

Psychology 207: Research Methods

Fall 2019

TR 3:30-4:45pm, ISE 207

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Office Hrs: Tuesdays 1:00-3:00pm or by appointment
Location: 109 Wolf Hall

Textbook: Morling, B. (2018). *Research methods in psychology: Evaluating a world of information*. 3rd Edition. New York: W.W. Norton.

Clickers: We will use iClickers in the class. It is your responsibility to register your clicker and bring it to class. You will not get credit for clicker questions if you do not bring it to class. See me if you are unfamiliar with iClickers.

Goals of the Course:

How can we understand human behavior, satisfy our curiosity about ourselves and other people, and better understand research reported in the media? The purpose of this class is to introduce you to research methodology, a critical thinking subject matter that builds your skills as a producer and consumer of research. This course will focus on the major research methods used in *psychological research*, although these same methods are used in many other fields, including sociology, political science, and communications. Psychological research is based on scientific evidence, and it relies on many tools developed to help us answer research questions and refute misunderstandings and myths along the way. This course is about understanding and employing those tools to make us better producers of behavioral research and also become a better consumer of research in your daily life.

All assignments are designed to maximize your achievement of the following learning goals. By engaging fully in these activities, by the end of the semester you will be able to:

- Understand the scientific method
- Properly evaluate original psychological research reports and statements from the media
- Identify research claims from both original and media sources and classify them as Frequency, Association, or Causal claims
- Effectively design a basic study to answer a question you are interested in, including constructing a research hypothesis and selecting participants for a study
- Discriminate between experimental, quasi-experimental, and non-experimental studies, and explain which claims (Frequency, Association, or Causal) each kind of study can support
- Understand validity (specifically construct, internal, external, and statistical validity)
- Describe the basic ethical guidelines that apply to research in psychology

Elements of Your Grade:

Grades in this course will be based on your performance on exams, in-class activities, and HW assignments. Good performance on each assignment and exam is important to your overall success in this course. **Final grades** are non-negotiable and are based on your total (non-

rounded) percentage points in the class. Grade changes will be made only to correct clerical errors. Make sure you calculate your grade in the class early to avoid any surprises. Your *total points* will be based on the following components:

Exam #1	25%
Exam #2	25%
Exam #3	25%
In-class activities	5%
HW assignments	20%
Optional final project	Replaces 10% of HW grade or 15% of lowest exam score (see below for details)

Grading cutoffs:

A	93%	C	73%
A-	90%	C-	70% (Note: You need at least a C- for the major)
B+	88%	D+	68%
B	83%	D	63%
B-	80%	D-	60%
C+	78%		

In-Class Activities

5% of your grade will be based on in-class activities, either via short written responses or iClicker questions. The in-class activities will be used as participation points only and *will not be graded*. The dates of these activities are not listed on the syllabus – it is your responsibility to attend class and complete the activities. Every student is allowed 2 missed in-class activities with no penalty. Otherwise, if you miss a class due to a personal emergency, you must inform me *prior to, or within one day*, of the missed class and provide a *university approved excused absence*. Failure to notify me about a missed class will result in a missed participation point.

HW Assignments

10% percent of your grade will be based on homework assignments that will be completed outside of class. All HW assignments will be submitted via Canvas. Late assignments will be graded (up to 3 days late), and then the grade will be reduced by 10% for every day it was late (e.g., a 10 will automatically be reduced to a 9 if it was 1 day late) → submitting any time after the deadline automatically counts as at least a single day late. Note that the grade reduction will not happen immediately – when you initially submit your late assignment you will see your full grade. Within the next week, your grade will be reduced as per the late penalty.

Exams:

There will be 3 closed-book, closed-note exams. All exams will be multiple-choice, potentially with a few short answer questions. Exam 1 and Exam 2 will not be cumulative. Exam 3 will partially be cumulative; details about what will be covered on Exam 3 will be

discussed in class.

Makeup Exams: Makeup exams will only be provided in the case of a documented emergency. Makeup exams will not be provided for any other reason. Before scheduling a makeup exam, you must provide *written documentation (e.g., a doctors note)* and this documentation must be approved by me. Makeup exams may take an alternative form to that taken by the rest of the class (e.g., essay exam).

Optional Final Project

You will have the option of completing a final project if you would like to improve your grade. The final project involves designing a study, answering a series of questions, and writing a final report. Your final project will be submitted via Canvas by Thursday 11/21. Since this is an optional assignment, late projects will not be accepted under any circumstances.

I will answer specific questions about your final project, but I will not read entire sections or drafts. The final project is lengthy, so if you use this option, make sure you start well before the deadline! Students in the past have done really well on this project, but it requires time and effort.

If you choose to do the final project, you have the option of using it in two ways. (1) You can replace 10% of your HW grade. This is a good option if you are not happy with your HW grade; using this option, your HW assignments will be worth 10% less of your final grade; and thus will have a smaller impact. (2) You can alternatively replace 15% of your lowest exam score. This is a good option if you are not happy with one of your exam scores; using this option, that exam will be worth 15% less of your final grade, and thus will have a smaller impact. The final project is completely optional. When you turn in the assignment, you should indicate whether you are using option 1 (replace partial HW score) or 2 (replace partial exam score).

Submissions on Canvas

You are responsible for submitting your own assignments. Anytime you submit an assignment on Canvas, you should double check to make sure the assignment is showing as “submitted” on your account; you need to be 100% positive that your assignment submitted properly.

