

**Research Methods in Social Psychology (830:323:01)**  
**Rutgers University – Fall 2011**

Thursdays (LAB – Tillett 205) 12-3:00

**Instructor:**           **Dr. Steve Kilianski** (skilians@rci.rutgers.edu)  
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Office Hours: Mon/Wed. 1-3PM or by appointment

**Pre-requisite:** Quantitative Methods (830:200); Social Psychology (830:321)

**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 PscINFO, 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 due toward the end of the semester. You will also present the "results" of that study via a PowerPoint presentation in class. There will also be 2 written examinations (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 understand and 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, small group projects, and research preparation and presentation (in writing and orally). In general, lecture material will be different from material presented in the text, although topics will overlap. 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 regular absences, this is not the class for you!**

**Grading Criteria (300 points possible):**

Your final course grade will be based on:

18% in-class assignments (55 points total)

20% 2 research project reports (30 points each - 60 total)

20% Mid-term exam (60 points). Exam will consist of multiple-choice and short answer "objective" questions.

22% Final exam (65 points). Exam will consist of multiple-choice and short answer "objective" questions.

20% Formal research paper (your individual "fictional" study) - 60 points

Final grades will be assigned on the basis of the number of points earned (300 total maximum).

Grades will be assigned according to the following percentages:

Grade	# of Points Required	Percentage	Grade	# of Points Required	Percentage
<b>A</b>	270-300	100 - 90%	<b>C</b>	210-225	74 - 70%
<b>B+</b>	255-269	89 - 85%	<b>D</b>	180-209	69 - 60%
<b>B</b>	240-254	84 - 80%	<b>F</b>	< 180	< 60%
<b>C+</b>	225-239	79 - 75%			

**Exams.** A midterm and a final exam will be given covering all in-class and text material assigned. The final will be comprehensive, covering the entire semester. Each exam 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. **Exams will be on 10/20 (Mid-term) and 12/20 (Final).**

**Research projects and reports.** Two 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 paper. All papers will be written in APA style. Guidelines for each paper will be available on the network drive in the lab. On project 2, which will be conducted in small groups, you will turn in only one paper per group. **Research project reports are due on 10/27 and 12/1.**

**Final research paper.** The assignment requires generating an idea for an experiment (specifically, testing an 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 (which you will make up), 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 your results as if you had done the study.* This assignment will require that you do outside reading (your report should cite at least five articles not assigned otherwise in the class) and that you write up your proposal in an APA style research 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, although this is not required. **Final reports are due on 12/20.**

Late assignments. Late assignments 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. Although it is possible to “make up” the assignments, past students have found this extremely difficult and it's a major inconvenience for me as well.

### **Required Text:**

Smith, R. A., & Davis, S. F. (2010). *The Psychologist as Detective* (5<sup>th</sup> ed.).  
New York: Prentice-Hall.

### **Key Readings** (available on network drive in Tillett 205 or via Sakai)

- 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.
- Bargh, J. A., & Chartrand, T. L. (1999). The unbearable automaticity of being. *American Psychologist*, *54*, 462-479.

### **Optional Reference Manuals**

*Publication Manual (6th edition)*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association. (APA style rules and examples from the 5<sup>th</sup> edition are covered in your textbook, but the manual (paperback) may be of considerable value, particularly because the text does not include the latest changes incorporated in the 6<sup>th</sup> edition.)

### **Required Materials:**

Storage medium (recordable CD, SD card or flash drive) **Bring one to every lab session.** An alternative is to email any important files to yourself. If you save files on the desktop computers in Tillett 205, there is no guarantee that they will remain there. Those computers are used by many classes with no restrictions, so do not take the chance of saving anything important there.

