

5A-11

221W-01

Research Methods (Fall, 2011)
PSYC 221W-01 (formerly: PSYC 420)
Monday, Wednesday, & Friday 10:00-10:50
Fisher Hall 725

Instructor: Lori E. Koelsch, Ph.D.
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Office Hours: Monday 12:30-2:00, and by appointment

Course Description:

This course is designed to assist you in becoming an informed consumer and producer of psychological research. In order to accomplish this, you will be introduced to different theories and assumptions that underlie various research methods. This course will have a dual theoretical and practical focus. In other words, we will spend time learning about the philosophy of research methodologies as well as the “nuts-and-bolts” of different research methods. We will touch on a wide range of methods; however the focus of this course is on traditional quantitative methods and methodology. This is intended to prepare you to critically examine psychological articles in peer-reviewed journals, assist those of you intending to pursue graduate school in psychology, and prepare you become active consumers of psychological findings that are discussed in the media.

Class meetings will consist of a combination of lecture, discussion, and various media. I strongly encourage questions and discussion. In order to be prepared for discussions, you must complete the required readings **prior** to arriving to class that day. I also encourage you to bring your textbook to class daily, since it will be a helpful reference.

Course goals and assessment:

Below, I have restated some of the relevant departmental goals (in italics) along with the specific course goals and manner of assessment. It is likely that portions of this course will be relevant to other goals as well.

- *“Understand the fundamental concepts, issues, and interest areas of psychology, both as a human science and a natural science.”* This goal will be assessed by your performance on exams and quizzes, during which you will be asked to:
 - Understand the basic philosophical assumptions associated with qualitative and quantitative methodologies.
 - Be familiar with various research methods.
 - Understand the strengths and weaknesses of traditional psychological research methods.
 - Critically evaluate psychological studies, including those found in psychology textbooks and the popular media.
- *“Work with and apply ethical principles, both personally and in service.”* You will write a short paper about ethical principles in psychological research.
- *“Think critically and creatively about human psychology and life as a whole”* and *“Communicate effectively.”* Both goals will be assessed by your grade on the APA-style research proposal.

Note about Blackboard Portfolios:

If you are majoring in Psychology and have already taken PSYC 102 (Orientation to the Psychology Major), remember that you are responsible for preparing an electronic portfolio that demonstrates your learning and development as a student of psychology. To help you in this process, you are required to upload at least one assignment from this course to your Blackboard portfolio. You may do this at anytime during the semester, but it must be done by the end of finals week. You will not receive a final grade in this course until you have completed this assignment. For this course, you should upload your **ethics paper**.

Required Readings:

Textbook:

Neuman, W.L. (2009). *Understanding research*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Other readings

(*Selections from*) Gravetter, F.J. & Forzano, L. B. (2012). *Research methods for the behavioral sciences (4th ed.)*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

van Baaren, R.B., Holland, R.W., Steenaert, B. & van Knippenberg, A. (2003). Mimicry for money: Behavioral consequences of imitation. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 39*, 393-398.

Any additional readings will be posted on Blackboard or distributed in class

Reference Books (optional):

Schwartz, B.M., Landrum, R.E., Gurung, R.A.R. (2012). *An easy guide to APA style*. Los Angeles: SAGE

American Psychological Association (2009). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association (6th Ed)*. Washington, DC: APA.

This book is available behind the reference counter at the library. If you are a psychology major or intend to pursue graduate studies in psychology, it is highly recommended that you purchase your own copy. Do not purchase a copy from the first press of this book – there are multiple errors!

Evaluation:

Research proposal – Half of your grade will be comprised of work toward an original research proposal, which will be completed in steps throughout the semester. The proposal **must be in APA style**. All assignments related to the proposal will be worth 200 pts (or 50% of your final grade), and are broken down as follows:

Selection of topic: 5

List of articles: 20

Review of literature: 25

Method section draft: 40

Final document: 80

Exams– You will complete two Exams worth 100 pts each, for a total of 200pts (50% of your final grade). The purpose of these exams is to ensure that you are keeping up with and understanding the material.

Ethics paper – You will write a brief paper about ethical issues in psychological research. Further details will be provided in class.

Attendance and Participation - Attendance at all class periods is required. I reserve the right to randomly take attendance and dock/award points accordingly. Participation is strongly

encouraged. Although I value spirited discussion of topics, please remain respectful of your fellow students in order to maintain a safe and comfortable environment for everyone. There will be no formal grade for participation; however students on the brink of a higher grade may be bumped up if they have significantly contributed to class.