Re-Grading Policy

You have a maximum of 2 weeks after receiving your grade to contest your grade for any assignment. It is your responsibility to request re-grading if you are interested. All re-grading requests must be in writing and must be accompanied by a justification of why you want your assignment re-graded and why you deserve a different grade. Be specific, because your justification really matters. Note that re-grading can result in either improving or reducing your grade. You will receive the new grade, even if it is lower than the original grade.

Additional info for exams: You will have a separate sheet of paper at each exam to write down and explain anything you feel is ambiguous on the exam (for example, you think two answers are accurate but you can only choose one), or if you want to justify your answer for

any reason. You must turn this sheet in at the end of the exam. You will largely only be able to contest the answer for the specific questions that you discussed on this sheet.

How to Succeed in this Class

I want everyone to succeed in this class! My goal is to help everyone earn the best grade possible, but I need your commitment to work hard as well. *Memorization of the material is not enough to get an A!* You must be able to apply what you learned to real study examples. If you are struggling with the material or if you are not sure how to apply what you are learning, it is your responsibility to see me early on. I have some great study tips, but I can only help you improve if you let me know that you want help!

Email Policy

I will respond to emails from students once per day, so you may not hear back from me for up to 24 hours. Emails about exam preparation must be sent by 5pm the night before each exam. Emails sent after that deadline will be disregarded. I will only respond to very specific questions about course content; broader questions are best addressed in-person. There is also a section on Canvas to post anonymous questions that I will address in the next class.

Academic Integrity:

Academic dishonesty is unacceptable under all circumstances. All work in this class is to be your own unless otherwise specified. You are responsible for keeping drafts and backup copies of your written assignments, to turn in upon my request until final grades are completed. If I discover that you have copied all or part of an exam or written assignment from another source (including another student, a web page, a textbook, or other published source), you will be reported to the Office of Student Conduct for disciplinary action (I usually recommend an F grade in the course). To avoid plagiarizing, you must educate yourself about appropriate citation procedures and follow them carefully. When in doubt, ask. Please do not put your college career at risk!

Social Justice Statement and Students with Disabilities:

Our University does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, age, disability, veterans status, religion, sexual orientation, or national origin. I agree with that commitment and expect to maintain a positive learning environment based upon open communication, mutual respect, and non-discrimination. I truly want everyone to feel comfortable, so let me know if you feel that the class is non-inclusive in any way.

If you need special academic accommodations due to a documented physical or sensory disability, please contact the Office of Disability Support Services at www.udel.edu/DSS/ during the first two weeks of class. The office provides academic support services to eligible students with temporary and permanent disabilities.

Lecture Schedule, Reading Assignments, HW Assignments

Class	Day	Date	Topic	Reading	Homework
1	T	8/27	The Science of Psychology - Part 1	Pages 25-41	
2	R	8/29	The Science of Psychology - Part 2	Chapter 1 – all	HW 1 Due
3	T	9/3	The Science of Psychology - Part 3	Pages 42-52	
4	R	9/5	Variable Measurement	Pages 117-125, 139-144	
5	T	9/10	Participant Selection	Chapter 7 - all	HW 2 Due
6	R	9/12	Ethics in Psychological Research	Chapter 4 - all	
7	T	9/17	3 Research Claims and Study Design Overview	Pages 61-68	HW 3 Due Extra credit HW Due
8	R	9/19	Review for Exam #1	N/A	
9	T	9/24	EXAM #1	N/A	
10	R	9/26	4 Study Validities and Threats to External Validity	Pages 68-82	
11	T	10/1	Experimental Designs - Part 1 (Basics)	Pages 273-280 (top)	HW 4 Due
12	R	10/3	Experimental Designs - Part 2 (Internal Validity)	N/A	
13	T	10/8	Experimental Designs - Part 3 (Internal Validity)	Chapter 11 - all	

14	R	10/10	Experimental Designs - Part 4 (Factorial)	Pages 295-302	HW 5 Due
15	T	10/15	Experimental Designs - Part 5 (Factorial)	Chapter 12 - all	
16	R	10/17	Experimental Designs - 4 Study Validities and Practice	N/A	HW 6 Due
17	T	10/22	Review for Exam #2	N/A	
18	R	10/24	EXAM #2	N/A	
19	T	10/29	Non-Experiments - Cross-Sectional Designs	Chapter 8 - all	
20	R	10/31	Class Cancelled - Halloween		
21	T	11/5	Non-Experiments - Developmental Designs	Pages 239-242	HW 7 Due
22	R	11/7	Quasi-Experimental Designs	Pages 389-406	
23	T	11/12	Non-Experiments and Quasi-Experiments - 4 Study Validities and Practice	N/A	HW 8 Due
24	R	11/14	Bringing it all Together		
25	T	11/19	Review for Exam #3	N/A	
26	R	11/21	EXAM #3	N/A	*Optional final project due*
27	T	11/26	No Class - Thanksgiving Break		

28	R	11/28	No Class - Thanksgiving Break		
29	T	12/3	Class Cancelled		
30	R	12/5	Class Cancelled		

*Schedule and readings subject to change

*Chapter 14 is not officially assigned, but we will learn material from that chapter throughout the semester. This chapter is a good resource for extra learning about different topics, so keep it on your radar.