

Research Methods in Social Psychology (830:323:B6)
Rutgers University - Summer 2010

T, Th, F 6:15 – 9:15 PM (Tillett Hall 205)

Instructor: **Dr. Steve Kilianski** (skilians@rci.rutgers.edu)
609 Tillett Hall Phone: 445-4036 (Dept. office)
Office Hours: Prior to or following class sessions

Pre-requisites: Quantitative Methods (PSYC 200) *and* Social Psychology (PSYC 321)

Course Description

This is an *advanced* undergraduate-level course covering research methods in *social* psychology. You need to have passed an introductory class in statistics (i.e., quantitative methods) *and* social psychology to be eligible for this course. The course will emphasize the conceptual foundations and methodological approaches used in social psychological research (e.g., hypothesis generation and testing, reliability and validity of assessment instruments, internal and external validity of results, etc.). The course involves lab sessions in which you will acquire the skills necessary for designing and conducting research, analyzing data, and presenting findings. This includes using PsycINFO, creating files and analyzing data in SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences), and writing scientific papers in APA-format. There will be two written papers in which you report the results of projects, and a written "fictional" research study paper that you will turn in at the end of the course. There will also be one written examination (multiple-choice and short-answer).

Objectives

- (1) Mastery of basic principles underlying empirical research and the scientific method.
- (2) A thorough understanding of experimental and non-experimental approaches, and their comparative strengths and weaknesses.
- (3) Familiarization with a wide variety of techniques for assessing various social psychological variables - including content analysis, self-report measures, behavioral observation, and reaction time methodologies.
- (4) Mastery of the "rules" (both explicit and implicit) for successful scientific writing, and acquiring the skills to evaluate the research of others.
- (5) Attaining rudimentary competence in the use of SPSS software and APA style writing.
- (6) Advancing your interest in social psychological research and cultivating a passion for psychology as a science.

Class time will involve lectures, demonstrations, SPSS assignments, small group projects, and research preparation and presentation. The course is designed incrementally, so that skills learned in one lab assignment are critical for success at subsequent lab assignments. **Students are therefore strongly urged to attend all class sessions - if you anticipate absences, this is not the class for you!**

Grading Criteria (200 points possible):

Your final course grade will be based on:

25% in-class assignments (50 points total)

20% 2 research project reports (20 points each - 40 total)

35% Final exam (worth a total of 70 points). Exam will consist of 50 multiple-choice questions and several short answer "objective" questions.

20% Formal research paper (your individual "fictional" study) - 40 points

Final grades will be assigned on the basis of the number of points earned (200 total maximum).

Grades will be assigned according to the following percentages:

Grade	# of Points Required	Percentage	Grade	# of Points Required	Percentage
A	180	100 - 90%	C	140	74 - 70%
B+	170	89 - 85%	D	120	69 - 60%
B	160	84 - 80%	F	< 120	< 60%
C+	150	79 - 75%			

Exams. A final exam will be given covering all in-class material and handouts distributed during the course. It will be composed of multiple-choice and short answer objective questions. A make-up exam will be given only if (1) I am notified in advance via phone or email and (2) A documented medical excuse (from an M.D.) or evidence of death in the family (obituary, funeral notice, religious service, etc.) is furnished. **Exam will be on 7/9.**

Research projects and reports. Two small research projects are planned. Each one will require data collection, data entry, and data analyses. You will learn the necessary skills for each project during class meetings. These projects will also require a brief report. All papers will be written in APA style. On project 2, which will be conducted in small groups, you may turn in only one paper per group or individual papers. **Research project reports are due on 6/22 and 7/1.**

Formal research paper. The assignment requires generating an idea for a research study (specifically, a causal hypothesis derived from social psychological theory), deciding how variables will be assessed and manipulated (specifically, the independent variable), operationalizing the dependent variable(s), providing a statistical analysis of the results, then discussing their implications, the limitations of the research, and future issues to be explored. *You will not have to collect and analyze real data - you will make up the results as if you had done the study.* This assignment will require that you do outside reading (your report should reference at least six articles not assigned otherwise in the class) and that you write up your project in an APA style report (length: approximately 10-12 pages). A more specific description of this assignment will be distributed later in the course. You are encouraged to turn in at least one preliminary draft to me for review and comment upon, although this is not required. **Final reports are due on 7/9.**

Late assignments. *In-class assignments cannot be made up.* Late papers will LOSE 1 POINT for each calendar day (including Saturdays and Sundays) that they are late (unless you have made alternative arrangements with me). Also, please note that class attendance is very strongly correlated with success in this course. We will all be depending on each other, so please do not let your classmates down.

Optional Texts:

Smith, R. A., & Davis, S. F. (2005). *The Psychologist as Detective* (4th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice-Hall.

Cronk, B. (2008). *How to Use SPSS*. Glendale, CA: Pryczak Publishing.

Key Readings (on network drive in Tillett 205)

Wiederman, M. W. (1993). Evolved gender differences in mate preferences: Evidence from personal advertisements. *Ethology and Sociobiology*, *14*, 331-352.

Cohen, F., Solomon, S., Maxfield, M., Pyszczynski, T., & Greenberg, J. (2004). Fatal attraction: The effects of mortality salience on evaluations of charismatic, task-oriented, and relationship-oriented leaders. *Psychological Science*, *15*, 846-851.

