

PSYC 200
Introduction to Research Methods
Course Syllabus, Fall 2016

Course Philosophy

PSYC 200 is an introductory course in Research Methods that focuses on the various methods that psychologists use to study behavior within the context of the scientific method. This course revolves around the scientific method as it relates to the field of psychology. The three major areas of investigation will be experimental (laboratory research), nonexperimental (observational and correlational) and quasi-experimental. When you can and want to control and manipulate the environment, you will use laboratory research methods. However, in many cases you will not want nor be able to control the environment. In these instances, field studies and applied research allow one to investigate how work is performed in naturalistic, operational settings with minimal control of the variables. You will learn when each method is appropriate, how to employ each research method, what the appropriate statistical technique is, and what the data suggest. The methods you learn in this course will lay the foundation, and are the basic tools for the rest of your psychology program at UWSP, which will prove invaluable in your future careers.

Course Materials

American Psychological Association. (2010). Publication manual of the American Psychological Association (6th ed.). Washington, D.C.: Author. (Recommended to buy).

Cozby, P. C., & Bates, S. C. (2012). *Methods in behavioral research*. (11th ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill.

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Section: 5-MW(3:35-4:50 pm) **Room:** D230 Science Bldg
Office Hours: M(1-3 pm), W(1-2 pm), by appointment
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Research Methods Goals

By the time you finish this course, you will be able to:

- *Apply* experimental methodology principles to investigate a psychology research question.
- *Apply* the principles of the scientific method to conduct experimental research.
- *Evaluate* journal articles of current psychological research issues.
- *Describe* and *summarize* the questions asked and methods used to investigate problems in psychological areas of interest (perception, cognition, psychophysics, attention, memory, developments, etc.).
- Present research theories, concepts, questions, and methodology in both oral and written reports.

Course Structure and Policies

Unrestricted Joint Effort - For any assignment presented in this course, **excluding exams and daily questions**, you may work with anyone and use any outside sources. However, the final product must reflect your own work and ideas. **Any exceptions must be duly noted through proper documentation techniques**. I strongly encourage the use of fellow students as editors and reviewers of papers prior to your submittal for grade.

Attendance - University Policy is that all students will attend class (see <http://www.uwsp.edu/reg-rec/Attendance.aspx>). Failure to attend class will result in missed DQs and missed information vital to all grading aspects of the course.

Late turn-in policy - The policy for this unlikely event will be a 10% reduction in your score for each day the paper is late. Any exceptional circumstances that may result in an unforeseen late submission (e.g., hospitalization, emergency absence) will be coordinated with your instructor. Missed exams may be rescheduled **within a week** of returning to class. Papers **are due when noted** in the syllabus unless prior arrangements have been made with the instructor.

Cell Phones and Electronic Recording Devices - All cell phones are to be silenced. Should a phone ring in class, I will be more than happy to answer that phone and talk to the caller. Anticipated emergency phone calls can be pre-arranged with the instructor, but the call must be answered outside of the classroom. Electronic recording devices for recording lectures must be pre-approved by the instructor.

Student's Rights and Responsibilities – Understanding your rights and responsibilities as students is an important aspect of your education here at UWSP. Your instructor expects you to understand and adhere to these rights and responsibilities in accordance with UWSP policy. Accordingly, students are encouraged to visit the Community Rights and Responsibilities document on-line at the listed URL below:

<http://www.uwsp.edu/centers/rights/RRBOOKLET8-2005-06.pdf>

Course Withdrawal - Students must withdraw from class in a timely manner in accordance with published deadlines. Failure to do so could result in a failing grade or the loss of reimbursable tuition fees. The published deadlines can be found at:

<http://www.uwsp.edu/news/uwspcatalog/academic.htm#Drop/Add>

Academic Honesty – If I suspect that a violation of academic honesty has occurred, I will pursue disciplinary sanction in accordance with UWS/UWSP 14, “Student Academic Standards and Disciplinary Procedures,” of the Wisconsin Administrative Code, Rules of the Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin System. Copies of UWS/UWSP Chapter 14 are located at <http://www.uwsp.edu/admin/stuaffairs/rights/rightsChap14.pdf> and in paper form at The Office of Students Rights and Responsibilities, each residence hall, the Reserve Desk of the Learning Resources Center, the University Center Information Center, and the office of each academic dean.

