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Required Text:

Conducting Research in Psychology: Measuring the Weight of Smoke. By Brett Pelham and Hart Blanton, 3rd Ed.

Course reader available at Ackerman Union

Objectives:

In this course, you will learn how to conduct research. Why might this be important? Even if you go into a career that does not involve research, you will someday be in a position of making choices based on information. These choices will include purchasing products, making work decisions, and making decisions about your health. How do you go about sorting through all this information? How do you deal with the fact that one study says “coffee is good for your health,” another says “coffee is bad for your health,” and another says “it’s not clear if coffee is good or bad for your health.” We’ll help you develop the *critical thinking* needed to make informed choices.

By the end of this course, my goals are that you will have the *thinking tools* that will help you ask the right questions and make decisions based on scientific information, including:

- How to develop a scientific question
- How to design a study to answer scientific questions
- How to interpret scientific research

So, the skills you learn in this class will apply to many things that you’ll be doing for the rest of your life.

This course will focus on research in health psychology. Health psychology studies psychological influences on how people stay healthy, why people become ill, how people respond when they become ill, and how we can change behavior to promote health. In addition to learning about research in health psychology, by the end of this course, another goal is that you will learn things that will benefit your health and well-being. We will be specifically focusing on research methods involved in studying stress and health.

Course Format:

During the first half of the course we will review the basics of research methods that you may have forgotten since Psych 100B. Towards the middle of the course most of your learning will take place during group activities, data collection, participating in research, writing research papers, and informal discussions.

Course Requirements and Grading:

Exam (120 points): The in-class exam on **October 29** will review the major concepts of research design that we will cover during the first five weeks of the course, and is based on material from lecture and the textbook. More importantly, the purpose of the exam is to help you apply what you’ve learned in the course, which will help you later when you work on your project. **There will be no make-up exam.**

Project: Research is an active process that always involves working with a team. For the project, you will work with 4 – 5 people. The project will be centered around a laboratory stressor, and we will collect data from volunteer participants November 9 - November 20. We will collectively determine the two experimental factors that will be manipulated in the study, and each group will be responsible for running participants in the control condition and one cell of the 2 x 2 design.

Your group will also do either 1) creating a dependent variable that will be measured in all conditions, or 2) determining a “moderating” variable that might explain responses to one of the independent variables. Your group will come up with a hypothesis and a research design (and get your instructor’s approval on it), and then collect and analyze the data. You will have class time set aside to work with your group. You will do several things based on this project:

- An in-class presentation (80 points): 10-12 minute presentation during the last week of the quarter, where each member of the group must participate. This presentation will cover the Introduction, Methods, Results, and Discussion. Your grade on the presentation will be based two things: the quality of the final presentation, and your own contribution to the project as graded by yourself and your group members.
- A Final Paper (100 points), consisting of the standard sections of an APA-style research report that you will turn in at different times throughout the quarter. Although you will implement the project as a group, you will each write *independent* papers on the project. You will prepare a concise report (double-spaced, 12-point font, 1-inch margins) based on the findings of your study. The required sections, length of each section, number of points, and due dates are listed below.

<i>Section</i>	<i>Maximum length</i>	<i>Points</i>	<i>Due Date</i>
Introduction	2 pages, plus references	20	Hard copy: November 10, beginning of class for peer review purposes Revised version due November 24 Final version due December 7
Methods	3 pages, plus references	30	
Abstract	120 words	4	December 7
Results	3 pages	14	Hard copy: 5611 Franz Hall, 5 PM
Discussion	3 pages, plus references and tables/figures	32	<u>Late papers will receive a zero.</u>

NOTE: You must turn in both a hard copy AND turn in an electronic copy at the Turnitin link at myUCLA.

Project quality (10 points): You will also receive a project quality grade, which will be based on your responsiveness to feedback on your Introduction and Methods section, the creativity of your project, the logic of your design, the independence of your groups thought and work (independent relative to relying primarily on ideas or suggestions from the instructor and TA), and the overall effort and quality of your work.

Survey project paper (40 points): You will collect self-report data on participants for several weeks. We will combine everyone's data into one large data set. With the data, you will write the Results section for an APA-style research paper. We will develop the Hypotheses and Methods together, to help guide you as you write your results section, and we will analyze the data together that you will need for the Reports section. This report must be concise (no longer than 3 pages, double-spaced, 12-point font, 1-inch margins, not counting tables or figures). In addition, you must include one Table or one Figure in your results.

Methodology exercises (10 points): To help familiarize you with basic research principles and procedures, and prepare you for the exam, you and your group will collaborate to work on three methodology exercises. You will have class time to work on these answers; you must provide written exercises that are due at the beginning of the next class. These exercises may not be worth many points, but if you master them, this will really help you during the midterm. Each of the three exercises is worth between 3 - 4 points, for a total of 10 points.

Peer review (10 points): One of the most important parts of the research process is getting feedback from your peers. On November 10, you will turn in a final draft of your Introduction and Methods section. We will then distribute your paper to another classmate, who will review your paper and provide constructive feedback. This will be an anonymous process, so neither the writer nor the reviewer will know who the other is. You will turn in your peer review forms the following week, which we will grade based on the substance and constructiveness of your feedback.

