Laboratory Research In Psychology

PSYC 270.002

Lab Sections 701 and 702, Spring 2018

COURSE SYLLABUS

Introduction

This course is a required course for all psychology majors.* The American Psychological Association (APA) dictates that all undergraduate psychology majors have a good understanding of how research is conducted in psychology. For those of you who are interested in conducting research in psychology or a related discipline, this course will provide a solid foundation in research methods by allowing you to conduct research. For all students, I hope the course illustrates how often you encounter research and provide you with the knowledge and skills to critically evaluate research claims.

Method

The best way to learn about how research is done is to actually do it. In this course you will conduct guided research projects and develop and conduct your own research study. In preparation for the work in this course, you will be asked to read the textbook, complete assignments, read research articles and complete write-ups of the research studies we conduct. Another major component of the course is learning how research in psychology is disseminated, primarily through writing, specifically in APA format (more on this later).
As a part of this course, you will often be asked to work in groups, make presentations and participate often. You'll get out of the course what you put in, and it will go faster and be much more fun if you dive right in. Along the way, I hope to help you develop skills that will benefit you in graduate school and/or the work force.

Results

By the end of the semester, you should be able to:
1. Identify the major approaches to conducting research in psychology and understand the advantages and disadvantages to these methods.
2. Develop your skills in reading research analytically and writing formal APA papers.
3. Research, prepare, conduct and report on the findings of your own experimental study.
4. Assess the validity of research claims made in academic articles or the mainstream media.

The goals in this course are aligned with the APA Guidelines for the Undergraduate Psychology Major (http://www.apa.org/ed/precollege/about/psymajor-guidelines.pdf). The course is intended to fulfill Goal 2 (Research Methods in Psychology) but is not limited to this goal. As an undergraduate major in psychology, I encourage you to read through each of the 10 goals and specific outcomes enumerated in this document.

Discussion

Students who have taken 270 find it to be a good introduction to research and writing in psychology. The workload is commiserate with a 4 credit hour class. Your peers have said the following:
"I learned how to think critically about studies, both as a researcher & consumer of research."
"I realized all the work that goes into setting up an experiment, collecting data, and then explaining it. It is not as simple as I thought and this class has made me appreciate those who do research for a living. It is an extremely challenging but rewarding experience."
Whatever your level of expertise in research methodology, we hope that you will continue to learn how complex and interesting conducting psychological research can be.

Your 270 Resources

Dr. Viji Sathy
Davie Hall Room 332
I'm on the third floor just in front of the stairs. Feel free to stop by and introduce yourself! Office hours will be posted on Sakai through the Sign-up tool.
viji.sathy@unc.edu

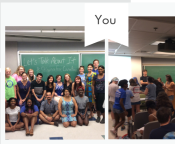
For fastest response, please direct questions about the course (concepts, deadlines, assignments, etc.) to your TA first. If you'd like to direct a question to me, please be sure to include your name and the course number in your email. Allow up to 24-48 hours for a response, not including weekends. If you haven't heard back from me in this time, please resend the message.

Cell phone: [redacted]

Email is preferred, but emergencies come up, so call me at this number between 7am-11pm. Please no text msgs.

Your TA's and ULA
There are 2 TA's for this course and one undergrad. learning asst. in the course.You can find their contact information on the course site (Resources>Welcome).

Course Site
We will be using Sakai for course information, required materials and grades. You can access Sakai at http://sakai.unc.edu.



*PSYC 101, and 210 or 215. You must have completed Psyc 210 or 215 prior to this course or have received course credit for it. There are no exceptions. This course picks up where statistics concluded, and you will find it very challenging if you have not completed it. If you did complete it, but are feeling rusty on the material, I'd encourage you to do the statistics reviews on the course site.

COURSE EXPECTATIONS

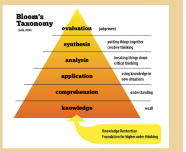
This course has been carefully designed to provide incentives to learn and employ higher levels of Bloom's Taxonomy: analysis, synthesis and evaluation.

