



Peru State College
PSYC 410-49A: EXPERIMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY
Syllabus – Fall – 2011

Professor: James R. Nevitt, Ph.D.

Office/Phone: My office is located in T.J. Majors (Room 243). I am readily accessible by email, which I check daily. I will attempt to answer all emails within 24hrs.

Phone: 402 872 2293
e-mail: jnevitt@peru.edu

Required Textbook: *Research Methods in Psychology* (8th Edition) by John J. Shaughnessy, Eugene Zechmeister, and Jeanne Zechmeister, McGraw-Hill, 2009
ISBN 978-0-07-338269-2

Recommended Textbook: *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, 6th ed., publisher – American Psychological Association

Course Meets: Online from 8/22/11 – 12/16/11.

Required Software: Microsoft Word.

Course Description & Objectives:

This course is designed to assist students in the comprehension and use of experimental methods and literature. Research exercises are provided to illustrate course content. (PSC College Catalog).

An introduction to scientific/experimental research methods used in the study of behavior and a survey of the field of experimental psychology. (Instructor)

Prerequisites: PSYC 121 Intro. To Psychology and PSYC 330 Research Methods desirable.

Course Objectives (general):

The principle objective of this course is to provide you with a basic understanding of research methodology as it applies to psychology. Accordingly, materials presented are related to the philosophy of science, research design, data analysis and interpretation. These materials are presented in the belief that a strong methodological background will

increase student effectiveness in other upper-division laboratory and lecture courses and provide essential information for those continuing on into graduate programs. The course is not intended solely for students who wish to pursue careers in research. The methodological concepts presented in class are being applied with increasing frequency to areas traditionally regarded as non-experimental (e.g., clinical psychology, community mental health, probation, criminal justice, and teaching).

Course Objectives (specific):

1. Students will use the scientific method as a primary basis for engaging in critical thinking and evaluating multiple sources of information.
2. Students will synthesize psychological theory and relevant research to formulate original hypotheses.
3. Students will study the design, analysis of descriptive, correlational, and experimental studies, and write a brief research reports using APA style.
4. Students will communicate and present psychological concepts, principles, and theories clearly and effectively, in written form.
5. Students will demonstrate basic understanding of prerequisite courses (PSYC 121 & PSYC 330).
6. Students will use appropriately the technical language of the science of psychology in oral and written communication in discussion boards and research assignments.

Expectations & Instructional Approach

Experimental Psychology is a demanding class that is taught in 16-week semesters. You will need to be self-motivated and spend a considerable amount of time working on this class each week in order to complete it successfully. Please allow yourself enough time to do your best work, and please contact me if you are having trouble meeting the course requirements.

Attendance and participation are vital to the learning experience, even online. Consequently, I expect you read the text material, turn in all assignments, and participate fully in the weekly discussion board. In order to foster a climate conducive to learning, please join me in treating your classmates with respect. I encourage students to ask questions via e-mail and seek my help when they need it.

1. **Carefully attend to the assignment and course documents section).** I will post instructions for course related activities in the assignment section. I will place additional reading materials, PowerPoint presentations, and exams in the course document section.
2. **Be proactive learners.** Read the assigned materials several times. Most students cannot absorb the large amount of materials covered this summer with only one reading. Be involved in discussion board activities. You will be evaluated on the quality of your participation. Your exams are demanding for students at the undergraduate level. Students that adopt a "passive" or "wait-and-see" approach to this course the first two weeks usually do not do well.

3. **Take exams when they are offered.** They will be available, one at a time, on a weekly basis. Each exam may be taken only once. There is no provision for making up a missed exam. There is no provision for extra credit in this class this semester. If you experience difficulties understanding assignments, do not hesitate to contact me via e-mail.

4. **Students will be expected to use their Peru State College e-mail accounts (no exceptions).** Do not try to correspond without using your assigned e-mail account. All term papers are to be done on Microsoft Word. If you do not have this software, acquire it.

