

SWS Research Methods in Psychology (PSY 300-09) (3 credits)
Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, 11 – 11:50am; ASH 2119
Fall 2022

Instructor: Ernest Park, Ph.D.

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I will try to respond to emails within 24 hours if they are received Monday-Friday. Please set up a meeting with me (e.g., during office hours) if you have any questions/concerns that may require a lengthy response. Please be aware that I may not respond to email inquiries that involve information that has already been covered in the syllabus or in class.

Office Hours: Tuesday and Thursday: 1 – 2:30pm, and by appointment

*This syllabus is subject to change. Changes (if any) will be announced during class, via email and/or in the class slides that are posted online. Students are responsible for keeping informed of any such notices.

Prerequisites: PSY101 or HNR234, WRT150, and STA215 or STA312

Required Readings: The required readings (e.g., journal articles) will be made available by the professor. At times, students will also be required to obtain required readings (e.g., journal articles) from the GVSU library. These required readings will all be made available to students without any additional costs or fees

Course Description: The world is awash in research and claims, but how can you tell which research and claims to believe? This course will teach you to look at the world like a research psychologist. You will learn how to identify the claim in a research study, as well as how to tell if the claim is likely to be true or valid. We will work to understand different types of research designs, the types of claims made based on those designs, and the strengths and weaknesses of those designs. In addition to learning to be a critical consumer of research, this course will strengthen your ability to communicate about the results of research with training in writing like a psychologist.

This course is designated SWS. Completion of WRT 150 with a grade of C or better (not C-) is a prerequisite. SWS credit will not be given to a student who completes this course before completing the prerequisite. SWS courses adhere to certain guidelines. Students turn in a total of at least 3000 words of writing. Part of that total may be essay exams, but a substantial amount of it is made up of essays, reports, or research papers. The instructor works with the students on revising drafts of papers, rather than simply grading the finished piece of writing. At least four hours of class time will be devoted to writing instruction. At least one third of the final grade in the course is based on the writing assignments. Students must complete the course with a grade of "C" or better in order to receive SWS credit. Students may receive SWS credit for taking the course as Credit/No Credit provided the student passes the course with a "Credit" grade.

Course Objectives: By the end of the semester, students should be able to: 1) describe the details of and summarize the essence of research articles, 2) write clearly and cogently in a scientific way, and 3) evaluate strengths and weaknesses of empirical studies consistent with the standards of psychological science

This course is designed to help students develop their skills in the following areas:

A. Psychological research, focused on the consumer role. In addition to those skills mentioned in the course overview and learning objectives (above), students will learn how to think like psychological scientists. They will learn how to distinguish a good research design from a poor one. They will learn how to identify valid and reliable tests and measures. They will learn how to recognize confounds in research design. In short, they will learn what they need to know to evaluate the claims in a psychological research study.

B. Analytic writing. Students will develop their capability to present an argument persuasively in written language. Research papers, like many other forms of writing, seek to pose a question and answer it. That is, they contain a central argument supported by evidence. Furthermore, they tell a story – taking the reader on a journey along a line of reasoning. In this course, students will begin to learn how to craft such arguments persuasively and with support from data.

C. Quantitative reasoning and graphical displays of data. Students will reinforce a basic grounding in statistics as used in psychological research. This course focuses on the use of such concepts in research reports. Students will learn to understand and critique reports of results in research articles. Students will learn to interpret graphical displays of data.

It is the instructor’s goal that students become proficient in each of these key areas. Evaluations are designed to assess proficiency in these areas.

Basis for grading:

Exam 1 = 100 points

Exam 2 = 100 points

Writing activities (3 activities worth 10 points each) = 30 points

Paper draft = 50 points

Final paper = 100 points

Total possible points = 380 points

Number grade = Earned points/380 X 100 (grades ending with .499 and below will be rounded down, and .50 and above will be rounded up)

Grading scale:

A = 94 and above	C+ = 77-79	F= 59 and below
A- = 90-93	C = 73-76	
B+ = 87-89	C- = 70-72	
B = 83-86	D+ = 67-69	
B- = 80-82	D = 60-66	

Exams: Exams will be used to assess comprehension and memory skills. These tests will be completed in-person in the classroom. Exams will consist of multiple-choice questions. Scantron forms will be provided. Students are responsible for knowing material from the assigned readings and any content discussed in class (including content from videos). Students will not be allowed to use any course materials during exams, and students are not allowed to talk about exam content with any other students.

Writing Activities: To develop students’ capabilities to write like psychologists, students will complete a series of writing training exercises, including worksheets and article critiques. These exercises will hone individual skills that are needed to locate, understand, evaluate, and synthesize psychological research articles. More information about these assignments will be provided during the semester

Paper draft and final paper: By the end of the semester, students will propose a basic study to test a research question. This final paper will primarily consist of an introduction and method section (APA format will be used). Prior to the final paper, students will submit a draft of the introduction and will receive feedback on this section. More information about these assignments will be provided during the semester

Policies:

Grading: Students are not permitted to redo/re-take any assignments or exams, and so it is important to be prepared for class and on exam days. Please see me if you have questions about this policy.