Participation and attendance (30 points): Throughout the quarter, we will do activities and have discussions in class and in smaller groups. Enthusiastic and creative participation is encouraged, and attendance is *required*. You are allowed *one* unexcused absence (except for the October 29, the day of the exam, and December 3, presentation day). All other absences require a written documentation of the reason for the absence by someone besides you (e.g., doctor's note, etc.). We will take attendance every day, and you receive 1.5 points for attending each class and 0 points if you fail to attend, for a total of 28.5 possible points. If you have perfect attendance for the quarter (attending all classes, basically not using your allowable unexcused absence), you will receive a bonus 1.5 points. If you are tardy by more than 10 minutes, we will receive a fraction of that point based on the number of minutes you are actually in class. For example, if you are a half-hour late to class, you would have attended 80 minutes of the 110 minute class, equivalent to 1.09 points.

Grading breakdown – you may use this to track your performance in the class:

<i>Requirement:</i>	<i>Points</i>	<i>Your points</i>
In-class exam	120	
Introduction section	20	
Methods section	30	
Abstract, Results, Discussion	50	
Project quality	10	
Final presentation	80	
Survey project paper	40	
Method. exercises	10	
Peer review	10	
Class participation	30	
Total points	400	

Other details

If you have a documented disability with the Office for Students with Disabilities and wish to discuss academic accommodations, please contact me as soon as possible.

Notice there's a lot of writing in this class. Fortunately the papers aren't long, but it is challenging to cover lots of material in a small amount of space. In fact, this is what you will be asked to do in real life when it comes to writing, no matter what the field: You will be asked to take lots of information and describe it in a very concise way.

Final grades will be assigned fairly and curved *only if necessary*. The instructor does not have to explain, defend, or even show you the curve. Complaints about grading must be submitted *in writing* on paper (email complaints will not be reviewed), within 7 days of the graded assignment or test being posted or presented in class. Final grades are not negotiable and will only be changed if there is a miscalculation.

Assignments are due at the beginning of the class unless otherwise specified. Late assignments (except for the final paper) will suffer a 10% penalty if they are handed in after the start of class and then a 10% penalty each day they are late after that. You are responsible for completing and handing in assignments on time. You are also responsible for being in class to hear any and all information and announcements. Not being in class the day an assignment is explained or due does not grant you extra time to complete it, or any special treatment in grading.

Finally...

DO NOT CHEAT. Your writing must always come from YOU. While you may draw from other sources to help formulate or support your work, you *must always cite these sources* and tie them into your own ideas. Plagiarism is cheating. If it is proven that you plagiarized on your papers or cheated on the exam or other assignments, you will immediately fail the course, be kicked out of the class, and I will report you to the Office of the Dean of Students.

Class schedule

Wk	Date	Lecture Topic	In-class Activity	Reading	Due Today in Class
0	R Sept 24	Course overview; Introduction to psychological science		Ch. 1 Reader: Cacioppo	
1	T Sept 29	How to ask scientific questions	Formulate survey project; introduce group project.	Ch. 2 (p. 27 – 44) Reader: Monroe	
	R Oct 1	How to measure things	Assign groups; evaluate measures	Ch. 3 (p. 73 – 76), Ch. 4	
2	T Oct 6	How to show causality – experimental designs and intervention studies	Discuss survey project	Ch. 7 (p. 176-201, 207-209); Reader: Kraemer	Method. Exercise 1: Design measures for survey project (3 pts)
	R Oct 8	How to design a valid study	Threats to validity; finalize survey project	Ch. 3 (p. 59 – 72), Ch. 5 Reader: CONSORT	Method. Exercise 2: Evaluate paper based on CONSORT (3 pts)
3	T Oct 13	Running a stress study in the laboratory	Health Psych Lab orientation; Survey project data collection	Ch. 7 (p. 202-206) Reader: Cardiovascular and Blood Pressure	Turn in your group's idea for independent variable manipulation
	R Oct 15	Non-experimental designs and quasi-experimental designs	Decide 2 x2 group project design; Survey project data collection	Ch. 6, Ch. 8 Kiecolt-Glaser article	
4	T Oct 20	Design variations: Factorial designs, within-subject, mixed	Generate hypotheses and measures for group projects	Ch .9; Marucha article	Turn in reading list for group project
	R Oct 22	COMPUTER LAB Statistics, Part 1	Analyze survey project data Meet with groups		Method. Exercise 3: Interactions (4 pts)
5	T Oct 27	Ethics	Exam review	The Belmont report Ch. 2 (p. 50 – 57)	Materials for group project due by the end of class
	R Oct 29	IN CLASS EXAM			

Wk	Date	Lecture Topic	In-class Activity	Due Today in Class
6	T Nov 3		Pilot test study procedures	
	R Nov 5	COMPUTER LAB Statistics, Part 2; Hand back exam	Create template for data entry Meet with groups	Survey project paper due at beginning of class
7	T Nov 10	Paper writing and presentations	Meet with groups	Turn in final draft of Introduction, Methods for peer review
	R Nov 12	In Class consultation and data collection day		
8	T Nov 17	In Class consultation and data collection day		
	R Nov 19	COMPUTER LAB How to Analyze your Data	Enter/analyze data	
9	T Nov 24	COMPUTER LAB	Enter/analyze data	Introduction, Methods due at beginning of class
	R Nov 26	NO CLASS – HOLIDAY		
10	T Dec 1	Meet with groups		
	R Dec 3	Student Presentations/Group Projects ATTENDANCE MANDATORY		
F	M Dec 7	Abstract, Introduction (revised), Methods (revised), Results, Discussion Due by 5 PM, 5611 Franz Hall NO LATE PAPERS WILL BE ACCEPTED		