Mar. 5	Independent Group Designs	Chapter 6
Mar. 7	Repeated Measures Designs	Chapter 7
Friday, Mar. 9	No Class – Help with papers in Nicole’s office	
Mar. 12-16	Complex Designs	Chapter 8
Friday, Mar. 16	Assignment due at the start of class	
Mar. 19-21	Single Subject/Small N Designs	Chapter 9
Mar. 23	The replication problem	
Mar. 26-30	No Class -- Spring Break	
Apr. 2	Exam Review	
Wednesday, Apr. 4	Exam 2	Chapters 6-9
Apr. 6-11	Quasi-Experimental Designs	Chapter 10
Apr. 13-18	Data Analysis & Interpretation	Chapter 11
Apr. 20-25	Data Analysis & Interpretation II	Chapter 12
Apr. 27	Communication in Psychology	
Apr. 30	Exam Review	
Wednesday, May 2	EXAM 3	Chapters 10-13
May 4	Review, Evaluations, Etc.	

Date	Topic	Material Assigned
Thursday, May 10 @ 10:10	Optional Cumulative FINAL EXAM	Chapters 1-13

Potential Assignments

From this list of 3, please choose one assignment to complete. Independent of choice, your assignment is due FRIDAY MARCH 16 AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS. Late assignments will be docked 10 points each day late, including weekends. No emailed submissions will be accepted without permission of the instructor. 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. **Assignments exceeding 5 pages will be docked 5 points (excluding title page and references).** 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.