

# PSY 201: RESEARCH METHODS IN PSYCHOLOGY

Fall 2016 \* Lecture: MWF 9:00am-9:50am \* Hopkins Center 310

Lab: F 11:00am-12:20pm \* Abell 208

**Professor: Lisa M. Brown, Ph.D.**

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*A man should look for what is, and not for what he thinks should be.*  
Albert Einstein

**Please note that all facets of the syllabus are subject to change at my discretion.**

## *Overview*

The purpose of this course is to provide a broad overview of psychology research methodology particularly as applied to social psychology. Lectures will cover major concepts in research planning, design, analysis and evaluation. In addition, you will gain hands-on experience in searching and reviewing scientific literature, designing and conducting psychological research and communicating empirical findings in a scientific manuscript.

A research methods class is potentially the most valuable course in the psychology major. Without knowledge of research methods, we are unable to judge the validity of research findings. This may seem irrelevant, but we often hear someone make a claim or give an observation. Such statements are often oversimplified, inaccurate, misleading or fictional. Learning about research methods helps us to be wise stewards of the information we encounter everyday so that we are better able to critically analyze such information.

## *Required Texts*

- 1) Morling, B. (2014). *Research methods in psychology* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). New York: W.W. Norton & Company. ISBN: 9780393936933
- 2) American Psychological Association. (2009). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association*, 6<sup>th</sup> ed. Washington, DC: Author. ISBN: 9781433805615. **MAKE SURE IT IS THE THIRD PRINTING.**
- 3) *Statistics help for students*: <http://statistics-help-for-students.com/> (This webpage gives instructions on SPSS, the statistics software you will use in class.)

## *Required Articles*

- 1) Lilienfeld, S.O. (2009, Winter). Tips for spotting psychological pseudoscience. *Eye on Psi Chi*, [http://www.psichi.org/pubs/articles/article\\_730.aspx](http://www.psichi.org/pubs/articles/article_730.aspx)
- 2) several online readings regarding various ethical breeches, for example, Karen Ruggiero fabricating data, Diederik Stapel fabricating data, the Tuskegee study, the Guatemalan study, the role of APA psychologists in torture after 9/11.

The books are at the campus bookstore. The articles are on Moodle  
You will also be responsible for the material covered in certain lectures from various webpages.

## *Assignments*

**I will make every reasonable attempt to grade blind.** In order to maintain blind grading on assignments submitted through turnitin.com, you must create a new or edit an existing turnitin.com account. For your first name, enter your four-digit personal class ID number. For your last name, enter your four-digit personal class ID number. Submit all of your assignments

for this class using this account that keeps your identity masked from me unless instructed otherwise. To receive credit for an assignment you must submit all written assignments both on hardcopy and on turnitin.com unless instructed otherwise in writing. **Instructions for assignments (and other course documents) are posted on Moodle.** You must complete hardcopies on a word processor, double-spaced, with 1" margins on all sides and 12 pt. font. **The turnitin.com class ID is 13197828. The password is class.** As noted in parentheses, some assignments are group assignments while others are individual assignments.

