PSCH 242 Introduction to Research Methods in Psychology

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Office Hours: Mondays 12:00-1:00 and by appointment

Lecture Sessions Meet: Mondays and Wednesdays 9:00-9:50 at Lincoln Hall 103

Discussion Sections Meet: Fridays 9:00-9:50 at Lincoln Hall 315

Welcome to PSCH 242, Introduction to Research Methods in Psychology! *I'm looking forward to working with you this semester! Research is all around us, and after completion of this course, you will gain the skills necessary to be confident consumers of research. I hope you'll enjoy the topics we cover in class. Psychological research allows us to test important and interesting questions about a wide variety of topics, such as social behavior, psychological disorders, memory, attention, and so much more. The things I've learned in this class, I use every day in my own research. I have also come across eye-catching articles in the news with claims such as, "*Chocolate reduces pain*!". *Understanding the concepts presented in this class are essential for properly evaluating claims such as this one.*

COURSE GOALS

The primary goal of this course is to provide you with the resources necessary to become familiar with different types of psychological research. In doing so, you will leave this class with the ability to critically *evaluate* and *conduct* empirical research, and *evaluate* the conclusions presented in peer-reviewed academic articles and mainstream news articles. For instance, you will learn how to confidently detect variables that threaten the soundness of a research study. Additionally, you will be able to *conduct* empirical research using the scientific method. For instance, you will learn how to formulate hypotheses, identify and control for confounding variables, and understand the strengths and weaknesses of different experimental designs. I will introduce you to basic statistical concepts and tests that will prepare you for later and more advanced inferential statistics courses.

REGISTRATION

Course prerequisites: PSCH 100 or instructor and advisor approval
Students must be enrolled in both the lecture section *and* a discussion section.
Last day to drop a course without receiving a W grade is ***January 25.***
Last day to drop a course with a W grade is ***March 22.***

COURSE MATERIALS

Required Text: Morling, B. (2015). *Research Methods in Psychology: Evaluating a World of Information (2nd Ed). New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company*

iClicker remote: iClickers will be used during lectures to determine your attendance and participation points, and to check your understanding of material. iClicker remotes are available in the UIC Bookstore and online. ***You must register your iClicker remote by the second Friday of the semester (1/25).***

Calculator: You need a calculator to perform simple calculations, such as addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division. You can use your phone's or computer's calculator application during lecture and discussion, but you will have to use a separate calculator to use during exams.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS & GRADING POLICIES

Evaluation Overview: You will be evaluated using exams, assignments, and class participation. These components will be weighted as follows:

Item	Points (each)	Points (total)	% of final grade
Exams (3)	150	450	45%
Final cumulative exam	250	250	25%
Assignments (5 out of 6)	40	200	20%
Attendance/IClicker Participation (40 out of 42)	2.5	100	10%
Total		**1000**	**100%**

To calculate your grade, add all earned points together and divide by the total possible number of points (1000).

Course Grading
Final grades will be based on the following scale.

Grade	Percent
A	90 – 100
B	80– 89
C	70 – 79
D	60 – 69
F	0 – 59

Incomplete Grades: Incomplete grades will be granted only under the circumstances outlined by the Office of the Registrar: https://registrar.uic.edu/student_records/grading_system.html

Grading Disputes: It is your responsibility to monitor your grade on Blackboard and through returned assignments. If you identify a grading error (a grade on Blackboard that does not match the grade written on your returned assignment), please bring this to my attention as soon as possible.

Exams: There will be three exams during the semester in addition to a cumulative final exam. The final exam cover will content covered throughout the semester. Of the three exams, your highest two exams scores will be included in your final grade calculations, therefore your lowest exam, score will be dropped. *The final exam score may not be dropped.* If you have questions about your scores or would like to review your completed exams, you may meet with me during my office hours. Because you can drop your lowest exam score, make-up exams will not be allowed. All exams will consist primarily of multiple choice questions along some short answer questions. We will hold a review session for each exam during the Friday discussion class prior to each exam.

