

PSYC 3141
Research Methods in Psychology
Janice H. Kennedy, Ph.D.
Spring, 2004
2261 Carroll Building
9:00 - 9:50 MWF
9:00 – 10:50 Th (Lab)

OFFICE: 1060A Carroll Building
OFFICE HOURS: 10:00 - 11:00 MTW; 8:30 – 9:00 Th and by appointment
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TEXTS:

Myers, A., & Hansen, C. (2002). *Experimental psychology* (5th ed.). New York: Wadsworth.

Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (4th ed.). (1994). Washington, D. C.: American Psychological Association.

A grade of "C" in PSYC 3131 is a prerequisite for this course. I assume that you have a working knowledge of statistics and the computer software to run basic analyses. A grade of "C" in this course is required to take PSYC 4143 (Senior Research).

COURSE DESCRIPTION: This course provides a general introduction to research methodology in psychology. Goals are to provide a foundation for: (1) understanding the fundamental considerations which must precede research; (2) developing experimental designs; (3) conducting research; (4) establishing the means by which to draw conclusions and make generalizations from research studies; and (5) communicating research findings to others. We will work toward these goals both through readings/lectures about research and through performing experiments ourselves.

Few psychology majors go on to become experimental psychologists, but all of you will be consumers of psychological research, even if only through reports in newspapers and magazines. In this course, you will learn how to evaluate the claims and uses of psychological research.

TESTS: Two tests will be given (see attached schedule for dates), each accounting for 20% of your grade. These tests may consist of multiple choice, fill in the blank, short answer, and/or essay questions. Each exam is worth 100 points. Makeup exams will be given only in the direst of circumstances and only on makeup day (the last day of the semester). Exams may include

assigned material not explicitly covered in class, as well as lecture material not covered in the text or readings.

RESEARCH PAPER: An original research project is required, accounting for 30% of your final grade. The goal of this project is to allow you to apply principles of experimental methods as you are learning about them. Specific components of the project are due as follows:

- a. Research idea due February 16. This should consist of a brief summary of your research question, why you believe it to be an important one, evidence of supporting literature (previous studies) for your question, and participants and procedures you are going to use. 2-3 pages, typed. 5% of research paper grade.
- b. Research proposal due March 22. This should consist of your review of relevant literature and a description of your proposed participants, materials, and procedures, written in APA style. (We will discuss this in class and labs.) A well written proposal will mean few revisions in your final paper. 12-18 typed pages. 25% of research paper grade.
- c. Research paper due April 26. This includes your edited proposal and your results and discussion sections of your paper. Turn in all xeroxed articles and notes taken from references in preparing your paper, arranged in alphabetical order. Also turn in your rough drafts that were submitted earlier and returned to you. 20-35 typed pages in APA style. 70% of research paper grade.

POSTER PRESENTATION: This is a concise presentation of your research project in a pleasing visual format that gives you a chance to explain your study and findings to interested others. 10% of your grade. Wednesday, April 28.

In addition to the specific components of your research project outlined above, I will periodically ask you to share your progress with me and with your peers, usually in labs.

Conducting a research study requires individuals to participate as subjects. Thus, one requirement of the course is to participate in studies conducted by other Research Methods students for a total of 3 hours (6 one-half hour slots) during the semester. This is required so that everyone will be able to conduct a research study. You may select the studies in which you want to participate. Studies beyond the required 3 hours can earn extra credit, if you so choose.

Cases of academic dishonesty are dealt with according to policies outlined in the student handbook. Academic dishonesty will result in a grade of "0" for the assignment and for the course. Academic dishonesty involves representing any work turned in (whether tests, labs, papers, etc.) completed in any part by others as your own. You are expected to work independently on labs and your research project without assistance from classmates unless approved by me. Plagiarism and appropriate citation methods will be discussed in class and described in handouts. Also, see the Georgia Southern student handbook for a discussion of

plagiarism.

LABORATORY: We will meet two hours per week for practical application of experimental methods. Your lab attendance is required for each session. No make-up labs will be offered. Two points can be accrued by participation in lab activities, which will constitute part of each test grade.

Approximately five written assignments will be required in labs, which will account for 20% of your final grade. To complete the lab assignment, you must be present for the appropriate lab. You should make an extra copy of your lab report before submission.

WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS: *All* assignments (sections of research paper submissions and lab assignments) are due by the beginning of class on the due date, unless otherwise stated. A penalty of 10% per day will be incurred for late papers. All papers must be typed and *stapled* in the upper left-hand corner.

GRADES: The grade you earn depends on the number of points you accumulate on the two exams, labs, research paper, and poster presentation.

Summarizing the above, proportions of your grade are computed as follows:

<u>Assignment</u>	<u>% of Grade</u>	<u>My Grade</u>
Test 1	20%	_____
Test 2	20%	_____
Research Paper	30%	_____
Labs	20%	_____
Poster	10%	_____

Grades are assigned as follows:

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Average Points</u>
A	90-100
B	80-89
C	70-79
D	60-69
F	Below 60

*Note that if you are a psychology major, you must have a "C" in this course to meet departmental requirements for graduation and to take Senior Research.

