

Psychology 397: Research Methods in Personality and Clinical Psychology

Fall, 2005
2:30 to 5:20 Thursdays
PAS 2086

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Course Aims

This course will introduce you to the issues involved in designing research in personality and clinical psychology. By the end of the course, you should (a) be able to critically evaluate theory and research, as reported in both scholarly journals and the mass media; (b) be able to effectively present research findings to peers; (c) be better prepared to conduct your own research; and (d) understand how to effectively write research reports.

Course Requirements

UW ACE. Several aspects of this course are available online using UW ACE. You will need to log in to UW ACE and select this course. Please check the course web pages often, particularly before each class on Thursday, as important announcements may be posted on the pages. Under the "Discussion Boards" tab, you will find (a) a folder containing lecture notes, in which outlines for each lecture will appear no later than the morning of the Thursday of each lecture; (b) a forum for you to submit article comments; (c) a forum for you to ask the instructor questions; and (d) a forum for students to introduce themselves. The syllabus and course calendar also appear on the course web pages. More information about using UW ACE will be given during the first lecture.

Readings. Several journal articles will be assigned throughout the course. It is crucial that you read the assigned material before each class so that you are able to participate in class discussions. Readings will be available in a folder in PAS 4028 or online.

Course Assignments

Article Critiques. An important aspect of conducting research in personality and clinical psychology involves critically evaluating other researchers' work. Critically evaluating research helps scientists to form and test new ideas. Thus, there will be five exercises throughout the term whose aim will be to enhance your ability to critically evaluate research. Specifically, you will be assigned to read five articles and to write a 2 to 3 page (double-spaced) critique of each of them. The first critique will be for practice only; you will receive feedback but will not receive a grade. The remaining four critiques will be graded. Critiqued articles will not be discussed in class until after students' critiques have been graded. Note that the critiques must be written **INDIVIDUALLY**; do not write or discuss the critique with other students. The critiques should **NOT** summarize but rather should critically evaluate and expand on the ideas presented in the article. More detailed information about article critiques is attached.

Group Article Presentation. For each week, there will be required readings that everyone is expected to do. However, for some weeks, there will be one or more additional readings that groups of students will present to the class. On the first day of class, students will list their three top article choices. The instructor, aiming to match students to their desired articles, will assign students to groups that will present one article each. It is expected that all group members will contribute approximately equally to the presentation. If you believe one or more members are not contributing equally or if you have any other difficulties with one or more members, please speak with the instructor. Instructions on article presentations are attached.

Research Proposal. You are expected to propose a study to test a hypothesis/hypotheses in an area of personality or clinical psychology (e.g., self-esteem, narcissism, generalized anxiety disorder). Your topic must be approved by the TA. You may e-mail her or talk in person with her during office hours to discuss your ideas. You will need to do background reading on both theoretical and empirical articles in the area of your proposal. The paper should be a maximum of 15 pages (excluding title page, references, tables, etc.) and must be in APA format. You will have the option of handing in a rough draft of the paper by November 18th. You are highly encouraged to take advantage of this opportunity. Even if you have completed only portions of the paper, you can hand them in to receive feedback. The feedback will greatly help you to improve your final paper, which will be due on the last day of class (December 2nd). You must write your research proposal individually (i.e., without the aid of other students). More detailed instructions are attached. Detailed instructions on how to write each section will be given out during the term.

Research Presentation. On October 20th and 27th, students will present their ideas to the class for about 10-15 min. Students in the audience will be expected to provide feedback on your presentation that may help you to improve your research design. Feedback should be both positive and critical, but always respectful. The date and time of each student's presentation will be determined during the first lecture. Detailed instructions on giving the presentation are attached.

Class Participation. You will be expected to attend every class and to participate in the discussions. Participation may include commenting on material the instructor presents in lectures, presenting critical comments on assigned readings, and providing feedback to students on their research proposals. Although quantity (i.e., frequency) of participation will be considered, quality of participation is much more important. You will be given feedback a few times during the term about the quality of your participation. Please inform the instructor in advance if you must miss a lecture.

In addition, for each week that there is an assigned reading, you will be expected to submit a question or comment about the reading **by 12AM Thursday** of the day of class. It can be just one or two sentences. These comments will be used to spark discussions during class. The comments should be critical evaluations of the research, not merely summaries of the research or questions about things you did not understand. For example, you might mention a confound, ambiguity about the direction of causation, an unresolved theoretical issue, or some other critical comment. Submit these comments in the “Article Comments” discussion board.