Assignments: There will be six assignments (20 points each). However, I understand that unexpected events may prevent you from completing all of the assignments to the best of your ability. Therefore, your lowest assignment score will be dropped from your final grade. Assignments are to be submitted via SafeAssign on Blackboard. I will deduct 5 points for every 24 hours that an assignment is late. A full description of each assignment and grading criteria will be posted to Blackboard at least one week in advance of each assignment's due date. Short descriptions of each assignment are included below to help you plan ahead. Most of these assignments consist of worksheets that may take 30 minutes to an hour to complete. *All assignments are due at 9:00 AM on the due date.*

    Assignment 1 (Due 2/01): Psychological Research in the Popular Press
        You will find a news article that describes a psychological study and evaluate it according to a set of criteria.

    Assignment 2 (Due 2/08): Variables
        You will be provided different research scenarios and be asked answer a set of questions regarding the variables involved.

    Assignment 3 (Due 2/25): Reliability and Validity
        You will be asked to assess the reliability and validity of various research scenarios.

    Assignment 4 (3/06): Descriptive Statistics and Significance
        You will be provided with example data sets and will calculate descriptive statistics, including the mean, median, and mode. You will also be asked to answer questions regarding significance and effect size.

    Assignment 5 (Due 4/10): Factorial Design
        You will be shown tables depicting a set of data, and will be asked to interpret whether main effects and/or interactions between the variables are present.

    Assignment 6 (Due 4/24): Quasi-Experiments
        You will be provided with an article describing a quasi-experiment and asked to answer a set of questions.

Attendance: I believe attending class is critically important for understanding the material. To encourage your attendance, I will give you 2.5 points for every day you attend lecture and discussion. However, I understand that unexpected events may prevent you from coming to class every day. Therefore, you are allowed two absences without penalty and no questions asked.

Extra Credit: I believe attending office hours is important for clarifying course expectations, assignments requirements, and class material. To encourage office hours attendance, I will add 2.5 extra credit points to your final grade if you attend office hours (on a Monday between 12:00 and 1:00 or during a confirmed appointment time) by the end of Week 7 (3/01).

CALENDAR OF MAJOR COURSE EVENTS AND DEADLINES

Week	Day/Date	Exam/assignment due
2	Friday 2/01	Assignment 1
4	Friday 2/08	Assignment 2
5	Monday 2/11	Exam 1
7	Friday 2/25	Assignment 3
8	Friday 3/06	Assignment 4
9	Monday 3/11	Exam 2
12	Friday 4/10	Assignment 5
14	Monday 4/22	Exam 3
15	Friday 4/24	Assignment 6
16	TBD	Final exam

STUDENT RESOURCES:

The Writing Center offers one-on-one consultation with student writers who need help developing ideas, or need advice, guidance or additional instruction on any aspects of writing in any class (www.uic.edu/depts/engl/writing). For an appointment, call the Writing Center at (312) 413-2206, or stop by room 105 of Grant Hall. Consider making an appointment to go over a draft of your final paper.

The Academic Center for Excellence can help you if you need more support in reading, writing, or study skills like time management, test preparation, etc. The academic center for excellence is located in the student services building (http://studentaffairs.uic.edu/ace).

Counseling Services are available for all UIC students. You may seek free and confidential services from the Counseling Center (www.counseling.uic.edu). The Counseling Center is located in the Student Services Building; you may contact them at (312) 996-3490. In addition to offering counseling services, the Counseling Center also operates the InTouch Crisis Hotline at (312) 996-5535 from 6:00 p.m.-10:30 p.m. They offer support and referrals to callers, as well as telephone crisis intervention.

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

Note: This schedule is **tentative**. Topics may take more or less time to cover depending on our progress as a class. It is your responsibility to keep track of any changes that are announced in class and through Blackboard.