- 1) **Exercise on Within Group and Between Group Variance** (group) – You will download a dataset from Moodle. In SPSS (a statistical software package), you will calculate some descriptive statistics from the data and answer questions on the instruction sheet on a 1-2 page, double-spaced, typed paper. It is worth 2% of your course grade.
- 2) **Exercise on Central Tendency and Variance** (group) – In class we will take down everyone's age in years. By hand and in SPSS, you will calculate some descriptive statistics from the data and answer questions on the instruction sheet on a 1-2 page, double-spaced, typed paper. It is worth 2% of your course grade.
- 3) **Literature Review** (individual) – You begin a literature review (ideally) based on intergroup relations, stigma, prejudice, and/or stereotyping. Using databases at Abell Library, you will look up relevant articles. You will need to include at least ten citations from refereed (i.e., peer reviewed), empirical journals. If you have any questions about the suitability of your articles, please ask me BEFORE you complete this assignment. **You must use PsycInfo rather than other databases.** You will also write a literature review in which you highlight the relevance of each article to your hypotheses. This paper should be 5-6 pages long. It is worth 10% of your course grade.
- 4) **Exercise on Measurement & Validity** (group) – You will construct a questionnaire. You will answer questions on the instruction sheet on up to 5 pages, double-spaced, typed paper. You will also hand in measures for your project. It is worth 2% of your course grade.
- 5) **IRB Proposal** (group) – You will complete a first and final draft of an IRB proposal according to the requirements of the Austin College Institutional Review Board. The AC IRB webpage may be found at <http://www.austincollege.edu/campus-offices/academic-affairs/institutional-review-board/irb-policies-procedures/> (the link for CITI training is <https://www.citiprogram.org/>). You must include copies of all of the materials you plan to use in your study. The first draft should be turned in to me only and not to the IRB. It is worth 5% of your course grade.
- 6) **Exercise on Sampling** (individual) – You will review pictures of breakfast foods on supermarket aisles. You will answer questions on the instruction sheet using up to 3 pages, double-spaced, typed paper. It is worth 2% of your course grade.
- 7) **Exercise on Random Assignment** (individual) - In class all students will complete a questionnaire. In SPSS, you will calculate some descriptive statistics from the data and answer questions on the instruction sheet on a 2 page, double-spaced, typed paper. It is worth 2% of your course grade.
- 8) **APA Format** (individual and group) – I will give you a file of a paper that is not in APA format. You will convert this document into APA format. You will also convert your Literature Review into APA format. This assignment is worth 7.5% of your course grade.
- 9) **Dealing with Data and Draft of Method section** (group) – You will collect data from the middle of October through the middle of November. You will be responsible to enter your data into an MS Excel spreadsheet. If you work in a group, you all need to use the same format for entering data by hand. This assignment is worth 5% of your course grade.
- 10) **SPSS, Draft of Results section & Presentation** (group) – You will run analyses in SPSS and interpret the results. You will write up these results in APA format. You will give a class presentation on your project. This assignment is worth 7.5% of your course grade.
- 11) **Exams** (individual) – There are four written exams that will cover lecture material and assigned readings. Each exam will require you to answer short answer questions. Short answer questions generally require specific details or compare and contrast types of responses. The

exams are weighted equally and are cumulative. If you must miss an exam because of a religious event, university function, or personal event that cannot be rescheduled (e.g., a wedding), it is necessary for you to take the exam **before** you leave. Please inform me of such absences within the first two weeks of class and remind me of your absence a week before it occurs. Each exam is worth 10% of your course grade.

12) **Research Paper** (individual and group) – You will write a formal research paper in APA format based upon the research you conducted and the specific hypotheses you proposed. Weeks 10 through 14 are dedicated primarily to working on your group project and this paper, and we will rarely meet as a class during this time. Your group must meet with me at least once during weeks 7-9 and at least once during weeks 10-12. Your paper grade will drop a full letter grade for each time you do not meet with me on time. Your group must also submit a draft of your Method section by Friday, November 11, 2016 and a draft of your Results section by Friday, November 18, 2016. Your paper grade will drop a full letter grade if you do not submit these drafts to me on time. The entire research paper will be worth 15% of your course grade. In addition, there will be a Research Forum on Friday, December 2 at 9am where your group will give a five-minute overview of your study. Attendance is required. The paper is due Friday, December 2 at 5pm. **You submit this final paper on turnitin.com as the Revision to the Literature Review assignment.**

13) **Lab** (individual) – Each time you have an unexcused, undocumented absence from lab, two points will be deducted from your final grade. Each time you are absent from a major portion of lab class, one point will be deducted from your final grade. Each time you are unprepared or uninvolved in lab class, one point will be deducted from your final grade.

### *Miscellaneous*

✘ **I offer extra credit for participation in studies through the Psychology Department Participant Pool or through comparable written assignments.** I generally do not accept more than 120 minutes of participation, so plan accordingly. In order to receive credit you must a) participate in studies approved by the Austin College IRB and b) turn in a sheet signed by the experimenter **in colored (not black) ink** documenting your participation and with your brief explanation of the study. You may earn no more than two points of extra credit on your final course grade (one point for every 60 minutes). These research opportunities are current studies being conducted by your peers and/or the psychology faculty, and are opportunities to contribute to the knowledge of the field as well as your classmates' education. Participation is a serious commitment that requires honest and thoughtful responses. If you give false, misleading, or thoughtless (i.e., choosing "4" on every item on the scale) data, it not only compromises the work of your peers and faculty but can potentially cripple research that took months or years to set up. The researchers can see how much time it took you to complete the study (even the online surveys) and have to throw out data that is clearly carelessly entered. If you do not have enough time to complete the research appropriately (as described in the informed consent statement), do it at another time. If you want to earn extra credit through writing assignments, please ask me. Incomplete grades are only appropriate when an unforeseen circumstance (e.g., an extended illness or severe accident) affects your ability to complete the assignments for this class in a timely manner. The incomplete allows you to complete the missed work at a later time; it does not allow you to rewrite a paper solely for the reason of improving your grade.