*Haiken, W, Kallaur, D., & Lewy-Neumann, O. *The reliability and validity of the Pledge of Allegiance Attitude Assessment Scale (PAAAS)*. Unpublished manuscript submitted in fulfillment of course requirement. Rutgers University, Summer 2004.

Optional Reference Manual

Publication Manual (4th edition). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association. (APA style rules will be reviewed in class, and I will provide some handouts, but the manual (paperback) may be of considerable value.)

Required Materials:

Storage medium: A writable CD, or flash drive for saving files . **Bring one to every lab session.** Alternatively, you can simply send any important files to yourself as email attachments, and that would give you permanent and universal access to them.

COURSE OUTLINE AND SCHEDULE

Module 1: The Foundations of Empirical Research

- T 6/1 Course Introduction - Can Psychology Be a Science?
Read Ch. 1 and 5 in text
 PsycINFO & IRIS - Complete Worksheet (5 pts)
SPSS overview and tutorial
- Th 6/3 Descriptive Statistics and Inferential Statistics
 Samples and Populations. Measurement reliability and validity
 Read **Chapter 9 pp. 171-187**
SPSS Exercise I (5 points)
- T 6/8 Elementary Inferential Statistics: Chi-Square and the T-test
Read Chapter 9 pp. 192-201; Chapter 10
SPSS Exercise II (5 points)

Module 2: Project #1-Content Analysis of Personal Ads: A Replication Study

- Th 6/10 Systematic Observation & Content Analysis
 Read **Chapter 4 , pp. 59-70** in text
 Prior to class, **READ: Wiederman, M. W. (1993). Evolved gender differences in mate preferences: Evidence from personal advertisements.**
 Enter content analysis data in SPSS - I will provide results and statistics for the entire class. **Paper is due 6/22 (20 points)**: Paper includes Title Page, Abstract, Introduction, Method, Results, Discussion and References in APA style.
- F 6/11 Correlations and within-subjects t-tests
Read Chapter 9, p. 188-192 and review Ch. 10
SPSS T-test and Correlation Exercise (5 points)
 Review of APA format and style
- Preparation for next session:
 Think about an attitude issue you want to assess, and at least one group-based characteristic (e.g., gender, race, political ideology) and/or individual difference variable (e.g., personality trait such as self-esteem, gender role, authoritarianism, extraversion, neuroticism, religiosity, etc.) that you think might be related to the attitude being assessed. Also, think about behaviors that might be related to scores on your attitude instrument. Your objective is to test the validity (e.g., known-groups, convergent, criterion, etc.) of the attitude scale you will develop. **Read Haiken et al. PAAAS scale development and testing paper (on public drive in Tillett 205).**

Module 3: Project #2 -- Design and Analysis of Self-Report Measures

- T 6/15 Self-Report Methods - Reliability and Validity
Read Chapter 4 (pp. 70-84) in text
 Construct and Select Measures for Project 2
 (Small Group Project - Phase I).
 Note: If this phase is not completed, it can be finished on 6/17
- Th 6/17 Self-Report Methods - Reliability and Validity
 Construct and Select Measures for Project 2
 (Small Group Project - Phase I) – unless completed on 6/15.
 Obtain data from at least 15 respondents each and bring completed items
 to the next Tuesday class (6/22)
- F 6/18 Analysis of Variance – 1-Way ANOVA and post hoc tests
Read Ch. 11 in text
 1-Way ANOVA with SPSS (**5 points**)
- T 6/22 Analyze results from Project # 2 (Phase II). Build SPSS data file, code
 and enter data. **Assignment (20 points)**: Write up APA format research
 report. **Report is due 7/1.**
- Project 1 paper is due today!**

Module 4: Experimental Methods

- Th 6/24 Analysis of Variance – Factorial ANOVA: Main and Interaction Effects
Read Chapter 12 in text
 Factorial ANOVA with SPSS (**5 points**)
- F 6/25 Experimental Design: Issues of Internal & External Validity
**Cohen et al. reading (on network drive) – Be prepared to discuss and
 analyze their original data.**
 Mixed Factorial ANOVA exercise using Cohen et al. data (**5 points**)
- For next class: Formulate a research hypothesis involving social
 psychological theory. This needs to be a *causal* hypothesis, put to
 the test via an *experimental* design, that involves 2 IVs, in order to
 distinguish and report main and interaction effects. Think about how you
 would test that hypothesis (what are the IVs and how do you manipulate

them, how to operationalize the DV, etc.) and **write up an informal 1-page proposal to be submitted on 6/29 (5 points).**

- T 6/29 21st Century Research Methods: Implicit Attitude Assessment & Neurophysiological Techniques
IAT Lab Exercise (5 pts.)
Read Chapter 6, 7 (pp. 133-140 only), and Chapter 8
Review and Discussion of Research Proposals (due prior to class)
- Th 7/1 Multiple Regression Analysis – The ‘Swiss Army Knife’ of Inferential Statistical Tools
SPSS Lab Exercise (5pts)
Project 2 papers are due!!
- F 7/2 Is this a class period??? Check U. calendar
- T 7/6 TBA
- Th 7/8 Review for final exam**

F 7/9	FINAL EXAM & FINAL PROJECT PAPERS DUE
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