

RESEARCH METHODS, Afternoon

Fall 2008

Dr. Iver Iversen

Office: Bldg 51, 3441

Hours: Tue/Thr: 2:00-2:45; Wed 4:00-5:00

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A prerequisite for taking this course is completion of Elementary Statistics or equivalent with a grade of C or higher. Students who do not meet this requirement and students who are currently taking statistics are not allowed to take Research Methods and must therefore withdraw from the course.

I. Course Material:

Required:

- 1) Bordens, K. S. & Abbott, B. B.
Research Design and Methods: A process approach, 7th Ed.
Mayfield Publishing Company, 2008.
- 2) *APA Publication Manual*, 5th Ed.
- 3) Material presented on Blackboard for this course

II. Course Objective:

This course is organized according to the following assumptions and objectives.

1. This is a required course and, as such, should acquaint you with the various methods of scientific inquiry common in the field of psychology. The lectures and text materials as well as exams address this objective.

2. You will acquire knowledge about research planning, research design, and data analysis. In addition, an important objective of this course is for you to learn to search and review scientific literature as well as to write about experimental findings. The APA-style exercise, the APA-style experimental report, and the APA-style literature review requirements address this objective. You will also learn to articulate issues related to research methods. The class presentation and class discussions address this objective.

III. Teaching Methods:

Lectures will detail particular issues from the chapter material and give supplemental information. Lecture material is presented in the format of PowerPoint slides, which will be placed on Blackboard. Various handouts and homework assignments will also appear on Blackboard. Questions on exams will be selected from material we cover in class (including homework, class demonstrations, and class presentations) as well as from assigned material in the textbook that we do not have time to cover in class.

As part of the learning process, each student will give a brief class presentation on an issue relevant to the general theme of research methods in psychology. Class

presentations illustrate the application of methods and research findings and thereby broaden the scope of methods in psychology. Material from class presentations is included on the exams.

You will come to learn particular methods of data analysis including some methods of graphical presentation of data. We will perform some actual research, and we will analyze the data in the class so that you can learn the methods of analysis step by step from the hands-on experience.

IV. Course Requirements:

There are three exams. The first exam will partly cover material you are already familiar with such as drawing and interpreting graphs, calculations regarding central tendency, and some basic statistics (these are prerequisites for the course anyway). Exams consist of multiple-choice questions, short-answer questions, and questions regarding data analysis that may include drawing, analyzing, and interpreting graphs. It is recommended that you bring a ruler and a calculator for each exam.

Each student will be required to prepare:

- 1) three one-page summaries of published research articles (research summaries).
- 2) various homework assignments
- 3) a short exercise in APA-style writing (about 5 text pages)
- 4) an experimental report in APA style (about 10 text pages)
- 5) a literature review in APA style (minimum 10 text pages)
- 6) a presentation for the class (about 10 minutes)

1: A Research Summary is a short summary of a single published research article. From a list of such articles supplied by the instructor you select three to read and summarize, with one summary for each assignment. The main purpose of doing these summaries is for you to make contact with some existing literature and learn how to read it and how to summarize it for other people. These articles are found in the scientific journals in the UNF library.

2: To facilitate your learning regarding how to write an experimental report, we perform some exercises in class on writing abstracts, formatting Tables of data, drawing graphs from actual data, and describing results from experiments. There is some homework associated with these exercises.

3: The APA-style **Exercise** serves to familiarize you with the style guidelines generated by the *American Psychological Association* (APA) regarding preparation of scientific reports. The objective of the exercise is for you to learn the basic rules of formatting a manuscript. Therefore, there will be very little text to write. In class, we do a simple experiment and analyze the results as well as discuss why it was done and what the results mean. From this material you will prepare a very short article in APA-style, the APA-style exercise.

4: The APA-style **Experimental Report** describes a more comprehensive experiment we all do in class. Each student serves as a subject in an experiment on perceptual illusions. The data from the experiment are your results. In addition, your report should make contact with some of the available literature on the relevant subject matter, which you can find in the library. It is your responsibility to search for, locate, read, understand, and write about this literature.

5: The APA-style **Literature Review** describes in summary form some already published research. You choose the topic of your review from a list of topics supplied by the instructor. Based on your own reading of 5-10 published research articles on a particular topic, you write a review that outlines the reasons for the research, the main points of the research design, some results from this research, the implications of the results, and some suggestions for future research. The literature review should be based on publications that can be found in the UNF library or its electronic databases. Because the literature review is the third APA-style paper you write in this course, APA style mistakes are graded harder for this assignment than for the previous assignments.

6: The **Class Presentation** summarizes a particular research method from a published experimental report that you choose from a list provided by the instructor. The topic of your presentation should be different from the topic of your literature review. **Class presentations should focus on the methods used in conducting the research and on the results.** You are encouraged to use PowerPoint slides for your presentation. Each student must show at least three slides of method and results during the presentations. Figures from articles can be scanned and placed on PowerPoint slides. Try to avoid showing Tables of results because they do not present well on slides; show graphs or diagrams instead. Each student who presents in class should prepare a one-page summary of the class presentation to be given to the other students at the time of the presentation. Each student is required to prepare and copy his/her own 1-page presentation summary for handout on the day of the presentation. The main points of the class presentation material will appear on the exams. Class presentations are graded by the whole class and by the instructor.

