

# PSYCHOLOGY 7: INTRODUCTION TO EXPERIMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY

## SUMMER SESSION A 2013

### SYLLABUS

Instructor: Alexander Swan  
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 Office Hours: Tue 12:30 – 2:30 PM

#### COURSE INFORMATION:

**MTW 11:00 AM – 12:25 PM**  
**Location: Phelps 1260**  
**Course Website: Gauchospace**

#### REQUIRED TEXTBOOK:

Morling, B. (2012). *Research Methods in Psychology: Evaluating a World of Information*. 1<sup>st</sup> Edition. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc.

#### SUPPLEMENTAL TEXTBOOK/RESOURCE:

- A companion website featuring a blog maintained by B. Morling: [www.everydayresearchmethods.com](http://www.everydayresearchmethods.com)
- Two professors from Cal State Fresno created a Research Methods site. Full PDF of book: <http://psych.csufresno.edu/psy144/AllReadings.pdf> OR Website with individual links for each topic: [http://psych.csufresno.edu/psy144/content/all\\_topics.html](http://psych.csufresno.edu/psy144/content/all_topics.html)

#### ADDITIONAL READINGS:

Additional journal articles will also be assigned for reading during the course, and they will be made available in a PDF format on the course website. Reading material should be read prior to the lecture in which it is assigned on the course schedule.

#### COURSE DESCRIPTION:

The purpose of this course is to introduce you to the diverse field of Experimental Psychology. One aim of the course is to familiarize you with methods and concepts of experimental psychology, including theories, the formulation of hypotheses, operational definitions, variables, and measurement scales. In addition, we will discuss different experimental and non-experimental research methods, when to apply them, and what inferences can be drawn from different designs. And finally we will explore ways of analyzing and interpreting data from different experimental designs. Throughout the course you will be exposed to a variety of past and current psychological research. Ultimately, our goal is to provide you with some of the basic necessary tools to examine the existing evidence about a variety of topics in the field and to be able to generate new ideas and ways of testing those ideas.

#### LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

By the end of the course, you should be able to

- Search for, understand, and *critically analyze* peer-reviewed and popular press articles

- Evaluate research studies in terms reliability and validity
- Compare and contrast the advantages and weaknesses of different study designs
- Generate new hypotheses and identify ways to test these hypotheses
- Analyze, interpret, and report results of studies
- Get hands-on experience with real-time data on classic psychological experience

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING:

|                                    |     |                          |
|------------------------------------|-----|--------------------------|
| APA Online Psychology Lab Project: | 30% | Monday, July 22, 2013    |
| Midterm:                           | 30% | Tuesday, July 9, 2013    |
| Final:                             | 40% | Wednesday, July 31, 2013 |

EXAMS AND COURSE GRADES:

- The midterm and final consist of multiple-choice and short-answer questions and are based on both the lectures and readings. The Midterm will cover material from the first half of the course and the Final will cover material from the second half. Although neither of the exams is cumulative, new material tends to build upon previous material. ANY material covered in the lectures or reading may appear on the exam. Some of the material in the reading will not be covered in the lecture and some of the material in the lecture will not be covered in the reading. You are responsible for both!
- Exams must be taken on the date scheduled. Vacation is not a valid excuse, nor is an exam scheduled at the same time. If you must miss an exam due to some emergency, then you can make it up by taking an essay exam. A doctor's note or some other formal verification of absence is required to make up an exam. This is the ONLY condition under which we will give a make-up. All make-up exams are ESSAY in format and must be taken during a make-up period scheduled for a time convenient for the TA. Make-up exams must be completed prior to the final exam.
- No use of notes is allowed for any exam. Please be aware that cheating on an exam results in a grade of 0 for the exam and reporting of the incident to the University Ethics Board. Cheating includes use of notes, books, cell phones, or copying from someone else's exam.

APA ONLINE PSYCHOLOGY LAB PROJECT:

- Too often in introductory courses do students get lost in the enormous amount of material that must be covered in a short period of time. PSY 7 is probably the worst offender. As a class, we will go through each stage of a classic psychology experiment through APA's Online Psychology Lab (<http://opl.apa.org>). This will hopefully give you some hands-on experience of not only being a participant in psychological studies, but analyzing and interpreting real-time data that the class generates.
- As a class we will go through each stage of the classic experiment in **Lexical Decision Making**. Each student in the class will act as a participant (no research requirement credit; discussed below). As a class, we will walk through the data tabulation, use a statistical package to analyze the data, and discuss the results and what they mean in the real world. Then, individually, you will write a small APA-style paper. This paper will briefly describe the methods used to collect data, what the results of the study were, and a small interpretation of the data. This project accounts for 30% of your overall grade, and

participation is MANDATORY. A rubric discussed at a later date will show a breakdown of the requirements for the project.

- When participating in the experiment online, please use this **CLASS CODE: 6322**

#### GRADING SCALE:

As you may know, your performance in this class will affect whether you will be eligible to declare a major in Psychology. Consequently, the Psychology Department has determined that this class be graded on a curve. The department grading policy appears below:

| PSYCHOLOGY  | DEPARTMENT | EQUALIZATION | OF | GRADING | POLICY |
|---|------------|--------------|----|---------|--------|
| <p>In order to ensure that grading procedures are consistent across all courses required for entrance into the major, the Psychology Department utilizes a grading policy that is applied to all pre-major courses (Psych 1, 3, 5 &amp; 7). This policy ensures that all students will be evaluated consistently across different classes and different instructors.</p> <p>According to this policy, approximately 10–15% of the class can receive a grade of A– or higher, approximately 40–45% of the class can receive a grade of B– or higher, and approximately 80–85% of the class can receive a grade of C– or higher. Thus, the final distribution of grades in this course will be based on these guidelines and on overall student performance. This means that your final grade will be based both on your <i>absolute</i> performance and on your performance <i>relative</i> to other students in the course.</p> |            |              |    |         |        |

#### RESEARCH REQUIREMENT:

A separate handout will explain the research requirement for this course. Each student is required to accumulate three (3) credits. If you fail to fully complete the research requirement (either Option 1 or Option 2), your final grade will be reduced one level after the calculation of the class curve (e.g., if you had an A–, you will receive a B+; if you had a C, you will receive a C–; etc.).

