Research methods in Health psychology
Fall 2007, Psychology 136D, Section 1

TR 10 AM – 11:50 AM
2288 Franz Hall

Instructor: Ted Robles, Ph.D.	Teaching Assistant: Betina Yanez
5611 Franz Hall Office hours: Tuesday, 9 – 10 AM or by appointment	A402 Franz Hall Office hours: Wednesday, 11 AM – 12 PM and Thursday, 9 – 10 AM.
Email: robles@psych.ucla.edu (preferred) Office phone: 4-9362	Email: byanez@ucla.edu

Required Text:
Conducting Research in Psychology: Measuring the Weight of Smoke. By Brett Pelham and Hart Blanton, 3rd Ed.

Objectives:
In this course, you will learn how to conduct research. Why might this be important? Even if you go into a career that does not involve research, you will someday be in a position of making choices based on information. These choices will include purchasing products, making work decisions, and making decisions about your health. How do you go about sorting through all this information? How do you deal with the fact that one study says "coffee is good for your health," another says "coffee is bad for your health," and another says "it's not clear if coffee is good or bad for your health." We'll help you develop the *critical thinking* needed to make informed choices.

By the end of this course, my goals are that you will have the *thinking tools* that will help you ask the right questions and make decisions based on scientific information, including:
- How to develop a scientific question
- How to design a study to answer scientific questions
- How to interpret scientific research

So, the skills you learn in this class will apply to many things that you'll be doing for the rest of your life.

This course will focus on research in health psychology. Health psychology studies psychological influences on how people stay healthy, why people become ill, how people respond when they become ill, and how we can change behavior to promote health. In addition to learning about research in health psychology, by the end of this course, another goal is that you will learn things that will benefit your health and well-being.

Course Format:
During the first half of the course we will review the basics of research methods that you may have forgotten since Psych 100B. Towards the middle of the course most of your learning will take place during group activities, data collection, participating in research, writing research papers, and informal discussions.

Course Requirements and Grading:

Exam (120 points): The in-class exam on **November 1** will review the major concepts of research design that we will cover during the first five weeks of the course, and is based on material from lecture and the textbook. More importantly, the purpose of the exam is to help you apply what you've learned in the course, which will help you later when you work on your project. **There will be no make-up exam.**

Project: Research is an active process that always involves working with a team. For the project, you will work with 4 – 5 people. Your group will pick a research topic from a list of possible topics, come up with a hypothesis and a research design (and get your instructor's approval on it), and then collect and analyze some data. Your project must at minimum involve two groups, and can be experimental or quasi-experimental. You will have class time set aside to work with your group. You will do several things based on this project:

- An in-class presentation (80 points): 20-25 minute presentation during the last week of the quarter, where each member of the group must participate. This presentation will cover the Introduction, Methods, Results, and Discussion. Your grade on the presentation will be based two things: the quality of the final presentation, and your own contribution to the project as graded by yourself and your group members.
- A Final Paper (100 points), consisting of the standard sections of an APA-style research report that you will turn in at different times throughout the quarter. Although you will implement the project as a group, you will each write *independent* papers on the project. You will prepare a concise report (double-spaced, 12-point font, 1-inch margins) based on the findings of your study. The required sections, length of each section, number of points, and due dates are listed below.

Section	Maximum length	Points	Due Date
Introduction	2 pages, plus references	20	October 25, end of class
Methods	3 pages, plus references	30	November 29, beginning of class
Abstract	120 words	4	December 10
Results	3 pages	14	5611 Franz Hall
Discussion	3 pages, plus references and tables/figures	32	5 PM **Late papers will receive a zero.**

In-class study (40 points): You will collect self-report data on yourself for several weeks. We will combine everyone's data into one large data set. With the data, you will write the Results section for an APA-style research paper. I will provide for you the Hypotheses and Methods to guide you as you write your results section. This report must be concise (no longer than 3 pages, double-spaced, 12-point font, 1-inch margins, not counting tables or figures). In addition, you must include one Table or one Figure in your results.

Methodology exercises (30 points): To help familiarize you with basic research principles and procedures, and prepare you for the exam, you and a partner of your choice will collaborate to work on four methodology exercises. You will have class time to work on these answers, and then you and your partner will have to provide written exercises that are due at the beginning of the next class. These exercises may not be worth many points, but if you master them, this will really help you during the midterm. Each of the four exercises is worth between 5 - 9 points, for a total of 28 points. If you complete all four exercises, you will receive an additional 2 points.

