

# PSYC 3301-801: Research Methods

## Course overview: #fakenews

Science is currently in crisis. In psychology, economics, biology, and even medicine, we're becoming increasingly aware that the scientific record is filled with false findings. How did we get to this point? Well, conducting high-quality scientific studies is difficult! It takes hard work and expertise. And it can be easy to misinterpret data, leading to false conclusions.

But don't despair! There *is* a solution, and it starts with you. Not all science is bad. This course is designed to introduce you to the fundamental skills you'll need, as a consumer of information, to recognize the questionable science that led us to the current crisis. And it's completely possible to do science well! So, equally importantly, this course will equip you with the skills to know *high-quality* psychological science when you see it, too. And should you decide to pursue research in the future, this course will introduce you to the core foundation you'll need to conduct good, strong, reliable science.

## Required Materials

1. Morling, B. (2017). *Research methods in psychology* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). Norton.
2. Poll Everywhere ([pollev.com/nwhudson](http://pollev.com/nwhudson))
3. A laptop computer for lab activities (see p. 3 for requirements)

### Professor

Nathan W. Hudson, Ph.D.  
[nwhudson@smu.edu](mailto:nwhudson@smu.edu)

### Lecture

Mondays & Wednesdays  
10:00-10:50am  
Fondren Science 153

### Lab

Fridays  
10:00-10:50am  
Fondren Science 153

### Lab TA

Diane Chao (N10)  
[dchao@smu.edu](mailto:dchao@smu.edu)

# COURSE LOGISTICS

## Learning Objectives & Skills

This course satisfies the following requirements in the University Curriculum: Information Literacy (IL), Quantitative Reasoning (QR), and Writing (W).

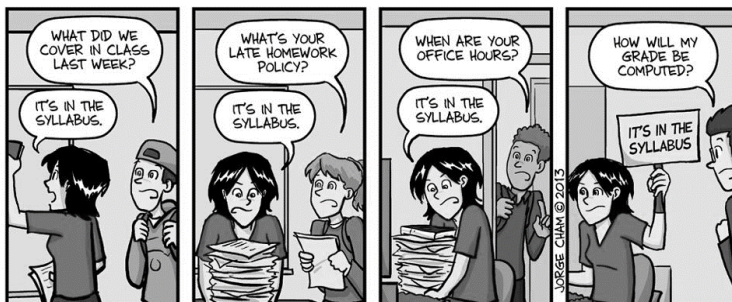
By the end of this course, you'll be able to:

- Identify different types of psychological research methods
- Understand common pitfalls in conducting and interpreting psychological research and how to overcome them
- Select and use appropriate research methods and search tools (IL1)
- Evaluate the strengths/limitations of various research designs (IL2)
- Collect, organize, and analyze data (QR1d)
- Test hypotheses and make predictions based on results (QR1f)
- Communicate quantitative information in writing (QR1g)
- Display basic competence in the research process by conducting a simple study and writing an APA-style report (W1)

## Course Format

This course is divided into lecture and lab sections. **Attendance is required for both lecture and lab.** Lecture is on Mondays and Wednesdays, and you'll learn all about how to do science well. On Fridays, you'll work with a TA to apply what you've learned by designing and running your own scientific study, analyzing the data, and writing a full APA-style report. As part of lab, you'll participate in activities that will give you the skills you need for each part of the research process. **Make sure to bring your laptop to lab!**

## Questions?



# IT'S IN THE SYLLABUS

This message brought to you by every instructor that ever lived.  
WWW.PHDCOMICS.COM

## Getting in Contact

The best way to contact me or your lab TA is through email (see p. 1). We're happy to answer most questions via email (although complex questions may require an appointment to discuss). We'll get back to you within 2 business days.

## Who to Contact:

**Contact your TA** for help with lab activities or if you'd like to review any of your grades.

**Contact me** with questions about course content or for help with lab activities.

## Office Hours

**Wed. 2:30-3:30pm** (Me)  
**Wed. 4:30-5:30pm** (TAs)  
@Expressway Tower 1300

It's best if you email us to let us know that you're coming (and why) so we can prepare.

If you can't make our office hours, email us to schedule an appointment. Please note, we need to schedule meetings several days in advance and may not be able to accommodate last-minute requests for meetings before exams or other deadlines.

