

**Course Syllabus**  
**Experimental Social Psychology (PSYC 4975)**  
**Winter 2006**

**Class meets:** Tuesday and Thursday, 2:00-3:15, McAlester 101

**Professor:** Bruce Bartholow (Office: 10 McAlester Hall)

**Office Hours:** Mondays 8:30-10:00, or by appointment

**Telephone:** 882-1805

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**Teaching Assistant:**

	<u>Office</u>	<u>Office Hours</u>	<u>Email</u>
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**Required Text**

- Christensen, L. B. (2004). *Experimental methodology* (9<sup>th</sup> ed). Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

**Also Strongly Recommended**

- George, D., & Mallery, P. (2006). *SPSS for Windows step-by-step: A simple guide and reference* (6<sup>th</sup> ed.). Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

**Additional Readings**

A major component of this course is the design and conduct of a psychological experiment, including a final written report of the results of that experiment formatted according to APA style. Your text includes a chapter on APA style, but you also might need to consult the APA's *Publication Manual*. This book can be purchased for around \$25 new from various sources, and can also be found in Ellis library. Another good option for you might be the abridged *Concise Rules of APA Style*, which is shorter and easier to digest. Any of you planning to go to graduate school in Psychology will need one or both of these books anyway, so you might consider getting one now.

In addition, you will need to plan on reading many journal articles during the design and write-up phases of your experiment. I expect you to have a general working knowledge of electronic databases like Ovid and PsycInfo, which can be used to search for articles on particular topics (or by particular authors) published in scientific journals. If you do not know how to use these databases, please inform me as soon as possible so we can get you up to speed.

**Course Objectives**

Students will:

- ❖ Fully understand how social psychologists use experimentation to study human behavior.
- ❖ Develop a working knowledge of the methods, tools, and theoretical concepts used in experimental social psychology.
- ❖ Conduct a complex research project from start to finish, which serves as a "capstone" to your education in psychology.

**Structure of the Course**

The primary goal of this course is to prepare you for conducting experimental research in social psychology, and in particular the research project that will comprise a major portion of your grade for the course. The first half of the semester will be devoted to presenting concepts related to experimental design and the conduct of research with human subjects, and to getting your projects started. The second half of the semester will be devoted entirely to completing your research projects, preparing and presenting professional conference-style posters of your findings, and

completing your final research reports. Starting the week of January 31 (3<sup>rd</sup> week of class), meetings with your research teams will take the place of the most usual Thursday class meetings (see the course calendar for details). After the mid-term exam (Mar 23), we will no longer have lectures and will devote all course-related time to completing your projects. This will include a number of meetings in the computer lab (Middlebush Hall, room 7) for data entry and analysis and other team-related activities. Refer to the course calendar for more specifics.

Also, instead of having multiple exams in this class, we will have only one in-class exam along with a series of short quizzes. For each lecture week other than the first one, we will have a quiz covering the material from the week prior. Quizzes will be short and will be based on material covered in lecture and text as well as information presented during team meetings (see below). The purpose of multiple quizzes is two-fold: 1) to encourage all students to attend lectures and team meetings and keep up with readings; 2) to make the mid-term easier.

### **Research Teams and Projects**

For purposes of conducting your research projects, the members of the class will be divided into several teams of 4-5 people. Each team will work on 1 research project, with the assistance of a member of the teaching staff (Dr. Bartholow or Ms. Barber). Each team will select a project from a group of project ideas, work out the specific procedural details, collect the data using a simple experimental design, enter the raw data into a spreadsheet, analyze the data using SPSS, and write-up and present the results. The teaching staff will help with all aspects of the project, including the statistical analyses. Then, each team will create a professional convention-style poster presentation of the project and present it to the class. Finally, each member of the team will write a journal-style paper on the project, including a thorough literature review. Note that each individual member of each team will be responsible for writing and turning in their own paper, although data and analyses will be shared within the team.

***Your papers must be fully compliant with APA publication guidelines!*** Each semester students lose points needlessly due to failure to conform to APA style in writing their papers. I will provide you with examples of published APA-style articles to use as rough guidelines, but specific questions concerning format (including section headings and sub-headings, references, citations in text, and a million other things) are answered in the *APA Publication manual* and/or your textbook (Ch. 14). See the FAQ section on page 4 for more information about the paper.

