

SOP 4214C: RESEARCH METHODS IN SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY
Spring 2019

Instructor:

Dr. Colin Tucker Smith
Office: PSY 259
Email: colinsmith@ufl.edu
Office hours: by appointment (I'm in my office most of the time from 9:30 to 3:45)

Meeting times/locations:

Lab: Psychology 0191
W: 10.40 - 11.30

Lecture: Chemical Engineering
T: 1.55 - 3.50 (room 316)
TH: 1.55 - 2.45 (room 237)

Lab instructor:

Rachel Forsyth
Office: PSY 268
Email: rachel.forsyth@ufl.edu
Office hours: Tuesday 10.40 - 12.35

Textbook:

Leary, M. R. (2012). *Introduction to behavioral research methods* (6th ed.).

Course overview:

You probably already think about social psychology in an intuitive way, seeking to understand the everyday thoughts, emotions, and behaviors of those around you. You may do this because it comes naturally to you, or because of your previous coursework in social psychology. In this course, you will learn to think about social psychology in a *scientific* way.

In other words, how do behavioral researchers take an everyday observation about the possible effects of social and personality factors and test it in a methodologically-sound scientific study? And, perhaps more importantly, how can *you* do this to understand the world? This course will introduce you to (or further your grasp of) the fundamentals of research methodology that social psychologists use to understand human thought, feeling, and behavior.

More specifically, this course will help you learn to generate and refine testable ideas for research, conduct literature reviews on existing relevant research, understand and evaluate original journal articles, design viable studies, collect and code data, identify and interpret appropriate statistical analyses for a given research design, write research proposals and reports, and present research ideas to others. This is a lot, no doubt. But at the end of the course you should be equipped to answer questions you have about the world by assessing what other researchers have done,

running simple studies, and analyzing the results of those studies. To me, these are powerful skills to learn.

This course involves two components: the lecture meetings and the lab meetings. Your active participation in both components is important to your success in this course. In lecture, we will cover the broad issues of research methods. In lab, you will obtain valuable hands-on experience by working with your fellow students and graduate lab instructor to learn about conducting literature reviews, designing studies, gathering data, analyzing data, and communicating your findings to others.

Grading:

Your final grade in the course will be determined by the following:

(1) **Midterm exams:** There will be three midterm exams, each worth 60 points. Lecture material, lecture discussions, and textbook readings are all fair game; exams may include multiple choice, fill-in-the-blank, short answer, and essay questions. Each midterm exam will be non-cumulative. Makeup exams will be offered only in extenuating circumstances (e.g., medical emergency) at the instructors' discretion. If you have an unexpected emergency and miss an exam, you must contact me within 24 hours of the original exam time and provide written documentation. If you know you will not be able to take an exam at the scheduled time, you must contact me beforehand about a makeup exam.

(2) **Final exam:** The final exam will account for 80 points in the course. All course material may be covered; it will be similar in format to the midterm exams and will take place on Wednesday, May 1 at 10am (Location: TBD). There is no make-up for the final exam.

(3) **Research projects:** To facilitate your understanding of the research process, you will complete three research projects (two papers, and an oral presentation based on a research proposal). You will receive more information about each of these projects individually. What follows is simply an outline:

(4) **Literature Review** (20 points): On February 13, you will turn in a literature review for variables included in Paper 1.

Paper # 1: The first paper will present the results of a correlational study that we will conduct ourselves. The first paper (50 points) is due at the start of lab on Wednesday, February 27.

Paper #2: The second paper will present the results of an experiment that we will also conduct ourselves. The second paper (70 points) is due at the start of lab on Wednesday, April 3.

Project 3 Proposal (10 points): On March 28, you will turn in a proposal for your final project.

Presentation: The third project will be a Powerpoint presentation (40 points) of a quasi-experimental study you propose (but do not conduct). Presentations will take place between

April 10 and 17. Your Powerpoint itself will receive a grade (10 points) in addition to a 10-point grade from your classmates, your grad TA, and me.

In all, there is a maximum of 450 points in the course. Final course grades will be assigned according to the following criteria:

A = 418-450	C = 328-345
A- = 405-417	C- = 315-327
B+ = 391-404	D+ = 301-314
B = 373-390	D = 283-300
B- = 360-372	D- = 270-282
C+ = 346-359	E = 269 or below

Please note that the above cut-offs are firm. I will not move anyone's grade up (or down) at the end of the semester for any reason. Of course, if you find I have added wrong or not given you points from an assignment that is a different matter!

