

PSY 300: Research Methods - Spring 2025

Wolfgang Friedlmeier

Section 01 – Online

Instructor

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Office hours:
W 10 am to 12 pm
or by appointment
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Textbook

Stangor, C. (2015, 5th ed.). *Research methods for the behavioral sciences*. New York: Houghton Mifflin Company. (available as e-book – GVSU Save)

Articles

Readings of all research articles will be announced, and the articles are available in Bb. The main article that you will mostly work with is:

Cheng, C.Y., Lee, F., & Benet-Martinez, V. (2006). Assimilation and contrast effects in cultural frame switching. Bicultural identity and valence of cultural cues. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 37, 742–760.

APA Style

American Psychological Association (2020). *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (Seventh Edition). Washington, D.C.: APA.

Course Overview

The aim of this course is to acquaint students with basic research methods in psychology while exploring practical, theoretical, and ethical issues regarding research design and its implementation in psychology. Upon completion of this course, you should (1) be able to understand and to summarize the essence of research articles, (2) you should be able to write clearly and cogently in a scientific way, and (3) you should understand how empirical studies are designed properly. A good understanding of basic statistics is a must as some statistical procedures will be presented that afford such basic knowledge.

The course is organized in a way that you get a broad overview about the research process in the beginning. Across the semester we will then go through the different steps of the research process in a more detailed way to deepen the understanding of each relevant

topic. When learning about the different parts of the research process, you apply the knowledge by summarizing the respective parts of a specific research article. The final goal is to increase your scientific literacy and to be able to read scientific articles in a critical way applying central methodological criteria.

Beside the textbook you are asked to read and work with several research articles in an intensive way.

Learning Outcomes

The aim of this course is to acquaint students with basic research methods in psychology while exploring practical, theoretical, and ethical issues regarding research design and its implementation in psychology. Upon successful completion of this course students will become more critical consumers of scientific information. writing clearly and cogently in a scientific way. identify the strengths and weaknesses of their own writing processes,

More specifically, the course has specific learning outcomes:

- (1) Knowing about biases how scientific information is presented through media
- (2) Recognizing criteria to identify predatory journals and articles
- (3) Being able to carry out systematic literature search for scientific information
- (4) Summarize the essence of an introduction of a research article (hypotheses, definitions of concepts, arguments)
- (5) Understanding the concept of operational definition as central to empirical research
- (6) Being able to evaluate the quality of scientific measures (reliability and validity)
- (7) Being able to recognize research designs and the results that refer to hypothesis testing
- (8) Critically evaluate articles along internal and external validity

This course is subject to the GVSU policies listed at

<http://www.gvsu.edu/coursepolicies/>

SWS Course

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 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.*

The writing instruction will focus on APA style (running head, titles and subtitles, citation and quotation, references, tables, figures, appendix). Writing instructions will be taught for at least four hours. You will be taught to locate peer-reviewed scholarship in a systematic way. The written assignments serve the purpose to train and test your writing skills. You will get

feedback to all written assignments and you will be able to submit revisions for one of the assignments. The word count for each assignment is mentioned below.

Prerequisites

WRT150, PSY 101 and STA 215

This course is designated SWS. Completion of WRT 150 with a grade of C or better (not C-) is the prerequisite. SWS credit will not be given to the student who completes this course before completing the prerequisite.

General Information

Office Hours. I am ready to meet on Wednesday between 10 and 12 via zoom for questions. Please, announce your interest in joining by sending a short email at least one day earlier. If you want another time for a zoom meeting, please send an email.

Withdrawal. The deadline for withdrawing from the class is **June 6, 5 p.m.**, through one of the Student Assistance Centers.

Special Needs. If there is any student in this class who has special needs because of a learning, physical, or other disability, please contact me and Disability Support Services (DSS) at (616) 331-2490. Furthermore, if you have a disability and think you will need assistance evacuating this classroom and/or building in an emergency, please make me aware so that the university and I can develop a plan to assist you. It is the *student's responsibility* to request assistance from DSS.

Academic Integrity. Students will do original work and will not take or receive the efforts of another person on any test or assignment, use unauthorized resources on quizzes or tests, plagiarize, or give/sell other students papers or assignments *not authorized by the instructor*. **You are responsible** for making yourself aware of and for understanding the policies and procedures that pertain to academic integrity. To that end, be sure to familiarize yourself with the GVSU Student Code [Section 223.01] related to academic integrity. **Furthermore, be sure to reference sources at all times.** If you are uncertain about such an issue prior to submission of an assignment, project, or test, please contact the instructor so we can eliminate that uncertainty. **Plagiarism or cheating will result in an F for the course.**

IMPORTANT: When you use ChatGPT or similar AI devices to create text you are asked to cite these passages. Here is some information how to do this. <https://apastyle.apa.org/blog/how-to-cite-chatgpt>. Failing to mark such text as citation counts as plagiarism and will be graded as Failed.