CLASS STRUCTURE/ATTENDANCE POLICY: Class time will be spent primarily with lectures, practical exercises, and demonstrations. I welcome your questions and relevant contributions to class discussions.

You are expected to attend class each day. You are, of course, responsible for announcements and lecture material covered during your absence from class.

ADMINISTRIVIA: This is a very labor-intensive course for both you and for me. I generally have more contacts with students outside of class in this course than in any other course. As you may or may not know, faculty do many other things beside teach classes. We usually conduct our own research, supervise students who work in our labs, supervise individual student projects at both the graduate and undergraduate level, and do much committee work. Therefore, we have to be really organized—just like you—to get everything done. Although I want to help you to succeed in this class in any way that I can, I want to establish some guidelines for help outside of class. I will be happy to discuss questions related to the course during my office hours. If you are not free during my office hours, we can schedule a meeting at a mutually convenient time. Generally, when my office door is open, I am happy to see you. However, when my door is closed, it is a signal that I prefer not to be disturbed or am not in. I would especially appreciate not being interrupted during the half-hour before a class when I am reviewing my notes and getting ready for class. After class is a good time for short meetings, or you can always e-mail me for any questions that you may have.

Note that I expect your attendance in class every day. If you are unable to be present, then I expect you to check with another student to determine what you have missed in class. I cannot meet with you individually in lieu of your attending class.

COURSE SCHEDULE AND READING ASSIGNMENTS

<u>Week</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Reading Assignment</u>
<i>January</i>		
5	Introduction to Course Experimental Psychology and the Scientific Method	Ch. 1
12	Research Ethics Alternatives to Experimentation: Nonexperimental Designs	Ch. 2 Ch. 3
19	MLK Day Alternatives to Experimentation: Correlational and Quasi-Experimental Designs	Ch. 4
26	Formulating the Hypothesis Test 1 (Thursday, January 29)	Ch. 5
<i>February</i>		
2	The Basics of Experimentation	Ch. 6
9	Solving Problems: Controlling Extraneous Variables	Ch. 7
16	Research Idea Due Basic Between-Subjects Designs	Ch. 8
23	Between-Subjects Factorial Designs	Ch. 9
<i>March</i>		
1	Last Day to Withdraw without Academic Penalty Within-Subjects Designs Test 2 (Thursday, March 4)	Ch. 10
8	Research Proposal Preparation	
15	Spring Break	

22 **Research Proposal Due**
Peer Review
Administrative Details for Running your Study
Pilot Data Collection

29 Data Collection

April

5 Data Collection

12 Distribution of Research Credits (Monday)
Stats Consultation

19 Paper Rough Drafts

26 Last Day of Class
Research Paper Due
Preparation for Poster Session
Make-Up Exam, 10:00 a.m.

28 **Final exam** (Wednesday, 7:30 – 9:30)

How to Do Well in This Course

1. As an upper-level psychology major, you are expected to take a major share of the responsibility for your success in this course. You have the responsibility for:
 - a. keeping up with your readings and with activities involving your research project;
 - b. becoming familiar with all handouts and instructions;
 - c. completing assignments as specified and on time;
 - d. asking for clarification if assignments are unclear.

2. Be on time for class. Important announcements are generally made at the beginning of class. Moreover, it's often difficult to know what's going on if you miss the first few minutes of a lecture. Coming in late is disruptive to my concentration and that of your classmates.

3. Read each chapter (at least skim it) before relevant lectures. This will make the lectures more meaningful and will allow you to know whether the topic is addressed in the text. I assume when I lecture that you have read the assigned readings. Then, after the relevant lectures, read the assignment carefully, and highlight. It is crucial that you keep up with your readings. Since you have only a few tests, an exam can be overwhelming if you have not kept up with your reading assignments.

4. In lectures and discussions, try to get actively involved. Don't simply copy down what I write on the board; try to put the information into your own words. Your active involvement in class discussions will help to make the class more interesting to you, especially if you have read relevant sections of the text, and will make the information more meaningful.

5. The same day as the lecture, go over your notes. Either rewrite them, type them, or simply read them again. This will allow you to make sure that they are legible and make sense while the information is still fresh.

6. The tests generally are made up of about 50% information from lectures and 50% from your text. Therefore, it is imperative that you study both.

7. Be sure that you can apply the concepts that you are learning about. Practice thinking up examples that illustrate the concepts. Do the exercises at the end of each chapter.

8. Since tests depend heavily upon notes, you must come to class every day if you expect to do well on tests.

9. Know that your library research, lab reports, written work, and typing will take at least twice the time that you think it will. Some students can complete a given lab in two hours; other students have reported to me that it may take them four hours to do the same lab. It depends on how easily writing comes to you, your prior exposure to APA style, and even your typing ability. And plan ahead for mishaps! I have heard many sad stories about computer viruses, disappearing files, uncooperative printers, and power failures.

10. After you have written each research report, read over it again. Many "A" papers become "B" papers because of misspelled words, awkward sentence construction, or careless mistakes. Correct these simple problems to make it an "outstanding" paper.

11. Make sure that everything you write is either your own idea, someone else's idea but in your own words and appropriately cited, or in quotation marks and appropriately cited. Papers are individual projects unless student collaboration is explicitly allowed.