Emergency Response Guidance:

Medical Emergency. Call 911 or use Red Emergency Phone (List Location). Offer assistance if trained and willing to do so. Guide Emergency Responders to victim.

Tornado Warning. Proceed to the lowest level interior room without window exposure at _____. (List primary location for shelter closest to class). See www.uwsp.edu/rmgt/Pages/em/procedures/other/floor-plans.aspx for floor plans showing severe weather shelters on campus. Avoid wide-span rooms and buildings.

Fire Alarm. Evacuate the building in a calm manner. Meet at west end of Gym (Swimming pool side). Notify instructor or emergency command personnel of any missing individuals.

Active Shooter: Run/Escape, Hide, Fight. If trapped hide, lock doors, turn off lights, spread out and remain quiet. Follow instructions of Emergency Responders.

See UW-Stevens Point Emergency Management Plan at www.uwsp.edu/rmgt for details on all emergency response at UW-Stevens Point.”

Title IX. *Under several federal and state laws, and according to several university guidelines, I am required to report acts of a criminal or offensive nature. This includes acts of sexual harassment and assault, bias and hate crimes, illicit drug use, and acts of violence. Any disclosure or description of these incidents – both current and in the past – may be reported to the Dean of Students office (<http://www.uwsp.edu/dos/>) or the local authorities*

Course Evaluation

Students will have many opportunities to practice the research skills they develop in the course. The course is comprised of 1000 points. The course has 20 daily questions, 3 written projects, 2 examinations, and a research presentation. The exams will test student knowledge of the course material and will draw heavily from course discussion and the book. The written projects and the course presentation are application-oriented and afford students the opportunity to conduct different types of research.

Classroom Attendance & Participation (CAP) Points (150 points) - CAP points account for 15% of a student’s grade in the course. These points, awarded at the end of the semester evaluates how well and how often a student participates in the class or provides items of interest to the instructor that can assist in another student’s learning. These points may also come from pop quizzes or unlisted outside assignments. Active oral participation is essential to do well in this portion of the grading. Should students fail to participate in class, they can expect to receive no better than **65 of 100 points**. You can also expect to be downgraded in this area for more than **two absences**. Two absences or less will result in a 75 out of 75 points for attendance. Attendance is recorded daily and the student is awarded a daily score from (0-Slept in class/did not attend, 1-

Failed to participate/refused to answer question when called upon or late to class, 2-participated when called upon, 3-active, voluntary participation). The participation portion of the grade will be calculated using an instructor-derived formula based on your daily score total.

Daily Questions (DQ) 100 points - To encourage daily preparation and to reward those who do prepare, students will answer 1-3 daily question(s) during each of the classes. Each question will be worth 5 points. A total of 20 questions will count toward your overall grade, although it is probable that more than 20 questions may be given during the semester. However, your maximum score for this area cannot exceed 100 points. When answering your daily question, you may use any study notes that you made prior to class. Daily lesson slides that you bring to class do constitute notes. Photocopies of another's notes do not constitute note preparation on your part. You may **not** use your textbook for the daily question. If you miss a DQ(s), you will simply miss the question(s) for that day.

Examinations (400 points total-2 @ 200 points each) - Examinations test the daily reading and classroom discussion with objective (multiple choice/fill-in-the-blank), (essay) components. Examinations are designed to evaluate a student's knowledge of the subject area.

Written Assignments

All **written assignments will be typewritten** and **abide by the rules of APA format** as outlined in the APA Manual. Additionally, I will review rough drafts, if I receive the rough drafts (Topic Paper excluded) **at least two** lessons prior to the due date. This lead-time will ensure students are not waiting until the last minute, while providing me the time to provide essential feedback so students can revise their paper prior to the due date. This policy encourages a quality product by the students and also capitalizes on the educational practice of feedback incorporation. I will discuss your paper and project at length with anyone who is interested.