Plagiarism and Other Academic Offenses: I am required to include the following information:

“Note on avoidance of academic offences: All students registered in the courses of the Faculty of Arts are expected to know what constitutes an academic offence, to avoid committing academic offences, and to take responsibility for their academic actions. When the commission of an offence is established, disciplinary penalties will be imposed in accord with Policy #71 (Student Academic Discipline). For information on categories of offences and types of penalties, students are directed to consult the summary of Policy #71 which is supplied in the Undergraduate Calendar (section 1; on the Web at http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infoucal/UW/policy_71.html). If you need help in learning how to avoid offences such as plagiarism, cheating, and double submission, or if you need clarification of aspects of the discipline policy, ask your TA or course instructor for guidance. Other resources regarding the discipline policy are your academic advisor and the Undergraduate Associate Dean.”

“Students who believe that they have been wrongfully or unjustly penalized have the right to grieve; refer to Policy #70, Student Grievance, <http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy70.html>.”

For advice on how to avoid plagiarism and other written offenses, see guide for students and instructors at <http://watarts.uwaterloo.ca/~sager/plagiarism.html>

Course Schedule

<u>Date</u>	<u>Wk</u>	<u>Class Topic</u>	<u>Graded Assignments Due</u>
9/15/05	1	Introduction; Critical Thinking; Review of Research Methods	
9/22/05	2	Research Scope in Personality and Clinical Psychology; Discussion of Practice Article Critique	Practice article critique

9/29/05	3	Measurement Methods: Self-Report and Projective measures; Further Discussion of Practice Article Critique	
10/6/05	4	Measurement Methods: Implicit Measures (Guest speakers Emiko Yoshida and Jennifer Peach!)	Self-report article critique
10/13/05	5	Mediation and Moderation	Implicit measures article critique
10/20/05	6	Research Presentations	Presentations
10/27/05	7	Research Presentations	Presentations
11/4/05	8	Remaining Presentations, Discussion of article critiques	Remaining Presentations
11/11/05	9	Longitudinal Research	Research Proposal Rough Drafts
11/18/05	10	Experience Sampling Research	Longitudinal article critique
11/25/05	11	Therapy Outcome Research: Introduction, Issues, & Controversies	Experience sampling article critique
12/2/05	12	Therapy Outcome Studies	Research Proposal Paper

Weighting for Course Grades:

Participation	
in class	5
article comments	5
Article Critiques	40 (10 each)
Group Presentation	10
Research Proposal Presentation	15
Research Proposal Paper	40
 Total	 115

Students' totals will be multiplied by 100/115 to derive a score out of 100.

Lateness Penalty:

Ten percent of the total possible points for each assignment will be deducted for each day the assignment is late. Thus, for each day late, 1 point would be deducted from article critiques and 4 points would be deducted from research paper proposals. Late submissions of article comments online will not be accepted. Also, students must present their research proposals and their group presentation articles on the scheduled day. The instructor may grant extensions for article critiques and research proposal papers if a note from a doctor indicates that the student or an immediate family member has a serious illness.

Article Critiques

Practice Critique Due September 22nd

Derakshan, N., & Eysenck, M. W. (1997). Interpretative biases for one's own behavior and physiology in high-trait-anxious individuals and repressors. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 73, 816-825.

Self-Report Measures Article Due October 6th

Robins, R. W., & Beer, J. S. (2001). Positive illusions about the self: Short-term benefits and long-term costs. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 80, 340-352.

Implicit Measures Article Critique Due October 13th

Teachman, B. A., Gapsinski, K. D., Brownell, K. D., Rawlins, M., & Jeyaram, S. (2003). Demonstrations of implicit anti-fat bias: The impact of providing causal information and evoking empathy. *Health Psychology*, 22, 68-78.

Longitudinal Article Critique Due November 18th

Lumley, M. A., & Provenzano, K. M. (2003). Stress management through written emotional disclosure improves academic performance among college students with physical symptoms. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 95, 641-649.

Experience Sampling Article Critique Due November 25th

Leigh, B. C. (1993). Alcohol consumption and sexual activity as reported with a diary technique. *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*, 102, 490-493.

Weekly Readings

WEEK 1: INTRODUCTION; CRITICAL THINKING AND REVIEW OF RESEARCH METHODS

Required Reading(s): None

Suggested Reading(s):

Keeley, S. M. (1995). *Asking the right questions in abnormal psychology*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall. (esp., pp. 3-52).

WEEK 2: SCOPE OF RESEARCH IN PERSONALITY AND CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY

No readings; practice article critique is due.

