

PSYCHOLOGY 201
Introduction to Behavioral Research
Spring 2020
University of Massachusetts Boston

Instructor: Matthew Hagler, M.A.

Lecture Room: Wheatley W01-0045

Meeting time: Tuesdays & Thursdays, 8:00 AM - 9:15 AM

Office: M/4/247

Office Hours: 9:15-10:15 AM Tuesdays & Thursdays. Also available at other times by appointment (please email to request)

Email: umbpsych201@gmail.com

Course Description

This is an introductory course aiming to provide a foundation for applying the scientific method to answer questions about psychology and human behavior. We will learn about principles and applications of various research designs (e.g., quasi-experiments, correlational studies, single subject, qualitative), basic statistics (e.g., descriptive, inferential, moderation), ethics, and cultural perspectives. You will also gain experience searching for research articles using databases such as PsycINFO, learning APA-style research writing, and preparing research findings to share with a wider audience.

By the end of the course, you should:

- Have a general understanding of the scientific method as a way of thinking and asking questions
- Understand sources of bias in research and different research methods used to reduce bias
- Be able to use online research databases to find peer-reviewed journal articles
- Be able to conduct basic critiques of published research to assess its quality and findings
- Be able to critically evaluate popular science writing and contrast with primary sources

Exams, Assignments, & Grading

I will regularly update your grades on Blackboard so that you have a sense of how you are doing. You will see grades for specific exams/assignments as well as a weighted average of everything graded so far (“Your Course Grade”). Please note that this average will not include Participation or Extra Credit, which will be added at the end.

3 Exams (45%): Each worth 15% of your grade.

APA-style paper (20%): Take-home paper that asks you to prepare a scientific lab report in APA-style. Detailed instructions and examples will be provided in class.

Article critique assignment (15%): Take-home assignment (not a full paper) in place of final exam that asks you to critique a scientific article based on concepts covered in class. Detailed instructions will be provided in class.

Quizzes (10%): There will be online quizzes due every few weeks on Blackboard (3 total). Instructions for this will be emailed after the first day of class. Quizzes are open-book/open-note and untimed.

Participation (10%): I will not take attendance in class. However, I believe that class attendance and participation are essential to grasping the challenging concepts covered in course. There will be 12 in-class, group-based exercises scattered throughout the course. I will not tell you which days these will occur. All students in attendance who submit your OWN sheet of paper with responses will receive credit for that day (graded for completion, not correctness). Even though these exercises are done as a group, you must submit YOUR OWN paper with your name in order to receive credit. You are allowed to miss 2 of these in-class exercises without penalty. In other words, if you are in attendance and participate in at least 10 in-class exercise, you will receive 100 for your participation grade. For each exercise you miss beyond the allowed 2, 10 points will be deducted from your participation grade

Extra credit: Three options (3% max towards final grade); any extra credit work must be turned in by 8:00 AM on **5/12/2019** (last day of class). Late submissions will NOT be accepted – no exceptions. You will only receive credit for assignments that clearly reflect effort and your original work.

- Participation in campus research studies: Typically, there will be several active research studies recruiting from the student body. Should you choose to participate, you must then write a 100-word paragraph reflection that you submit to me (1% each, 3 studies/reflections max). Reflections should include: the name of the study and the researcher conducting it (typically a professor and/or graduate student), what you learned, what was comfortable and/or uncomfortable about the experience, what you wish was done differently at any stage.
- Make an APA-style annotated bibliography: Choose a topic in psychology that you are interested in. Submit the topic to me for approval. The topic CANNOT be related to the APA-style article assignment. Once I approve your topic, use PsycINFO or Google Scholar to find at least 3 articles on that topic. Make an APA-style annotated bibliography and submit to me. More detailed instructions will be provided in class. Each worth 1%, can be done up to three times (on different topics).
- Psychology in the media: Find a news article that is reporting on findings from a specific psychological study. Submit the article to me for approval. Once approved, use PsycINFO or Google Scholar to find the original scientific article. Read both the media article and the scientific article and write a 1-page (250-word) paper in which you compare and contrast them.

More detailed instructions will be provided in class. Each worth 1%, can be done up to three times (on different articles).

The following is used as the grading range for this course:

Letter Grade	Grade %	Letter Grade	Grade %
A	94-100	C+	77-79
A-	90-93	C	74-76
B+	87-89	C-	70-73
B	84-86	D	60-69
B-	80-83	F	0-59

Text

Main text: Nestor, P., & Schutt, R. (2014). *Research Methods in Psychology: Investigating Human Behavior* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

I may also assign supplementary readings (e.g., articles, book chapters, blog posts). These will be posted on Blackboard.

