Psyc 330 Research Methods in the Behavioral Sciences
University of Scranton

Syllabus

Spring 2013 3 cr, Sect 2 CRN 30940
Tu, Th 10:00-11:15 AM AMH 211
Office: AMH 223, Tel: 941-4268, e-mail: Thomas.Hogan@Scranton.edu
Office hours: Tu, Th 9-10, Wed 10-11 Other times by arrangement

Instructor: Dr. Tom Hogan, Professor of Psychology

Teaching Assistant: Francesca Arvonio

REQUIRED MATERIALS:

EVALUATION PROCEDURES AND ASSIGNMENTS:

We have 10 quizzes, each consisting of 12 multiple-choice items based on the topic just completed, with emphasis on material covered in class. The attached schedule gives the dates for the quizzes. Make-up quizzes will be given only in documented emergency cases; the nature of the make-up quiz is at the discretion of the instructor. You may drop one quiz; this includes quizzes missed due to absence. An optional final, cumulative exam consisting of both multiple-choice and essay questions will be given on the day designated for the final exam; score on the final exam may be used to improve the overall grade, with a weight of two quizzes and used only if it improves the overall quiz average.

There are 11 brief assignments due according to the attached schedule. These assignments will reinforce material covered in class. See the separate handout for description of these assignments. Graded 1/0. If late, automatic half-point deduction. If marked “re-do”, automatic half-point deduction. “On time” submission means at beginning of class when it is due. No e-mail submissions. Copying an assignment from another student is considered academic dishonesty for both parties.

Grading will be determined as follows:
Sum of Quizzes (9 of 10) = 75% (adjusted for final if appropriate) Assignments (11) = 25%
For conversion of percents to letter grades, see Grade Summary on Angel

ACADEMIC HONESTY:
See the University's policy on academic honesty. A student found cheating or engaging in another form of academic dishonesty will receive an F for the assignment and the Dean’s office will be notified.

Students with Disabilities:
In order to receive appropriate accommodations, students with disabilities must register with the Center for Teaching and Learning Excellence and provide relevant and current medical documentation. For more information, see http://www.scranton.edu/disabilities.

REVISIONS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS:
The syllabus is subject to revision. Any revisions will be announced in class.
Class Attendance, Procedures, and Suggestions for Success

1. Class attendance is expected and is normally essential for learning the material.

2. You are responsible for knowing all announcements made in class, including those related to any changes in the attached schedule or course procedures.

3. Classes will begin and end promptly. Suitable attire and civil behavior are expected in class. Turn off cell phones and other electronic communications devices. No flash photography in class.

4. Research Methods is not a statistics course but it assumes you have had a statistics course (and that you remember basic concepts and procedures from that course). Statistical concepts and methods are woven into the text and lecture throughout Research Methods. If you need to refresh your knowledge of statistical concepts and procedures, do so immediately, using your statistics textbook or Chapter 4 and Appendix C in our textbook.

5. Concepts in Research Methods are generally not difficult but there are a lot of them to cover and important distinctions among them. Of course, there are also a few conceptually difficult topics. One of the keys to learning the material is immersion. That takes time on your part.

6. Become accustomed to the rhythm used in the textbook beginning in chapter 5. It goes like this: (1) A method is introduced. Its key features are identified. (2) Then examples of the method drawn from the psychological literature are given. The examples actually take up more space in the book than do the descriptions of the methods. The examples may be read quickly. (3) Finally, limitations or special problems with the method are treated. This cycle is repeated several times in each chapter, with subtopics under each major method.

7. Quizzes will cover material in the chapters plus material covered in class.

8. The lecture part of Research Methods introduces you to the concepts, terminology, and typical applications of widely used methods of psychological research.

9. At the conclusion of our treatment of each method we will have a general discussion of the method. Participation in these discussions is not formally graded. However, participation or lack thereof will determine final grades in borderline cases.