Example:

When prompted with "Is the left brain right brain divide real or a metaphor?" the ChatGPT-generated text indicated that although the two brain hemispheres are somewhat specialized,

“the notation that people can be characterized as ‘left-brained’ or ‘right-brained’ is considered to be an oversimplification and a popular myth” (OpenAI, 2023).

In References Section

OpenAI. (2023). ChatGPT (Mar 14 version) [Large language model].
<https://chat.openai.com/chat>

Fred Meijer Center for Writing and Michigan Authors

The Fred Meijer Center for Writing provides writing assistance to all GVSU students, on any type of project and at any stage of the process and online support is available during all hours of operation. Students can access one-to-one writing support by connecting through Book It (<https://www.gvsu.edu/bookit/>) to schedule online appointments, virtually drop-in to work with a consultant (first-come/first-serve), or connect with asynchronous email support (72 hour response time). In addition to synchronous and asynchronous support, the Writing Center also maintains educational resources about a variety of topics and we look forward to working with you!

The Writing Center employs both undergraduate and graduate writing consultants from a variety of majors and disciplines. Consultants are trained to help writers brainstorm, organize, and/or develop their ideas; and they can help writers edit their own work and document sources correctly. The Center's services are free and students can work with an idea or assignment prompt all the way through drafting and finalizing their paper.

Web: Program information – <http://www.gvsu.edu/wc>

Appointment scheduling - (<https://www.gvsu.edu/bookit/>)

Contact: virtualwc@mail.gvsu.edu - (616) 331-2922 or Patrick Johnson (Director - johpatri@gvsu.edu - (616) 331-8077)

LIBRARY Support

Each department has a designated librarian to support your research needs. Christine Malmsten is your liaison librarian for Psychology. Her email is malmstec@gvsu.edu and her office is in Mary Idema Pew Library (Allendale), room 240. You are welcome to make an appointment with her. The psychology library subject guide (<http://libguides.gvsu.edu/psych>) contains links to all of the psychology databases and other specific resources for psychology students.

Library Research Center

<https://www.gvsu.edu/library/km/library-research-center-11.htm>

Library Research Center is part of the Knowledge Market, where peer consultants are available to assist students with their research needs.

Assignments

You will be required to fulfill eight written assignments (see below). Detailed information about each assignment and related files will be provided on Bb with deadlines. Feel free to ask questions when you are not sure how to proceed on a task. All assignments are turned in by

assignment manager through Blackboard. **IMPORTANT: Submit word document files and not pdf files or other formats.** More than half of the final grade in the course is based on writing assignments. You can resubmit a revised version of the assignment based on my comments to improve your points for AS3 to AS8.

Assignment 1: Science and Media (20 points)

Task: Write up three reasons why and how scientific knowledge may be distorted by the media and two reasons how science contributes to such biases based on the video by John Oliver.

Assignment 2: Criteria of Predatory Journals (20 points)

Task: Look for three predatory open access journals <https://beallslist.net/> <https://beallslist.weebly.com/> and report how you can identify that they are predatory (give at least three criteria for each journal).

Assignment 3: Hypotheses (20 points) - revision optional

Task: Read the introduction (up to Method section) of the article by Cheng, Lee and Benet-Martinez (2006). Write down the hypotheses and elaborate the arguments and evidence that allow the researchers deriving these hypotheses. Include definitions of the main concepts that form the hypotheses. You find the article on Bb in the Literature folder.

Assignment 4: Literature Search (20 points) - revision optional

Task: Search for 10 relevant journal articles that focus on a research topic of your choice in a systematic way in PsycInfo (a training will be provided).

Assignment 5: Operational Definition (20 points) - revision optional

Task: Identify the independent and dependent variables; describe the exact operational definitions of all variables that were assessed (see attached file).

Assignment 6: Reliability and Validity (20 points) - revision optional

Task: Report the reliability and validity of the variables and measures in the article by Cheng et al. (2006). Draw some conclusions regarding the strength how much we can be sure that the measures are reliable and assess the concepts of interest.

Assignment 7: Hypotheses Testing (20 points) - revision optional

Task: Report for the Cheng et al. (2006) article, how the researchers tested the hypotheses and whether the hypotheses were confirmed.

Assignment 8: Critical Analysis of Research Articles (20 points)

Task: Read each of the two articles intensively. Identify and discuss critical points.

Quizzes

There will be 13 short online multiple-choice quizzes for each chapter with five questions. The quiz will test the content of the related chapter in the textbook. You will have about two days after the announcement to answer and submit the questions. The answer time will be limited to 10 minutes. Ten of the quizzes will go into your final grade. If you miss the deadline of the quiz, 0 points will be in your record for the respective quiz. Taking the quiz will require to use the Respondus Lockdown Browser and monitor (see more under Exams).