The course can only fulfill these goals if you promise the following in return:

1. Attend and participate in class. This course will rely heavily on what you do in class meetings. For this format to succeed, you should show up on time and participate in class. You will receive points for participation in this course through class assignments and exercises (see grading for more information). This course will require you to use your laptop and/or cell phone during class time. While I recognize that you are an excellent multi-tasker, research suggests that your peers are not. Please be respectful of your classmates and restrict your use of digital devices to course content. If we see that you or your peers are distracted, we will ask you to put your devices away and you may forfeit your ability to earn participation points that day. There will be times when you have completed your work or answered a poll question, but your peers have not. We ask that you assist your peers when appropriate or use the time to review your notes while you wait. I understand that your devices connect you to your friends and family (a wonderful thing!) but the classroom should be a place apart, however briefly (even if it seems like an eternity to you), from the outside world and distractions. You will learn more if you concentrate on the course while you are here and your classmates will thank you for not impeding their ability to learn.

2. Read the assigned materials. The textbook and research articles we read will provide us with the common ground upon which we will base our conversations. Without that common ground, our conversations will lose their richness. To help you keep up with the readings, there will be class assignments about the material.

3. Complete the required assignments in a timely fashion. The assignments in this course provide you with both informal and formal opportunities to demonstrate your comprehension of research methods in psychology. The topics in the course are cumulative and you will get the most out of this course if you turn in your work on time. When your work is done in time, we can evaluate it and return it in a timely manner. There is a penalty that accrues daily for assignments that are turned in late. Extensions require one full day's advance approval from me or your TA. Excuses related to computer failures or incorrectly uploaded documents are NOT valid excuses. Please see my recommendations for backing up your work (Resources>Welcome...). Thanks for helping us help you in the course by sticking to our schedule.



JUST FOR FUN (Yes, I meant fun and totally optional.)
Search Group Page: Psyc 210 and 270
@vijisathy
https://www.pinterest.com/vijisathy/statistics-science-fun/

ACCESSIBILITY RESOURCES
UNC-CH provides accommodations for any student with documented disabilities. If you have a disability and believe you require accommodations, please contact the Department of Accessibility Resources at http://accessibility.unc.edu. Please contact me early in the semester so we can make any necessary arrangements and discuss the learning checks.

SEE, SAY, DO SOMETHING
We're happy you are here and eager to learn. Despite our best intentions to follow a plan, life may throw us a curve ball. If you or someone you know is experiencing some distress or you are concerned about the well-being of a student, please report it here: https://deanofstudents.unc.edu/carereport It is important to support one another. If you see something, say and do something.

THE LOGISTICS

Course meets weekly on Thursdays at 3:30pm in New East 102.
There are also twice weekly lab hours in Davie 110 (see schedule online). Lab hours are not optional or interchangeable. If you foresee a conflict in attending lab regularly please see me or your TA immediately so that we can attempt to register you for a section that fits your schedule.

REQUIRED TEXTS & SOFTWARE

BOOK: McBride, D. M. The process of research in psychology, 2nd ed or up. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.
This is a required text (most editions are fine). These are available at the bookstore and book sellers online. The text is also available as an e-textbook. I have placed a copy of the textbook on reserve at the undergraduate library.

SPSS: you will be using the statistical software package SPSS in this course. You can access SPSS in the lab. SPSS is also available on campus at the Odum Institute (http://its.unc.edu/labs) as well as on your own machine through the virtual lab (https://virtuallab.unc.edu). Details can be found on the course site.

ARTICLES: Articles assigned in the course can be accessed through the UNC library. Most articles will be accessible through the e-journals site (http://www.lib.unc.edu/).

COURSE SCHEDULE

The course schedule is posted on Sakai and can be found here: bit.ly/270SpringSchedule. We may discover that we want to spend more time on certain topics and less time on others. I'll consider changing the schedule if such a change would benefit most students' learning in the course. I'll notify you if there are any changes to the schedule as soon as possible. The learning checks and final exam dates are fixed.

Assignments & Evaluation

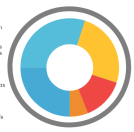
Your grade in this course will be based on a number of components. If you'll recall from your statistics class one or two extreme scores can have a large impact, so I've designed the course to draw from a number of smaller components. This course is a 4-credit hour course. As such, it will contain about 33% more work than a typical course. My intention is to provide incentives to stay on top of your work, and continually assess mastery of material, but also to make the course as enjoyable as possible.

The following outlines the points possible for each of the graded components. A full breakdown of the components can be found on the course site gradebook. You will have 2 weeks from when a grade is issued for an assignment/exercise to discuss the grade or make up work from an excused absence. After the 2 weeks, the grade that is issued is fixed.