WEEK 3: MEASUREMENT METHODS: SELF-REPORT AND PROJECTIVE MEASURES

Required Reading(s):

Shedler, J., Mayman, M., & Manis, M. (1993). The *illusion* of mental health. *American*

Psychologist, 48, 1117-1131.
 Replies to Shedler et al.: *American Psychologist*, 49, 971-976.

Group Presentation Article(s):

Taylor, S. E., Lerner, J. S., Sherman, D. K., Sage, R. M., & McDowell, N. K. (2003). Portrait of the self-enhancer: Well adjusted and well liked or maladjusted and friendless? *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 84, 165-176.

Suggested Reading(s):

Cohen, R. J., & Swerdik, M. E. (1999). *Psychological testing and assessment: An introduction to tests and measurement*. Mountain view, Ca.: Mayfield Publishing Company. (pp. 436-462).
 Lilienfeld, S., Wood, J. M., & Garb, H. N. (2000). The scientific status of projective techniques. *Psychological Science in the Public Interest*, 2, 27-66.

WEEK 4: MEASUREMENT METHODS: IMPLICIT MEASURES

**Browse through the implicit measures web site, read the background information, and take at least one IAT. Web site:

<https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/demo/selectatest.html>

Required Reading(s):

Teachman, B. A., & Woody, S. R. (2003). Automatic processing in spider phobia: Implicit fear associations over the course of treatment. *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*, 112, 100-109.

Group Presentation Article(s):

Olson, M. A., & Fazio, R. H. (2004). Reducing the influence of extrapersonal associations on the Implicit Association Test: Personalizing the IAT. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 86, 653-667.

Suggested Reading(s):

Fazio, R. H., & Olson, M. A. (2003). Implicit measures in social cognition research: Their meaning and use. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 54, 297-327.

WEEK 5: MEDIATION AND MODERATION

Required Reading(s):

Langens, T. A., & Schuler, J. (2005). Written emotional expression and emotional well-being: The moderating role of fear of rejection. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 31, 818-830.

Group Presentation Article(s):

Sloan, D. M., Marx, B. P., & Epstein, E. M. (2005). Further examination of the exposure model underlying the efficacy of written emotional disclosure. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 73, 549-554.

Suggested Readings(s):

Baron, R. M. & Kenny, D. A. (1986). The moderator—mediator variable distinction in social psychological research: Conceptual, strategic, and statistical considerations. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *51*, 1173-1182.

WEEKS 6 TO 8

No readings; students will present their research ideas.

WEEK 9: LONGITUDINAL RESEARCH**Required Reading(s):**

Stroebe, M., Stroebe, W., Schut, H., Zech, E., & van den Bout, J. (2002). Does disclosure of emotions facilitate recovery from bereavement? Evidence from two prospective studies. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, *70*, 169-178.

Group Presentation Article(s):

Bonanno, G. A., Papa, A., Lalande, K., Westphal, M., & Coifman, K. (2004). The importance of being flexible: The ability to both enhance and suppress emotional expression predicts long-term adjustment. *Psychological Science*, *15*, 482-487.

WEEK 10: EXPERIENCE SAMPLING RESEARCH:**Required Readings(s):**

Swendsen, J. D., Tennen, H., Carney, M. A., Affleck, G., Willard, A., & Hromi, A. (2000). Mood and alcohol consumption: An experience sampling test of the self-medication hypothesis. *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*, *109*, 198-204.

Group Presentation Article(s):

Garry, M., Sharman, S. J., Feldman, J., Marlatt, G. A., & Loftus, E. F. (2002). Examining memory for heterosexual college students' sexual experiences using an electronic mail diary. *Health Psychology*, *21*, 629-634.

Suggested Readings(s):

Reis, H. T., & Gable, S. L. (2000). Event-sampling and other methods for studying everyday experience. In H. T. Reis, & C. M. Judd (Eds.), *Handbook of research methods in social and personality psychology* (pp. 190-222). Cambridge University Press.

WEEK 11: THERAPY OUTCOME RESEARCH: INTRODUCTION, ISSUES, CONTROVERSIES**Required Reading(s):**

Wampold, B. E., Mondin, G. W., Woody, M., Stich, F., Benson, K., & Ahn, H. (1997). A meta-analysis of outcome studies comparing bona fide psychotherapies: Empirically, "All must have prizes." *Psychological Bulletin*, *3*, 203-215.

Luborsky et al. (1999). The researcher's own therapy allegiances: A "wild card" in comparisons of treatment efficacy. *Clinical Psychology: Science and Practice*, 6, 95-106.