10. See the separate page on assignments.

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Side effects: The Course Objectives identify the intended effects of this treatment. Suggestions for Success list ordinary dosage levels to help ensure the treatment works. Minor adjustments may be needed in individual cases. Extensive observational studies, but not placebo-control studies, have revealed certain side effects. These include an increased inclination to actually engage in research, a sense of delight in discovering unusual features of SPSS, and an urge to serve as a TA for research methods (either lecture or lab) in the future. In most cases, these symptoms are mild and remission occurs within days. If any of these symptoms persist for more seven days, consult your professor immediately.
COURSE OBJECTIVES

According to the catalog, Psych. 330 is "A survey of scientific method and research design in the behavioral sciences. Topics include single subject, survey, correlational and experimental research. Lecture and lab involve computerized data analysis. Lab also includes supervised research and scientific writing. The laboratory is writing intensive." Following is a more detailed list of the principal learning objectives for the course.

1. Describe elements of scientific method and contrast that method with other ways of knowing.

2. Describe ethical principles applicable to the research enterprise, including APA guidelines and federal and University regulations governing use of human and animal subjects.

3. Describe the standard structure for research articles in psychology, including citation format.

4. Become familiar with journals in the field of psychology, with special emphasis on their treatment of methods.

5. For each of the following research methods, recognize
   (a) major characteristics and appropriate applicability,
   (b) standard terminology employed with, and
   (c) strengths and weaknesses of the methods:
   - observation, including use of unobtrusive measures and content analysis
   - surveys, including focus groups
   - correlational methods, including simple linear regression, factor analysis, multiple and partial correlation; test research also treated here
   - experimental methods, including:
     one-way randomized,
     repeated measures, and
     two-way (with interaction) randomized designs
   - quasi-experimental designs and program evaluation
   - small N, behavior analysis, and single-subject case studies

   (See handout on "Summary of Methods" for a convenient overview of this objective.)

6. Apply APA format in preparation of written materials.*

7. Display proficiency in using standard sources for literature reviews in the social/behavioral sciences, including the most recently available electronic sources.*

8. Apply appropriate format in preparation of a poster.*

9. Demonstrate proficiency in statistical processing in SPSS/PC for all of the latter methods.*

* These objectives are treated primarily but not exclusively in the lab portion of the course. The Lecture portion of the course provides formal presentations on the topics covered in item 5. The Lab portion requires practical application of several of the methods, including data collection, statistical processing, and preparation of reports.
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RM Assignments Spring ‘13

Each assignment should be one page, typed.

Put your name, date, and the assignment number in the upper right hand corner of the paper as above.

1. List 3 research topics in behavioral science of interest to you. (You’ll use these for later assignments, so devote a little thought to your interests.) Give a one or two sentence description of each topic.
And, list 3 journals in behavioral science of interest to you. See “PsycArticles” handout. You’ll use these for the next two assignments, so choose carefully.

2. Get 3 journal articles (empirical studies). Review them and outline their structure. Cite them in proper APA format.

3. For each of 2 articles (a) identify operational definitions of the variables and (b) give a brief summary of the adequacy of description of the participants.

4. Complete the CITI certification. Go to:
http://academic.scranton.edu/department/ors/IRBTrainingPgm.htm
and follow the steps. Use Group 1: Social and Behavioral Science. Submit evidence of completion.

5. Complete a simple observation study according to directions given in class. Write up results.

6. For a topic of interest to you, design the form that will be used in a survey.

7. Design a correlational study. Clearly identify what variables you are correlating, their operational definitions, and how you will analyze the data. See separate handout.

8. Design a “true experiment” for one of your research topics. (a) Include your hypothesis and (b) briefly describe how you will analyze the data. (c) Clearly identify the independent and dependent variables.

9. Design a factorial study. Include the elements listed above for assignment 8.

10. For a given set of raw data, prepare it in SPSS data file.

11. Pick an article, based on an empirical study, from one of your journals. Critique the “Method” section.