## Laptop Requirements

A laptop is required for this course to complete lab activities. If you do not own a laptop, you may still take this course. However, lab sessions will not be as helpful, and you will need to complete all lab activities outside of class.

### 1. Microsoft Office (free for SMU students)

Your laptop must have Microsoft Office, including Excel and Word, installed. You must *install* the software; you **cannot** simply use the browser-based online apps (as some Excel functions that we will be using are not available in the browser-based versions of the software). Office is a free download for SMU students at [office365.smu.edu](http://office365.smu.edu).

If you have a Mac, you might need to update to the latest version of macOS (a free upgrade) to be able to install Microsoft Office. If necessary, update macOS and install Microsoft Office ASAP to avoid future problems.

### 2. Map Your U: Drive (free of cost)

In order to analyze data later in the semester, you'll need to map your SMU U: drive (the programs we'll be using can open only files that are stored on your U: drive). Contact the OIT Help Desk (214-768-HELP) or visit [wiki.smu.edu/display/TK/U+Drive+Information](http://wiki.smu.edu/display/TK/U+Drive+Information) to learn how to do so. Note that you must be on the campus network (Peruna Net) and/or using the VPN off-campus ([vpn.smu.edu](http://vpn.smu.edu)) in order to map and/or access your U: drive.

### 3. Apps.SMU: SPSS (free of cost)

As part of this class, we'll be using SPSS on [apps.smu.edu](http://apps.smu.edu). It's a good idea to practice opening the latest version of SPSS on apps.SMU early in the semester so that you'll be familiar with the process when we begin using it during labs.

#### Having Trouble with Apps.SMU on Your Laptop?

Most students encounter no problems or technical difficulties completing lab activities or using SPSS on apps.SMU. However, in previous semesters, a small portion of students have reported occasional technical difficulties with SPSS or apps.SMU. If you have trouble using apps.SMU or SPSS on your laptop, please contact the OIT Help Desk at 214-768-HELP.

Additionally, there are computers available for student use on campus (e.g., in the Fondren Library). Campus computers should have SPSS preinstalled. Thus, if you have trouble opening your U: drive or using SPSS on apps.SMU on your own laptop, try completing the assignments using a campus computer.

## Complete Computer Assignments Early

Please begin working on any computer-based activities early. You don't want to wait until the last minute to start an activity, only to find that (1) you don't know how to complete the activity or that (2) unexpected technical difficulties arise.

Ideally, you should begin all computer-based activities *during lab* so that your TA can help you get started. However, some activities are longer and will require you to work on them outside of class. Make sure to complete these activities early so that you have enough time to seek help if needed.

If you experience technical difficulties with lab activities, you can reach out to the OIT Help Desk (214-768-HELP) or use a campus computer (e.g., at the Fondren Library).

## Check Your Spelling

One common problem students encounter when using SPSS to analyze data is spelling errors. If SPSS throws unexpected errors when running statistical analyses, you should first check to make sure that you've spelled all commands and variable names correctly.

# GRADING

## Exams

There will be 2 regular exams and 1 comprehensive final exam. Each exam is worth 120pt. Regular exams contain 40 questions (3pt/question). The final contains 60 questions (2pt/question). Thus, exams are worth 360pt total.

Exam	Format	Chapters Covered
One	40 multiple choice questions	1-6
Two	40 multiple choice questions	7-9, 13
Final	60 multiple choice questions	1-14 (esp. 10-12, 14)

## Exam Policies

- Make-up exams will be offered only in the case of valid, dated, documented excuses. Job interviews, family vacations, personal travel, oversleeping, wanting more time to study, and non-emergency unexpected life events are **not** valid excuses. Valid excuses include:
  - Religiously observant students wishing to miss an exam due to holidays must notify me in writing **by Week 3 of class** (see p. 10)
  - Students wishing to miss an exam due to official, scheduled University activities must notify me in writing at least 2 weeks in advance, and provide an official travel letter from the University
  - Students wishing to miss an exam due to illness must provide a **dated** doctor's note saying they're too sick to take the exam
  - Students with urgent personal/family emergencies must provide dated documentation (e.g., police reports)
- Show up for exams on time. Once the first student finishes an exam, no one else will be allowed to begin the exam late.
- No cellphones, smartwatches, headphones, or any other technology are allowed at exams (make sure cellphones stay in your backpack/pocket). If a test protector even sees such technologies in your possession during an exam, you may receive a zero on the exam.
- Students with DASS accommodations for extra time on exams must schedule to take exams at the DASS testing center **at least one week before the exam date** (see pp. 10-11). *You must take the exam at the same time as the rest of the class.* It takes DASS time to initialize your accommodations, and accommodations are **not** retroactive; so, do not wait to contact DASS about your accommodations.

