



Research Methods in Psychology

PSY 3213, CRN 10969

Spring 2012

Credit hours: 3

Class time: Monday 11:00 AM – 1:45 PM

Class location: Ben Hill Griffin Hall 215

Please note that on April 2nd and April 9th we will be meeting at the University Library Classroom 438

Instructor: Elena Stepanova, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Psychology

Email: estepanova@fgcu.edu

Phone: 239-590-1513

Office: Modular 1, Rm. 9

Office Hours: 2:00- 4:00 PM, Monday and Tuesday, and by appointment

Required Texts

Pelham, B. P., & Blanton, H. (2007). *Conducting Research in Psychology: Measuring the Weight of Smoke* (3rd Edition). Wadsworth, Cengage Learning.

American Psychological Association (2009). *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th Ed.)

Course Prerequisites

PSY 2012 with a minimum grade of C and STA 2122 with a minimum grade of C and STA 2023 with a minimum grade of C and (PSY 3017 with a minimum grade of C or PSY 3044 with a minimum grade of C).

Course Description

This course covers “logic of experimental design, concepts of control, ethical issues in the conduct of laboratory and applied research, and analysis of experimentally obtained data.”

Course Overview

This course will explore the principal research methods used in psychology; teach you some of the skills necessary to conduct research; help you to be better informed and more careful evaluators of research conducted in psychology, medicine, public health, etc.

Course Objectives and Outcomes

As a result of taking this course, you will

- Learn the principal research methods used in psychology
- Learn some of the skills necessary to conduct research in psychology, which include (a) how to formulate testable research questions (*aka* hypotheses); (b) how to approach the statistical analysis of the data and (c) how to communicate the purpose or rationale of your study and how it was conducted, as well as your findings in a manner that is both clear and consistent with formally accepted standards of scientific reporting. You may find it helpful to approach this course as one

would a language course, because in many ways the purpose of this course is to teach you the “language” of psychology.

- Share with others the intellectual excitement that can come from the pursuit of knowledge
- Learn to apply information obtained to your future endeavors, academic or not

Course Web Site

Syllabus, announcements, hand-outs, EC opportunities and other course-related information can be found on ANGEL.

On-line Workbook (free)

http://www.wadsworth.com/cgi-wadsworth/course_products_wp.pl?fid=M20b&product_isbn_issn=9780534532949&token=

Course Format

This course will consist of a combination of lectures, discussions, hands-on demonstrations, debates and games to help you master the content.

Grading

Grades will be based on **two exams, completion of CITI training, a research proposal topic, a theory paper, a method section paper and a full research paper**. Also, a number of extra-credit opportunities will be available throughout the semester. Your grade will be calculated as a percentage (out of 200 points) on the basis of the following scoring:

1. Two exams (80 total, 40 points each)
2. Completion of CITI training (10 points)
3. Research proposal topic (10 points)
4. Theory paper (20 points)
5. Method section paper and associated materials (35 points)
6. Final research paper and associated materials (45 points)

Minimum percentage points (and actual points) required for each final grade are as follows: A = 93 (186), A- = 90 (180), B+ = 88 (176), B = 83 (166), B- = 80 (160), C+ = 78 (156), C = 73 (146), C- = 70 (140), D+ = 68 (136), D = 63 (126), D- = 60 (120). If you are taking this class Pass-Fail you must earn a C- or better to earn a passing grade.

A grade of incomplete is normally not given, unless there are highly extenuating circumstances that are documented in a timely manner. When such circumstances occur prior to the deadline for dropping a course, students are encouraged to drop the course rather than request an incomplete.

The instructor will be posting your scores for exams and assignments and EC points throughout the course of the class on ANGEL. In an event of a grade dispute, email the instructor and arrange an appointment. Note that instructor will *not* engage in a grade dispute over the phone.

