

PSYCHOLOGY 301 LAB SYLLABUS
RESEARCH METHODS IN PSYCHOLOGY
 Summer 2006: Tuesday 4:00-5:50pm (2B1), 6:00-7:50pm (2B2)

Instructor: Megan Wagner
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 Office: Jazzman's Café in the Johnson Center
 Office Hours: Thursdays 2:30-3:30 or by appointment
 Phone: (703) 993-1349 (email is preferred)
 Mailbox located in hallway of David King Hall in adjunct faculty section

TEXTS & MATERIALS

- Shaughnessy, J.J., Zechmeister, E.B., & Zechmeister, J.S. (2006). *Research Methods in Psychology* (7th ed.). Boston: McGraw-Hill.
- Dunn, D.S. (2004). *A Short Guide to Writing About Psychology*. New York: Pearson-Longman.
- Publication Manual for the American Psychological Association (5th ed.) (recommended)
- Computer disk or jump/flash drive in order to save any computer work completed in lab (recommended)

COURSE GOALS

- Understand the role of experimentation in psychology and learn about experimental design
- Understand and apply statistical principles in research design (not calculation of statistics per se)
- Learn how to access and use psychological databases (e.g., E-Journal Finder and PsycINFO)
- Gain experience proposing and conducting your own psychological research
- Learn how to write a scientific report in APA format

EXPECTATIONS: I expect all students to attend lab, show up on time to both lab and appointments with me, complete all assignments in a timely manner, turn off cell phones during lab, and generally encourage a good learning environment. It is my goal to be as available to you as possible to answer any questions, address concerns, review concepts, etc. Regarding emailed questions/concerns, I ask that you please give me at least 24 hours to respond.

POLICIES: Please familiarize yourself with the following:

- Lab attendance is imperative. Students will receive participation grades, which account for a substantial portion of the final lab grade. Students are responsible for all materials, assignments, and announcements covered in the lab. I would suggest exchanging email addresses or phone numbers with at least two of your classmates in the unlikely event that you are absent and need to know what you missed.
- **If a student misses an in-class assignment or experiment, this cannot be made up at a later date.** Homework assignments must be handed in the day they are due; **no late assignments will be accepted.** All homework assignments are **due within the first 10 minutes** of the lab period. You must give me **hard copy** of all assignments you turn in.
- If a student cannot attend class and wishes to turn in a homework on-time, the assignment must be emailed to me **prior** to the beginning of the class in which the assignment is due. If you know in advance you'll be absent, please leave a hard copy of the assignment in my mailbox **in addition to** emailing it to me.
- Writing assignments must be typed and double spaced, in 12pt font with 1inch margins. The only acceptable fonts for submitted assignments are Times New Roman or Arial. Because spelling and grammar check is available on word processing systems, any errors of this type will count heavily against the grade (but please be aware that relying *solely* on computerized grammar-check is *not* recommended). **Save all of your corrected assignments;** you will be required to turn in corrected drafts along with final copies of papers.
- School closings: If the GMU campus closes on a class day that you are to turn in a writing assignment, you must still email me that writing assignment by your regular lab time on the day it is due. You must then have a paper copy of that same e-mailed assignment turned in to my mailbox no later than 5pm the first day that campus re-opens (mostly likely the following day). **Changes made between emailing me your assignment and turning in a hard copy will be considered a violation of the honor code.**

HONOR CODE: All provisions of the GMU Honor Code will be followed in this class. Although student discussion is encouraged, and labs will sometimes involve group work, all writing assignments must be completed individually. Lab reports are expected to be the student's own work. Students may use books, notes, and other sources in preparing lab reports. Under no circumstances are you to collectively write papers with another student. This is considered to be plagiarism and plagiarism of any kind will not be tolerated. Work such as library references, statistics, and reports of the research studies should be each student's own work. Quotations in lab reports should be *minimal* and the appropriate citation must be given.