## Point Breakdown

Exams	360pt
Participation	40pt
Lab assignments	120pt
Lab attendance	30pt
Research report	220pt
Subject pool	30pt
Total Points	800pt
+Extra Credit	+50pt

## Letter Grade Cutoffs

Grade	Points Needed
A	720
B+	696
B	664
B-	640
C+	616
C	584
C-	560
D+	536
D	504
D-	480

## Grading Policies

- All grades will be posted to Canvas
- Final letter grades are based on the above point cutoffs, not percentages
- Participation, subject pool, lab attendance, and extra credit will be posted at the end of the semester
- Because all students must be graded with identical standards, there is no special extra credit. So, please do not email asking me to raise your grade

## Participation

You can earn up to 40pt toward your final grade by participating in Poll Everywhere polls during lecture. Every time you respond to a poll (whether you answer correctly or not), you will earn 0.40pt. Although only a maximum of 40pt (100 polls) will count toward your final grade, there are far more than 100 polls throughout the semester. Thus, **there are no make-up points**; but you can safely miss a lecture or two (or fail to respond to a few polls during lectures) without worrying about getting a lower final grade. **You must be in attendance at lecture to receive points for responding to polls.**

### How to Register for Poll Everywhere

1. Sign into this course's website on Canvas ([canvas.smu.edu](https://canvas.smu.edu)) and click the "Register for Poll Everywhere" link
2. Create a free account **using your @smu.edu email address**
3. When asked how you should be identified, enter your SMU ID number and click the "Update" button

### How to Respond to Polls in Class

1. Open [pollev.com/nwhudson](https://pollev.com/nwhudson) on your laptop or handheld device

## Lab Assignments

Throughout the semester, there will be 7 graded lab assignments, each worth 20pt. Your lowest score will be dropped.

The lab assignments all build upon each other and systematically prepare you to write your final research report. Some lab assignments can be completed during class; others will require you to work on them outside of class. Lab assignments are usually due **on Canvas by 11:59pm** one week after they are assigned (some are due in-lab, as noted in their instructions). Late assignments will receive a 10% penalty for each day they are late. No assignments will be accepted more than 5 days late.

## Lab Attendance

Attending lab is extremely important. For each unexcused lab absence, you'll lose 10pt from the lab attendance portion of your grade. If you have a valid excuse (see p. 4), make sure to email your TA documentation **in advance**.

## Mastering Exams

Exams in this course are tough! They consist mostly of *application questions*, which require you to understand the concepts well enough to recognize real-life examples of each concept. Just memorizing definitions without understanding them will not help you on exams!

So, to succeed on exams, you will need to study. Focus your study efforts on the lecture slides, but also read the textbook for more detail. Make flashcards. Practice them "both ways" (e.g., look at the term and try to remember the definition and then vice versa). Try to explain the concepts in your own words to a friend or stuffed animal. Don't cram; study the material slowly and repeatedly over time instead.

## Mastering Lab Work

The lab assignments will involve learning some new skills, such as analyzing data. The work you do in lab builds upon itself through the semester and will prepare you to write your final research report. Thus, it's critical for you to master each assignment, as you will revisit the skills it teaches in future weeks. Make sure to attend lab—and reach out to us if you need extra help.

## Research Report

Over the course of the semester, you will conduct a miniature psychology study, analyze the data, and write a full APA-style research report detailing your findings. In total, the research report is worth 220pt. However, this is broken into several assignments worth various amounts of points across the semester, as detailed below:

Week	Progress Milestone	Pt
3	Pick a group of 4-5 students	-
5	Preregistration due; begin collecting data	30
7	Literature Review due	60
8	All data should be collected	-
15	Final Research Report due	130

### Research Report Requirements

The full requirements for the research report can be found on Canvas. In brief, you will create a full APA-style manuscript, with: (1) a title page, (2) an abstract, (3) an introduction with literature review, (4) a Method section, (5) a Results narrative, (6) a Discussion section, (7) a references list, (8) at least one Table, and (9) at least one Figure. Even though you'll be working with a team to collect data, your report **must fully be your own, independent work**.