All written assignments and associated materials should be turned in at the beginning of the class on the day they are due unless otherwise indicated. All written assignments should be turned in as hard copies, no emails. There is a 10% penalty for each day an assignment is late, without exception, with the first penalty occurring at 11:15 AM and each subsequent penalty occurring at 24-hour intervals thereafter. Note: do not turn in late assignments under an office door or in a mailbox – it might be several days before someone finds it, and the penalty will be assessed based on when your instructor first sees it. Make sure to physically hand your written assignments to the instructor. Do not submit your late assignments by email.

Exams

As shown on the course calendar, the course has been divided into two units. There will be one exam per unit. The exams will only cover material presented in their respective units. Also, there is no cumulative final exam, and students will be told in advance what material the final exam will cover. All exams will consist of a variety of formats, including, but not limited to: multiple choice, matching, and true-false questions. Students are expected to take all exams during class on the announced exam dates. In an event of highly extenuating circumstances (e.g., death of a close relative or serious personal illness), please contact the instructor ASAP. You will be asked to provide **a written documentation**, and a make-up might be arranged. Minor illness, death of a person other than a close relative, etc., is *not* excused.

CITI Training

All students in this course are required to complete CITI training before they start collecting data. Please see instructions at <http://www.fgcu.edu/ORSP/Compliance/CITIregistrationNov2010.pdf>

You will need to print your completion certificate and turn it in on **March 12th**. The training takes several hours, so please plan your time accordingly. If you have already completed this training, please log into CITI system and reprint your completion certificate. You will not be allowed to start data collection until you complete this training.

Research Proposal Topic, Theory Paper, Method Section Paper, and Final Research Paper

For this class, you will have to write an APA-style research paper that answers a research question of your choice. Because you will have to collect data to answer your research question, this will be a group project. The class will be split into 10 groups of three. You will have a choice to select your partners, but if you do not find partners by **Jan. 30th**, I will assign you to a group. *Each group will have to agree on a research question, design a study that answers their question, prepare all the materials for their study, coordinate and complete data collection and conduct data analyses together.* However, all members of each group will write a Research Proposal topic, Theory Paper, Method Section, and Final Research Paper *independently, without consultation with each other.*

Guidelines for all papers and supplemental materials will be provided in class and placed on ANGEL. You are strongly encouraged to contact the instructor—individually or as a group—to assist you with any questions you have at any stage of the project.

If a group member does not contribute at various stages of the project (e.g., does not participate in formulating research question, preparation of research materials, data collection and analyses), it is the responsibility of other group members to inform the instructor about the situation. Group members who have not completed their shared group work **will be penalized, up to 100% for an assignment.** Additionally, each group member will have to sign an acknowledgment that they have equally contributed to the shared work load of this project. No free riders are allowed in this class!

Research Proposal Topic

Your research proposal topic should be a succinct description (1 page, double-spaced) of a research question you will be addressing in the final research proposal paper. The deadline to submit it is **Feb 6th**. Important: no individual will be allowed to submit Theory Paper if (s)he has not submitted their research proposal topic. Your research topic has to be approved by the instructor before you can start working on your Theory Paper. If you submit your Theory Paper without submitting your Research Proposal Topic paper, you will receive 0 points for both assignments!

Importantly, when deciding on a topic for your research, please keep in mind the following guidelines by FGCU Office of Research and Sponsored Programs (currently under consideration, provided by Sandy

Terranova, Research Compliance Coordinator, sterranova@fgcu.edu). To avoid submitting an IRB application for class projects, the research must be limited in scope, will not lead to generalizable knowledge or be shared outside of the classroom and **DOES NOT**:

