Research Methods

Fall, 2015

What: Psychology 45

When: TTh 2:00-3:15

Who: John Terrell, Ph.D.

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Office Hours: MW 4:30-6; TTh 12:30-1:30

Why: Course description: This course surveys psychological research methods. An emphasis is placed on research design, descriptive techniques, experimental procedures, and the characteristics of valid assessment tools. The course also focuses on the collection, analysis, interpretation, and reporting of research data. Cultural considerations and the ethics of research with human and animal participants will be included. Designed for psychology majors and others who require familiarity with such research techniques. You will be encouraged and expected to be a participant in the teaching process by being involved in class activities and exercises. The exams will contain some things that are discussed in lecture but not in the text, and some things that are discussed in the text but not in the lectures. So, both class attendance and reading the textbook are very important for doing well in the class.

Course outcomes are as follows:

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

A. identify basic principles of the scientific method and distinguish between scientific psychology and pseudoscience.

B. compare and contrast general research designs, including their strengths and limitations.

C. evaluate the quality of sources that report research findings, identify the research methods used, and recognize potential

sources of bias.

D. recognize ethical vs. unethical examples in the conduct of human and animal research.

E. identify correct examples of APA style.

Text: Goodwin, C., Goodwin, K. (2012). *Research in Psychology* (7th Edition). New York; Wiley Publishing

The textbook for the course is required.  Copies of the textbook can be purchased in the campus bookstore.  Please do not try to get through the course without the textbook.  There will be a copy of the text on reserve in the library also.

What, again:

Course Requirements: There will be three midterms and a final. All exams will be worth 100 points, and will be a combination of multiple choice and essay questions. Additionally, 100 points will be available by participating in class activities, discussions, and test review exercises. If you are absent from class, you will not be able to receive the participation points for the activity from that day, so continued absences will become a problem in the number of points that you have earned. If you are in class but fail to participate in a meaningful way (as determined by the instructor,) you will receive no points for the exercise. There will also be a term paper worth 100 points, which is discussed on the last page of this syllabus.

Exams:

Make-up exams will be allowed only in the rare case of extreme emergencies, and at the discretion of the instructor. Students are not generally given, and should not expect, a make-up exam to be allowed without written documentation of the emergency condition (illness, accident, family emergency, etc.), and then only if some notice is given in advance of the exam. The lowest of your midterm exam scores will be dropped in the evaluation of your final grade. This means that missing a midterm will not necessarily count against you, but missing two will certainly hurt your final grade. However, all students must take the final exam in order to pass the course and no make-up exams will be allowed for the final exam.

Attendance and Class Etiquette:

You should be on time for all classes, and especially for the exams, because very important information is often given at the very beginning (and at the very end) of the class period. If you are often late to class (or leave early), you won’t receive the participation points that are an important component of your grade. Also, tardiness and leaving early are both disruptive to the class, so a ½ absence will be assigned to those students arriving late or leaving early. If you accumulate 6 or more absences in the first 9 weeks of class, you might be dropped from the course.

Disruptive behavior will not be tolerated in class.  Disruptive behavior is defined as leaving class early, coming in excessively late, working on assignments for other classes, talking with other students during class time, texting or using a cell phone in any way, or anything else deemed so by the instructor. Students will be moved around in the classroom to prevent misbehavior. All cell phones and other electronic devices must be turned off before class begins, and they must be stored out of sight for the entire class period. Any student who uses, checks, or refers to a cell phone, or other electronic device or has any such device in sight during an examination may expect to receive no credit and a failing grade for the examination or no credit for the day's exercise or discussion.

Your first warning might be verbal for any of the above disturbances. The second time you may be asked to leave the class for 1 or 2 days (at the instructor's discretion) and counted as absent.  The third time you will need to see the V.P. of Student Services and/or sign a behavioral contract before returning to class. Your participation points will be deducted if you are disruptive in class during the exercise or discussion.

Special assistance:

If, after the first exam, you are not testing well in this class, please seek assistance for studying and test preparation.   If you have a verified need for an academic accommodation or materials in alternate media (i.e., Braille, large print, electronic text, etc.) per the Americans with Disabilities ACT (ADA) or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, please contact me as soon as possible. If you have difficulty with test taking and need some assistance on how to prepare for exams, how to study for exams, or how to reduce your anxiety before taking an exam, please see me several weeks before the exam and I will offer you assistance. Everyone has the potential to do well. Let’s do whatever it takes to make sure you get the extra help you need.

