

PSY 234 INTRO TO RESEARCH METHODS

Spring 2008

Credit hours: 3

Section 1: Tu, Th 12.30 - 2.00 AB4, Rm 313

Section 2: Tu, Th 8.00 - 9.20 AB4 Rm 301

Instructor: T. C. Sim, Ph.D

Office: AB4, Rm 333

Tel: 294-1507

Office hours: Refer to grade policy

Required text:

Research Design and Methods (6th Edition) by Bordens and Abbott. Mayfield Publishing Company

Supplemental text:

Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (5th ed.)

The Elements of Style by Strunk and White (also available on internet <http://sut1.sut.ac.th/strunk/>).

Writing with style by John R. Trimble.

Recommended readings:

Kuhn, Thomas S. (1970) *The structure of scientific revolutions. (2nd ed.)* The University of Chicago Press

PROPOSED SCHEDULE

Please take note that this is a proposed schedule. Any changes in the schedule (especially EXAMS) will be announced in class. If a student is absent from class, it will be his/her responsibility to get information on any updated changes from classmates.

TOPICS

1. Explaining behavior
2. Developing ideas for research
3. Choosing a research design
4. Making systematic observations
5. Choosing and using subjects

FIRST EXAM Sep 25

6. Experimental designs
9. Between-subjects designs
10. Within-subjects designs (ends pg. 294)

SECOND EXAM Oct 23

7. Nonexperimental designs
8. Survey research
10. Combined Designs (begins pg. 294)

THIRD EXAM Nov 13

11. Using inferential statistics
12. Reporting your research results
15. Artifacts in research

FINAL EXAM Dec 11

CLASS OBJECTIVES

Welcome to the world of scientific research. This course is designed to teach you the proper methods of scientific investigation. Particularly important to you, as a student of psychology, will be the basic methods of research in psychology. At the end of the semester, you should become acquainted and comfortable with reading a scientific and scholarly article in a critical manner, and be familiar with the ways of experimental research so often encountered in psychology. This course will provide you with the training to take an idea and develop the idea into a testable hypothesis. You will also learn to design and conduct a scientific study to investigate scientific hypotheses. You will be instructed on a variety of research designs that are most appropriate for examining various topics of interest, and the proper procedures of data gathering. The climax of this class will be the final research proposal. You will take a topic of interest to you and design a study to learn more about that subject, using all the skills and tools that are available. **Although this proposal will count as one exam score and is equal to only 20% of the course grade, you must complete this project in order to earn a passing grade.** You must also be enrolled in the laboratory class that accompanies this course. The lab instructor will announce the due date for this project. All topics must be approved before you begin.

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Office hours: Mon, Tue: 9-10; Tue Thu: 9.30 - 11.00, 2-3p, or by appointment.

Grading policy:

There will be at least four (4) major in-class examinations with approximately 50 multiple-choice questions. There may also be essay questions in certain segments of the course and will be announced prior to the start of that segment. **All assignments must be submitted in hard copies, and late submissions will not be accepted. No make-up exam will be given... unless there is a a serious illness or a death in the immediate family. Documentary evidence must be provided. NO EXCEPTIONS**

Absence from a scheduled exam or class quiz will be equivalent to a score of zero. Students are encouraged to take note of exam schedules for all classes. **All exams** must be taken on the scheduled day and **no one** may ask for a postponement or to take the exam in advance because of multiple exams on the same day (**especially for FINALS**). If you have more than one exam on the same day, give yourself ample time to prepare. The final grade will be based on the average of all exams. **Students who are late on the day of the test will not be allowed to take the test if a classmate has already completed the test and has left the room. Students who are dishonest in exams will receive a grade of F for the course and will be referred to the appropriate disciplinary body .**

The final grade for the course will be based on the points scored by the student divided by the number of available points for all exams combined.

A = 90% - 100% C = 70% - 79%
B = 80% - 89% D = 60% - 69%

6 absences: Highest possible grade B
8 absences: Highest possible grade C
10 absences: Highest possible grade D
12 absences: F

Attendance Policy: Attendance at all class meetings will be expected. Students who leave before dismissal of class will be considered as absent. Students with 6 absences will be dropped a letter grade, and will forfeit all accrued extra credit. Students who are habitually tardy will forfeit all extra credits earned.

Class Participation:

Students will be expected to read assigned text by class time and to be able to participate in class discussions. The exams will include all topics discussed in class, and the assigned text. In addition to the in-class examinations, students will also have the opportunity to make presentations to enhance their course grades. Students who miss class meetings will be responsible for getting the lecture notes from their classmates. If you anticipate missing class for an extended period (out of town emergency, chronic illness, etc.) it will be to your advantage, as well as good courtesy, to keep me informed.

If you have any questions about the class material, please contact me during my posted office hours. You may also call me at my office outside of the posted hours. If you have any questions concerning any material discussed in class or in the text, I strongly encourage you to raise those concerns in class. If the scheduled time is not convenient, do not hesitate to make an appointment. As long as I am in my office, you are invited to come in and discuss any pertinent issue.

Academic Dishonesty:

All students are expected to engage in all academic pursuits in a manner that is above reproach. Students are expected to maintain complete honesty and integrity in the academic experiences both in and out of the classroom. Any student found guilty of dishonesty in any phase of academic work will be subject to disciplinary action. The University and its official representatives may initiate disciplinary proceedings against a student accused of any form of academic dishonesty including, but not limited to, cheating on an examination or other academic work which is to be submitted, plagiarism, collusion and the abuse of resource materials. **Students who are guilty of any of the above offences will be given a failing grade for the course.**

Classroom Rules of Conduct:

Students who, by being habitually tardy, sleeping in class, or engage in any form of behavior that is disruptive and detrimental to maintaining a classroom environment that is conducive to learning will be penalized with a letter grade demotion. All cellular phones and personal pagers are to be switched off during class time.

STUDENT ABSENCES ON RELIGIOUS HOLY DAYS POLICY

Section 51.911(b) of the Texas Education Code requires that an institution of higher education excuse a student from attending classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day, including travel for that purpose. A student whose absence is excused under this subsection may not be penalized for that absence and shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment from which the student is excused within a reasonable time after the absence.

University policy 861001 provides the procedures to be followed by the student and instructor. A student desiring to absent himself/herself from a scheduled class in order to observe (a) religious holy day(s) shall present to each instructor involved a written statement concerning the religious holy day(s). This request must be made in the first fifteen days of the semester or the first seven days of a summer session in which the absence(s) will occur. The instructor will complete a form notifying the student of a reasonable timeframe in which the missed assignments and/or examinations are to be completed.

DISABLED STUDENT POLICY

It is the policy of Sam Houston State University that no otherwise qualified disabled individual shall, solely by reason of his/her handicap, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any academic or Student Life program or activity. Disabled students may request help with academically related problems stemming from individual disabilities from their instructors, school/department chair, or by contacting the Chair of the Committee for Continuing Assistance for Disabled Students and Director of the Counseling Center, Lee Drain Annex, or by calling (936) 294-1720.

If you have a disability that may affect adversely your work in this class, then I encourage you to register with the SHSU Counseling Center and to talk with me about how I can best help you. All disclosures of disabilities will be kept strictly confidential. NOTE: no accommodation can be made until you register with the Counseling Center.

Visitors in the Classroom

At the discretion of the instructor, unannounced visitors to class must present a current official SHSU identification card to be permitted in the classroom. They must not present a disruption to the class by their attendance. If the visitor is not a registered student, it is at the instructor's discretion whether or not the visitor will be allowed to remain in the classroom.