Assessment and Grading

Course Overview and Grading: The major requirements of this course will include weekly written discussion board assignments, weekly chapter quizzes, a research paper, and a cumulative final exam.

The total point distribution is as follows:

8 Discussion Board Writing Assignments @ 20 points each.....	160 points
8 Weekly Quizzes @ 50 points each.....	400 points
1 Research Paper @ 50 points.....	50 points
<hr/>	
Total	610 points

Weekly discussion board posts: Classes that meet in person often spend significant time discussing course content. You are expected to participate on the discussion board each week. Questions that are related to the required readings will be posted weekly. A Discussion Board question will be posted early in the week (generally on Tuesday morning) and will be available the rest of the week and then removed the following Monday Morning.

The instructor expects students to demonstrate that they are knowledgeable about the selected subjects and demonstrate this knowledge by contributing at least 300-400 words of discussion each week. Discussion board responses will be evaluated with consideration as to how well-informed and thoughtful the content is. Some consideration will also be given to creativity of responses. Student will be evaluated on spelling and grammar as well. **Consider the discussion board items exercises in writing as well as a forum of opinion. Improper spelling, profanity, incomplete sentences, etc. will result in a lower weekly score. NOTHING WILL LOWER YOUR SCORE QUITE AS MUCH AS FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH THE REQUIRED LENGTH OF THE WRITING ASSIGNMENT.**

Consistency is the key here. A student will earn points weekly, they will be evaluated weekly. **Neglecting to respond to a question one week will result in zero points for this part of the course.** These points cannot be made up.

Documentation of opinion is an important part of these assignments. Neglect of documentation or failure to report resources associated with reported information will result in a lower weekly score.

Chapter quizzes: There will be **eight quizzes** during the Fall 2011 semester. They will be offered at two-week intervals. **Each will usually cover two chapters in your textbook.** The quizzes are fifty questions multiple-choice items each, drawn from the readings in your textbook. Each quiz will be worth 50 points. The last quiz, **WILL BE COMPREHENSIVE** and will cover all previous chapters in the text as well as the last chapters studied. The last quiz is worth 50 points, the same point value as all of the previous ones. **Each week a quiz will be made available to the student on Monday.** Students will have two entire weeks to prepare for and take each quiz. It will be removed on Sunday at 10:30 pm and replaced with a new one for the next chapters to be studied the next day (on Monday morning). The old quiz will not be placed back online once it is removed! Students may take a quiz at any time period during the week it is available. Quizzes may not be taken ahead of their scheduled time. Quizzes may not be taken twice. Students need to make certain they have read the textbook materials repeatedly and are prepared at the time they commit themselves to take the quizzes. These are demanding quizzes. Student should make certain that they are completely prepared to take the quiz before each experience. **Each quiz will be timed.** Students will have one hour to complete the entire quiz. Once the time period elapses, the quiz can be scored automatically for the student. After the quiz is scored and feedback is provided to the student, the quiz will be unavailable to the student for a second attempt.

Term Paper: **A ten page research paper utilizing electronic and conventional library resources will be required as a portion of the evaluation process. The paper must be written in APA style.** There are many other styles of writing reports and term papers. However, APA style is the most frequently used writing style in the fields of psychology, counseling, criminal justice, sociology, social work, and many other areas in social sciences and business. I will not read a paper that is submitted in a style other than APA writing style. Useful overviews for those that need assistance writing a paper for this course can be found in the document section but they are no substitution for the APA Publication Manual.

The instructor does not simply regard the paper as an exercise in writing. It is a chance to learn about APA style (for those that don't yet know it) and an opportunity to research a special area of interest. I'm assuming that those students attempting this project this fall will choose to use many electronic references, but students may use other traditional references (e.g. a book such as the course text) as well, provided that the citations and reference page of the paper is consistent with APA style. The term paper must be done

in Microsoft Word. If you do not have this software available to you, please acquire it! I will not accept papers in any other form.