Week	Date	Readings	Topic	Assignment Due at 9:00 AM
1	M 1/14		Introduction	
	W 1/16	Chapter 2	Ways of Acquiring Knowledge	
	F 1/18		Discussion Activity	
2	M 1/21		*No Class*	
	W 1/23	Chapter 1	The Theory-Data Cycle	
	F 1/25		Discussion Activity	
3	M 1/28	Chapter 4	Ethical Issues in Research	
	W 1/30	Chapter 3	Variables	
	F 2/01		Discussion Activity	**Assignment 1 Due**
4	M 2/04	Chapter 3	Validity of Claims	
	W 2/06	Chapter 14	Generalizability	
	F 2/08		Discussion Activity	**Assignment 2 Due**
5	M 2/11		**EXAM 1**	
	W 2/13	Chapter 7	Sampling	
	F 2/15		Discussion Activity	
6	M 2/18	Chapter 5	Validity	
	W 2/20	Chapter 5	Reliability	
	F 2/22		Discussion Activity	

7	M 2/25	p. 441-461	Descriptive Statistics	**Assignment 3 Due**
	W 2/27	p. 295-302	Statistical Validity	
	F 3/01		Discussion Activity	
8	M 3/04	p. 463-486	Significance and Effect Size	
	W 3/06	Chapter 8	Bivariate Associations	**Assignment 4 Due**
	F 3/08		Discussion Activity	
9	M 3/11		**EXAM 2**	
	W 3/13		Data Visualization	
	F 3/15		Discussion Activity	
10	M 3/18	Chapter 10	Experimental Design	
	W 3/20	Chapter 9	Multivariate Research	
	F 3/22		Discussion Activity	
SPRING BREAK – NO CLASSES (3/25-3/29)				
11	M 4/01	Chapter 12	Factorial Design	
	W 4/03		Factorial Design	
	F 4/05		Discussion Activity	
12	M 4/08	Chapter 11	Threats to Internal Validity	
	W 4/10		Quasi-Experiments	**Assignment 5 Due**
	F 4/12		Discussion Activity	

13	M 4/15	Chapter 13	Survey Design	
	W 4/17	Chapter 6		
	F 4/19		Discussion Activity	
14	M 4/22		**EXAM 3**	
	W 4/24	Chapter 14	Replicability	**Assignment 6 Due**
	F 4/26		Discussion Activity	
15	M 4/29	p. 39-49	Finding and Reading Research	
	W 5/01		Review	
	F 5/03		Review	
Final Exam Week (exam date: ***Tuesday 5/07, 10:30-12:30 in LH 103***): The final exam will be *cumulative*. You may not drop this exam score from your final grade.				

COURSE POLICIES

Electronic Communication
I will periodically email you announcements and information about assignments. You are responsible for reading any information communicated via email. I will do my best to respond to you within 24 hours of your email during weekdays, however, I might not be able to respond this quickly on weekends. When emailing me, please be sure to include, "PSCH 242", in the subject line and your name in the email. Please write in a professional, but friendly manner. This will give you practice for how you need to communicate as a professional in the future.

Academic Integrity
If you are ever unsure about what constitutes as plagiarism, ask me. Students who are found to have plagiarized work may be subject to various disciplinary actions, including a failing grade on a particular assignment, failure of the entire course, and possible expulsion from the university. For any case of academic dishonesty, my policy is to file a complaint with the Office of the Dean of Students. For more information about violating academic integrity and its consequences, consult the website of the UIC Office of the Dean of Students at http://www.uic.edu/depts/dos/studentconduct.html.

Religious Holidays
If you identify a scheduling conflict with a religious holiday, please notify me at least ten days prior that date. If the holiday falls within the first ten days of the semester, notify me as soon as possible. I will do my best to accommodate your needs. Additional information about UIC's religious holiday policies are available online at http://oae.uic.edu/religious-calendar.

Disability Accommodation
Students with disabilities who require accommodations for access to and/or participation in this course are welcome, but must be registered with the Disability Resource Center (DRC). For more information, please contact DRC at 312-413-2183 (v) or 312-413-0123 (TTY) or visit their website at http://drc.uic.edu/guide-to-accommodations.