

Psychology 207: Research Methods
Syllabus, Fall Semester, 2012
University of Delaware
Section 015, Meets in MKL 061

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Dr. Vickery's office hours: Tuesday and Thursday, 10:30a-11:30a

Appointments outside of office must be made two days in advance.

Course Description and Aims

How can we better understand human behavior, in order to satisfy curiosity about ourselves, make the most of our lives, and progress toward a happier and more productive future? Modern psychology is based on logic applied to measured observations and evidence, and it relies on many tools developed to ensure that we get closer to understanding reality over time, and expunge misconceptions and myths along the way. This course is about understanding and employing those tools to make us better consumers and producers of psychological research.

The fundamental goals of this course are to teach you how to:

- 1.) Evaluate original psychological research reports.
- 2.) Apply research methods and design experiments to answer questions about psychology.
- 3.) Properly evaluate second-hand reports of psychological research, including popular press and academic review articles.
- 4.) Communicate ideas, methods, and findings.

In support of these goals, by the end of this course you should be able to:

- Understand, identify, and discriminate between different types of inference frequently made in psychological research (frequency, association, and causal claims).
- Understand validity (in particular construct, internal, external, and statistical validity) and apply these concepts to evaluate various claims.
- Understand issues that affect the reliability, generalizability, and replicability of psychological research.
- Articulate and apply ethical guidelines to psychological research. Identify when those guidelines may have been violated and know how to follow guidelines.
- Use practical knowledge essential to psychological science, such as searching literature using PsycINFO, Pubmed, Scopus, and other literature search engines, and using APA style to write and cite research papers.

Texts

Morling, B. (2012). *Research methods in psychology: Evaluating a world of information*. New York: W.W. Norton.

* Additional reading assignments may be assigned via Sakai and/or Library

Assignments

1. *Sakai* : The course will be managed regularly with help from Sakai. (<http://sakai.udel.edu/portal>). The syllabus, lecture slides, and assignment details will be posted, along with important news, announcements, and any changes to assignments or the syllabus. You are expected to check this site regularly.
2. *Groups*. You will be assigned to groups of five people. Together, you will complete the group popular press project (see e, below). I would also like you to sit together during class. During many classes you will work together as a group to answer discussion questions.
3. *Exams*. There are a total of four exams (three in-class exams plus a final). The exams will consist of multiple-choice and short answer questions. The multiple-choice questions may come from either the book or material not in the book that is covered in lecture. The short-answer questions will usually be patterned after problems that we will work in class through discussions and group work. The first three exams are in-class. Each exam is worth 100 points. **Your lowest of the first three exams will be dropped. The final exam is NOT optional and may NOT be dropped.** Bring pencils and erasers to exams.
4. *Quizzes and homeworks*. On most Tuesday classes (noted on syllabus), you will be required either to take an in-class quiz or to turn in a homework assignment by the beginning of class. There will be 13 such quizzes / assignments. In the prior class (usually a Thursday) you will be told whether to expect a quiz or be given an assignment. Quizzes will normally precede lectures on the quizzed chapter. Thus, you should stay ahead of the lectures by reading the chapter that will be covered before that class. **Your best 10 of these assignments or quizzes will be counted towards your final grade. Missed quizzes or assignments will be graded as a 0. Quizzes and assignments may not be made up or turned in late.** Bring at least a pen or pencil and paper to class for quizzes and group work.
5. *Popular press project*. This project will involve working in groups of 5 people to produce a report about a popular press article describing psychological research. Details will be discussed in class and posted on Sakai. **Your entire group will share the grade for this, and it will be worth 5% of your final grade.**
6. *Evaluate & Design Project*. This is a major assignment involving several steps, to be completed by individuals. It involves finding and evaluating basic research articles, and then designing a new study that extends and/or improves upon the studies reported in the original articles. Details will be discussed in class and posted on Sakai. **This project will be worth 25% of your final grade, and thus it is even more important to your grade than the final exam.**
7. *Extra credit?* Extra credit assignments may occasionally be given at the instructor's discretion. These will likely involve homework assignments and additional (Thursday) quizzes. You will have to attend class in order to take advantage of these opportunities.

Attendance and Participation

Attendance is required. Attendance will not be explicitly monitored, but failing to attend will put you at a serious disadvantage. First, quizzes will be administered in-class and may not be made up for any reason. Second, a significant portion of this class will involve active discussion and working in groups during class to solve problems. These are exactly the sorts of problems that will be included on the tests, so the best way to prepare for tests is to attend class. Third, all extra credit assignments will require Thursday attendance. Finally, you are responsible on the tests for anything in the readings **as well as** anything that is said in class, whether or not it appears on a slide. Just because it does not appear on a lecture slide does not mean it won't appear on a test.

Grading breakdown

Best two of exams 1-3	(200 pts) 40%
	(each of exams 1-3 is 100 points / 20%, best 2 counted)
Final Exam	(100 pts) 20%
Quizzes + Homework	(50 pts) 10% (each is 5 pts, best 10 counted)
Popular Press Project	(25 pts) 5% [Group grade]
Evaluate & Design Project	(125 pts) 25% [Individual work]

Grading cutoffs:

A	93%	C	73%
A-	90%	C-	70%
B+	88%	D+	68%
B	83%	D	63%
B-	80%	D-	60%
C+	78%		

Professionalism

1. Please don't arrive late or leave early unless absolutely necessary. If you do either, please do so quietly and minimize disruption to class.
2. Turn off your cell phones.
3. Computers or tablets are acceptable for taking notes or working on in-class assignments, only. Please close email, chat windows, web browsers, social networking, games, etc. during class.
4. Stay on topic during group work.