✘ **If you miss class**, you are responsible for making up the work. My Powerpoint slides are on Moodle, so do not ask me for lecture notes. However, you may ask your classmates. If you have questions about a classmate's notes (or in general), please ask me for clarifications. Students who have more than three unexcused absences may be reported to the Student Services Office and/or your mentor. Students who have more than four unexcused absences may be dropped from the class. As mentioned above, if you will be out of town on an exam day for an official absence, it is necessary for you to take the exam before you leave. Such absences generally do not count as unexcused absences; however, if you have already expended your allotment of unexcused absences or you are doing poorly in the class, I will determine if official absences count as unexcused absences on a case-by-case basis.

✘ **Make-up exams without a late penalty** after the scheduled exam time will **only** be offered in the case of a **documented** emergency, illness or death in the family. Make-up exams will consist of short answer questions. When you are ill, I need an official note from a medical professional (e.g., an email from the campus nurse). In the case of ongoing problems, you or your family should notify Karen Spore in Student

Affairs at 903.813.2228. Notification of your absence on the discussion leading day should be given preferably prior to but no later than the day of the class, and prior to the start time of the class to avoid a late penalty. **If you have completed your assignment, email me a copy and submit it to turnitin.com by the due date to avoid a late penalty.**

✘ **Regarding reviewing your exams**, I do not give exams back to students. If you would like to review an exam you have taken (and I strongly encourage you to do so), please come to my office hours. I will keep your course materials through the end of the following semester. After that point, I will throw them out.

✘ **If you have a documented disability** for which you would like accommodations, please inform me by the second week of class. It is your responsibility to remind me of your accommodations at least a week before I distribute each assignment or exam. To arrange for accommodations, you will need to register as soon as possible at the Academic Skills Center with Laura Márquez-Ramsey, the Director of the Academic Skills Center, (903) 813-2454, Suite 211 of the Wright Campus Center. For information on this process, go to <http://www.austincollege.edu/campus-life/academic-skills-center/>.

✘ **Turn your cell phones on silent or off during class.** Please clear it with me if you feel that you have an emergency situation that requires that you put your cell phone on vibrate mode while you are in class. You can enter your class schedule into a cell phone app (e.g., Studious [for Android phones]), and it will silence your phone when you are in class. If you need to use your phone, please step out of class to do so.

✘ **Please be courteous in class to fellow students and to me.** This includes not holding conversations, not reading for other classes or for pleasure, not studying for other classes, not doing games or puzzles, not text messaging or emailing, not surfing the net, not flirting, etc. during class. Please make an effort not to fall asleep in class. Be respectful not to leave during class unless absolutely necessary. If you know you will need to leave during class, then sit near the door. Students who routinely text, surf the net or are otherwise distracted during class will be dropped from the class.

✘ **The GRADING SCALE is as follows:** A+ = 97-100; A = 94-96; A- = 90-93; B+ = 87-89; B = 84-86; B- = 80-83; C+ = 77-79; C = 74-76; C- = 70-73; D+ = 67-69; D = 64-66; D- = 60-63; E = 59 or below. I will make every reasonable attempt to grade blind, so only put your Personal Class ID number on your assignments (unless instructed otherwise). I will downgrade all late work a third of a letter grade for each day late (including weekend days). If you want to contest a grade, note I will keep course materials only until the last day of the subsequent semester. I will discard them after that time.

✘ **You are responsible for keeping track of your grades in the course.** Do not assume that you are passing the course or that the course grade will be curved so that no one fails. If you are concerned about your progress in the class, please come and see me – the earlier in the semester, the better.