Other important notes:

(1) I highly recommend that you complete the relevant text readings *prior* to lecture. This allows us to cover material in greater depth, and facilitates classroom discussions/tasks. Another piece of advice: Don't fall behind in the coursework. You will encounter challenging material and tasks this semester, and you should expect to dedicate time to mastering the course objectives. In addition, this course is designed to build on itself so falling behind is dangerous.

(2) *PLEASE* communicate with me, your lab instructor, and your fellow classmates regularly. This class is limited to a small number of students, which allows for active discussions. We all can enjoy the benefits of a small class; I encourage you to take full advantage of it. If you have a question about material, raise it during class, ask a classmate after class, or see me or your graduate TA outside class. This should be a course that is challenging and rewarding. Your consistent engagement will minimize the former and maximize the latter.

(3) If you require disability accommodations in this class, please see me as soon as possible. Students requesting classroom accommodations must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean's Office will give the student documentation, which must be provided to the instructor when requesting accommodations. All information regarding disability will remain confidential.

(4) I expect everyone to conduct themselves with the utmost academic integrity throughout the semester. Plagiarism of others' work and cheating on exams are *not* tolerated and will result in a zero on the assignment at the very minimum. This can be confusing in this course, as some work is shared; we will talk more about this when writing papers. Information on academic integrity can be found at:

<https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>

(5) Papers are due **at the beginning of class** (whether lecture or lab). At 5 minutes after the start of class, they are considered late. Late papers will be marked down 10% until midnight of the day they are due. They will be marked down an additional 10% for each day they are late. Papers will not be accepted after 3 days (e.g., 11:59pm of March 2 for Paper 1). These papers are very time-consuming; **please** do not start your paper the night before it is due!

Meeting Date	Day	Topic	Reading
January 8	T	Introduction to Course, Syllabus, etc.	
January 9	W	LAB	
January 10	TH	Introduction to Behavioral Research	Chapter 1
January 15	T	Introduction to Behavioral Research	
January 16	W	LAB	
January 17	TH	Developing hypotheses + Specifics (IVs, DVs, etc.)	Chapter 3
January 22	T	Approaches to Psychological Measurement	Chapter 4
January 23	W	LAB	
January 24	TH	Approaches to Psychological Measurement	
January 29	T	Correlational Research	Chapter 7
January 30	W	LAB	
January 31	TH	Correlational Research / Exam Review	
February 5	T	Exam 1	
February 6	W	No Class	
February 7	TH	No Class	
February 12	T	Behavioral Variability and Research	Chapter 2
February 13	W	LAB	Literature Review Due Paper 1 Data Due
February 14	TH	Basic Issues in Experimental Research	Chapter 9
February 19	T	Basic Issues in Experimental Research	
February 20	W	LAB	
February 21	TH	Experimental Design	Chapter 10
February 26	T	Experimental Design	
February 27	W	LAB	Paper 1 Due
February 28	TH	Analysis of Experimental Data	Chapter 11
March 5	T	No Class	
March 6	W	No Class	
March 7	TH	No Class	
March 12	T	Analysis of Experimental Data / Exam Review	
March 13	W	LAB	
March 14	TH	Exam 2	
March 19	T	Quasi-Experimental Designs	
March 20	W	LAB	
March 21	TH	Descriptive Research	Chapter 6
March 26	T	Ethical Issues in Behavioral Research	Chapter 15

March 27	W	LAB	
March 28	TH	Current Issues in Methodology	Project 3 Proposal Due
April 2	T	<i>Space to move into or to add a topic</i>	
April 3	W	LAB	Paper 2 Due
April 4	TH	The Publishing Process	
April 9	T	LAB (meet in Tuesday classroom)	
April 10	W	Project 3 Presentations [4]	Project 3 Slides Due
April 11	TH	Project 3 Presentations [4]	
April 16	T	Project 3 Presentations [8]	
April 17	W	Project 3 Presentations [3] / Exam Review	
April 18	TH	Exam 3	
April 23	T	NO CLASS	
April 24	W	NO CLASS	
May 1	W	Final Exam	