Final Grade Break Down:

Exam 1 - 100pts +

Exam 2 - 100pts +

Ethics paper - 30pts +

Research proposal (including all assignments) - 170 pts

Total = 400 possible points

Point Value/Grading Scheme

372-400 = A	332-347 = B	280-307 = C
360-371 = A-	320-331 = B-	240-279 = D
348-359 = B+	308-319 = C+	<240 = F

Academic Integrity

I assume that all students strive to maintain academic integrity. Please see <http://www.duq.edu/judicial-affairs/code-of-conduct/academic-integrity.cfm> in order to refresh yourself with Duquesne's policies. In our current Google/YouTube/Hulu/etc society it is easier than ever to *unintentionally* violate a policy. Even an unintentional breach of integrity is subject to sanctions. I strongly encourage you to speak with me if you have any questions. If I suspect that a policy is violated I will follow the procedures outlined by the University throughout the course of investigation and sanctioning process (if it is determined that a violation has occurred).

Disability Services

I strive to make my classroom a positive learning experience for all students. If you have (or believe you may have) a disability that requires accommodations please contact the Office of Freshman Development and Special Student Services in 309 Duquesne Union (x6657). You may also contact me individually, however you must have documentation in order to receive accommodations.

Additional Policies

- Use of cell phones (including texting) is distracting and is therefore prohibited. Cell phones must be silenced, but if you need to keep your ringer on due to extenuating circumstances, see me ahead of class. By the way, I can see you texting under the desk!
- I do my best to keep up with email, but please understand that I have many other responsibilities and cannot always reply immediately. I will respond to all emails within one business day (Monday-Friday). I **always** respond to email, even if to just say that I've received your message. If you do not hear back from me, assume that I have not received your email. It is your responsibility to keep track of email, and if you do not receive a reply from me you must attempt to contact me again or, better yet, speak to me in person.
- Late assignments will be penalized unless accompanied by proper documentation (e.g., doctor's note). **Late assignments will lose 5% of the final grade** per business day. All work **must** be turned in either through the Assignment area on **Blackboard** or by **hard copy** (either in class or in my mailbox). All assignments **must be typed**. Handwritten assignments will lose credit. **I do not accept assignments via email.**

Class Schedule

Date	Day	Topic	Reading
8/22	M	Introduction and Syllabus review	
8/24	W	Why do research?	Chapter 1
8/26	F	Why do research?	Chapter 1
8/29	M	Planning a study	Chapter 2
8/31	W	Planning a study	Chapter 2
9/2	F	Planning a study	Chapter 2
		Labor Day - no class - 9/5	
9/7	W	Finding research	Library
9/9	F	Ethics - Topic choice	Chapter 3
9/12	M	Ethics	Chapter 3
9/14	W	Ethics	Chapter 3
9/16	F	Sampling	Chapter 4
9/19	M	Sampling - Ethics paper	Chapter 4
9/21	W	Sampling	Chapter 4
9/23	F	Measuring	Chapter 5
9/26	M	Measuring - List of articles	Chapter 5
9/28	W	Measuring	Chapter 5
9/30	F	Exam 1	
10/3	M	The Survey	Chapter 6
10/5	W	The Survey	Chapter 6
10/7	F	The Survey	Chapter 6
10/10	M	Sample Study & how to write a lit review	See Blackboard
10/12	W	The Experiment	Chapter 7
10/14	F	The Experiment	Chapter 7
10/17	M	The Experiment - Literature review	Chapter 7
10/19	W	The Experiment	Chapter 7
10/21	F	The Experiment	Chapter 7
10/24	M	Nonreactive research	Chapter 8
10/26	W	Nonreactive research	Chapter 8
10/28	F	Writing a method section	
10/31	M	The numbers	Chapter 9
11/2	W	The numbers	Chapter 9
11/4	F	The numbers	Chapter 9
11/7	M	The numbers - Method section due	Chapter 9
11/9	W	The numbers	Chapter 9
11/11	F	Observing	Chapter 10
11/14	M	Observing	Chapter 10
11/16	W	Observing	Chapter 10
11/18	F	Comparing across cultures	Chapter 11 (pp. 308-317)
		Thanksgiving break -11/21-11/25	
11/28	M	TBA	
11/30	W	Exam 2	
12/2	F	Writing the report	See Blackboard
12/5	M	Writing the report	See Blackboard
12/13	T	Final proposal due by 10:30am	

**I reserve the right to modify this syllabus at any time.*