

**Research Methods in Social Psychology (830:323:01)**  
**Rutgers University – Spring 2012**

Tues (LECTURE – Tillett 207): 12-1:20 Thurs. (LAB – Tillett 205) 12-3

**Instructor:** **Dr. Steve Kilianski** (skilians@rci.rutgers.edu)  
 225Tillett Hall Phone: 445-4036 (Dept. office)  
 Office Hours: Prior to or following class sessions

**Pre-requisite:** 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" experimental research paper due toward the end of the semester. You will also present the "results" (you make them up – no data will be collected) of that study via a PowerPoint presentation in class. There will also be 2 written examinations, a midterm and a final exam (multiple-choice and short-answer), and several "pop" (i.e. unannounced) quizzes during lecture sessions.

**Objectives**

- (1) Mastery of basic principles underlying empirical research and the scientific method.
- (2) A thorough understanding of experimental and correlational 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, 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:

17% In-class assignments (50 points total)

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

17% Mid-term exam (50 points). Exam will consist of multiple-choice and short answer "objective" questions.

17% Final exam (50 points). Exam will consist of multiple-choice and short answer "objective" questions.

6% Unannounced quizzes in lecture sessions (20 points)

17% Formal research paper (your individual "fictional" study) (50 points)

6% In-class presentation (PowerPoint) of your "fictional" study (20 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 3/8 (Mid-term) and TBA (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 3/1 and 4/5.**

**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, 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 5/4.**

**Final research presentation.** Taking the results from your final project, you will present the work in class. This will be analogous to a conference paper presentation. You will be allotted 15 min. to introduce your topic, review your hypotheses and their foundation, explain your method, present your results, and discuss their implications and the research limitations. You must use PowerPoint presentation software, and include at least one chart illustrating your results. **Presentations will be done during the last 2 weeks of the semester and I will assign your dates/times. Your grade will be based on your classmates' and my ratings of your presentation.**

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 lab 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. (2004). *The psychologist as detective*. New York: Prentice-Hall.

### **Key Readings** (available on the network drive in 205 and on Sakai under “Resources”)

- 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 Manual**

*Publication Manual (6th edition)*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association. (An example of the latest APA format is available on the network drive in 205 and on Sakai under “Resources”)

### **Recommended Materials**

A flash drive that will allow you to save files and easily exchange them with classmates. You can also retain or distribute files as email attachments.

## COURSE OUTLINE AND SCHEDULE

### Module 1: The Foundations of Empirical Research

- LECTURE 1            Course Introduction & Review of Syllabus  
1/17
- LAB 1                 Can Psychology be a Science? Fundamental Issues  
1/19                    PsycINFO & IRIS - Complete Worksheet (**5 pts**)  
**SPSS overview**  
Read Chapter 1 in text.
- LECTURE 2           Principles of Statistics - Samples & Populations and levels  
1/24                    of measurement. Descriptive vs. Inferential Statistics  
Read Chapter 8 **pp. 166-183 and 188-198 in text.**
- LAB 2                 Measurement and Descriptive Statistics  
1/26                    SPSS LAB I (**5 points**)
- LECTURE 3           Inferential Statistics: The Chi-Square and the T-test  
1/31                    The null hypothesis, p-values, degrees of freedom, etc. **pp. ?? in text**
- LAB 3                 Using Inferential Statistics to draw conclusions  
2/1                     The Chi-Square and the T-test  
SPSS LAB II (**5 points**)

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

- LECTURE 4           Non-Experimental Methods  
2/7                     Read Chapter 4 **pp. 69-77 in text.** Prior to class, READ: **Wiederman, M. W. (1993). Evolved gender differences in mate preferences: Evidence from personal advertisements**
- LAB 4                 Systematic Observation & Content Analysis  
2/9                     Enter content analysis data in SPSS - I will provide results and statistics for the entire class. **Paper is due 3/1 (30 points):** Write up Introduction, Method, Results, and Discussion (implications of research and limitations) in APA style. **YOU CANNOT MISS THIS CLASS SESSION.**
- LECTURE 5           More Inferential Statistics: Correlations and Within-Subjects T-tests  
2/14                    Read Chapter 8 **pp. 184-187 and Chapter 9 pp. 207-211** in text.



LECTURE 8            Review for Midterm Exam.  
3/6

**MIDTERM EXAM**   Multiple-choice and short-answer objective questions  
**3/8**

### Module 4: Experimental Methods

LECTURE 9            Analysis of Variance (1-way and Factorial) - Main and Interaction Effects.  
3/20                    Read pp. ??? to ??? in text

LAB 9 (3/22)            Analysis of Variance (1-way and Factorial) - Main and Interaction Effects  
Discuss Research Proposal Ideas. **Submit a 1-page summary of your experimental research idea (5 points) prior to class.**  
ANOVA with SPSS (5 points)

LECTURE 10            Experimental Design: Issues of Internal & External Validity  
3/27                    Read **Chapter 6 (pp. 131-139) and Chapter 7.**  
Using mixed designs and multiple DVs to test a hypothesis. **Cohen et al. “Fatal Attraction” reading – Be prepared to discuss their design, method, and results, and re-analyze their original data.**

LAB 10 (3/29)            Understanding and Critiquing an Experiment  
Mixed Factorial ANOVA and Chi-square exercise using Cohen et al. data  
(5 points)

LECTURE 11            Research Methods in Social Cognition  
4/3                    Priming and Automatic Processing.  
Prior to class read: **Bargh & Chartrand (1999) *The Unbearable Automaticity of Being***

LAB 11 (4/5)            21<sup>st</sup> Century Research Methods: Implicit Attitude Assessment &  
Neurophysiological Techniques  
IAT Lab Exercise (5 pts.)  
**Project 2 papers are due!!**

LECTURE 12            Presenting Research to Colleagues – “What to do and what to avoid”  
4/10

LAB (4/12)	Multiple Regression Analysis & Factor Analysis: Advanced analytic tools in empirical social science research. <b>(10 points)</b>
LECTURE (4/17)	<b>Research Presentations</b>
LAB (4/19)	<b>Research Presentations</b>
LECTURE (4/24)	<b>Research Presentations</b>
LAB 4/26	<b>Research Presentations</b> (if needed) REVIEW SESSION FOR FINAL EXAM

5/4	<b>FINAL PROJECT PAPERS DUE</b>
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<b>TBA</b>	<b>FINAL EXAM</b>
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