WRITING & TECHNOLOGY: PSYC 301 is an approved writing intensive course. This means that in the laboratory you will have multiple writing assignments that build upon one another and that the total amount of writing equals or exceeds GMU's specified minimum. If you feel you would benefit from additional assistance with writing, please see <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/>. The lab will include an introduction to Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) and on-line searches using PsycINFO, and other electronic databases, meeting part of the technology across the curriculum requirement. Most extra-class communications will be completed by e-mail. If you are uncomfortable with any of the technology required in this course, I would suggest going to the STAR center: <http://media.gmu.edu/>. Finally, important course material (e.g., class notes/outlines) will be posted at <http://mason.gmu.edu/~mwagner6/Teaching.htm>. It is the student's responsibility to acquire information from this site.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: If you are a student with a documented disability and require some academic accommodation, please see me and contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at (703)993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office.

GRADING CRITERIA Lab counts for 40% of the total grade in 301. (A total of 435 points is possible)

Class Participation	70 points
<i>In-class assignments, experiments, & discussions; peer/group reviews, & design critiques</i>	
Quiz 1 & 2 (drop the lower one)	10 points
Observation Data Collection (design sheet, data and summary)	15 points
Observation Write-up (<i>method & results</i>)	20 points
Survey Write-up (<i>method and results section</i>)	20 points
PAPER 1	
Draft of Introduction	25 points
Draft of Discussion	10 points
Data Collection	10 points
Draft of entire paper	Extra Credit
Completed Paper	100 points
FINAL PROPOSAL (<i>see page 4 for detailed instructions</i>)	
Articles & Summaries	10 points
Draft of Abstract	10 points
Outline of final proposal	10 points
Draft of Proposal	Extra Credit
Completed Final Proposal	100 points
Presentation of Final Proposal to Class	25 points

IMPORTANT DATES: Last Day to Add: June 14th; Last day to drop: June 21st

COURSE OUTLINE

Note: This is a tentative schedule. Any changes to topics and assignments will be announced in class.

Week #	Lab Lecture Topic	Lab Activities	To Do For Next Time
Week 1			
6/6	Syllabus & goals of lab; Overview of research Design; Description of library resources	Research interests	Study for quiz #1
6/8	Observational research with and without intervention; Operational definitions; Descriptive statistics; Inter-rater reliability	Quiz #1; Small group discussion about observational study (+ Worksheet)	Conduct observational study. Staple in-class study design worksheet to your typed

			collected data, along w/ a written summary, including a list of variables and operational definitions, and means. *Hint: Use a table for your data to make it easier.
Week 2			
6/13	Discuss & receive graded quiz #1; APA format & Different sections of an APA-style paper; How to write the Method and Results sections of an APA paper	Methods & Results Worksheet (work in pairs)	Write method and results section of observational study.
6/15	Correlations & correlational research; Advice on reading journal articles	Take survey; SPSS data entry	Study for quiz #2
Week 3			
6/20	Receive & discuss survey results; discuss & receive graded observational M&R assignment; Explanation of theoretical and empirical background for today's class experiment	Quiz #2; Class Experiment (basis for paper #1); SPSS data entry	1) Write method and results section for correlational study 2) Collect data from 3 people outside of class using class experiment materials
6/22	Discuss & receive graded quiz #2; Literature review in APA-style papers; Receive & discuss results of Tuesday's experiment	Workshop on writing an introduction and help with finding additional article.	1) Print and read the three <i>paper #1</i> foundational articles. 2) Obtain and read 1 more pertinent article 3) Write draft of intro section for paper #1
Week 4			
6/27	Discuss & receive graded correlational M&R	Mid-course student feedback; Workshop on writing a discussion section	1) Write discussion section for paper #1 (bring 2 copies) 2) Extra Credit: bring in draft of final version of paper 1 for peer review (bring 2 copies)
6/29	Receive & discuss graded Intro section drafts; APA style abstracts	Peer review of discussion sections; Optional peer review of extra credit drafts	Complete final version of paper #1
Week 5			
7/4	No Lab	Happy 4 th of July! ☺	
7/6	Discuss ideas for final proposal	Further discussion of ideas; Final proposal topics worksheet	1) Obtain and summarize at least 5 relevant articles for final proposal. 2) Next time, turn in references, abstracts and summaries of <i>each</i> article.
Week 6			
7/11	Outlines for final proposal	Writing workshop	1) Write outline of final proposal to turn in next time (bring 2 copies) 2) Write a 1-paragraph summary of your proposal plans
7/13	Discuss & receive graded paper #1; discuss & receive final proposal article abstracts; Discussion of final proposal outlines	Writing workshop	Extra credit: full rough draft of final proposal (bring 3 copies)
Week 7			
7/18	Receive final proposal outlines; Discuss presentations & any remaining questions about final proposal	Peer review of extra credit rough draft of final proposal	1) Continue to work on final draft of proposal 2) Presentation due next week
7/20	None	Student Presentations	Finish final proposal - due Monday 7/24 at 12pm in my mailbox
Week 8			
7/25	Class cancelled; use this time to study for your final exam on Wednesday	None	Have a great summer!