Current (Preliminary) Deadlines for Assignments and Quizzes

Assignments are due on Tuesdays/Thursdays

AS1 – May 13
 AS2 – May 13
 AS3 – May 20
 AS4 – May 20
 AS5 – May 27
 AS6 – May 27
 AS7 – June 10
 AS8-1 – June 12
 AS8-2 – June 12

Quizzes are due on Tuesdays

Quiz 1 – May 13
 Quiz 2 – May 20
 Quiz 3 – May 20
 Quiz 4 – May 27
 Quiz 5 – May 27
 Quiz 6 – June 3
 Quiz 7 – June 3
 Quiz 8 – June 3
 Quiz 9 – June 10
 Quiz 10 – June 10
 Quiz 11 – June 10
 Quiz 12 – June 17
 Quiz 13 – June 17

IMPORTANT: Due dates can change. Please refer primarily to the due dates given with the assignments and quizzes during the semester.

Exams

There will be two exams during the course of the semester. Each exam is comprised of 50 multiple choice questions. Prior to the exams, you will get about 50 test questions online that are similar to the exam questions. You can go through these test questions by yourself as often as you want. They may serve as a test before the exam for your level of preparedness.

The online exam will be available throughout the day of the exam (from 8 am to 11 pm). You can decide the time to start the exam. When you start it, you have 60 minutes available to finish the test. The midterm exam will be on **Tuesday, May 27**.

The final exam will be on **Tuesday, June 17**.

Respondus Lockdown and Monitor

Exams will require Respondus Lockdown and Monitor. The software allows for fair, secure tests by preventing students from accessing other programs and ensuring that student knowledge is being validly measured. It's best to think of this software as a way to simulate the experience of students taking a proctored exam in a regular classroom.

Download and Install link:

<https://download.respondus.com/lockdown/download.php?id=936312756>

Tips for taking an online exam

- Ensure you're in a location where you won't be interrupted
- Turn off all other devices (e.g. tablets, phones, second computers) and place them outside of your reach.

- Clear your desk or workspace of all external materials not permitted - books, papers, other devices.
- Remain at your computer for the duration of the test.
- To produce a good webcam video, do the following:
Ensure your computer or device is on a firm surface (a desk or table). Do NOT have the computer on your lap, a bed, or other surface where the device (or you) are likely to move. If using a built-in webcam, avoid readjusting the tilt of the screen after the webcam setup is complete.
- Take the exam in a well-lit room, but avoid backlighting (such as sitting with your back to a window)

How to Succeed in an ONLINE COURSE

Self-Management is Key: Online courses require perseverance, self-discipline, self-motivation, and the ability to work independently – more so than face-to-face on-campus classes. Make sure to:

- Log onto Blackboard at least 4 to 5 times per week to check announcements and interact with course material.
- Stay organized and track of due dates.
- Plan weekly study times and stick to a schedule. Plan on spending roughly 10 to 15 hours per week on this course. (Re)watching video lectures, completing readings and taking notes, completing assignments, and preparing for quizzes and exams.
- Read! Complete the Connect Reading Assignment associated with each lecture before you watch the videos. This will provide you with a broader context for understanding the material presented in the recordings.
- Take Good Notes when you read the chapters and listen to recordings.
- Turn in all Assignments on time. Late Assignments receive a 0. Missing one homework assignment will substantially lower your grade in the course.
- Prepare for Exams Well in Advance. You should re-read your lecture notes. You may create flashcards. Work through the test questions posted two weeks before the exams. Do not wait with the exam preparations until the last minute.
- Communicate with me! Email me or make an appointment to meet with me on Zoom if you need to discuss anything pertaining to this course.

Grade Distribution

A	94 - 100%	A-	90 - 94%		
B+	87 - 90%	B	83 - 87%	B-	80 - 83%
C+	77 - 80%	C	73 - 77%	C-	70 - 73%
D+	64 – 70%	D	60 - 64%		
F	60% and lower				

Assignment 1: Science and Media	20 points	6.5%
<i>Word count: 400-500</i>		
Assignment 2: Criteria of Predatory Journals	20 points	6.5%

Word count: 500-700

Assignment 3: Hypotheses 20 points 6.5%

Word count: 600 to 800

Assignment 4: PsycInfo Search 20 points 6.5%

Word count: 700 to 900

Assignment 5: Operational Definition 20 points 6.5%

Word count: 400 to 600

Assignment 6: Reliability and Validity of measures 20 points 6.5%

Word count: 400-600

Assignment 7: Hypotheses Testing 20 points 6.5%

Word count: 500-700

Assignment 8: Critical Analysis of Research Articles 20 points 6.5%

Word count: 400 to 500 per paper

Quizzes 50 points 16.1%

Midterm Exam 50 points 16.1%

Final Exam 50 points 16.1%

Total 310 points

Note: This is a preliminary list of tasks and assignments that may still be subjected to change.