YOUR COURSE GRADE: 500 POINTS

150: INDEPENDENT RESEARCH PROJECT

The final project is the culmination of all of your work in the course and we will work together to help you meet interm deadlines that will allow you to design, implement, analyze data from and disseminate findings to your peers by the end of the term. Your grade on this project will be comprised of the write-up of the final project and associated final project assignments (proposal and literature review), the quality and professionalism of your presentation of your experiments by peers, peer review contribution as well as peer and TA review of contribution to the group if the project is done in a group. Detailed information about the independent research project can be found online. As an added incentive to come up with a great final project, a bonus will be awarded for best project (details online).



125: DIRECTED RESEARCH PROJECTS

In preparation for the final project, we will conduct two directed research projects. The topics are fixed, but class data will be used. Grading of these projects include participation, write-up and peer review contribution. Please plan to attend on the days we collect data and complete write-ups of the results of the directed research projects. The details of the projects will be provided to you after data collection is complete. A detailed grading rubric is also provided in the project documentation, you are strongly encouraged to read through it prior to handing in your papers.

70: LAB ASSIGNMENTS

In your labs, you will also be completing assignments and making presentations. The presentations will be graded. A random selection of assignments from the labs will be used to make up the lab grade. There are no make-ups for these assignments.
In order for the assignments to be considered complete, it must be done in class/lab and address the question or assigned work (i.e., cannot be off-topic or blank).

30: CLASS ASSIGNMENTS

In the larger class meeting, we will use a combination of polleverywhere, in-class quizzes and practices to comprise this portion of your grade. The practices will be collected during class time. A few of these will be collected at random for this grade. To receive credit it must be completed satisfactorily and submitted prior to the end of the class period.

125: FINAL EXAM

A comprehensive multiple-choice final exam covering all aspects of the course. To help you prepare for the final exam, there will be two learning checks during the semester. These are much like mid-terms but carry the weight of a typical class assignment.

GRADE INTERPRETATION

The grading scale will follow a standard scale (scores above 450 = A- or A, 400-449 = B- to B+, etc.). Adjustments may be made to account for section differences as well as adherence to the University's grading policy. As outlined more fully in the UNC undergraduate bulletin (www.unc.edu/ugradbulletin/procedures1.html) grades are defined as follows:

A – Mastery of course content. The A grade states clearly that a student has shown such outstanding promise in the aspect of the discipline under study that he/she may be strongly encouraged to continue.

B – Strong performance. The B grade states that the student has shown solid promise in the aspect of the discipline under study.

C – A totally acceptable performance. The C grade states that while not yet showing any unusual promise, the student may continue to study in the discipline.

D – A marginal performance. The D grade states that the student has given no evidence of prospective growth in the discipline; an accumulation of D grades should be taken to mean that the student would be well advised not to continue in the academic field.

F – An unacceptable performance. The F grade indicates that the student's performance in the required exercises has revealed almost no understanding of the course content.

ACADEMIC HONESTY

I expect that all the work you produce for this course will be your own. Your participation in this course comes with the expectation that your work will be completed in full observance of the Honor Code (http://honor.unc.edu/). You should not read or in other ways use written work that other students have prepared for PSYC 270 in completing your assignments or exam. This applies to work done by other students in your own section, in other sections, or from past semesters.

Furthermore, you are not to copy or post course materials (notes, videos, practice questions, etc.) online without the instructor's permission.

If you plagiarize any material from outside sources for your written work or presentations in this course, or on the final exam, it will result in an F for that assignment/exam. There are no exceptions to this and no second chances. As much of the work we do in this course is group-oriented, the line between academic honesty/dishonesty can become fuzzy. Please read my guidelines for this course (under Resources>Welcome to Psyc 270). Please don't be tempted to take the "easy" way out. You are here to learn. If you find yourself in the situation where you think you may have taken on more than you can handle, please talk to your TA or Dr. Sathy. We may be able to help you find a better solution that is in the spirit of learning.

THRIVE

Your instructional team supports the thrive @Carolina initiative.

We believe students THRIVE when they:
- Take full advantage of the breadth and depth of our curriculum
- Set academic and personal goals
- Take responsibility for their education, choices, & decisions

WELCOME!

Lastly, I'd like to share this quote with you because I share this philosophy:

"We can all work together to create and sustain the kind of community where all feel welcome, respected, and free to pursue their dreams and goals and become their best and truest selves. I want to make it clear that no member of our community is less important than any other. None of us should be made to feel – in our classrooms, libraries, or laboratories, or in our offices or residence halls, or in any public or private place – that our presence here is anything other than an achievement rightly earned and celebrated." Chancellor Folt

Congratulations on your achievement.
Welcome to Psyc 270, let's get to work!

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