### **Grading**

Grades will be determined on the basis of your performance in each of these areas:

Research Project	30% (group presentation = 10%; APA journal-style paper = 20%)
Mid-term	30%
Quizzes	20%
Assignments	10% (occasional homework related to your final paper)
Class participation	10% (includes both in-class and research team activities)

Earned percentages of the total points available for the course will be accorded letter grades as follows (plus/minus grading will be used for the upper and lower thirds of each decile):

90% or greater of total	A
80% to 89% of total	B
70% to 79% of total	C
60% to 69% of total	D
59% or fewer of total	F

## **Policies on Absences, Make-ups (quizzes and exams), Late Assignments, & Participation**

Regular attendance is critical to your success in this course. Quiz material will be taken from lecture and other activities that take place in class. In addition, throughout the semester there will be a series of short in-class activities that will be considered in determining your grade. *Points related to in-class activities CANNOT be made up.* Thus, if you miss a class period during which an activity takes place, you will receive zero points for that activity. However, coming to class is optional in the same way that being a student at MU (as opposed to anything else you might do instead) is optional. I do not need or want to know about why you missed class, regardless of the reason. In other words, please do not email me to apologize for missing class or to explain yourself. Missing class – and anything you feel you must do to make up for missing a day, including getting notes, discovering what was covered, etc. – is your responsibility alone. I will not provide you with my notes or lecture slides. I suggest that you become acquainted with at least one other person in class so that you might be able to copy her/his lecture notes in the event that you miss a class. In any case, missing class regularly is likely to result in a poor grade, so I suggest that you not do this.

*No make-ups will be allowed for quizzes.* The two lowest quiz scores for each student will be dropped before calculating the final overall quiz grade. Therefore, you can miss two quizzes, or miss one and completely bomb another, without any ill effect on your grade. Because of this, there will NOT be any opportunity to make-up missed quizzes, under ANY circumstances (other than university-related activities such as athletics or music). No make-ups will be offered for the mid-term exam, either, with one exception: If you have a documented illness on the day of the exam that can be verified by the Dean's office, you might be allowed to reschedule the exam. Rescheduled exams MUST be taken within 5 week days of the scheduled mid-term. Students who know in advance that they will miss class on March 23 because of university-related commitments should see me immediately to make arrangements. Students who miss the mid-term exam for ANY reason other than that just stated will earn a score of zero. Also, note that I have no sympathy for students who might wish to take the mid-term early because of Spring Break plans, even if your friend's mom already booked your flight to Brazil for the 23<sup>rd</sup> (yes, I have heard that one before).

Late assignments will never be accepted. Students turning in assignments after the end of the meeting or class period at which they are due will earn a score of zero on that assignment.

Your participation in the research team and project is critical to your success, and that of your fellow team members. It is vitally important that you attend team meetings regularly and that you complete your assigned tasks on time. You might have an estimate of how long a particular task will take you. In all cases, you should at least double that estimate. The research process is fraught with unforeseen hurdles and always takes much longer than we think it should. Team members who consistently meet their obligations will be rewarded with higher grades and a much better end product. Team members who consistently fail to meet their obligations will receive a lower grade, and the team's project will suffer.

## **Academic Dishonesty**

Never write a paper with another student, copy text from a copy-written document (this includes published journal articles), or paraphrase without citing a source. All of these are examples of plagiarism, and students who engage in plagiarism are subject to dismissal from the university. Academic honesty is fundamental to the activities and principles of a university. All members of the academic community must be confident that each person's work has been responsibly and honorably acquired, developed, and presented. Any effort to gain an advantage not given to all students is dishonest. The academic community regards academic dishonesty as an extremely serious matter, with serious consequences that range from probation to expulsion. When in doubt about plagiarism, paraphrasing, quoting, or collaboration with other students, please consult the course instructor.

## **Special Needs/ADA**

If you need accommodations because of a disability, if you have emergency medical information to share with me, or if you need special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please inform me immediately. Please see me privately after class, or at my office. To request academic accommodations (for example, a note taker), students must also register with Disability Services, AO38 Brady Commons, 882-4696. This is the campus office responsible for reviewing documentation provided by students requesting academic accommodations, and for accommodations planning in cooperation with students and instructors, as needed and consistent with course requirements. For other MU resources for students with disabilities, click on “Disability Resources” on the MU homepage.