Group Presentation Article(s):

Chambless, D. (2002). Beware the dodo bird: The dangers of overgeneralization. *Clinical Psychology: Science and Practice*, 9, 13-16. AND
 Crits-Cristoph, P. (1997). Limitations of the dodo bird verdict and the role of clinical trials in psychotherapy research: Comment on Wampold et al. (1997). *Psychological Bulletin*, 122, 216-220.

Suggested Reading(s):

Roth, A., & Fonagy, P. (1996). *What works for whom? A critical review of psychotherapy research*. New York: The Guilford Press. (esp. pp. 13-36).

WEEK 12: THERAPY OUTCOME RESEARCH: SPECIFIC STUDIES

Required Reading(s):

Borkovec, T. D., & Costello, E. (1993). Efficacy of applied relaxation and cognitive-behavioral therapy in the treatment of generalized anxiety disorders. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 61, 611-619.

Group Presentation Article(s):

Watson, J. C., Gordon, L. B., Sternmac, L., Kalogerakos, F., & Steckley, P. (2003). Comparing the effectiveness of process-experiential with cognitive-behavioral psychotherapy in the treatment of depression. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 71, 773-781.

Article Critique Outline

Article Reference: (e.g., Smith, Jacksonbanana, & Yombutomato, 1995; you don't need to write the rest of the reference)

Author(s)' main hypotheses: (State at both the conceptual and operational levels; one to two sentences should be sufficient unless there are many hypotheses.)

Why the issue is important: (You may consider both theoretical and practical issues; you can restate reasons the author(s) state, but you should try to go beyond their reasons.)

Main independent or predictor variables: (brief statements)

Conceptual level	Operational level

Example:

Conceptual level	Operational level
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Neuroticism	Neuroticism subscale of the International Personality Item Pool (self-report measure)
Success/failure feedback	False feedback (either positive or negative) on a bogus test of intelligence

Note that the levels (positive or negative) of the manipulated variable are included. You wouldn't include this information for a continuous predictor like the IPIP—Neuroticism subscale because each score would simply represent another “level.”

Main dependent or criterion/outcome variables: (brief statements)

Conceptual level	Operational level

Example:

Conceptual level	Operational level
Depressive symptoms	-Beck Depression Inventory (self-report) -Ratings of participants' happiness by their romantic partners

Most important finding(s)

Strengths of the Study: You can use point form, but use full sentences and be clear and complete. For example, don't just say “A strength is that the study included a control group”; state *why* the control group was a strength of the study. For example, what alternative explanations for the findings does the control group help to rule out?

Weaknesses of the Study: You can use point form, but use full sentences and be clear and complete. For example, don't just say “the study lacked random assignment”; explain why the lack of random assignment is a problem. That is, state why it may cast doubt on the author(s)' interpretation of the results.

Remaining issues/Areas of further research:

You may include (a) unresolved theoretical or empirical issues that could be addressed in future studies; (b) follow-up studies that could be conducted based on the results of the study; (c) comments on unsupported claims or overly broad generalizations the author(s) made; and (d) any other significant issues not covered in other parts of the critique.

Note: The instructor may pose a specific question for students to write about in addition to the main areas outlined above. In such a circumstance, students will be allowed extra space beyond 2 to 3 pages for the critique.

Tips for Article Critiques

- Stick to the most important points. Do not write about minor issues like the number of participants unless the issues are important strengths or weaknesses of the study.
- Describe only operationalizations that are most important, or that you want to critique, or that are central to the conclusions of the author(s).

- Do not go into great detail about the operationalizations. Name the measure and say what type of measure it was (e.g., self-report; peer ratings). You do not need to discuss the reliability, response format (e.g., Likert), or other minor details of the measure. (You may discuss this information in the strengths or weaknesses section if it is very important.)
- Do not list every tiny merit or flaw in the strengths and weaknesses sections; list the most important ones.
- Do not describe problems that may have merely obscured the results. For example, if the authors found support for the alternative hypothesis (i.e., found significant effects), do not state issues that would have made it harder for them to obtain the effects (e.g., small sample size); these issues make it only more impressive that the authors *still* obtained significant effects (but don't list these issues as strengths either!). State issues that raise alternative explanations for the reported effects and make it clear how these explanations could have influenced the results of the study.
- Strengths and weaknesses should be plausible, important, and different from one another (rather than repetitive).
- Use your own words. Do NOT quote the authors unless you are commenting on a specific claim they made.
- There is more than one correct way to critique articles; two individuals may answer the same question differently but still receive equal grades if their comments are of equal quality.

