PSYC110 PSYCHOLOGY RESEARCH METHODS 1

Term I, 2015-2016

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

Psychology experiments can range from simple to complex, but there are some basic terms and concepts that all students of psychology should understand. This course introduces students to the core methodological concepts and procedures used in empirical research in psychology.

The course will cover basic research methods in psychology, including both qualitative and quantitative approaches. Basic issues relating to the formulation of research questions, hypothesis generation and testing, research design, measurement, descriptive and inferential statistics, and ethical principles will be discussed. Applications in various areas of psychology will be used to illustrate these issues.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

This course is designed to help students to:

- Acquire a basic understanding of the core methodological concepts and procedures used in the psychological research.
- Develop a working knowledge of the basic research methods in psychology.
- Appreciate the ways in which theory, design, measurement, data analyses, and inferences are explicitly linked in a scientifically and socially defensible study in psychology.

CLASS SESSIONS & CONSULTATIONS

Classes are of one 3-hour session per week. The sessions involve lectures, classroom activities/demonstrations, and discussions.

This class adopts a no laptop policy. Paper handouts will be provided.

Consultation with the Instructor may be done through emails or individual meetings.

CLASS WEBSITE

eLearn ➔ PSYC110-Psychology Research Methods I-G1-2

Version: 2015-06
Class participation (10%)

Students are encouraged to contribute in constructing an effective learning environment. The evaluation is based on criteria such as:

- Raising questions related to the lecture and class discussion.
- Making comments related to the lecture and class discussion.
- Responding to questions from the Instructor.
- Raising questions, initiating a discussion, and making comments as part of the audience during group presentations.
- Active participation in class activities.

Class Mini-exercise (5%)

Mini-exercises are take-home assignments and in-class activities administered to facilitate learning and discussion. Students will put themselves into groups to work on the mini-exercises. One (or several) group will be randomly selected to present their responses to the exercises to provide the correct answer or for the purpose of class discussion.

Group Research Proposal (25%)

This is the final project of the course. Its purpose is to provide an opportunity to put RM skills into practice. Students can choose their group members (group size to be confirmed later). There will be two major parts to this proposal: (a) literature review and (b) research methodology of the proposed study. Detailed instruction on the proposal will be given out in class.

The research proposal is due at 11:59am on Nov. 18 (Wed). A softcopy should be submitted through Turnitin on eLearn. For late submissions, 20% of the grade will be deducted for every 24 hours overdue; portion of 24 hours will be counted as 24 hours. All students in the group will receive the same grade.

Midterm Exam (25%) and Final Exam (35%)

The midterm exam consists of multiple-choice questions (MCQ), and the final exam consists of MCQ and short questions. Both are close-book exams.

Research Participation for Bonus Points

Penalty for irresponsible participation: Experimenter will wait for 5 minutes, beyond which time the participant will be considered as a no-show. Students who do not show up will owe the system the number of credits that the missed experiment offers. For example, if a student misses a 1-credit experiment, he/she will receive a penalty of -1. To elaborate, if the student had missed one half-hour study (that is worth 1 credit), he/she will now have to participate in 2.5 hours of studies, rather than 2 hours of studies, to receive 2.0% of bonus points. However, if at the end of the semester, a student has accrued a negative number of bonus points (e.g., -1, -2, etc.), he/she will not have points taken off of their course grade. Their course grade will remain as it is, with no bonus points.

Recruitment: An email will be sent to students when an experiment is available, with a general description of the experiment and students can respond and sign up if they wish to participate. Some studies may last more than half-an hour and may require attending multiple sessions on separate dates. Please read the description of each study carefully.

Note: If experimenter is more than 5 minutes late, participants will receive the appropriate credit without having to participate in the study. Experimenters can only cancel an experiment 24 hours before the scheduled time.
**Policy on Attendance**

Because SMU prides itself on the participatory instructional style, consistent and punctual attendance is essential. The instructor will neither take attendance nor require that you attend class, but the more you miss, the lower your participation in the activities; therefore, the lower your grade in this area.

**Excused Absence**
An excused absence (from class presentation and exams) is an absence covered by one of the following:
- A Medical certificate, which must be submitted to the instructor as soon as possible.
- A Letter from the Dean’s Office of your School (explaining why the Dean has approved your absence from this class due to an important SMU commitment, such as an athletic event, conference, case competition, study mission abroad, etc.). It is your responsibility to obtain this letter from your Dean before the missed class(es).
- A Letter from your NS Commander (explaining why the Commander cannot reschedule your reservist training if you have a conflict with attending this class on important dates). It is your responsibility to obtain this letter from your Commander before the missed class(es).

**Unexcused Absence**
All other absences will be deemed unexcused (past examples have included taking a drivers license exam, missing the bus, giving tuition, attending birthday parties, taking French lessons, etc.) If the absence is unexcused, there will be no possibility for a makeup presentation and midterm exam, and a grade of “0” will be recorded for the presentation and missed midterm exam. If the absence is excused on a date corresponding to a midterm exam, then a makeup midterm exam is possible. The makeup midterm exam is of a different format, not identical to the original midterm exam, and given only during Week 14 of the semester, no exceptions. Additionally, if the absence is unexcused on a date corresponding to your class presentation, a lower grade will be recorded for class participation. The policy is binding and non-negotiable.

**Academic Integrity**
All acts of academic dishonesty (including, but not limited to, plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, facilitation of acts of academic dishonesty by others, unauthorized possession of exam questions, or tampering with the academic work of other students) are serious offences. All work (whether oral or written) submitted for purposes of assessment must be the student’s own work. Penalties for violation of the policy range from zero marks for the component assessment to expulsion, depending on the nature of the offense.

When in doubt, students should consult the instructor of the course. If students believe that there has been an infraction by someone in the class, please bring to the instructor’s attention. Details on the SMU Code of Academic Integrity may be accessed at http://www.smuscd.org/resources.html.

**Accessibility and Accommodations**
SMU strives to make learning experiences accessible for all. If you anticipate or experience physical or academic barriers due to disability, please let me know immediately. You are also welcome to contact the university’s disability support team if you have questions or concerns about academic accommodations: included@smu.edu.sg

Please be aware that the accessible tables in our seminar room should remain available for students who require them.
# Course Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td><strong>Introduction</strong></td>
<td>Introduction to Research &amp; Scientific Reasoning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td><strong>Three Claims, Four Validities</strong></td>
<td>+ Mediators, 3rd Variables, Moderators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3,4</td>
<td><strong>Construct Validity</strong></td>
<td>Identifying Good Measurement – Measures, Reliability &amp; Validity</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Describing What People Do – Surveys, Observations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5,6,7</td>
<td><strong>Internal Validity</strong></td>
<td>Basic Experimental Design</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Factorial Design</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Internal Validity Threats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td><strong>Recess Week</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td><strong>Midterm Exam</strong></td>
<td>Covers topics from Week 1 to Basic Experimental Design</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No regular class.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td><strong>Group Consultation on Research Proposal</strong></td>
<td>No regular class. Meetings held during class time. Meeting schedule to be arranged.</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td><strong>Internal Validity</strong></td>
<td>Quasi-Experiments</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td><strong>External Validity: Sampling</strong></td>
<td>+ Bivariate &amp; Multivariate Correlational Research</td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td><strong>Ethical Issues and Wrap Up</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td><strong>Revision Week</strong></td>
<td>Research proposal due at 11:59am on Nov. 18 (Wed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td><strong>Final Exam</strong></td>
<td>Covers all topics from Week 1 to Week 13</td>
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