

**Class Meetings**

MW 1:00pm – 1:50pm Biology-Psychology 1250

**Discussion Sections**

W 2:00pm – 3:50pm Biology-Psychology 1232  
Th 9:30am – 11:20am Martin Hall 3102  
Th 2:00pm – 3:50pm Biology-Psychology 1228  
F 10:00am – 11:50am Martin Hall 2154  
Th 12:30pm – 2:20pm Martin Hall 0309

**Instructors**

Kevin E. O'Grady

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**WWW:** <http://www.bsos.umd.edu/psyc/ogrady/psyc300.htm>

**Blackboard:** <http://elms.umd.edu>

**Course Description**

This course provides a general introduction and overview to the fundamental theoretical, conceptual, and practical issues in psychological research in both the laboratory and the field. It is assumed that you have had one introductory-level course in statistics (*PSYC200: Statistical Methods in Psychology*, or its equivalent).

## **Course Objectives**

The objectives of this course are threefold, focusing on the planning, conduct, and interpretation of psychological research. More specifically, the three goals are to develop in the student:

- ▶ An understanding of how to – and how not to – design psychological research
- ▶ An appreciation for the relative strengths and weaknesses of a variety of research designs
- ▶ A capacity to think critically about psychological research findings

## **Texts**

Gravetter, F.J. & Forzano, L.B. (2012). *Research methods for the behavioral sciences* (Fourth Edition). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Cengage Learning. [ISBN-10: 1111342253 ISBN-13: 9781111342258]

e-book: <http://www.cengagebrain.com/shop/ISBN/9781111342258?cid=APL1>

■ *I have not ordered a textbook for the class. The e-book option is substantially cheaper, and I encourage you to use this option. If you do wish to order a textbook, you can probably find a reasonable price at sources such as Amazon or WalMart. However, I could not find a resource that priced the book more cheaply than the e-book. I discourage use of the Third Edition.*

## **Discussion Sections**

Discussion sections will meet weekly. You may only attend the Discussion section in which you are enrolled.

There are two primary goals of the Discussion sections. The first goal is to help you develop critical skills in evaluating psychological research. Several articles from the psychological literature will be available on the class Blackboard site, and evaluation and discussion of these papers will be a primary focus of a number of weekly Discussion section meetings. Assignment of these articles will be provided to you on a weekly basis by your class Teaching Assistant. You are expected to have read the assigned article prior to the meeting of your Discussion section, and to be ready to critique the article during the meeting. Your critique should include, but not necessarily be limited to an evaluation of the theoretical, conceptual, methodological, design, measurement, statistical, and inferential strengths and weaknesses of the article.

*Note* that it is likely that additional articles will be chosen as the semester progresses, and added to the Readings now available on your class Blackboard site.

*Note* that you *will* be responsible for knowledge of the articles on the exams.

The second goal of the Discussion section is to help you prepare your class term paper. This paper will require you to write the Methods and Results sections of a manuscript prepared according to American Psychological Association Style Manual standards. Each Discussion section will design its own study. Each section will discuss and then choose what it considers to be the most appropriate: measures to conduct the research, design, and statistical methods.

Each of you will then be provided your own data, and be required to analyze the data and draw the appropriate inferences. Discussion sections will spend time each week reviewing the literature, presenting the issues involved, designing the study, choosing measures, and supporting you in your statistical analyses.

### **Class Materials**

Outlines of each class lecture can be found in Powerpoint presentations on the class Blackboard site.

The lectures that I deliver in this class and course materials I create and distribute, including Powerpoint presentations, tests, outlines, and similar materials, are protected by federal copyright law as my original works. My lectures are recorded or delivered from written notes in order to ensure copyright protection. You are permitted to take notes of lectures and to use course materials for your educational benefit in this course. You are not allowed to audio-record my lectures without my prior written consent. You are not authorized to reproduce or distribute notes of lectures or my course materials or make any commercial use of them without my express written consent. Individuals who sell or distribute copies or modified copies of course materials or assist another person or entity in selling or distributing such materials may be considered in violation of the University Code of Student Conduct, Part 9(k).

### **Exams**

- You will be given two mid-term exams. These exams will both be closed-book and 50 minutes in length. These will be administered during a regularly-scheduled class period; the second of the two mid-terms will be administered during the last regularly-scheduled class period. The first mid-term exam will cover material presented since the beginning of the semester; the second mid-exam will cover material presented since the first mid-term exam.
- If for any reason the first mid-term exam cannot be administered during the regularly-scheduled class meeting, it will be administered at the next regularly-scheduled class meeting. If for any reason the second mid-term exam cannot be administered during the final regularly-scheduled class meeting, it will be administered during the regularly-scheduled class final exam period.
- There will be no final exam.

### **Term Paper**

An Acrobat pdf image of your term paper will be due *in your TA's email inbox* at the end of the class final exam period: 3:30pm on Friday, May 13.

### **Policies:**

- Please make sure your pdf file is complete and uncorrupted before you submit it.
- Do *not* leave your TA a physical copy of your paper.

- A late term paper will be down-graded one letter grade.
- A term paper submitted after the close of the final exam period will receive a 0.

**Extra Credit**

It is possible that extra-credit opportunities will be extended to students throughout the semester.

Please note that students will not be allowed to participate in studies other than those studies for which recruitment takes places during class, or through the class Blackboard site.

**Grading**

Your grade in this course will be based on a weighted average of the two exams, the term paper, and Discussion section participation. Each exam will count 30% of your final grade; the term paper will count 30% of your final grade; participation in your Discussion section will count 10% of your final grade.