1. Collect personal information (name, SSN, or any code or combination of codes that can be linked to a participant's identity)
2. Involve the use of vulnerable participants (i.e. children, persons who suffer from impaired cognitive functioning prisoners, residents in a nursing home, etc.)
3. Involve asking participants about illegal activities such as shoplifting, underage drinking, prostitution, the use of drugs, immigration status, etc., which place the study participant and/or data at risk of subpoena
4. Potentially pose a risk of breach of confidentiality for its participants, such as one that asks about socially stigmatized behaviors and attitudes
5. Place participants at risk due to emotionally charged subject matter (including rape, sexual abuse, child abuse, suicide)
6. Involve sensitive topics such as sex or sexuality, death including suicide, drug use of any type, drinking alcoholic beverages, violence or violent acts, failure and/or inadequacy, depression, etc.
7. Involve deception
8. Involve participants who do not speak English as their primary language
9. Involve physically or psychologically invasive, intrusive, or stressful procedures
10. Have the potential to place the individual at more than minimal risk

If you are unsure whether or not your research topic meets these guidelines, consult your instructor before submitting your research proposal topic.

Theory Paper

As we'll cover in class, theory and explanations are very important to psychology research. At the same time that we cover the important components of different research methods toward the beginning of the semester, students will also be thinking of a research question that you would like to investigate in your Method Section and Final Research Paper. To answer the research question, students will need to identify a theory that can be applied to the topic. The theory paper is a first part of your final research paper, i.e. *Introduction*. Your research question should be supported by *at least 5 research papers/chapters* relevant to the topic that you chose. A paper describing the research question and summarizing and explaining prior research on the theory will be due on **Feb. 27th**.

Methods Section Paper and Supplemental Materials

This assignment will include three components: (a) Method Section itself, (b) an informed consent you will be using for your study, (c) and all necessary experimental materials you need to conduct your study (e.g., questionnaires).

For all student projects, it is recommended by the FGCU IRB that the studies are conducted following ethical standards which include the use of a written consent form, voluntary withdrawal from a study, confidentiality procedures, and other practices that would be appropriate if the exercise were an actual research study. Therefore, be prepared to write a consent form that you will be using for your data collection.

Final Research Paper and Supplemental Materials

The final paper should be an APA-style report, that includes cover page, abstract, introduction, method, results, discussion, references, figures and/or tables and appendix (if needed). You are required to revise your *Introduction* and *Method* sections to incorporate feedback you will receive from your instructor on Theory and Methods papers. We will collect data for your project using your classmates, however, you are allowed to recruit other participants as well (e.g., students from other classes, friends). You will analyze your data using SPSS software in class. A sample research paper will also be placed on ANGEL to assist you in writing your final paper. Please approach the instructor with any questions you might have regarding this paper during office hours. Your final submission will consist of (a) SPSS output to show your data analysis, (b) your

graded Theory and Methods papers and (c) your final research paper. The deadline for submission, **Apr. 16th**, will be strictly enforced.

Extra Credit (Grade Insurance)

A number of EC opportunities will be available and will be described throughout the course and placed on ANGEL. Note that you cannot earn more than 2.5% (5 points) of your grade on all your extra-credit assignments.

Important Recommendations

Mastering “language of psychology” requires that students work regularly and avoid procrastination and cramming. Attend every class session. Read the text and complete assigned homework prior to the lecture that covers the material. Come to the instructor’s office hours for extra help.

Regular class attendance is strongly recommended but not required. Some of the material discussed in class is *not* covered in your textbook. Students missing class are responsible for all material presented in class and for any modifications to the course calendar that are announced in class. If you expect to miss a class, make arrangements beforehand *with a classmate* who takes good class notes.

Prior to each exam, a review session will be held during regular class time. This session is *not* intended to replace class attendance and doing the homework on a regular schedule. *Prior* to the review session, you should have identified your areas of weakness and formulated your questions.