Final Proposal Assignment -Psychology 301

The last/second full writing assignment project is to be an original experimental proposal or partial-replication of an experiment relevant to topics in psychology. The student may “propose” a project from any area of psychology. Correlational or observational studies are acceptable but studies with at least one variable to manipulate are highly encouraged.

Students are required to write the proposal in APA format, with a minimum of **five** references. The proposals must be projects that are plausible in that the project could realistically be completed. For example, if I wanted to test 100 amnesic patients, it would not be plausible because it would be extremely unlikely that I would have access to 100 amnesic patients.

Because this is a proposal of research to be conducted in the future, the paper should be written in the future tense: Below are a few examples:

- a. “The present project is designed to investigate whether older adults recall more items than younger adults.”
- b. “The participants will be tested in a laboratory setting.”
- c. “Participants will be presented with lists of words from....”

The proposals must include the following:

1. An **Introduction** section that introduces the question/problem and includes a review of the literature relevant to the topic. The hypothesis should also be stated at the end of the introduction.
2. A **Method** section that includes the design (e.g., a 2 X 2 mixed factorial), participants, materials and procedure. All of the sections should be written in appropriate APA format.
3. A **Results** section should briefly describe how the data *would* be analyzed and what the expected result *would* be based on the hypothesis. For example, if a correlational study is done, the student would write something such as .A pearson-product correlational analysis will be conducted to determine the strength and direction of the correlation between anxiety and depression. It is predicted that (insert prediction here). This is likely because ...
4. A **Discussion/Conclusion** section should include the following:
 - a. What would this research contribute to the literature if the hypothesis were supported?
 - b. A discussion of what would be done next if the hypothesis were supported. In other words, what would be the next step in the research or what would the researcher do next.
 - c. Additional ideas if the hypothesis were not supported could be added. Of course, this would be hypothetical.
 - d. A critique of their own design or the limitations of the study.

(Note: this section should be no longer than two paragraphs and does not have to be extensive.)
5. An **Abstract** should be included as well. Students may include an expected outcome rather than a real outcome. Again the text should be written in the future tense. For example, “It would be expected that older adults would recall fewer words than younger adults.”

All students must attach the measures/materials to be used (e.g., a survey). An exception will be made if the survey would have to be purchased by the student. However, this is a rare exception.

When the final proposals are turned in, students must include the following:

- a. **A copy of all articles referenced in the report, copies of the measures, etc. mentioned above**
- b. **Two copies of the final paper. If all of these are not included, there will be a grade reduction.**

Final Presentation

Each student is required to present the proposal to his/her classmates the last day of lab class. It is an opportunity for students to demonstrate to their classmates what kind of research they are interested in and what they think the study would reveal. This presentation should be considered as an informal conversation with their classmates as well as a good opportunity to practice speaking in front of others.

All materials will be returned to the students at the end of the semester. The extra copy of the papers will be given to Dr. Linda Chrosniak for her files. We keep copies of all papers written in Psychology 301 to minimize plagiarism and to use in writing assessments for the university.