

Peru State College  
**PSYC 410 EXPERIMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY**  
Syllabus – Spring – 2010

**Instructor:** James R. Nevitt, Ph.D.

**Office Hours:** 9:30 – 11:00 a.m. and 12:30 – 1:30 p.m. on Mon. and Wed.

8:00 – 9:00 a.m. and 1:00 – 2:00 p.m. on Tues. and Thur.

Fridays from 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon by appointment only.

**Office Telephone:** (402) 872-2293

**Email Address:** jnevitt@peru.edu

**Course Meets:** 8:00 – 9:15 a.m., Mon. – Wed. T.J. Majors Room 325

**Required Textbook:** Research Methods In Psychology, by John Shaughnessy, Eugene Zechmeister, and Jeanne Zechmeister, (2006), 7<sup>th</sup> ed., McGraw-Hill.

ISBN – 007-298622-0

**Required Software:** MS Word

### **Course Description & Objectives**

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

**Prerequisites:** Psychology 121, and/or Psychology 330, junior or senior standing

Upon completion of this course you should be able to:

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, most importantly, experimental studies, and write 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 on quizzes and research assignments.

At the beginning of the course, we will discuss how these objectives fit into the College's and School's mission and goals.

### **Expectations & Instructional Approach**

Class will include lectures and power point presentations, guided discourse, recording attendance, unit exams, assignment and/or discussion of outside readings and brief occasional streaming or DVD presentations. Your attendance and participation will be vital to the learning experience. Consequently I expect you to be at each class, having read the material of the day, and ready to participate in the day's discussion and learning experience. Do not bring a radio, i-pod or CD player with or without headphones to class. Please place pagers and cell phones on silent mode.

### **Assessment and Grading**

#### Class Attendance and Participation:

It is important that you attend each session as scheduled. Class time is important. Attendance will be taken and will count as a significant part of your grade. Attending a lecture or DVD presentation is defined as "being present throughout the entire period"; as such, attendance will be taken during the first ten minutes of class. **Late arrivals will be counted on the attendance roster at the discretion of the instructor if the reason seems valid.**

In the event a student may miss a class, the student is **required to notify the instructor via e-mail or phone a minimum of one (1) hour prior to that class.** Students may miss the equivalent of two (2) classes without an adverse effect on their grade...thereafter **ten (10) points shall be deducted from the student's final grade.** In the event that a student misses a class due to reasons beyond his or her control and wishes to make up a percentage of those points, additional reading and written assignment(s) may be permitted at the discretion of the instructor. **Any student missing more than 5 classes shall not pass this course. Regular unit exams must be taken at the scheduled time unless excused in advance by Dr. Nevitt, with the exception of a medical emergency verified by a doctor's confirmation. Exams must be taken within one week of the time administered to the class to be considered as part of a student's grade.**

Weekly Assignments: (50 points)

Weekly assignments will be given in the form of videolab experiences or other written homework. They must be turned in upon the next meeting period for full credit. These weekly assignments will be graded on the merit of timely completion, content, creativity, and thoughtfulness.

Individual Project: (50 points)

A ten page research paper, written in APA style, utilizing electronic and conventional library resources will be required for successful completion of this course. A contract specifying the research paper topic and resources/references to be used will be completed prior to mid-term. Guidelines for writing this paper will be covered in a future session. The topic selection is up to the student. The topic and outline for the paper must be approved by the instructor before mid-term. The topic must relate to course content in some meaningful way.

Exams:

There will be four exams during the semester. Each exam will cover several chapters in your textbook and related lecture materials. Each exam will be worth 100 points. The exams will be multiple-choice, true/false, matching, completion, definition and short-answer essay in nature.

Late Assignment Policy:

Assigned written homework that is turned in late will be docked 50% of the assigned points or more. Homework over a week (7 days) late is worth zero points.

Exams must be taken the day they are scheduled unless there is a valid medical or other reason (as determined by the instructor). All missed exams must be made up within a week (seven days) of the time they are offered; otherwise the student will receive zero credit.

Grading Scale

The total number of points possible this semester can be seen below:

5 Homeworks @ 20 points each	100 points
4 Exams over textbook chapters and lecture @ 100 points each	400 points
1 Individual Research Paper	50 points
TOTAL	550 points

Excessive and unexcused absences may result in the lowering of your grade. See section on Class Attendance.

Your final grade will be based on a straight percentage of points earned to the total possible. The scale used for grading is:

100 – 90 A	Superior
89 – 88 B+ 87 – 80 B	Above Average
79 – 78 C+ 77 – 70 C	Average
69 – 68 D+ 67 – 60 D	Below Average
Below 60	Failing

The instructor reserves the right to modify any aspect of the course syllabus or content to enhance student learning. Any modifications will be communicated to students in advance. A tentative course schedule will be printed separately.

#### 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.

NSCS Board of Trustees Policy 4220 states that each College “. . . will establish a distance learning assessment policy that will include, at a minimum, a substantial culminating experience that is proctored.” Peru State College's policy is that each course that is offered entirely online will feature a proctored final exam that substantially measures the extent the course's stated learning objectives are achieved. Online course syllabi will clearly state that, regardless of grades earned previously, the proctored final exam must be passed in order to receive credit for the course. Courses which feature graded site-based activities (e.g., teaching demonstrations) and/or video-taped presentations that occur near the end of the term, and that are designed to substantially assess the achievement of learning objectives, can be considered in compliance with this policy. Project-based capstone and graduate courses utilizing real-time discussions held by web-cam, phone or in person with the faculty member as part of the assessment process can also be considered in compliance with this policy.

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 students for two semesters 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

<u>Week</u>	<u>Reading Assignments/Activities</u>
1	Introduction to the Course / Syllabus/ Instructor Expectations Purpose of the Course
2	What is Inside a Magic 8-ball? The Scientific Method and Establishment of Cause-and-Effect Sciencing/ What is a Theory? Term Paper Topics are Due
3	Science in 3 Contexts Thinking Like a Researcher The Mozart Effect
4	Theory Construction and Testing/ The Importance of Falsifiability Goals of Behavioral Science Lab Experience 1

- 4 Considerations in Science: Constructs, Measurements, and Instruments  
Science and Ethics  
Models of Research and Ethics  
4 Privacy, Informed Consent and Subject Deception  
Plagiarism  
Ethical Considerations: Famous Cases

EXAM 1

- 5 Microwaving Grapes  
Case Studies/ The Research of Oliver Sachs  
Early Research on Multiple-Personality Disorders (DID)  
6 Small n Studies/ The ABBA Design  
Multiple-Baselines  
Eye Blink Research and Other Early  
The Topic of Internal Validity  
Lab Experience 2  
Threats To Internal Validity

EXAM 2

- Analysis of Between Groups Designs  
Descriptive Statistics  
The Concept of Effect Size  
Theory Behind Hypothesis Testing/ t-Test For Independent Means  
Lab Experience 3  
The Topic of External Validity  
Social Psychology and The Violence-Media Connection  
Facial Recognition Research  
Lab Experience 4  
Matched Groups and Post-hoc Studies (Quasi-experiments)

EXAM 3

- Term Papers are Due  
Theory Behind Analysis of Variance/ One-Way ANOVA  
Attribution Theory and Personality  
Repeated Measures Designs  
Factorial ANOVA/Main Effects and Interactions

EXAM 4