You can use EBSCO Host associated with the PSC online library to find a scholarly article on a psychological topic of interest to you. This assignment is worth 50 points.

Content of Term Paper: The student will construct and write an APA formatted literature review, with a body 10 pages long, using 12 point font, and double spacing. The required ten pages do not include a reference section and cover sheet. Students should contact the lead instructor with their topics prior to beginning their research. A formal outline of the paper and a topic approval by the instructor is required prior to the end of the third week of the semester before a student will be granted permission to begin his or her research. Papers that have not been given approval prior to the third week will not be read or evaluated by the instructor.

Topics for a paper may include :

- (1) A famous line of experimental or cognitive psychological research (e.g. facial recognition research or studies on obedience).
- (2) A specific researcher's contribution to science and its specific relation to this course, e.g. the works of (as opposed to the biography or life of) Roger Sperry, Robert Fantz or another famous researcher that used formal experiments during his/her research career.

The primary point is to familiarize the student with a researcher or line of research using the experimental techniques that this class revolves around. Papers should focus upon human or animal learning, perception/sensation, memory, attention, physiological psychology and related subareas.

Folders in these general subareas have been placed online in the course document section to familiarize the student with some of the early researchers and their work. It is not the case that I want you to write primarily about these early figures. Most of your paper should FOCUS UPON RESEARCH THAT HAS BEEN CONDUCTED IN THE LAST TEN YEARS. Feel free to bring the reader up to speed historically...but most references used in this paper should be fairly current.

The following general topics are NOT CONSIDERED APPROPRIATE for this assignment:

1. Clinical/Counseling Topics – The paper should focus upon Cognitive or Experimental Psychology and research within the field. Please save papers that explore personality, attachment/emotions, parenting, or other related topics for other courses that rightfully investigate them.
2. Researchers classically associated with personality theory, abnormal psychology or clinical studies...Freud, Jung, Maslow, Rogers etc.

A one-page outline related to the term paper topic will be due at the end of week 3 of this course. The instructor will review student outlines and respond back to individual

students during week 4. Failure to turn in an outline will result in loss of opportunity to do the term paper assignment and reduce a student's score by fifty points. Failure to turn in a term paper that doesn't conform with the instructor approved outline submitted during week three will likewise result in a reduction of fifty points.

The term paper itself is due on November 30th, 2011.

Rubric A general rubric associated with the evaluation of the term paper.

A (50-45 points) = Clearly stands out as excellent performance. Has unusually sharp insight into material. Sees many sides of an issue. Articulates well and writes logically and clearly. Integrates ideas previously learned from this and other disciplines. Anticipates next steps in progression of ideas. Superior knowledge of APA writing style.

B (44-40 points) = Grasps subject matter at a level considered to be good to very good. Writes well. Accomplishes more than the minimum requirements. Work is of high quality. Above average knowledge of APA writing style.

C (39-35 points) = Demonstrates a satisfactory comprehension of the subject matter. Accomplishes only the minimum requirements. Communicates at an acceptable level for a college student. Has a generally acceptable understanding of all basic concepts. in paper. Adequate knowledge of APA writing style.

D (34-30 points) = Quality of written work is poor overall. Inadequate ability to communicate in writing. Poor understanding of chosen topic. Inadequate knowledge of APA writing style.

F(Below 30 points) = Quality of work completely unacceptable.

Late Assignment Policy: It is very important that students turn in their work in a timely fashion. *Assignments that are submitted after the deadline will not be scored unless a student has made arrangements with me.* I also reserve the right to impose a late penalty of as much as 25% of the total possible points. Deducting points from well-done work is painful for both of us. Please make it a priority to submit your work in on time.