#### GETTING INFORMATION:

**TIP:** I use email for almost all communication. If you do not check your UCSB email often, forward it to an address you do check.

**Contacting Me:** The best way to contact me is always via email.

**Office Hours:** If you have classes during my office hours, email me for an appointment. In your email, give me a wide range of days/times when you are available. I will do my best to accommodate you.

#### COURSE WEBSITE:

The power point slides used for the lectures will be made available online after each lecture.

#### PARTICIPATION & ATTENDANCE:

- Due to the format of the class, participation during class will not be required. However, active participation is strongly recommended. Students who take notes, ask questions, respond to questions, and come to office hours are typically the ones who succeed in this class.

- Although lecture attendance is not required, it is highly recommended. You will be responsible for *all* material covered in lecture, some of which will not be covered by the textbook.

#### CLASS ETIQUETTE:

- Please do not use your cell phones during class. I would prefer them to be put on silent or off. If your cell phone goes off during class or an exam, please silence it immediately; do not let it ring through. I will remind everyone prior to exams to make sure their phones are turned off. Please refrain from text messaging during class. I know you think you're being subtle; I assure you that I can see you texting.
- Please do not leave the class partway through unless it is an emergency; it is very disruptive.
- Please have respect for the class, your peers, and yourselves by being fully present in the class. Please avoid anything not relevant to the class, such as sleeping or doing homework for other classes.
- **LATENESS:** Please try to arrive a few minutes before the start of lecture. We will begin promptly at 11:00 AM, and it can be distracting to me and to your peers if you arrive late. I will not keep you late.

#### DISABLED STUDENTS PROGRAM (DSP)

The DSP provides academic support services to eligible students with temporary and permanent disabilities. Please inform the instructor if you require special classroom accommodations due to a disability – you must register with DSP prior to receiving these accommodations. If you require additional time on an exam, please schedule your own proctor through the DSP and confirm the arrangements with our TA at least one week prior to the exam. Please contact the DSP office for information and assistance (2120 Student Resource building, 893- 2668, [www.sa.ucsb.edu/dsp](http://www.sa.ucsb.edu/dsp)).

#### COUNSELING SERVICES

If you are experiencing any difficulties meeting class requirements, or any difficulties in your personal life, please contact Counseling Services (located in Building 599). Counseling Services offers individual and group counseling, crisis counseling, stress-management workshops, self-help information, and connections to off-campus mental health resources. For information, please call (893-4411) or visit their web site ([www.counseling.ucsb.edu](http://www.counseling.ucsb.edu)).

#### ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated in any form. This includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, improper citations, or misrepresenting your work in any way. Students caught behaving in such a way will receive an automatic “0” on the assignment or an “F” in the class, depending on the extent of the infraction. At the discretion of the instructor, some students may be referred to Judicial Affairs for disciplinary action.

Please familiarize yourself with the university’s policy on academic dishonesty here:

<http://judicialaffairs.sa.ucsb.edu/PDF/academicintegflyer.pdf>

#### CHANGES TO SYLLABUS:

The Instructor reserves the right to make policy and course changes to the syllabus at any time with advance notice to students.

TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE:

*Note:* The schedule is subject to change depending on the progress of the course.

| Lecture | Day | Date | (week) | Lecture Topic                                     | Readings                          |
|---------|-----|------|--------|---|-----------------------------------|
| 1       | M   | 6/24 | 1      | Introduction/Explanation of Research Requirement  |                                   |
| 2       | T   | 6/25 |        | Psychology is a Way of Thinking                   | Ch. 1                             |
| 3       | W   | 6/26 |        | Sources of Information                            | Ch. 2                             |
| 4       | M   | 7/1  | 2      | Three Claims, Four Validities                     | Ch. 3                             |
| 5       | T   | 7/2  |        | Ethical Guidelines for Psychology Research        | Ch. 4; "Mind of a Con Man"        |
| 6       | W   | 7/3  |        | Identifying Good Measurement                      | Ch. 5                             |
| 7       | M   | 7/8  | 3      | Describing What People Do                         | Ch. 6;<br>Appendix A              |
| 8       | T   | 7/9  |        | <b>MIDTERM EXAM</b>                               |                                   |
| ----    | W   | 7/10 |        | Project Analysis & Discussion                     | Meyer & Schvaneveldt, 1971        |
| 9       | M   | 7/15 | 4      | Correlational Research                            | Ch. 7 & 8                         |
| 10      | T   | 7/16 |        | Simple Experiments                                | Ch. 9;<br>Appendix B              |
| 11      | W   | 7/17 |        | Presenting APA Results                            | Bem, 1995;<br>Appendix C          |
| 12      | M   | 7/22 | 5      | Confounding & Obscuring Variables                 | Ch. 10; <b>Project Papers Due</b> |
| 13      | T   | 7/23 |        | Experiments with More Than 1 Independent Variable | Ch. 11                            |
| 14      | W   | 7/24 |        | Quasi-Experiments & Small-N Designs               | Ch. 12                            |
| 15      | M   | 7/29 | 6      | Replicability, Generalization, & the "Real World" | Ch. 13                            |
| ----    | T   | 7/30 |        | Final Review                                      |                                   |
| ----    | W   | 7/31 |        | <b>FINAL EXAM</b>                                 |                                   |