Each assignment involving written material must be typewritten. For late APA-style papers, 5 points are subtracted for each calendar day the paper is late, beginning on the day the paper is due. On the due date, **papers are due in class when class starts** (see course schedule). You must personally present the paper to the instructor in the classroom. So, papers delivered under the door to my office during, or after class time on the due date are considered late by one day. For example, if you hand in your paper one calendar day after the due date it is considered late by two days and thus you will have 10 points subtracted from the paper.

Computer/printer/ink/paper/typist/USB-stick problems or car trouble and traffic jams etc. are not accepted as excuses for late papers. The only valid excuses for late papers are those that can be documented officially, such as medical problems.

Ethics: The student handbook describes the UNF policies regarding Academic Integrity (<http://www.unf.edu/student-affairs/student-handbook.html>), page S 53. Issues related to cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, and dishonesty, etc. are described here. You should read this material. The instructor will assume that you are familiar with and abide by these policies. For example, if you engage in cheating or plagiarism you will automatically get an F for the course, and the instructor will forward a letter to that effect to the Chairperson of the Psychology Department, to the Dean of Student Affairs, and to the Dean of the College of Arts of Sciences.

V. Grading:

Each exam contributes up to 50 grading points. The APA-style exercise, the experimental report, and the literature review contribute 25, 40, and 50 points, respectively. The APA-style assignments are graded for adherence to the APA style, the content, understanding of the issues reported, and the overall presentation (graphs, typing, spelling, etc.) The class presentation will earn you up to 20 points.

Exam I	50
Exam II	50
Exam III	50
Three Research Summaries (5 points each)	15
APA-style Exercise	25
APA-style Experimental Report	40
APA-style Literature Review	50
Class Presentation	20

Total: 300

Your final grade is based on the following table:

300-270 = A
269-240 = B
239-200 = C
199-150 = D
149- 0 = F

Homework: Various exercises will be presented for activity during class hours or for activity outside of class. The homework is not graded but receives some casual feedback from the instructor. No points are collected for the homework. However, you will not be able to answer certain questions on exams that relate directly to the homework assignments unless you have completed and understood the homework assignments, that is what they are for - to teach you the material as an actual skill. For students who consistently do not have the homework prepared when we discuss it in the classroom, the instructor will deduct points from the overall class total, up to a maximum of 10 points.

Extra Credit: Up to 15 extra points in total can be earned for the semester. One source is showing your completed APA-style papers to the instructor **before the due date**. The purpose of showing it is for you to get some simple feedback on the APA style and the overall content. The instructor will not directly read the paper word by word but will look

through it to catch big mistakes. To earn this extra credit you must present the **typed and completed paper** on an assigned date prior to the due date. After you get the feedback you can take the paper home and correct mistakes before it is due. You earn 3 points for each of the APA-style exercise, the experimental report, and the literature review. Another source of extra credit is that you can earn 2 points for each of the three APA-style papers when you **personally deliver the paper on time at the beginning of class on the due date and remain in class for that entire class period.**

In addition to all the points earned, it is required for a final grade of C or higher that all non-exam assignments are completed and turned in to the instructor. This means that for you to pass the course (C or higher) you must turn in the three APA-style manuscripts, the three Research Summaries, and give a class presentation in addition to having a total point score of 200 or higher.

Notice: There is no grading on a curve in this course. Thus, the point-based grading system allows for each and every student to earn a final grade of **A** for this course.

Exams: Each student must bring for each exam a light-brown Scantron sheet with 50 questions on the front.

Research Methods - Course Schedule, Fall 2008

August

Tue	26	Syllabus and Introduction	
Thr	28	Describe Data and Read Graphs	Chap 13 (pp. 387-404)

September

Tue	2	continued	
Thr	4	continued	
Tue	9	continued	
Thr	11	EXAM 1 (Chap 13, handouts, and exercises)	
Tue	16	Developing Ideas for Research	Chap 3
Thr	18	Visit to library	
Tue	23	Library Assignment Due Discussion of library assignment Discussion of actual research publication Do Research in Class	(handout)
Thr	25	Reporting Research Results	Chap 16 & APA Manual
Tue	30	APA style continued Res Sum #1 Due	

October

Thr	2	APA-style exercise due Do Research in Class	
Tue	7	Choosing Research Designs Discussion of class research	Chap 4
Thr	9	Single-subject designs Res Sum #2 Due	Chap 12
Tue	14	Single-subject designs continued	

Thr	16	continued Res Sum #3 Due	
Tue	21	continued	
Thr	23	continued	
Tue	28	Validity, reliability, scales APA-style Experimental Report Due (Begin Literature Review)	Chap 5 (pp.123-142)
Thr	30	Choosing and using subjects Sampling techniques	Chap 6 (pp. 157-163) Chap 9 (pp. 268-278)

November

Tue	4	Summing up	
Thr	6	EXAM 2 (Chaps 3, 4, 5, 6, 9, & 12 and experiment)	
Tue	11	<i>Holiday</i>	
Thr	13	Between-subjects designs	Chap 10 (except pp. 298-308)
Tue	18	continued	
Thr	20	continued	
Tue	25	continued APA-style Literature Review Due	
Thr	27	<i>Holiday</i>	

December

Tue	2	Specialized Research Designs	Chap 11 (from p. 325)
Thr	4	continued, and summing up	

Exam week:

Tue	9	EXAM 3 (Chaps 10 & 11, handouts and exercises)	
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