Grading Scale

Final course grades will be assigned as follows:

Course grade	Percentage of points earned	Number of points earned
A	100-90%	610-549
B+	89-86%	548-525
B	85-80%	524-488
C+	79-76%	489-464
C	75-70%	463-427

D+	69-66%	426-403
D	65-60%	402-366
F	Below 60%	365 or fewer

College's Incomplete Coursework Policy

To designate a student's work in a course as incomplete at the end of a term, the instructor records the incomplete grade (I). Students may receive this grade only when serious illness, hardship, death in the immediate family, or military service during the semester in which they are registered prevents them from completing course requirements. In addition, to receive an incomplete, a student must have completed substantially all of the course's major requirements.

Unless extenuating circumstances dictate otherwise, students must initiate requests for an incomplete by filling out an Incomplete Grade Completion Contract, which requires the signature of the student, instructor, and Dean. The Incomplete Grade Completion contract cites the reason(s) for the incomplete and details the specific obligations the student must meet to change the incomplete to a letter grade. The date by which the student agrees to complete required work must appear in the contract. The Dean, the instructor, and the student receive signed copies of the Incomplete Grade Completion Contract.

Even if the student does not attend Peru State College, all incomplete course work must be finished by the end of the subsequent semester. Unless the appropriate Dean approves an extension and if the student does not fulfill contract obligations in the allotted time, the incomplete grade automatically becomes an F.

College's Academic Integrity Policy

The College expects all students to conduct themselves in a manner that supports an honest assessment of student learning outcomes and the assignment of grades that appropriately reflect student performance. It is ultimately the student's responsibility to understand and comply with instructions regarding the completion of assignments, exams, and other academic activities. At a minimum, students should assume that at each assessment opportunity they are expected to do their own original academic work and/or clearly acknowledge in an appropriate fashion the intellectual work of others, when such contributions are allowed. Students helping others to circumvent honest assessments of learning outcomes, or who fail to report instances of academic dishonesty, are also subject to the sanctions defined in this policy.

Instances of academic dishonesty may be discovered in a variety of ways. Faculty members who assign written work ordinarily check citations for accuracy, run data base and online checks, and/or may simply recognize familiar passages

that are not cited. They may observe students in the act of cheating or may become aware of instances of cheating from the statements of others. All persons who observe or otherwise know about instances of cheating are expected to report such instances to the proper instructor or Dean.

In order to promote academic integrity, the College subscribes to an electronic service to review papers for the appropriate citations and originality. Key elements of submitted papers are stored electronically in a limited access database and thus become a permanent part of the material to which future submissions are compared. Submission of an application and continued enrollment signifies your permission for this use of your written work.

Should an occurrence of academic misconduct occur, the faculty member may assign a failing grade for the assignment or a failing grade for the course. Each incident of academic misconduct should be reported to the Dean and the Vice President for Academic Affairs (VPAA). The VPAA may suspend for two semesters students found to be responsible for multiple instances of academic dishonesty. The reason for the suspension will be noted on the student's transcript.

A faculty member need present only basic evidence of academic dishonesty. There is no requirement for proof of intent. Students are responsible for understanding these tenets of academic honesty and integrity. Students may appeal penalties for academic dishonesty using the process established for grades appeals.

Title IX Compliance Notice

Peru State College is an equal opportunity institution. PSC does not discriminate against any student, employee or applicant on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, religion, or age in employment and education opportunities, including but not limited to admission decisions. The College has designated an individual to coordinate the College's nondiscrimination efforts to comply with regulations implementing Title VI, VII, IX, and Section 504. Inquiries regarding non-discrimination policies and practices may be directed to Eulanda Cade, Director of Human Resources, Title VI, VII, IX Compliance Coordinator, Peru State College, PO Box 10, Peru, NE 68421-0010, (402) 872-2230.

Students requesting reasonable accommodation and tutoring services should contact the Center for Achievement and Transition Services (CATS).

Tentative Course Schedule: The following course schedule includes topics, reading assignments, and the dates of exams. However, I do reserve the right to change this

course calendar as needed. You will always be notified if our plan deviates from this schedule.