<u>Participation and attendance (30 points).</u> Throughout the quarter, we will do activities and have discussions in class and in smaller groups. Enthusiastic and creative participation is encouraged, and attendance is *required*. We will take attendance every day, and you receive 1.5 points for attending each class and 0 points if you fail to attend. If you are tardy by more than 10 minutes, we will receive a fraction of that point based on the number of minutes you are actually in class. For example, if you are a half-hour late to class, you would have attended 80 minutes of the 110 minute class, equivalent to 1.09 points.

<u>Grading breakdown</u> – you may use this to track your performance in the class:

Requirement:	Points	Your points
In-class exam	120	
Introduction section	20	
Methods section	30	
Abstract, Results, Discussion	50	
Final presentation	80	
In-class study paper	40	
Method. exercises	30	
Class participation	30	
Total points	**400**	

Other details

<u>If you have a documented disability with the Office for Students with Disabilities and wish to discuss academic accommodations, please contact me as soon as possible.</u>

Notice there's a lot of writing in this class. Fortunately the papers aren't long, but it is challenging to cover lots of material in a small amount of space. In fact, this is what you will be asked to do in real life when it comes to writing, no matter what the field: You will be asked to take lots of information and describe it in a very concise way.

Final grades will be assigned fairly and curved *only if necessary*. The instructor does not have to explain, defend, or even show you the curve. Complaints about grading must be submitted *in writing* on paper (email complaints will not be reviewed), within 7 days of the graded assignment or test being posted or presented in class. Final grades are not negotiable and will only be changed if there is a miscalculation.

Assignments are due at the beginning of the class unless otherwise specified. Late assignments will suffer a 10% penalty if they are handed in after the start of class and then a 10% penalty each day they are late after that. You are responsible for completing and handing in assignments on time. You are also responsible for being in class to hear any and all information and announcements. Not being in class the day an assignment is explained or due does not grant you extra time to complete it, or any special treatment in grading.

Finally…
DO NOT CHEAT. Your writing must always come from YOU. While you may draw from other sources to help formulate or support your work, you *must always cite these sources* and tie them into your own ideas. Plagiarism is cheating. If it is proven that you plagiarized on your papers or that cheated on the exam or other assignments, you will immediately fail the course, be kicked out of the class, and I will report you to the Office of the Dean of Students.

Class schedule

Week	Date	Lecture Topic	In-class Activity	Reading	Due Today in Class
	R Sept 27	Course overview; Why science?		Ch. 1	
1	T Oct 2	How to ask scientific questions	Review project topics, Assess physical activity	Ch. 2 (p. 27 – 44)	
	R Oct 4	How to measure things	Evaluating different types of measurement Intervention week 1	Ch. 3 (p. 73 – 76), Ch. 4	
2	T Oct 9	How to show causality – experimental designs	Assign Group Project and Groups	Ch. 7 (p. 176-201, 207-209)	Methodology Exercise 1: Designing measures
	R Oct 11	How to design a valid study	Intervention week 2	Ch. 3 (p. 59 – 72), Ch. 5	
3	T Oct 16	How to manipulate things	Methodology Exercise 2: Random assignment	Ch. 7 (p. 202-206)	
	R Oct 18	Non-experimental designs and quasi-experimental designs		Ch. 6	Turn in reading list for group project
4	T Oct 23	Factorial designs	Methodology Exercise 3: Design an experiment and non-experiment	Ch. 8 Ch. 9 (p. 242-258)	
	R Oct 25	Within-subject, mixed designs	Methodology Exercise 4: Interactions	Ch. 9 (258-267)	Introduction due by *end* of class Turn in in-class study data
5	T Oct 30	Ethics	Ethical debates Exam review	The Belmont report Ch. 2 (p. 50 – 57)	
	R Nov 1	**IN CLASS EXAM**			
6 **Computer lab**	T Nov 6	Statistics, Part 1	Meet with Groups		
Computer lab	R Nov 8	Statistics, Part 2 Hand back exam	Meet with groups		
7	T Nov 13	Final presentation info/How to give a research presentation	Meet with groups		
	R Nov 15	In Class consultation and data collection day	Meet with groups		In-class study paper due at beginning of class
8	T Nov 20	In Class data collection day	Meet with groups		
	R Nov 22	**HAPPY THANKSGIVING!**			
9 **Computer lab**	T Nov 27	How to Analyze your Data	Meet with groups		Data for group project due at beginning of class
	R Nov 29	How to Discuss your data	Meet with groups		Methods due at beginning of class
10	T Dec 4	Student Presentations/Group Projects **ATTENDANCE MANDATORY**			
	R Dec 6	Student Presentations/Group Projects **ATTENDANCE MANDATORY**			
Finals week	M Dec 10	Abstract, Results, Discussion Due by 5 PM, 5611 Franz Hall **NO LATE PAPERS WILL BE ACCEPTED**			