✘ **Academic Honesty:** The academic process is one in which all members of the class, instructors and students alike, disseminate information and acquire knowledge with goals of both personal fulfillment and collective improvement through intellectual enrichment. Academic dishonesty completely undermines this honorable and valuable process. If I have evidence of your suspected academic dishonesty, I will report it to the Academic Integrity Council and you will have the incident noted in your file. Punishment could be as severe as failing the course. Austin College's detailed statement on academic honesty is in the student handbook, *The Environment*.

### Avoiding Plagiarism and Cheating

**Working together on assignments:** Imagine a math problem involving a right triangle in which one leg of the triangle is 6 inches long while the other is 8 inches long. You and a friend are working on this homework problem. Your friend says, "Help me find the value of the hypotenuse." On the one hand you could say, "It's 10." However, on the other hand you could say, "It involves the Pythagorean theorem:  $A^2 + B^2 = C^2$  where A is one leg of the triangle, B is the other and C is the hypotenuse." In my class the first response would be cheating and the second response would not. I define working together as sharing information regarding the *means* to a solution for an assignment. Sharing the solution is a form of cheating because one person's grade is dependent upon another person's work and unless instructed otherwise, you must produce the solutions to your assignments independently. You may share strategies and pointers (e.g., "Look at the lecture notes from last week" or "Read p. 52 in the text"). But each person must do the work to solve the problem alone unless instructed otherwise in the syllabus or a handout for the assignment.

**Working together on research:** Some of you may end up collaborating on a research project. You are allowed to work together on specified assignments and to develop a questionnaire, design a study, create an experimental manipulation and/or collect data. For your required meetings at the end of the term, you should come in together to analyze the data with me. You may collaborate in writing the Method section and the Results section of your final paper. However, all sections of the final paper besides the Method and

Results should be done and submitted independently unless you have written confirmation from me stating otherwise.

**Studying Together for Exams:** I encourage you to study together for exams. Collaborative learning is beneficial in many ways. It helps you gain varied perspectives on a certain issue. There may be certain things that you have studied that remain confusing to you that other students may understand. There may be certain things that you help other students understand and in the process of explaining things to them, it helps you cement your knowledge. In preparing for exams, I strongly encourage you to study in groups.

**Plagiarism:** You will write assignments for this class, and you will need citations beyond the required readings. Throughout the body of the paper, if you are summarizing findings or ideas that are not yours, you need to cite where you found that information- even if from the textbook, course readings or lecture. Not giving credit to the original authors is plagiarism. In addition, if you use more than three words in a row from a source, you need to not only cite it but you also need to use quotation marks. Typing in a sentence from a source and then changing every third word but presenting it in your paper as your own ideas and writing is dishonest (i.e., it is cheating). In addition, using work you wrote or created for another course or from a previous semester of Methods without first clearing it with me and any other professors involved will be considered plagiarism in this course.

**Research Papers and Citing Sources:** The writing assignment will require you to conduct research. This involves citing the sources for your ideas. If you use someone else's idea, you MUST cite it. This is not only when you quote it; this is ALWAYS. In addition, you include the citation immediately after the sentence with the idea. IT IS PLAGIARISM TO USE SOMEONE'S IDEAS THROUGHOUT A PARAGRAPH AND THEN CITE THEM AT THE END OF THE PARAGRAPH. Maybe this is how some of you were taught in high school. NOT ONLY IS THAT WRONG ACCORDING TO MLA STYLE AND APA STYLE, BUT IT IS ALSO PLAGIARISM. If you think this is a trivial offense, keep in mind that students were reported to the Academic Integrity Council for this exact type of offense. As your professor, I believe it is incumbent upon me to give you clear warnings and instructions regarding this issue. However, it is incumbent upon you to take this seriously and to work diligently not to plagiarize. Students often start papers at the last minute. Doing so may not allow you enough time to cite sources properly. Make sure you give yourself enough time to cite things properly so that you do not end up with a violation of Austin College's Academic Integrity Policy.

**Collecting Data:** For certain assignments, you will be asked to collect data. You will be given clear instructions on how to complete this task. Do not fabricate data. This is another violation of the Academic Integrity Policy. People who fabricate data will be immediately reported to the Academic Integrity Council. If you do not understand how to complete a task, simply ask the professor. Data collected by our class may be submitted to a conference, and publishing results based upon fabricated data completely undermines the scientific process.