Research Project (350 points) - Each student team will conduct an extensive literature review and design an experiment based on any area of psychology that may interest their team of four/five individuals. To accomplish these goals, several milestones have been established in the form of papers that will continually build on the previous paper(s). This approach should aid students in ensuring research deadlines are met. The four milestones will be the topic paper (40 points), introduction (literature review – 130 points), and the research proposal (100 points), and the presentation (80 points).

Topic paper (40 points) will list and describe **at least 5** references to be used in your research proposal. This paper will state your observation of the research problem and how you became aware of it. The paper will also state the theory that supports your idea and a **general** hypothesis for your research. You will simply complete the handout sent to you via email. Be sure to list the Reference in APA format then provide a quick sentence or two concerning how the paper applies to your research proposal. Everyone will complete their own topic paper, but the topic papers will be stapled together and submitted as a team.

Introduction paper (literature review-130 points) will adequately develop the theory behind what you believe will happen, the literature that supports this belief, and (a) well-derived hypothesis(es). The paper should contain **no less than 10 references**. This introduction will be the introduction used for the research proposal.

Research proposal (100 points) should, in addition to the introduction paper, explain in detail how you will test the hypothesis (e.g., the method section). The participants, apparatus, and procedures to be used should be discussed. All measures and supporting material that would be used should be included in an appendix at the end of the paper, observing copyright laws. The paper will contain an analysis section describing the statistics of choice for analyzing the research design. If you are not sure on the analysis, then come see me with your research design and we will determine the correct analysis. **No discussion section** will be required for the research proposal. Please remember to include an abstract, the reference pages, and appendices, as necessary.

Each student will write their own topic paper, although students may assist each other in the learning process. This approach will ensure each student is adequately evaluated on his/her own writing ability. The introduction and final research proposal will be a team effort; only one paper will be graded for the whole team. Authorship will be based on contribution to the paper. This approach will emphasize that most research projects are done as teams and requires immense effort to ensure a quality paper. To minimize social loafing, each member's grade will be a combination of the team's grade adjusted by the team's evaluation of your contribution to the project. This evaluation will be confidential and done during class on the day the paper is due. Your team of four/five individuals will present their project in class during the final.

Bonus Points (15 Points maximum) - To encourage an in-depth reading and review of this syllabus and other course material, this instructor will award any student 1 point (up to a maximum of 15 points-1.5% of your grade) for any error that s/he discovers in any of the instructor's written documents. This policy does not apply to email. The email should state what course and section you are in and the error (e.g., PSYC 110-Section 1: The word "eror" found on slide 2, line 2 of the normal distributions lesson should be spelled "error."). Only the first individual who notifies the instructor of the error will receive the point. So as not to interrupt the class, students are to notify the instructor before or after class via email. E-mail is the acceptable method of notification as this provides this instructor with a traceable record for assigning the bonus points. Only students who email the error will get credit. Verbal notification is not enough, with the exception of quizzes and the final. For these examinations, the student must inform the instructor and then write the error and question number on the front of the examination to receive credit. However, if two students should have the same error listed, I will use the date/time of the message to indicate who was first. The instructor will keep a master copy of the student's name for each error for each document. Since I strive to produce the best product possible, this approach will help me reach a goal of zero errors in my materials. Should a student also receive a verbal bonus point in class, that student must again email the instructor reminding him of that bonus point award on that day. Delayed (**more than two days**) or non-notification results in loss of the bonus point.

Course Grading Summary	Points	%	Score	Cumulative Total
CAP Points	150	15	_____	_____
DQ	100	10	_____	_____
Exam 1	200	20	_____	_____
Exam 2	200	20	_____	_____
Research Project:				
Topic Paper	40	4	_____	_____
Introduction/Lit Review	130	13	_____	_____
Research Proposal	100	10	_____	_____
Presentation	80	8	_____	_____
Total	1000	100	_____	_____

THE MEANING OF GRADES IN PSYC 200

Since scores on papers and examinations reflect the student's ability, instructor's grading tendencies, and the difficulty of the test, a contract grade schedule for this course would be inappropriate. Therefore, this course will not use a rigid contract for converting percentages to letter grades. However, the course will use the following guidelines to assign points on essays and projects. Although final grade cuts may be associated with lower percentages, these guidelines represent guaranteed grades for achieving these percentage levels. For example:

A	94-100	B+	87 – 89.99	C+	77 – 80.99	D+	67 – 70.99
A-	90-93.99	B	84 – 86.99	C	74 – 76.99	D	64 – 66.99
		B-	81 – 83.99	C-	71 – 73.99	F	Below 64

What do these grades/percentages mean in terms of academic performance?