WEEKS ONE AND TWO (Monday, August 22 - Sunday, September 4, 2011)

Topics: Introduction and Scientific Method

Readings: Chapters 1 and 2

Read chapters one and two several times in text. Then please review the PowerPoint presentations, learning objectives, glossaries, practice quizzes, and "Taking it to the Net" features for both chapters located in the course document section. Take exam 1 found in course document section. Answer discussion board 1 questions found in discussion board section.

WEEKS THREE AND FOUR (Monday, September 5 – Sunday, September 18, 2011)

Topics: Ethical Issues and Observation

Readings: Chapters 3 and 4

Read chapters three and four several times in text. Then please review the PowerPoint presentations, learning objectives, glossaries, practice quizzes, and "Taking it to the Net" features for both chapters located in the course document section. Take exam 2 found in course document section. Answer discussion board 2 questions found in discussion board section.

WEEKS FIVE AND SIX (Monday, September 19 - Sunday, October 2, 2011)

Topics: Survey Research and Unobtrusive Measures of Behavior

Readings: Chapters 5 and 6

Read chapters five and six several times in text. Then please review the PowerPoint presentations, learning objectives, glossaries, practice quizzes, and "Taking it to the Net" features for both chapters located in the course document section. Take exam 3 found in course document section. Answer discussion board 3 questions found in discussion board section. Select a research paper topic and turn in a one page outline.

WEEKS SEVEN AND EIGHT (Monday, October 3 - Sunday, October 16, 2011)

Topics: Independent Group Designs

Readings: Chapter 7

Read chapters seven several times in text. Then please review the PowerPoint presentations, learning objectives, glossaries, practice quizzes, and "Taking it to the Net" features for this chapter located in the course document section. Answer Discussion Board 4 questions. Take exam 4 found in course document section.

WEEKS NINE AND TEN (Monday, October 17 - Sunday, October 30, 2011)

Topics: Repeated Measures Designs

Readings: Chapter 8

Read chapter eight several times in text. Then please review the PowerPoint presentations, learning objectives, glossaries, practice quizzes, and "Taking it to the Net" features for this chapter located in the course document section. Take exam 5 found in course document section. Answer discussion board 5 questions found in discussion board section.

WEEKS ELEVEN AND TWELVE (Monday, October 31 - Sunday November 13, 2011)

Topic: Complex Designs and Single Case Designs/Small-n Research

Readings: Chapters 9 and 10

Read chapters nine and ten several times in text. Then please review the PowerPoint presentations, learning objectives, glossaries, practice quizzes, and "Taking it to the Net" features for both chapters located in the course document section. Take exam 6 found in course document section. Answer discussion board 6 questions found in discussion board section.

WEEKS THIRTEEN AND FOURTEEN (Monday, November 14 - Sunday November 27, 2011)

Topics: Quasi-experimental Designs and Data Analysis and Interpretation: Part 1

Readings: Chapters 11 and 12

Read chapters eleven and twelve several times in text. Then please review the PowerPoint presentations, learning objectives, glossaries, practice quizzes, and "Taking it to the Net" features for both chapters located in the course document section. Take exam 7 found in course document section. Answer discussion board 7 questions found in discussion board section.

WEEKS FIFTEEN AND SIXTEEN (Sunday November 28 - Friday, December 16, 2011)

Topics: Data Analysis: Part 2 and Communication in Psychology

Readings: Chapter 13 and 14

Review entire text book as well as read chapters 13 and 14 several times in text. Then please review the PowerPoint presentations, learning objectives, glossaries, practice quizzes, and "Taking it to the Net" features for the last two chapters located in the course document section. Take exam 8 found in course document section. Remember the last exam is comprehensive and will cover previous readings as well as the last two chapters assigned. Answer discussion board 8 questions found in discussion board section.

*Note: All coursework must be completed by **Friday, December 16** at noon. Please plan accordingly.