### Research Report Due Dates

The Preregistration, Literature Review, and Research Report must all be turned in on Canvas by 11:59pm on their respective due dates (see pp. 10-11). Late assignments will receive a 10% penalty for each day they are turned in late. No assignments will be accepted more than 5 days late.

Don't wait until the last minute to attempt to turn in your assignments on Canvas! If you attempt to upload your assignment in the few minutes before it is due, you may run into technological issues (e.g., slow internet connections, etc.) that prevent you from turning in the assignment on time. If you run into technological issues with Canvas, please contact the OIT Help Desk (214-768-HELP). The TAs and I cannot troubleshoot problems with Canvas (so, you must contact OIT for help). If you and OIT cannot resolve the issue before the assignment due date, email your assignment to both me and your TA **before** it is due.

### Your Research Report Must be Entirely Your Own Work

You will be working with a group to collect data for your research report. However, your group is there **only** to help you with data collection. Every element of your Research Report—including **all** written sections, **all** analyses, all Tables, and all Figures—must be **entirely your own work**. Do not work with group members to write your report. And do not copy and/or share parts of your research report (e.g., Method section, tables, figures) with other people in your group. Play it safe! Don't even let groupmates see your report because they might copy your work.

### Revise Your Literature Review

You'll receive detailed feedback on your Literature Review after you turn it in. Your Literature Review will also be included as part of your final Research Report. Make sure to address the feedback in your final Research Report. You might also need to tweak your Literature Review after you know what your findings are. So, be prepared to revise your paper!

## Subject Pool

You can earn up to 30pt toward your final grade by gaining 6 credits from subject pool studies. Partial participation will be prorated.

### Sign up for Studies

Register an account on Sona ([smu.sona-systems.com](http://smu.sona-systems.com)). When registering, make sure to enroll in the correct section for this course (3301-801). Sign up for appointments to complete studies. New studies are continually added to Sona; so, check back frequently and complete studies as soon as possible!

### Designating Credit

If you are in multiple courses that require subject pool participation, each Sona credit may only count toward one course. You will have to decide on Sona which course to apply each credit to. **You must designate credit by the Sunday before the last day of classes, or it will not count for any course.**

### Canceling Appointments

If you cannot make an appointment, **you** must cancel it **on Sona** at least 24 hours in advance. If you miss an appointment without canceling, you may *lose* credit on Sona. If you repeatedly miss appointments without canceling, your Sona account may be permanently locked and you may be unable to complete any more subject pool studies for the rest of the semester.

## Extra Credit

You can earn up to 50pt of **extra credit** toward your final grade by participating in the *PSYC 3301 Personality Study*. This study involves completing an online personality test once per week across the semester. Each time you complete a wave of the study, you'll earn 3pt of extra credit. Students who complete all 16 waves will receive a 2pt bonus (50pt total). To make sure you earn all possible extra credit, get started today!

*Note: This study is separate from the Subject Pool requirement. Click the "Extra Credit Study" link on Canvas for details.*

### Alternative Assignments

If you have a principled objection to participating in the Subject Pool or PSYC 3301 Personality Study, you may complete alternative assignment essays. Details are posted on Canvas.



#### Slides are on Canvas

When I was a young whipper-snapper, we had to carve our class notes into tiny pieces of tree bark. Try keeping up with a speedy lecture while doing that! These days, you young'uns don't even have to *write* the notes. You can just download and/or print a copy of the lecture slides before class and jot extra information in the margins.

#### Read the textbook

"They never use the book in class," you say? Well, back before we had these confounded Micro-softs and inter-webs, we used to actually have to read books to learn. And apparently, that 600-page textbook contains a lot more detail than lecture—which might make for some juicy test questions. The textbook also makes for a handy study aid. Hmph... but since you don't need to bring the book to lecture, maybe you can get your mitts on one of those fancy, cheaper "electronic versions."