Tips and Instructions for Group Article Presentations

The article presentations should be viewed as oral article critiques presented in front of the class. Thus, the same instructions for commenting on strengths, weaknesses, areas of future research, and unresolved issues apply. You should also comment on variables at both the conceptual and operational levels. In contrast to the article critiques, the presentations give you the opportunity to communicate with an audience unfamiliar with the work you will present. Thus, to aid audience comprehension, you should

- use visual aids (e.g., overhead projection slides, PowerPoint slides);
- briefly describe the rationale for the study (which is typically covered in the introductory sections of articles);
- describe the methodology in sufficient detail so that the audience can visualize what the participants did during the study;
- describe the main results and the author(s)' conclusions/interpretations; and
- provide your comments on and reactions to components of the study while you discuss them. For example, if you thought a manipulation was good or bad, you could explain your view after you describe the manipulation.

Research Proposal Tips

You will enjoy the project more if you pick a topic in which you are intrinsically interested. Depending on how much research and theoretical work exist in the area of

your proposal, you may need to narrow the focus of your proposal. The TA and instructor can help you. To review a topic efficiently, you should

- read the section of an abnormal or personality psychology textbook to get an overview of the area;
- discuss the topic with a faculty member or a graduate student doing research in the area. He or she can point you to the best articles in the area. The TA and instructor can help you find such a faculty member;
- conduct a literature search using appropriate key words in PsycINFO;
- read the most recent review paper on the topic published in a high-quality journal. (The TA and instructor can help you evaluate journal quality.); and
- read 10 to 15 empirical articles in the area that appear in high-quality journals.

Research Proposal Presentation Tips

You will have a maximum of 15 minutes; thus, you will need to be concise, though still thorough. You should

- very briefly define the construct;
- discuss one or two theories in the area that are the most relevant to your proposal, including controversies and competing hypotheses;
- discuss recent empirical studies on which your study will build;
- state your hypotheses (at both the conceptual and operational levels) and the rationale for them;
- describe the methodology;
- discuss the importance of the anticipated findings, including their theoretical and practical implications.

Your presentation must use visual aids (e.g., overhead slides or PowerPoint). Remember that the audience (your fellow students) may not be familiar with your topic. Thus, you will need to describe everything in an appropriate level of detail, as with the group article presentations. You may state weaknesses of your methodology in the presentation and request feedback on how to improve the methodology.

Research Paper Tips and Instructions

As with the presentations, you will need to define the construct; discuss the relevant theories and empirical articles on which your study will build; state your hypotheses including their rationale; describe the methodology; and discuss the importance and implications of the anticipated findings. All aspects of your paper must be in APA style, including References, Figures, and Tables. Also, paraphrase as often as possible rather than quoting authors.

Your introduction should follow the “funnel technique” in which broad concepts are discussed first (e.g., “what is self-esteem?”) and more narrow topics are discussed at the end (e.g., “self-esteem as measured by the RSE scale is expected to correlate negatively with depressive symptoms as measured by the BDI”). Your paper should then include a Method section in which you describe the participants, materials, and procedure in a

manner similar to that in a journal article, except that the future tense should be used because you are writing a proposal rather than a report of a study that has already been conducted.

You do not need to include a Results section because you have not collected data. However, you should include a Discussion section in which you discuss the importance of your study and the implications that would follow if the results supported your hypotheses. Your Discussion section should appear in a “reverse funnel” format in which specific, narrow topics are addressed first and broader issues are discussed toward the end. In a report where you have collected data, the Discussion section would typically begin with a re-statement of the goals/purpose of the study and the main findings. Here you can re-state the goals/purpose of the study and re-state your hypotheses. You should then interpret the (anticipated) results and discuss (a) their implications for the theoretical work in the area; (b) whether and why your findings are consistent or inconsistent with past research in the area; (c) what unresolved issues your study helps to resolve; (d) what issues remain unresolved/what limitations exist in your study and how they might be addressed in future research; and (e) what have we learned from this research about both your construct and, more generally, about human thoughts, feelings, and behavior? Finally, your paper should include a References section in which the full reference of every paper you cite in your paper appears (in APA format).

Your papers will be evaluated for

- the soundness and clarity of each section
- the theoretical rationale for the study, especially the hypotheses;
- the care with which you created your design and procedure and selected your measures;
- the extent to which your method truly tests your hypotheses, ruling out confounds, third variables, and other alternative explanations;
- the degree to which your anticipated findings justify your conclusions; and
- your adherence to APA format