The "A" project - Work is clearly an outstanding example of the best effort a student can give. I'd be willing to take this project to my boss and have her read it, as is, and defend it as meeting or exceeding the highest academic standards established for undergraduate education. This project, with minor modifications, would be *suitable* for publication in a scholarly journal.

The "B" project - Work is of superior quality. With relatively minor changes, this project has the potential for becoming an "A" project.

The "C" project - Work satisfies the bare minimum technical requirements for the assignment. Without major revisions, this could never become an "A" project.

The "C- and below" project - The project fails to satisfy the minimum requirements.

For purposes of a writing assignment, these grades translate into the following criteria:

Grading Criteria

1. Normally, an "Average" (C) paper should meet the following standards:
 - a. Conform to the basic requirements of the assignment, and address all relevant questions.
 - b. Exhibit sound organization: clear purpose supported by easily identified main ideas.
 - c. Intellectually sound in developing a strong thesis, using appropriate strategies.
 - d. Conform to APA guidelines with regard to word choice, sentence construction, and format.
 - e. Be turned in on the date assigned.
2. The "Better Than Average" (B) paper should meet the foregoing tests and also:
 - a. Contain elements of vividness and special interest in its style.
 - b. Be of more than average stimulative quality in challenging the reader to think or in arousing depth of response.
 - c. Demonstrate skill in understanding unusually difficult concepts or processes or in winning agreement from readers initially inclined to disagree with the writer's purpose.
3. The "Superior" (A) paper not only meets the foregoing standards, but also:
 - a. Constitutes a genuinely individual contribution by the writer.
 - b. Achieves a variety and flexibility of mood and manner suited to the presentation.

PSYC 200, Spring 2016 Schedule

Date	Lesson Topic	Readings	Due Items
Sep			
7	Introduction-Research Cycle	Syllabus Chapter 1	Good Attitude
12	Understanding Behavior (Team Selection)	Chapter 1	
14	Library Research and Research Articles	Chapter 2	Meet at Library as team
19	Hypotheses: Questions for Research	Chapter 2	Topic Paper (4%)
21	APA format: Writing Research Reports 1	Appendix A APA Manual	
26	Ethics Critiquing Research Articles	Chapter 3 Doty Article	
28	Experimental Methods: Types	Chapter 4	
OCT			
3	Experimental Methods: The Variables	Chapter 4	
5	TBA		
10	Experimental Methods: The Variables	Chapter 4	
12	Measurement: Validity and Reliability	Chapter 5	Introduction (13%)
17	Measurement: Validity and Reliability	Chapter 5	
19	Observational Methods	Chapter 6	
24	Survey Research	Chapter 7	
26	Exam 1	Chapters 1-7	Exam 1 (20%)
31	Experimental Design	Chapter 8	
NOV			
2	Experimental Design	Chapter 8	
7	APA format: Writing Research Reports 2		
9	Conducting Experiment	Chapter 9	Bring a graph to class
14	Complex Designs	Chapter 10	
16	Complex Designs	Chapter 10	
21	Single Case Designs	Chapter 11	
23	Quasi-Experimental Developmental Research	Chapter 11	
	Have a Great Thanksgiving!		
28	Description & Correlation	Chapter 12	
30	Statistical Inference	Chapter 13 Appendix B	Proposal Final Draft (10%)
DEC			
5	Statistical Inference	Chapter 13 Appendix B	
7	Exam #2	All Chapters	Exam 2 (20%)
12	Presentation Q & A – Understanding PowerPoint		
14	Course Project Presentation I		Presentation (8%)
22	Final: Thursday (12:30-14:30) Course Project Presentation II		Presentation (8%)