## COURSE POLICIES

### Electronics & Other Distractions

Please silence all phones, laptops, other electronic devices, conversations, and any other unspecified noises before class. Laptops and handheld devices should be used *only* for taking notes and participating in polls. Students who are texting, playing games, web browsing, talking/whispering, or otherwise distracting others will be asked to leave and will lose 4 participation points.

### Disability Accommodations

Students needing academic accommodations for a disability must first register with Disability Accommodations & Success Strategies (DASS). Students can call 214-768-1470 or visit [smu.edu/provost/sasp/dass](http://smu.edu/provost/sasp/dass) to begin the process. Once approved and registered, students must submit a DASS Accommodation Letter to me through the electronic portal *DASS Link* and then communicate directly with me in person to make appropriate arrangements. Please note that DASS can take a while to process your accommodations and issue letters (see p. 4 for DASS exam policies). If you anticipate needing extra time on exams, *do not wait to contact DASS*.

### Academic Integrity

**Exams.** Any cheating during exams will result in a zero on the exam. Suspicious behavior during exams, attempting to take or photograph an exam booklet, or using any sort of notes or technology (phones, smart watches, headphones, etc.) will result in failing the exam.

**Plagiarism.** All written assignments must be *your own original ideas* and written *completely in your own words*. Copying and pasting from other sources is strictly prohibited. Even copying a source “idea for idea” (e.g., reading a Wikipedia article or a friend’s essay and rewriting it in your own words) is a serious violation of academic integrity. Any instances of plagiarism will result in a zero on the assignment in question.

**Severe/repeated dishonesty.** Any student who cheats and/or plagiarizes severely and/or more than one time will receive a failing final course grade.

### Ask Questions!

If you have questions about any course material, you’re not alone! It benefits everyone when you raise your hand to ask questions.

### Quiet, Please

Please silence all side-conversations and whispering before class.

### Admin Drops

Students who accrue 3+ unexcused lab absences or who miss 3+ lab assignments may be administratively dropped from the course.

### Technical Support

If you have trouble using Canvas (e.g., turning in assignments) or need help with using SMU services (e.g., apps.SMU or your U: Drive), please contact the OIT Help Desk at 214-768-HELP.

### Writing Support

If you need help with the writing assignments in this course, you can schedule an appointment with the SMU Writing Center through Canvas. You can also get subject-specific tutoring through SASP: [smu.edu/sasp](http://smu.edu/sasp)



## Makeup Exams and Assignment Extensions

Makeup exams will be offered only in the case of severe illness, emergencies, or other valid absences (see p. 4) for which students have provided dated documentation (e.g., a doctor's note specifying which dates you're too sick to attend school). Because deadlines for lab and writing assignments are posted in advance (see pp. 10-11), extensions will be granted only in extenuating circumstances. Illness, holidays, University-related travel, or technical issues *on the day an assignment is due* are generally **not** extenuating circumstances. Other circumstances (e.g., chronic illness before the due date) require dated documentation (see p. 4) and will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

### Dated Documentation Must Be Provided in Advance

In order to qualify for makeup exams or deadline extensions, documentation of a valid excuse must be provided ***in advance***. For unforeseen/emerging crises for which it is not possible to provide advance documentation, documentation must be provided ***as soon as is possible***.

It is the student's responsibility to communicate any medical or other emergencies and provide documentation in advance (or as soon as is possible for unforeseen crises). No makeup exams or deadline extensions will be offered to students who fail to promptly (1) provide documentation and/or (2) make arrangements to make up missed work as soon as is possible (e.g., makeup exams must be taken the day you are able to return to school).

### Chronic Health Conditions

Students experiencing chronic conditions of physical health (e.g., chronic fatigue) or mental health (e.g., anxiety, depression) that are severe enough interfere with their academic performance should contact the Dean of Students to arrange accommodations ***before*** missing any exams and/or assignments ([smu.edu/studentaffairs/studentlife](http://smu.edu/studentaffairs/studentlife)). Even in the case of chronic health conditions, students must provide valid, dated documentation *for each individual* requested makeup exam or deadline extension.

Accommodations for chronic health conditions must be made ***in advance***. Retroactive accommodations will **not** be granted (e.g., students who wait until the end of the semester—or even days or weeks after an assignment is due—to ask for accommodations for any reason, including chronic physical or mental health conditions, will **not** be allowed to make up or redo prior work).