Late assignments: If an exam or assignment deadline is missed due to illness, I must be notified by email within 12 hours of the scheduled due date. To turn in late work for reasons other than illness, students must contact me at least 24 hours in advance of the scheduled due date. A valid excuse must be provided for any missed work and students should wait for approval from me before assuming the excuse is acceptable. **Exams and/or assignments that are not turned in, or are turned in late and fail to meet these regulations will result in a zero.**

Integrity of Scholarship and Grades

This course is subject to the GVSU policies listed at <http://www.gvsu.edu/coursepolicies/>

Truth and honesty: The principles of truth and honesty are recognized as fundamental to a community of teachers and scholars. The university expects that both faculty members and students will honor these principles and in so doing protect the validity of university grades. This means that all academic work will be done by the student to whom it is assigned without unauthorized aid of any kind. Instructors, for their part, will exercise care in the planning and supervision of academic work, so that honest effort will be positively encouraged. Compliance shall include compliance with the following specific rules:

1. No student shall knowingly, without authorization, procure, provide, or accept any materials which contain questions or answers to any examination or assignment.
2. No student shall, without authorization, complete, in part or in total, any examination or assignment for another person.
3. No student shall, without authorization, allow any examination or assignment to be completed, in part or in total, by another person.
4. No student shall knowingly plagiarize or copy the work of another person and submit it as his or her own.
5. No student shall submit work that has been previously graded or is being submitted concurrently to more than one course without authorization from the instructor(s) of the class(es) to which the student wishes to submit it.

Plagiarism

Any ideas or material taken from another source for either written or oral presentation must be fully acknowledged. Offering the work of someone else as one's own is plagiarism. The language or ideas taken from another may range from isolated formulas, sentences, or paragraphs to entire articles copied from books, periodicals, speeches, or the writing of other students. The offering of materials assembled or collected by others in the form of projects or collections without acknowledgment also is considered plagiarism. Any student who fails to give credit in written or oral work for ideas/materials taken from another is guilty of plagiarism.

Such activity may result in failure of a specific assignment, an entire course, or, if flagrant, dismissal from Grand Valley. For further information see the Student Code.

Disability: If you are in need of accommodations due to a learning, physical, or other disability you must present a memo to me from Disability Support Resources (DSR), indicating the existence of a disability and the suggested reasonable accommodations. If you have not already done so, please contact the Disability Support Resources office (4015 JHZ) by calling 331-2490 or email to dsrgvsu@gvsu.edu. Please note that I cannot provide accommodations based upon disability until I have received a copy of the DSR issued memo. All discussions will remain confidential.

Well-being: Your health and your family's health should be your priority. If you are dealing with illness, sick family members, travel difficulties, a bad internet connection, increased anxiety, childcare challenges, or any other issues, please reach out as soon as possible and we can talk about potential accommodations.

Psych Friends: If you feel you could use some extra help/guidance/support in any academic domain or for your well-being, please consider scheduling an appointment with a mentor through Psych Friends. Psych Friends mentors are upper-level undergraduate peer mentors who are trained to provide support in many areas including: effective study and time management techniques, exam preparation and reflection skills, comprehension of the psychology and behavioral neuroscience major requirements, tips for engaging in the field, strategies for education continuation, methods for maintaining physical and mental health. Schedule an appointment here: <https://www.gvsu.edu/navigate> and Questions? Email psychfriends@gvsu.edu

Cancelled classes: If the university is closed and classes are cancelled, any scheduled exam will take place the next class meeting (unless you are notified otherwise by me).

Assigned readings and their deadlines will be announced in class. Students are expected to complete each assigned reading before the deadline that is provided

	Topic (Tentative Schedule)	Assignments Due
Week 1, starts Aug. 29	Syllabus How science is done; thinking like a psychologist	
Week 2, Sept. 5	NO CLASS on MONDAY (Labor Day; 9/5/22) Sources of information; Claims and validities (Wednesday)	
Week 3, Sept. 12	Claims and validities continued Reading and understanding scientific journal articles	Writing activity #1 due 9/12/22 (by 5pm)
Week 4, Sept. 19	Identifying good measurement	
Week 5, Sept. 26	Surveys and observations	
Week 6, Oct. 3	Sampling	Writing activity #2 due 10/3/22 (by 5pm)
Week 7, Oct. 10	Exam 1 (Monday) Research ethics (Wednesday)	Exam 1 on 10/10/22
Week 8, Oct. 17	Bivariate correlational research	Paper draft (Intro) due 10/17/22 (by 5pm)
Week 9, Oct. 24	NO CLASS on MONDAY (Fall Break; 10/24/22) Multivariate correlational research (Wednesday)	
Week 10, Oct. 31	Simple experiments	
Week 11, Nov. 7	More on experiments	
Week 12, Nov. 14	Experiments with more than one IV	Writing activity #3 due 11/14/22 (by 5pm)
Week 13, Nov. 21	Quasi-experiments NO CLASSES on WEDNESDAY or FRIDAY (Thanksgiving break; 11/23/22 and 11/25/22)	
Week 14, Nov. 28	Statistics review	
Week 15, Dec. 5	Statistics review continued	Final paper due 12/9/22 (by 5pm)
	Final (Exam 2) Wednesday, December 14, 10 – 11:50am	Exam 2 on 12/14/22