Final grades will be determined as follows:

Letter Grade	Weighted Average
A+	97% and above
A	93%-96%, inclusive
A-	90%-93%, inclusive
B+	87%-89%, inclusive
B	83%-86%, inclusive
B-	80%-83%, inclusive
C+	77%-79%, inclusive
C	73%-76%, inclusive
C-	70%-73%, inclusive
D+	67%-69%, inclusive
D	63%-66%, inclusive
D-	60%-63%, inclusive
F	59% and below

A grade of I (Incomplete) will only be given to a student who has been performing at an acceptable level, but who, due to illness or other extenuating circumstances beyond the student's control, has been unable to complete a small portion of the work.

## **Medical Excuses**

Campus Senate policy requires students who are absent due to illness or injury to furnish documentary support to their instructor. Students are required to contact me by email or by phone prior to class time to indicate that they have an illness or an injury and will be missing either exam, or will be turning in the term paper late. Students must provide written documentation verifying their illness or injury on the day they return to class. Students will not be allowed to turn in the term paper or make up an exam if they have not provided this documentation. In addition, if I believe that falsified documentation might have been provided, the student will be referred to the University's Office of Student Conduct (<http://studentconduct.umd.edu/>).

## **Students with Learning, Emotional, Psychological, and Physical Disabilities**

Every effort will be made to accommodate students who are registered with the University Disability Support Services (DSS) Office and who provide a University of Maryland, College Park DSS Accommodation form that has been updated for the Spring, 2011 semester. This form must be presented to me no later than March 1, 2011. I am not able to accommodate students who are not registered with DSS or who do not provide me with documentation that has been reviewed by DSS after March 1, 2011.

## **Religious Observances**

University policy stipulates that students must inform their instructor in writing of a projected absence due to a religious observance within two weeks of the start of the semester. Thus, a student must make a written request for a make-up mid-term exam by Tuesday, February 8, 2011 if either of the mid-term exams falls on a date of a religious observance.

## **Classroom Conduct**

Students are expected to treat each other with respect. Disruptive behavior of any kind will not be tolerated. Students who are unable to show civility with one another, class guests, or their instructor will be subject to referral to the Office of Student Conduct or to Campus Police. Students are expected to adhere to the Code of Student Conduct (<http://www.president.umd.edu/policies/docs/v100b.pdf>).

## **CourseEvalUM**

As a member of our academic community, you as a student have a number of important responsibilities. One of these responsibilities is to submit your course evaluations each term through CourseEvalUM in order to help faculty and administrators improve teaching and learning at Maryland. Please make a note now of the dates for the Spring, 2010 semester (Tuesday, April 27 through Wednesday, May 12) and the link at which you can access the submission system ([www.courseevalum.umd.edu](http://www.courseevalum.umd.edu)). If you submitted all of your evaluations in the fall or are a new student, you can also access all posted results from Fall, 2008 forward via Testudo under CourseEvalUM. To retain this access, you must submit all of your evaluations each semester. If you do not have access right now, you can gain it by submitting all of your Spring, 2010

evaluations. More information is available at:  
[https://www.irpa.umd.edu/Assessment/CourseEval/stdt\\_faq.shtml](https://www.irpa.umd.edu/Assessment/CourseEval/stdt_faq.shtml).

### **Academic Integrity**

The University of Maryland, College Park has a nationally recognized Code of Academic Integrity, administered by the Student Honor Council. This Code sets standards for academic integrity at Maryland for all undergraduate and graduate students. As a student you are responsible for upholding these standards for this course. It is very important for you to be aware of the consequences of cheating, fabrication, facilitation, and plagiarism. For more information on the Student Honor Council or the Code of Academic Integrity, please visit <http://www.shc.umd.edu> and <http://www.testudo.umd.edu/soc/dishonesty.html>.

To further exhibit your commitment to academic integrity, remember to sign the Honor Pledge on all examinations and assignments: "I pledge on my honor that I have not given or received any unauthorized assistance on this examination (assignment)."

## Schedule of Assignments

The following schedule of assignments should be viewed as a guideline. Not all topics fit neatly into a 50-minute presentation. And, we may decide that some topics merit further discussion or exploration. Thus, dates below should be considered fluid, and will likely change as the semester progresses.

	Topic	Chapter
Jan 24	Introduction	
Jan 26	Science and Psychology	1
Jan 31	Ethics Principles and Psychological Research	4
Feb 2	Measurement and Scaling	3
Feb 7	Reliability and Validity	3
Feb 9	Probability	15
Feb 14	Hypothesis Testing	15
Feb 16	Power	15
Feb 21	Planning a Research Study	2
Feb 23	Survey and Survey Sampling	5
Feb 28	Scale Construction	3
Mar 2	Survey Methods	13
Mar 7	Observational Studies, Field Research, Archival Studies	12-13
Mar 9	<b>» Mid-Term Exam «</b>	
Mar 14	Qualitative Research	6
Mar 16	Correlational Research	12
Mar 21	<i>¡Spring Break!</i>	
Mar 23	<i>¡Spring Break!</i>	
Mar 28	Correlational Research (continued)	12
Mar 30	Non-Experimental Designs	10
Apr 4	Quasi-Experimental Designs	10
Apr 6	Design of Experiments	7
Apr 11	True Experiments	8
Apr 13	True Experiments (continued)	9
Apr 18	True Experiments: Factorial Designs	11
Apr 20	Randomized Clinical Trials	11
Apr 25	Mediators, Moderators, and Structural Equation Models	
Apr 27	Longitudinal Research	10
May 2	Case Studies	14
May 4	Time Series	14
May 9	<b>» Mid-Term Exam «</b>	
May 13@3:30pm	<b>» Term Paper Due «</b>	