## Third-Party Emails

Please do not ask your parents (or any other third party) to email me about your grade. Federal regulations (FERPA) do not allow me to discuss your course performance or grades with any third party. Moreover, my answers to any grade-related questions will be the same irrespective of whether it is you asking or a third party asking for you.

## Resources

### Dean of Students

The Dean of Students (and Division of Student Affairs) is a resource that you can contact in the case of chronic illness or emergencies. The Dean of Students can communicate with your professors and help arrange appropriate accommodations ([smu.edu/studentaffairs/studentlife](http://smu.edu/studentaffairs/studentlife)).

### Student Counseling Center

The student health center offers free counseling appointments for students ([smu.edu/StudentAffairs/HealthCenter/Counseling](http://smu.edu/StudentAffairs/HealthCenter/Counseling)).

### Psychology Clinic

The psychology department clinic offers therapy services on a sliding payment scale ([smu.edu/Dedman/Academics/Departments/Psychology/SMU-Psychology-Clinic/](http://smu.edu/Dedman/Academics/Departments/Psychology/SMU-Psychology-Clinic/)).

# SCHEDULE

W	Date	Topic	Readings	Due
	F 1/17	Introduction		
1	M 1/20	MLK Day – NO CLASS		
	W 1/22	What is science, and why do we need it?	Ch. 1-2	
	F 1/24	<i>LAB 1: Finding scientific articles (LA 1)</i>		
2	M 1/27	What is science, and why do we need it?	Ch. 1-2	
	W 1/29	Ethics in science	Ch. 4	
	F 1/31	<i>LAB 2: Ethics training (LA 2)</i>		Lab Assignment (LA) 1
3	M 2/3	Variables, operationalizations, and construct validity	Ch. 3, 5	
	W 2/5	Variables, operationalizations, and construct validity	Ch. 3, 5	
	F 2/7	<i>LAB 3: Methodological preregistration (LA 3)</i>		LA 2
4	M 2/10	Variables, operationalizations, and construct validity	Ch. 3, 5	
	W 2/12	Scale construction	Ch. 6	
	F 2/14	<i>LAB 4: Literature reviews/planning your study</i>		LA 3
5	M 2/17	Scale construction	Ch. 6	Preregistration
	W 2/19	<b>EXAM 1</b>		<b>Exam 1</b>
	F 2/21	<i>LAB 5: Constructing a scale (LA 4)</i>		
6	M 2/24	Populations, sampling, and inferential statistics	Ch. 7	
	W 2/26	<i>SPECIAL LAB 6: Intro to SPSS (meet in lecture room)</i>		
	F 2/28	<i>LAB 7: Descriptive statistics</i>		LA 4
7	M 3/2	Populations, sampling, and inferential statistics	Ch. 7	
	W 3/4	Populations, sampling, and inferential statistics	Ch. 7	
	F 3/6	<i>LAB 8: Inference and sampling error (LA 5)</i>		Literature Review
8	M 3/9	Correlation	Ch. 8	
	W 3/11	Correlation	Ch. 8	
	F 3/13	<i>LAB 9: Correlations (LA 6)</i>		LA 5
9	3/16-3/20	SPRING BREAK – NO CLASS		
10	M 3/23	Regression and complex correlational designs	Ch. 9, 13	
	W 3/25	Regression and complex correlational designs	Ch. 9, 13	
	F 3/27	<i>LAB 10: Analyzing data with regression</i>		LA 6
11	M 3/30	Regression and complex correlational designs	Ch. 9, 13	
	W 4/1	<b>EXAM 2</b>		<b>Exam 2</b>
	F 4/2	<i>LAB 11: Making figures (LA 7)</i>		
12	M 4/6	Experiments and internal validity	Ch. 10, 11	
	W 4/8	Experiments and internal validity	Ch. 10, 11	
	F 4/10	GOOD FRIDAY – NO CLASS		LA 7

	<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic/Reading</b>	<b>Due</b>
13	M 4/13	Experiments and internal validity	Ch. 10, 11
	W 4/15	Experiments and internal validity	Ch. 10, 11
	F 4/17	<i>LAB 12: Writing Methods and Results</i>	
14	M 4/20	Interactions	Ch. 12
	W 4/22	Interactions	Ch. 12
	F 4/24	<i>LAB 13: Writing Discussions</i>	
15	M 4/27	Open science and replication	Ch. 14
	W 4/29	Open science and replication	Ch. 14
	F 5/1	<i>LAB 14: Help with writing your report</i>	Research Report
16	M 5/4	Open science and replication	Ch. 14
	T 5/12	<b>TUESDAY, May 12</b> <b>8:00-10:00am</b> <b>FINAL EXAM</b>	

## Other Important Dates

- F Week 15 Last day to complete subject pool studies
- Su Week 16 Deadline to designate subject pool credit on Sona



**KEEP  
CALM  
AND  
READ THE  
SYLLABUS**

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### Is this course more difficult than other psychology courses?