Additional Resources

Student resources for this book (quizzes, flashcards, etc.) can be found at:
<https://study.sagepub.com/nestor2e>

Class Attendance and Tardiness

As stated above, I will not formally take attendance into class, but your participation in in-class exercises will count towards your grade.

Communication

Outside of class time, my primary way of communicating with you will be e-mail. This will be the easiest way for you to reach me. I generally will respond to e-mails within 24-hours during the week. It is important to you check your UMB e-mail daily (during the week), as I will frequently use e-mail to update you, send out readings and assignments, etc. I will also actively update and maintain the course's Blackboard page and post readings and assignments there.

Late Assignments and Requests for Extensions

Generally, I do not allow for extensions, and I will penalize late submission of assignments (10 points will be deducted for every day the assignment is late). However, in the case of personal or family emergencies or extenuating circumstances that may interfere with your completion of course assignments, exceptions can be made. You must contact me as soon as you anticipate an issue or need an extension in order to discuss possibilities of accommodations. The earlier you ask for an extension, the more likely I am to grant it, so it is in your best interest to look ahead to foreseeable events (e.g., religious holidays, family events). I am unlikely to grant a request for an extension that is made close to or after the due date except under extreme circumstances (e.g.,

health or family emergencies). **Each request will be considered on a case-by-case basis, and I cannot guarantee any request for extension or make-up work will be granted.**

It is not acceptable to miss class for several weeks without any communication and then request extensions or work to make-up. I encourage you to be proactive about your workload and seek me out if you have concerns about deadlines, before any issues arise.

Extensions will not be granted for submission of extra credit assignments. No exceptions.

Missing Exams

It is imperative that you attend class on time for exam days. **I will not allow you to make up an exam except under very extreme circumstances.** In most cases, if you miss an exam, it will be recorded as a 0. In the case of exam days that you must miss for legitimate and foreseeable reasons (e.g., religious holidays), I will consider requests to take exams early that are made at least two weeks prior to the exam day. **Again, each request will be considered on a case-by-case basis, and I cannot guarantee any request to take an exam early will be granted.**

Academic Honesty

It is assumed that in this class each student and I will act in a professional and honest manner. Therefore, any student who engages in an act of Academic Dishonesty, plagiarizing a paper (copying from any source without quotes and referencing is plagiarizing), etc., will receive a failing grade for that assignment/test and in most cases a failing grade for the course. Please review the sections on Academic Standards, Cheating, and Plagiarism VI and VII of the Code of Student Conduct

http://www.umb.edu/life_on_campus/policies/regulations.; or download a pdf version of the Code of Student Conduct at

https://www.umb.edu/life_on_campus/policies/community/code.

If you still have questions about Academic Honesty or expectations in this course see me well before the due date of the assignment.

Academic Assistance/Support

The university does provide academic support for students who are in need of advising and/or tutoring. I can help direct you to these services or Academic Support. In accordance with Section 503 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 the University of Massachusetts Boston attempts to accommodate all students with a documented disability. For information about academic support programs and tutoring at UMass Boston, go to:

http://www.umb.edu/academics/vpass/academic_support/

Through the Ross Center for Disability Services various aids such as sign language interpreting, readers, testing accommodations, etc. are available to students. If you believe that you require such services, you should contact the Ross Center on upper level of the Student Center (617-287-7430) as soon as possible. For information about the Ross

Center, go to: <http://www.umb.edu/academics/vpass/disability/>. If in doubt, please come talk to me. If you have documented need of special arrangements for this course, please see me and bring your documentation at the start of the semester.

Incompletes

Incompletes are meant to be used in cases of extreme medical or personal emergency. These are the only situations in which I will even consider granting an incomplete. If a situation of this type should arise I would need to be contacted as soon as possible so that a contract could be negotiated to outline what work would need to be finished and in what time frame. I reserve the right to ask for documentation of the emergency should the need arise.

Classroom Civility

Respect of others and participation is expected. Also, out of respect for the instructor and your fellow students, turn off all electronic communication devices before class begins. Do not text message, e-mail, or chat during class. If there is an emergency and you are expecting a critical text/email/call during class, please speak to me before class.

Computer Use in Class

Those using computers to take notes must be offline during class. I can usually tell when students are browsing the internet rather than taking notes. This will negatively impact your participation grade. If I deduct points for computer use, you will be made aware of this so that you have the opportunity to change your behavior. Repeated infractions by multiple students could result in a change in this policy (e.g., a ban on computer use in class). I reserve the right to ask students to put away their computers at any time during class, or to make a class period “computer-free” in order to facilitate discussion.

