

Peru State College

Psychology 410 49-A (16 weeks): Experimental Psychology

Syllabus— Fall 2009

Teachers open the door, but you must enter by yourself.

- Chinese Proverb

Instructor: Dr. James R. Nevitt

Course Begins: Monday 08/24/09. The last day to drop this course with a tuition refund is Sunday- 08/30/09. After that date, dropping this course will be considered a withdrawal and tuition will be forfeited. You **MUST** log into your course by that date or you will be dropped and removed as a “no show”.

Office Hours: **Course Ends:** Friday 12/18/09
8:30 - 10:00 AM and 3:30 – 4:00 PM Monday to Thursday
9:00 AM to 11:00 AM Fridays

Office: TJ Majors, Room 237 in Professional Studies Area
Office Telephone: (402) 872-2293

PSC email address: jnevitt@oakmail.peru.edu

Textbook required: *Research Methods In Psychology*, 7th edition, by John Shaughnessy, Eugene Zechmeister, and Jeanne Zechmeister

Optional text
American Psychological Association. *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th edition), Washington D.C.

Course Description :

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: Psychology 121, Psychology 330, junior or senior standing

Upon completion of the course, the successful student should be able to:

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 data 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 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:

1. Carefully attend to the assignment and course documents sections. I will post instructions for course related activities here. Read the Course Syllabus carefully. It is located bothin the course document section and the course assignment section.

2. The course content placed in the course document section and assignment section will allow you to complete discussion board items with greater ease or provide enough background to allow you to take a stand on an issue (pro or con) and defend it in writing. You will be required to answer discussion board questions every two weeks. You will also be tested over several textbook chapters at two week intervals. Additionally, read and attend to any materials associated with red text as these materials were specially selected to be part of the course reference materials (e.g. instructor created vocabulary).

3. Be proactive learners. Do not wait until the last moment to read your assignments. Be involved in discussion board activities.

4. Take exams when they are offered. They will be available, one at a time, on a two week basis. Each exam may be taken only once. There is no provision for making up a missed quiz. **There is no provision for extra credit in this class this fall semester.** If you experience difficulties understanding assignments, do not hesitate to call or e-mail the instructor.

5. Students will be expected to use their acorn mail accounts (no exceptions). Do not try to correspond without using your acorn mail account (these are your PSC e-mail accounts).

6. All students will use MS Word for the duration of the semester. All assignments must be done on MS Word. If you do not have this program installed on your computer please acquire and install it.

7. If you have difficulty accessing your Blackboard account or technical difficulties within Blackboard, please email:

Email bbtechsupport@peru.edu

Work Phone 1-888-258-5558

Office Location If you have difficulty accessing your Blackboard account or are experiencing technical difficulties within Blackboard, please contact the Blackboard Support Team at the e-mail address or phone number listed above.

Student Evaluation

(A) Research Paper:

50 Points

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 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 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 other famous researcher.

Scale used for the paper:

50-46
points "A" Excellent

45-40 points "B"
Above Average

39-35 points "C"
Average

34-30
points "D" Below
Average

30 points or below "F"
Failing

A rubric associated with the evaluation of the term paper is found in the course assignment section.

A = 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 = 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 = 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 = 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= Quality of work completely unacceptable.

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 most students wanting to attempt this project will choose to use electronic references a majority of the time. A Purdue APA style and formatting guide is found at <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>

This same site is an excellent area for learning about writing skills.

The term paper must be done in Microsoft Word. If you do not have this available to you, please acquire it! **The term paper is due on or before Monday, November 30, 2009.**

(B) Multiple-Choice Exams: 8 exams; 50 points each (Total 400 points)

There will be 8 multiple-choice exams scheduled throughout the semester over the textbook, one every two weeks. **The exams will contain specific questions drawn from the course textbook.** These exams will cover either one or two chapters each. Each exam will be composed of fifty multiple-choice and true-false items. The software that generates these questions was specifically made to be compatible with your textbook. **Students will have one hour to take each of these exams.** They may be take at any point during the two week interval before I change materials in the Course Document section. The exam items are drawn at random from an extremely large pool of questions recommended by the author of your textbook. No two students will take exactly the same fifty question exam. The software also insures that each exam is about the same difficulty level. Students will take each exam within the two week interval it is offered. Students will not be permitted to take an exam prior to the time interval in which it is offered. If you experience difficulties understanding assignments, do not hesitate to call or e-mail the instructor.

(C) Discussion Board: Answer two instructor posed questions per week; 20 points per week (Total 160 points)

Topics related to readings or course content will be posted in the discussion board section . I expect 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 boards will be evaluated with consideration as to how well informed and thoughtful the student content is. Some consideration will also be given to creativity of responses. Student will be evaluated on spelling and grammar as well. Consider the discuss 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.

Late responses to Discussion Board questions will not be scored or considered in a student's overall evaluation.

Consistency is the key here. A student will have an opportunity to earn points at every two week interval and they will be evaluated at the end of that same two week interval. Neglecting to respond during said interval will result in zero points for that part of the course. These points cannot be made up. There is no extra credit offered this semester in this course.

Students will be expected to have their own opinions relating to their subjects and readings and to express them in response to discussion board questions and topics. Student opinion doesn't have to agree with the opinion of the instructor or other students. This will not be a point of evaluation. I will expect students, when they assert opinions, to be able to back the opinions up with reading and/or researched materials and include that documentation in their discussion board response.

Unless directed otherwise, students are expected to do their own work on assignments and quizzes. Academic dishonesty will result in actions in accordance with the college's disciplinary policy. Students with special needs are encouraged to make them known to the instructor during the first week of class.

Your Final Grade

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

8 Sets of Discussion Board Questions; 1 set per every two weeks @ 20 points each.....	160 points
8 Multiple-Choice Quizzes; 1 per every 2 weeks @ 50 points each.....	400 points
1 Research Paper.....	50 points
	Total 610 points

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

100-91% - 90% A

89-80% - 80% B

79-70% - 70% C

69-60% - 60% D

Below 60% F

Readings schedule : Below is a reading schedule. A more specific schedule of readings and evaluation will be posted weekly in the assignment section.

Week 1-2 – Chapters 1 and 2 in textbook

Week 3-4 - Chapters 3 and 4 in textbook

Week 5-6 - Chapters 10 and 14 in textbook

Week 7-8 - Chapters 6 and 7 in textbook

Week 9-10 - Chapter 7 in textbook again

Week 11-12- Chapter 8 in textbook

Week 13-14 Chapter 9 in textbook

Week 15 to end of semester – Chapter 11 in textbook

The instructor reserved 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.

Accommodation Statement:

The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (public law 93-112) Section 504, provides that “no otherwise qualified disabled individual the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.” It is the student’s responsibility to notify the institution of any special circumstances that would affect his/her ability to compete equally in the college environment. Learning disabilities must be appropriately documented. While students are encouraged to self-identify at the earliest possible time, students may not know of the choice to self- identify, but can still receive services at any time once they self-disclose and document. Students should contact the office of Student Support Services, Vice President for Student Affairs or the Director of Admissions for further advisement. Students with special needs are encouraged to make them known to the instructor.

A Final Word:

Like a good mattress, these policies are firm, but not rock-hard. I am aware that individual circumstances may arise warranting a change in some of these procedures or policies, but you should not count on that being the case. If you have any questions regarding where you stand in the course, then I strongly recommend that you write or talk to me. I want to emphasize the importance of consulting with me as soon as possible should any difficulties arise in your life that might interfere with your performance in the course. Waiting until the last two weeks of class or when final grades are distributed to talk to me is altogether too late!