This course is not more *difficult* than other psychology courses, but it *does* require a bit more time and work. For example, this course has regular lab and writing assignments throughout the semester (see pp. 10-11 for due dates). Thus, you should plan to devote a bit more time each week to this course than you would to a typical psychology course.

That said, the distribution of grades in this course is very similar to other psychology courses (if not higher). In other words, students tend to do about as well (or better) in this course as they do in any other psychology course. In fact, the vast majority of students are very successful in PSYC 3301—with most students earning a B or higher. Indeed, historically *every* student in my class who has (1) regularly attended lab and lectures, (2) completed all assignments in good faith and turned them in on time, and (3) earned the majority of participation, subject pool, and extra credit points has earned a C- or higher.\* In contrast, students who perform poorly tend to do multiple of the following: (1) skip lectures or labs, (2) fail to turn in assignments, or (3) fail to earn a substantial amount of participation, subject pool, or extra credit points.

In sum, this course will require quite a bit of work outside of class. However, the material *is* within your ability level, and most students tend to be very successful and earn similar grades to their other psychology classes. You can maximize your chances of success by devoting sufficient time to completing all course activities—and also to studying for exams. Finally, make sure to earn all available points, including participation, attendance, subject pool, and extra credit points!

\*Note: This is not a guarantee that you will earn a C- or higher just by turning in all assignments and showing up to lecture and labs. Devoting enough time to activities to complete them to the best of your ability and spending time studying for exams is necessary for success in this course.

### Do I need the textbook?

Yes, I strongly recommend that you buy the textbook and read it. The material on the exams is based primarily on lectures. Thus, I always recommend that students focus their study efforts on the lecture slides. However, the lecture slides contain only bullet points. So, if you study only the lecture slides, you may forget important details that I talked about during lectures. Moreover, reading the textbook exposes you to the material a second time from a different perspective, which will help you learn it better and correct any potential misunderstandings you might have from lecture. For maximum success, I strongly recommend (1) reading the appropriate chapter prior to lecture, (2) attending lecture and asking questions, and then (3) reviewing the lecture slides and textbook weekly throughout the semester.

### What's up with the practice quizzes on Canvas?

If you click the “Modules” link on Canvas, you can find some practice quizzes. These quizzes do *not* count toward your final course grade (so feel free to skip them!)—they are provided only for your benefit. To do well on exams, you not only need to “get the material into your brain” (e.g., studying the lecture slides and textbook)—you also need to practice “getting the material out of your brain” by quizzing yourself. The quizzes on Canvas are a nice tool to do so. Please be aware, however, that the quizzes on Canvas are provided by your textbook publisher. Thus, they are not written by me, are not necessarily similar to my exam questions, and may cover topics that we don't cover in lecture.

It's the end of the semester and I'll do literally anything for a higher final letter grade. Can you please, please, please raise my grade?

Sorry—I can't give extra points at the end of the semester. All students must be graded with identical standards. So, I can't offer special extra credit to some students but not others. I must follow the same policies in the syllabus for everyone. Usually, students who need extra points at the end of the semester haven't completed many waves of the extra credit study, haven't completed the subject pool requirement, have skipped labs, and have lost points by turning in assignments late (or not turning them in at all). I strongly recommend taking advantage of the opportunity to earn points through the extra credit study, subject pool, lab attendance, and participation throughout the entire course of the semester, while those opportunities are still available to you.

How do I do well with the lab part of this course?

**Remember skills you learn in lab; you'll need them again in the future**

The lab part of this course is focused on helping you gain the necessary skills to write your final research report. Each week, we'll give you skills you'll need in the future. For example, in the first week, you'll learn how to do PsycINFO searches. In later weeks, we'll teach you how to perform various statistical analyses, such as forming composites for variables, computing means, computing reliability, and running regressions. **You will need these skills again in the future.** So, make sure to master the skills each week. If you have trouble with a new lab skill, please ask us for help!