**Abusing the Extra Credit Participant Pool:** Students who undermine the integrity of the participant pool extra credit system by "gaming the system" in any way are in violation of the Academic Integrity Policy. Violators will be reported to the Academic Integrity Council.

**There are additional notes on avoiding plagiarism and cheating on Moodle. There are also notes on how to do well in this class on Moodle. You are responsible for information and instructions posted in these documents on Moodle even if I do not mention them in class.** Moodle is a website that Austin College uses so that professors may exchange information via the Internet with their students. I use it to post documents you need for the course as well as to send messages to the class. If you are unsure how to sign into your Moodle account, ask another student or ask someone at the IT Helpdesk, 903.813.2063, helpdesk@austincollege.edu.

| WEEK              | TOPIC                                      | READINGS                  | ASSIGNMENT   | LAB on FRIDAY   |
|-------------------|--|---------------------------|--|---|
| 1: Aug 25-29      | Overview                                   | Chs. 1 & 2,<br>Lilienfeld |  | Choosing a realistic research project/Lit searches in psychology                                    |
| 2: Aug 31-Sept 5  | Variability                                | pp. 441-474               | 1: Variance exercise due Wed 8/31  |   |
| 3: Sept 7-12      | Validity I                                 | Ch. 3                     | 2: Central Tendency & Spread exercise due Wed 9/7  | <b>EXAM 1: Chs. 1, 2, pp. 441-474, Lilienfeld</b>   |
| 4: Sept. 14-19    | Ethics                                     | Ch. 4, online readings    | 3: Lit. Review due Mon 9/19  | CITI Ethics training  |
| 5: Sept. 21-26    | Measurement, Reliability & Validity II     | Ch. 5, pp. 474-486        |  | <i>Bring laptop to class - IRB</i>  |
| 6: Sept 28-Oct. 3 | Nonexperimental Methods                    | Chs. 6, 7, 8 & 9          | 4: Meas./Validity exercise due Wed 9/30<br>5: draft IRB Proposal due Mon 10/3  | <b>EXAM 2: Chs. 3, 4 &amp; 5, pp. 474-486, online readings</b>                                      |
| 7: Oct. 5-10      | Experimental Methods                       | Chs. 10, 11 & 12          | 6: Sampling exercise due Wed 10/5  | <b>NO CLASS – FALL BREAK</b>  |
| 8: Oct. 12-17     | Experimental Methods                       | Chs. 10, 11 & 12          | 7: Random assignment exercise due Wed 10/14<br>- Start collecting data only <b>after</b> IRB approval from the IRB Chair | Have me review your final IRB proposal  |
| 9: Oct. 19-24     | Additional Methods                         | Chs. 13 & 14              |  | <b>EXAM 3: Ch. 6, 7, 8 &amp; 9</b>  |
| 10: Oct 26-31     | Writing                                    | pp. 487-526               | During Weeks 10-12 have me review running your stats in SPSS   | <i>Bring laptop to class – APA format</i>   |
| 11: Nov 2-7       | Dealing with Data<br>- Work on your Method |                           | 8: APA format, due 11/4<br>9: Entering data, data dictionary, etc. due 11/7  | <b>EXAM 4: Ch. 10, 11 12, 13 &amp; 14, pp. 487-526</b><br><i>Bring laptop to class – data entry</i> |
| 12: Nov 9-14      | - Work on your Results                     |                           |  | Have me review draft of Method section  |
| 13: Nov 16-28     | - Work on your Discussion                  |                           | 10: SPSS output due Fri 11/18  | Have me review draft Results section<br><b>SWPA deadline</b>  |
| Nov 21-25         | <b>THANKSGIVING BREAK</b>                  |                           |  |   |
| 14: Nov 30-Dec 2  | - Revise Introduction<br>- Finalize paper  |                           | <i>Friday, Dec 2 @ 5pm FINAL PAPER DUE</i>   | <i>Research forum on Friday</i>   |

**DATES YOU MAY WANT TO KEEP IN MIND**

Sept 1: last day to add a course

Sept 27-29: Off-campus Jan Term registration

Oct 14: last day to drop or change grading system

Oct 18-20: On-campus Jan Term registration

Nov 4: last day to drop with W grade

Nov 7-11: Spring registration

Nov 30: SWPA deadline

Dec 5-9: Exam period (no exam for this class)