Important Mental Health Statement

As a student, you may experience a range of issues that can cause barriers to learning, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, health issues, alcohol/drug problems, feeling down, difficulty concentrating, and/or lack of motivation. These concerns, or other stressful events, may lead to diminished academic performance or may reduce your ability to participate in daily activities. Students are encouraged to seek help when this is the case. An excellent place to start is with the University Health Services Counseling Center (UHS CC). The UHS CC provides free and confidential mental health screening for any currently enrolled UMass-Boston student. The UHS CC is located next to University Health Services General Medicine on the 2nd floor of the Quinn Administration Building. You can call (617 287-5690) or stop by to set up a meeting. Students can also go to the UHS CC without an appointment for emergency evaluations if needed.

Basic Needs Security:

Any student who has difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day, or who lacks a safe and stable place to live, and believes this may affect their

performance in the course, is urged to contact the Dean of Students for support at dean.students@umb.edu

You may also want to contact UACCESS about the services they offer, at https://www.umb.edu/life_on_campus/uaccess

SCHEDULE OF TOPICS, READINGS, & ASSIGNMENTS

Note: Readings and assignments are due on the day of the class with which they are listed at the beginning of the class period. I have indicated how long each reading is in parentheses.

Week	Date	Topic	Readings & Assignments Due
1	Tuesday, 1/28	Syllabus and Course Overview	
	Thursday, 1/30	In-class workshop*	*Counts towards your participation grade as one in-class exercise*
2	Tuesday, 2/4	The Scientific Method	Read Chapter 1 (18 pgs.)
	Thursday, 2/6	The Scientific Method (cont.) The Practice of Psychological Research	Read Chapter 2 (only pg.19-32) (14 pgs.)
3	Tuesday, 2/11	The Practice of Psychological Research	Read Chapter 3 (26 pgs.)
	Thursday, 2/13	Ethics) and Cultural Considerations in Research	Read Chapter 3 (26 pgs.) Complete class survey by 2/25 (instructions emailed to you individually)
4	Tuesday, 2/18	Conceptualization and Measurement	Read Chapter 4 Skim Campbell-Stills et al. (2006) – Identify IV, DV, confounds
	Thursday, 2/20	Conceptualization and Measurement (cont.)	Quiz #1 due before class starts
5	Tuesday, 2/25	In-class activity & exam review	Study for Exam #1 and come with questions Complete class survey by today
	Thursday, 2/27	Exam #1	

6	Tuesday, 3/3	Finding Articles using PsycINFO and Google Scholar	Read Ch. 2 (only pg. 32-49) (17 pgs.)
	Thursday, 3/5	APA style APA style lab report assignment distributed	Read Chapter 12 (30 pgs.)
7	Tuesday, 3/10	Sampling and Survey Research	Read Chapter 5 (30 pgs.)
	Thursday, 3/12	Sampling and Survey Research (cont.)	
8	Tuesday, 3/17	SPRING BREAK – NO CLASS	
	Thursday, 3/19		
9	Tuesday, 3/24	Causation and Experimentation	Read Chapter 6 (31 pgs.)
	Thursday, 3/26	Causation and Experimentation (cont.) Hypothesis testing	Quiz #2 due before class starts Work on rough draft of APA introduction
10	Tuesday, 3/31	Complex Research Design/Multifactorial Experiments	Read Chapter 7 (28 pgs.)
	Thursday, 4/2	Complex Research Design (cont.)	ROUGH DRAFT OF APA INTRODUCTION DUE BY EMAIL
11	Tuesday, 4/7	In-class activity & exam review	Study for Exam #2 and come with questions
	Thursday, 4/9	Exam #2	
12	Tuesday, 4/14	Catch up day Check-in on APA-Style paper	Work on your APA-style paper
	Thursday, 4/16	Quasi-experimental and Non-experimental Designs	Read Chapter 8 (25 pgs.) Work on your APA-style paper
13	Tuesday, 4/21	Quasi-experimental and Non-experimental Designs (cont.) Article critique assignment distributed	Work on your APA-style paper

	Thursday, 4/23	Small-N/Single Subject Design	Read Chapter 9 (28 pgs.) FINAL DRAFT OF APA-STYLE LAB REPORT DUE BY 5:00 PM
14	Tuesday, 4/28	Quantitative Methods	Read Chapter 10 (pg. 256-272) (16 pgs.)
	Thursday, 4/30	Quantitative Methods (cont.)	Read Chapter 10 (pg. 272-287) (15 pgs.)
15	Tuesday, 5/5	Qualitative Methods	Quiz #3 due before class starts Read Chapter 11 (31 pgs.)
	Thursday, 5/7	In-class activity & exam review	Study for Exam #3 and come with questions
16	Tuesday, 5/12	Exam #3	LAST DAY OF CLASS EXTRA CREDIT DUE
	Sunday, 5/17, 11:59 PM	ARTICLE CRITIQUE DUE (submitted on Blackboard)	

This syllabus is subject to change due to time constraints, school cancellations due to weather, or personal circumstances of instructor. Students will be notified of modifications as soon as possible.