## COURSE OUTLINE AND SCHEDULE

### Module 1: The Foundations of Empirical Research

- 9/1  
LAB 1                      Review Syllabus, course procedures/policies, resources.  
**Read Ch. 1 and 5 in text.**  
PsycINFO & IRIS - Complete Worksheet (5 pts)  
**SPSS overview – complete worksheet (5 pts)**
- 9/8                              NO CLASS. Monday classes are being held today, not Thursday classes.
- LAB 2                      Measurement and Descriptive Statistics – Levels of Measurement  
9/15                      **Can Psychology be a Science?** Class Discussion  
SPSS LAB I (5 points)  
Read **Chapter 9 pp. 171-187**
- LAB 3                      Principles of Inferential Statistics - Samples & Populations  
9/22                      **Read Chapter 9 pp. 192-201; Chapter 10**  
The Chi-Square and the independent samples *t*-test  
SPSS LAB II (5 points)

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

- LAB 4                      Non-Experimental Methods. Read **Chapter 4 , pp. 59-70** in text  
9/29                      Prior to class, READ: **Wiederman, M. W. (1993). Evolved gender differences in mate preferences: Evidence from personal advertisements**  
Systematic Observation & Content Analysis  
Enter content analysis data in SPSS - I will provide results and statistics for the entire class. **Paper is due 10/27 (30 points)**: Write up Introduction, Method, Results, and Discussion (implications of research and limitations) in APA style.
- LAB 5                      SPSS T-test and Correlation Exercise (5 points)  
10/6                      **Read Chapter 9, p. 188-192 and review Ch. 10.**  
Review of APA format and style. **Review Ch. 14 in text.**
- 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. **Review Haiken et al. PAAAS scale development and testing paper.**

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

LAB 6  
10/13                      Self-Report Methods - Reliability and Validity  
Construct and Select Measures for Project 2  
Read **Chapter 4 (pp. 70-84)** in text. **Read Haiken, Kallaur, & Lewy-Neumann (2004)**  
(Small Group Project - Phase I).  
Obtain data from at least 10 respondents each and bring completed items to the next lab 10/27)

MIDTERM EXAM      Multiple-choice and short-answer objective questions  
10/20

LAB 7  
10/27                      Analyze results from Project # 2 (Phase II). Build SPSS data file, code, enter data. Assignment (30 points): Paper is due 12/1.  
**Project 1 Paper due.**

For next lab: Formulate a research hypothesis concerning a social-psychological phenomenon of interest to you (e.g. aggression, prejudice, conformity, compliance, persuasion, person perception, helping behavior, etc.). Think about how you would test that hypothesis (*specifically via an experiment*) and **write up an informal 1-page proposal to be submitted on 11/3 (5 points).**

### **Module 4: Experimental Methods**

LAB 8 (11/3)                      Analysis of Variance (1-way) – Post hoc tests  
**Read Ch. 11**  
Discuss Research Proposal Ideas. **Submit a 1-page summary of your research idea (5 pts.).**  
ANOVA with SPSS Part I (5 points)

LAB 9 (11/10)                      Factorial ANOVA – Main Effects and Interactions  
ANOVA with SPSS Part II (5 points)  
**Read Ch. 12.**

- LAB 10 (11/17) Experimental Design: Issues of Internal & External Validity  
Between Ss and Within Ss IVs  
**Read Chapter 6, 7 (pp. 133-140 only), and Chapter 8**
- Read** Cohen, Solomon, Maxfield, Pyszynski, & Greenberg (2004) – **Be prepared to discuss their design, method, and results, and re-analyze their original data.**  
Mixed Factorial ANOVA and  $\chi^2$  exercise using Cohen et al. data (5 points)
- LAB 11 (12/1) 21<sup>st</sup> Century Research Methods: Implicit Attitude Assessment & Neurophysiological Techniques  
Read **Bargh & Chartrand (1999) *The Unbearable Automaticity of Being***  
IAT Lab Exercise (5 pts.)  
**Project 2 papers are due**
- LAB 12 (12/8) **Explaining Variance with Many Independent Variables**  
Multiple Regression lab exercise (5 pts.)  
**Review for Final Exam**

12/20	<b>FINAL PROJECT PAPERS DUE</b>
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12/20	<b>FINAL EXAM 12PM – 3PM</b>
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