Me, again:

There are two ways to reach me if you want to during the course of the semester:     
               1. You can leave me a voice mail message. Since it is a voice mail system you may call it anytime 24 hours a day.  Please leave a detailed message with a phone number and the time you would like me to call you back.     
   2. The best way to reach me quickly is to email me.  I usually check email every day and reply soon.  My email address is john.terrell@reedleycollege.edu.  
If you do not have an email account you may open one in the Library Computer Lab.

Grades: Final grades will be decided according to the following scale. There will be a total of 500 points possible from the three 100-point midterms, the 100-point final, the 100-point paper, and 100 points available from in-class and participation activities (remember, your lowest test score will be dropped, but not the final exam score):

500-465 A (93%) 384-365 C (73%)

464-450 A- (90%) 364-350 C- (70%)

449-435 B+ (87%) 349-335 D+ (67%)

434-415 B (83%) 334-315 D (63%)

414-400 B- (80%) 314-300 D- (60%)

399-385 C+ (77%) Below 300 Don’t go here!

When, again:

Topic Readings

Week 1 (8/17-24) Thinking Like a Scientist Chapter 1

Week 2 (8/31) Ethics in Psychological Research Chapter 2

Week 3 (9/7) Developing Ideas Chapter 3

Week 4 (9/14) Measurement and Data Analysis Chapter 4

**Exam #1- (9/22)**

(On exam day, please bring a Scantron 886-E and a #2 pencil. The Scantron form can be purchased in the bookstore.  You will need a total of 4 Scantrons for this course.)

Week 5 (9/21) Experimental Research Chapter 5

Week 6 (9/28) Methodological Control Chapter 6

Week 7 (10/5) Single-Factor Designs Chapter 7

Week 8 (10/12-19) Factorial Designs Chapter 8

**Exam #2- (10/27)**

Week 9 (10/26-11/2) Correlational Research Chapter 9

Week 10 (11/9) Quasi-experimental Designs Chapter 10

Week 11 (11/16) Small N Designs Chapter 11

**Exam #3- (11/24)**

Weeks 12 (12/1-12/8) Observation and Surveys Chapter 12

**Term Paper Due- (12/4)**

Week 18 (12/14) **Final Exam**

**Thursday, 12/17**

**2:00-3:50**

*This syllabus is subject to change and/or revision during the academic term.*

Have a GREAT SEMESTER-If you have any questions, just ask!

**Term Paper**

1. Subject: Pick a topic that offers some controversy about the research methods in psychology, and offer both sides of the argument in your paper. Possible topics include ANYTHING THAT INTERESTS YOU! If you're not sure that a topic is appropriate (or possible), be sure to discuss it with me before writing the paper.

2. Length: 4 pages of text (normal margins, double-spaced, 12-point font, not including title and reference page.)

3. Cite at least 5 references (in either APA or MLA styles). Make certain that each side of the argument has at least two references in support. The point of the paper is to come to some conclusion about the debate. Be sure to do that without offering your opinion. DO NOT OFFER YOUR OPINION WITHOUT EVIDENCE.

4. **Triple check** your paper for grammatical and spelling errors because those elements will be considered, with content and originality, in the evaluation of the assignment.

5. Due by 5:00 on Wednesday, 12/4/2015. Those papers turned in early will receive more lenient grading, but late **(or e-mailed)** papers will not be accepted under any circumstances.

6.  **The term paper is a requirement of the course. You cannot pass the class if you do not turn in a term paper.**

The “P” Word

Please note that plagiarism is a violation of Reedley College policy. Anyone deemed to have submitted a plagiarized paper will automatically receive a failing grade. Plagiarism may include, but is not limited to, failing to provide complete citations and references for all work that draws on the ideas, words, or work of others, failing to identify the contributors to work done in collaboration, submitting duplicate work to be evaluated in different classes without the knowledge and consent of the instructors involved, or failing to observe computer security systems and software copyrights.