**Attend lab and use lab time wisely**

Attendance is required at lab so that you can take advantage of the time to get help from your TA. I strongly recommend that you spend lab time diligently working on the lab assignments and your research report. Get as much help from the TA as you can during lab each week—and reach out to me or your TA if you need further help with the lab activities.

**Keep the handouts and refer back to them**

The skills you learn in lab all build upon each other. For example, early in the semester, we will teach you how to compute reliability for a scale. This is something you'll need to do multiple times throughout the semester. In lab, you'll receive detailed handouts (which are also available online) that contain step-by-step instructions for performing many of the skills you'll need throughout the semester—including for your final research report. If you get stuck (e.g., if you forget how to compute reliability for a scale), make sure to look back through the handouts. You'll likely find one that walks you through the process. If you've found the appropriate handout and still need help, reach out to me or your TA.

**Complete lab and writing assignments early so you can seek help if needed**

I strongly recommend completing the lab activities and your research report as early as possible. This will give you sufficient time to seek help if you need it. The TAs and I want to help you learn both the course material from lecture and the research skills from lab—and we want you to succeed in this course. To that end, we have weekly office hours and are available to schedule appointments if you can't make our office hours. However, our schedules tend to fill up quickly and we tend to need to book appointments several days in advance. If you wait until the day or two before an assignment is due and ask us to meet to help you, it is likely that we may not be available. Similarly, if you email us last-minute questions, we will try to respond as quickly as possible, but it may take us a day or two to get back to you—especially over the weekends. Therefore, it's extremely wise to begin the assignments as early as possible so that you can request help early.

## Can I work together with my groupmates on my research report?

No. Your groupmates are there solely to help you collect data for your research project. Therefore, you are **not** allowed to work with your groupmates on any other aspect of the research report. For example, you should analyze your data on your own, without working together with your groupmates. You should also write all sections of your research report independently, without working with your groupmates. You should make your own tables and figures. You should **not** share parts of your research report with your groupmates (e.g., you should **not** copy a groupmate's Results section or share your Results section with your groupmates). I recommend playing it safe and not even letting your groupmates see your final research report (including individual sections, results, tables, and figures). If you share your report with groupmates, they may copy your work, leading to a reduction in points for everyone involved.

You should think of your research report like you would any other independent paper in any other class. In the same way that you cannot work together with other students to write an essay for a literature class, you should not work with other students to write your research report.

## How can I avoid plagiarism?

Plagiarism occurs any time you take someone else's words or ideas and represent them as your own. You're likely aware that copying and pasting someone else's work is plagiarism (even if you swap out a few words and/or rewrite what they wrote in your own words). However, stealing someone else's ideas is also plagiarism. For example, if you were to read someone else's literature review and then copy their basic outline, writing an introduction completely in your own words, but following their ideas, that would still be plagiarism.

When writing a literature review, it can be very tempting to plagiarize. For example, you might find an existing journal article that provides a nice literature review, and you might be tempted to copy that article's literature review thought-for-thought, using similar logic, arguments, and citations. That would be plagiarism—which obviously isn't good.

So, how can you avoid plagiarism when writing your literature review? Here's the easiest way to do so:

1. Perform your own literature search by primarily relying on scholarly search engines (e.g., Google Scholar, PsycINFO). It's okay to read through other relevant articles to see who they cite. But make sure that you do not rely on any single one article (e.g., don't just read another article and copy all of its citations)—and make sure that you perform your own Google Scholar and PsycINFO searches, too.
2. When you find new articles, take *extremely brief* notes about what the article found (e.g.: *Roberts and Bogg [2004] found that college students who smoke marijuana tend to decrease in conscientiousness over time, as compared to their non-smoking peers*). Make sure that you take your notes *completely in your own words*. Don't directly quote or paraphrase things you've read.
3. Based solely on your own notes, form your own thoughts and ideas about what the literature says.
4. Write your literature review completely in your own words, referring *only* to your notes. Don't look at other people's literature reviews while writing your own (lest you be tempted to copy their wording, thoughts, or argument structure).