## **Final Paper FAQs**

*Q: How long does the paper need to be?*

A: Many factors will determine the length of your paper, and there is no magic number. However, there are some general guidelines. Your introduction, which will begin on page 3 of your manuscript, should be around 5-6 pages long. In other words, you should get to your Method section on around page 8 or 9. Your Method section needs to be a comprehensive description of what you did to conduct your experiment, including a full description of your participants (who they were, how many, etc.), any questionnaires you administered, your independent variable manipulations, measurement of your dependent variable(s), and a step-by-step accounting of what participants did from the moment they arrived at your study until the moment they left. This generally takes at least 3-4 pages. The Results section can vary from a single page to 5 or 6 pages depending on how many analyses you conduct and report. Note that you generally won't report every analysis you conduct. Finally, the Discussion section should serve 2 main functions. First, it is a summary of your results, and whether or not your findings supported your hypotheses. Second, it is a forum for you to discuss the implications of your findings for other researchers to consider. This generally requires 3-4 pages.

*Q: How many references do I need in my paper?*

A: Again, no magic number, but as a general rule, a lot. Most students' papers have too few references given the amount of ground they cover. One rule of thumb about references is that you should cite 5 sources on each page of your manuscript, not including the Method and Results sections; again, this is only an estimate and will vary widely depending on your topic. Although I don't expect your papers to be publication quality, it might help go consider that an average journal article (which tends to be around 35 pages, including tables, figures, references, and footnotes) will include more than 40 separate references.

*Q: Is there a special format for tables and figures that I need to follow?*

A: Yes. APA has specific guidelines for tables and figures and you will need to make sure that your tables and/or figures are formatted accordingly. See pp. 452-453 of your text for guidance (pp. 444-445 show example tables).

Tentative Course Calendar\*

Week	Class Meetings	Topics	Assignments Due
1	1/17 (L) 1/19 (L)	Introduction to the course, anonymous quiz Role of science in knowing (Ch 1)	
2	1/24 (L) 1/26 (L)	Receive and rank project ideas The experimental approach (Ch 3)	Quiz 1 (Ch 1)
3	1/31 (L) 2/2 (T)	Variables used in research (Ch 6)	Quiz 2 (Ch 3) <b>FIRST TEAM MEETING</b>
4	2/7 (L) 2/9 (T)	Validity (Ch 7)	Quiz 3 (Ch 6)
5	2/14 (L) 2/16 (T)	Control techniques (Ch 8)	Quiz 4 (Ch 7) <b>Outline of Introduction</b>
6	2/21 (L) 2/23 (T)	Experimental design (Ch 9) Group exercise: IRB application	Quiz 5 (Ch 8) <b>Rough drafts of research materials</b> (scripts, stimuli)
7	2/28 (L) 3/2 (T)	Avoiding bias in data collection (Ch 12)	Quiz 6 (Ch 9)
8	3/7 (L) 3/9 (T)	Writing an APA-style journal article (Ch 14) Group exercise: practice research (attendance is mandatory)	Quiz 7 (Ch 12) <b>Intro and references</b>
9	3/14 (L) 3/16 (T)	Ethics and debriefing (Ch 5)	No Quiz today <b>Draft of Method section</b>
10	3/21 (L) 3/23 (L)	Review for Midterm <b>MIDTERM EXAM</b>	Quiz 8 (Ch 5) Research should be ongoing
11	3/28 3/30	Spring Break Spring Break	
12	4/4 (T) 4/6 (T)	Data collection and entry Data collection and entry	Research should be ongoing Research should be ongoing
13	4/11 (CL) 4/13 (CL)	Data entry and analysis Data entry and analysis	Research should be ongoing Research should be ongoing
14	4/18 (CL) 4/20 (CL)	Data analysis and write-up Data analysis and write-up	Research should be done
15	4/25 (CL) 4/27 (T)	Final analyses, outline of results Working on team posters	<b>Results Draft</b>
16	5/2 (T)  5/4 (L)	Working on team posters  Conference style poster presentations	Full paper drafts will be accepted (incl. Discussion) <sup>†</sup>
	5/8 (10 McAlester)	Final exam period. Come to my office anytime between 1:00pm-3:00pm to turn in your final papers.	<b>Final paper due</b>

\*This schedule is subject to change as we progress through the semester.

L = lecture session (meet in McAlester 101)

T = research team meeting (meeting sites TBA)

CL = computer lab (meet in Middlebush room 7)

<sup>†</sup>You can turn in a complete draft of your paper for feedback on this date, or you can hand in your final product early.