Academic Behavior Standards and Academic Dishonesty

All students are expected to demonstrate honesty in their academic pursuits. The university policies regarding issues of honesty can be found in the FGCU Student Guidebook under the ***Student Code of Conduct and Policies and Procedures*** sections. All students are expected to study this document which outlines their responsibilities and consequences for violations of the policy. The FGCU Student Guidebook is available online at <http://studentservices.fgcu.edu/judicialaffairs/new.html>

Disability Accommodations Services

Florida Gulf Coast University, in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and the university’s guiding principles, will provide classroom and academic accommodations to students with documented disabilities. If you need to request any accommodation in this class due to a disability, or you suspect that your academic performance is affected by a disability, please see me or contact the Office of Adaptive Services (<http://studentservices.fgcu.edu/adaptive/>). The Office of Adaptive Services is located in Howard Hall 137. The phone number is 239-590-7956 or TTY 590-7930. You can e-mail Adaptive Services at adaptive@fgcu.edu

Student Observance of Religious Holidays

All students at Florida Gulf Coast University have a right to expect that the University will reasonably accommodate their religious observances, practices, and beliefs. Students, upon prior notification to their instructors, shall be excused from class or other scheduled academic activity to observe a religious holy day of their faith. Students shall be permitted a reasonable amount of time to make up the material or activities covered in their absence. Students shall not be penalized due to absence from class or other scheduled academic activity because of religious observances. Where practicable, major examinations, major assignments, and University ceremonies will not be scheduled on a major religious holy day. A student who is to be excused from class for a religious observance is not required to provide a second party certification of the reason for the absence.

Important Dates to Remember

Friday, January 13, 5 pm - last day to drop/withdraw via Gulfline with 100% Refund.

Friday, March 23, last day to drop/withdraw without academic penalty.

Friday, April 27, last day to apply for grade forgiveness.

Other Policies

- **Use of cell phones and PDAs in the class is not permitted**, unless there is an emergency justification for such use. In that case, cell phones should be set to vibrate during class periods.
- **Texting is not permitted in class.**
- Students are allowed to bring laptops to class and use them for educational purposes only (e.g., notes taking). Emailing, instant messaging, social networking, gaming and other irrelevant activities are not permitted.
- **Please make it to class on time.** However, should some unforeseen circumstances hinder your prompt arrival, the instructor would prefer you arrive late than miss class altogether. **Please, do not make tardiness a habit!**
- If I need to contact the class for any reason, it will be by email. It is your responsibility to ensure that you receive your email from your FGCU account.
- Please do not wait until the last minute to contact the instructor regarding questions you have about exams or assignments. Always check the syllabus, handouts and materials on ANGEL for an answer to your question before contacting the instructor.

Course Schedule

Class Date	Topic	Reading Assignments	Other Assignments
Jan. 9	Introduction Course Overview		
Jan. 16	NO CLASS (MLK Day)		
Jan. 23	How Do We Know? How Do We Find Out?	Chapters 1-2	
Jan. 30	Validity, Reliability, and Measurement	Chapter 3	Group Info due (not graded)
Feb. 6	Common Threats to Validity	Chapter 5	Research Proposal Topic due
Feb. 13	Psychological Measurement	Chapter 4	
Feb. 20	Exam 1 Nonexperimental Research Designs	Review Ch. 1-5 and all relevant lecture material	
Feb. 27	Experimental Research Designs	Chapters 6-7	Theory Paper (Introduction) due
Mar. 5	NO CLASS (Spring Break)		
Mar. 12	Quasi-Experimental Research Designs Choosing the Right Research Design	Chapters 8-9	CITY certificate due
Mar. 19	Statistics	Chapter 10 And Appendix 3	Methods Paper and supplemental materials due
Mar. 26	Telling the World about It	Chapter 11	
Apr. 2	Collecting Data/Analyzing Data		
Apr. 9	Collecting Data/Analyzing Data		
Apr. 16	Putting Your Knowledge to Work	Chapter 12	Final Research Proposal and supplemental materials due
Apr. 23	Exam 2		

This schedule and the procedures in this course are subject to change. The instructor retains the right to make any changes necessary, including the due dates; in that case, the instructor will provide as much advance notice to students as is possible.