Emailing the professor

- I will respond only to non-anonymous emails that include [PSYC207] in the subject line, are respectful, and coherent.
- I will be happy to respond to procedural or administrative questions by email *as long as the question is not answered by the syllabus or assignment documents*. I am likely just to ignore any redundant questions.

- Content questions will generally not be answered by email. Instead, I will either address the question at the beginning of the next class (without indicating your identity) or I will invite you to stop by during office hours to discuss your question. I will reserve the first few minutes of each class for answering (good) content questions that I've received by email.

Reviewing and contesting grades

Graded tests, quizzes, and assignments will not be returned after grading. These materials will be kept on file. If you wish to see your graded assignment you will need to make an appointment. If you wish to contest a grade, please be aware that the only option will be to request that the *entire* test, quiz, or assignment be re-graded. This can have the consequence of either improving or reducing your grade. Grades may never be revised or disputed after 2 weeks have passed since they were issued.

Late work and make-up exams

No extensions will be granted, because they are unfair to other students in the class. Dean's Office does provide guidelines regarding excused absences from exams:

1. Absence from an exam due to athletic participation or other extracurricular activities in which the student is an official representative of the University is excused, as long as the student informs the instructor in writing during the first two weeks of the semester of these planned absences.
2. Absence from an exam due to serious illness or death within a student's family. To validate such absences, students need to present evidence to the Dean's Office of his or her college. The Dean's Office will then provide a letter of verification to all of the student's instructors.
3. Absence from an exam due to serious illness (e.g., hospitalization, surgery, or protracted medical illness or convalescence). To validate such absences, the student should present evidence of the illness to the Dean's Office of his or her college. The student will need to request that the Student Health Service provide supportive evidence directly to the respective Dean.

Make-up exams can only be given under the above-mentioned circumstances. Otherwise, a score of 0 will need to be entered for the missed exam. But, keep in mind that the lowest test score (but not the final!) will be dropped from the final grade.

Students with disabilities

Students who have documented physical or sensory disabilities may need accommodations so that they can succeed in this class. Any student who thinks he/she may need an accommodation based on a disability should contact me personally ASAP,

no later than the second week of class. It takes time to set up accommodations so please let me know as soon as possible.

The Disability Support Service (DSS) is located at 119 Alison Hall, Phone: 302-831-4643, www.udel.edu/DSS.

Academic integrity

Academic dishonesty will be treated in accord with the Official Policy of the University of Delaware as prescribed by the Office of Judicial Affairs, 218 Hullihen Hall. You are encouraged to become familiar with the policies that govern academic integrity at the University of Delaware at <http://www.udel.edu/judicialaffairs/>. Descriptions of academic violations, such as plagiarism and cheating, can be found in the Student Guide to University Policies (<http://www.udel.edu/stuguide/06-07/index.html>). This is very important for you to understand, so please see me if you have any questions.

Except when I explicitly state that group work is acceptable for a given assignment, *all work must be your own*.

Course/Assignment Calendar
(Subject to change at Dr. Vickery's discretion)

Date	Topic	Assignments & Quizzes
8/28 T	Introduction	
8/30 R	Cycles: Basics of conducting, reporting, and applying research (Ch. 1)	Q/H 1 (Ch. 1)
9/4 T	Sources of knowledge (Ch. 2)	Q/H 2 (Ch. 2)
9/6 R	Searching the literature and writing in APA format (Ch. 2, Appendix C)	
9/11 T	Three claims / Four validities (Ch. 3)	Q/H 3 (Ch. 3)
9/13 R	Ethics (Ch. 4)	"Bonus" Quiz (Ch. 4)
9/18 T	Reliability and Validity (Ch. 5)	Q/H 4 (Ch. 5)
9/20 R	...continued + review	Extended office hours TBA Evaluate & Design, Stage 1
9/25 T	Exam #1 (Ch. 1-5)	
9/27 R	Surveys and Sampling (Ch. 6)	
10/2 T	Bivariate correlations (Ch. 7)	Q/H 5 (Ch. 7)
10/4 R	...continued	Popular Press Project Due
10/9 T	Multivariate correlational research (Ch. 8)	Q/H 6 (Ch. 8) Evaluate & Design, Stage 2
10/11 R	...continued	
10/16 T	...continued + review	Q/H 7 (Ch. 8) Extended office hours TBA
10/18 R	Exam #2 (Ch. 6-8)	
10/23 T	Experimental basics (Ch. 9)	Q/H 8 (Ch. 9)
10/25 R	...continued	
10/30 T	Experiments and validity (Ch. 10)	Q/H 9 (Ch. 10)
11/1 R	Null results (Ch. 10)	Evaluate & Design, Stage 3
11/6 T	ELECTION DAY (no class)	
11/8 R	Complex experiments (Ch. 11)	Q/H 10 (Ch. 11)
11/13 T	...continued	Q/H 11 (Ch. 11) Evaluate & Design, Stage 4
11/15 R	...continued + review	Extended office hours TBA
11/20 T	Exam #3 (Ch. 9-11)	
11/22 R	THANKSGIVING BREAK (no class)	
11/27 T	Experimental variations (Ch. 12)	Q/H 12 (Ch. 12)
11/29 R	Replicability (Ch. 13)	
12/4 T	Generalizability (Ch. 13)	Q/H 13 (Ch. 13) Evaluate & Design Final Portfolio is Due!
Finals week	Cumulative final, all chapters + all lectures	