

RESEARCH IN SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY
Psychology 395 (Section 01)
Fall, 2010

Instructor: Richard Ennis
Email: rennis@uwaterloo.ca
Phone: 519-888-4567 ext. 35333
Office: PAS 3017
Office Hours: Monday, 12:00 - 1:30 p.m.

Teaching Assistant: Martin Day
Email: mvday@uwaterloo.ca
Office: PAS 3240
Office Hours: TBA

Class Meetings: Monday and Wednesday, 10:30 - 11:50, PAS 2086
Required Readings: PSYCH 395 Courseware (available for purchase in Dana Porter Library)

COURSE OVERVIEW

This course will consist of both lecture and seminar styles. Early in the term, the majority of class time will be devoted to lectures. The focus will be on the decisions that must be made in conducting research. The strengths and weaknesses of various designs will be presented. This lecture material will serve as the background for the "hands on" work you will be doing both individually and as a group member.

CLASS ACTIVITY AND READINGS

The readings have been selected to supplement the lectures. We will be discussing these in class so it is essential that you keep up with the assigned readings. Concurrent with the readings, you will begin "experiencing" research as a member of a research group. By the sixth week, you will have completed the course readings and be well on your way to designing your own research.

ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION

The effectiveness of this course depends on the participation of everyone. You will be expected to play an active role in your group work. You will also be expected to make contributions to class discussions and the research presentations of your fellow students. To encourage participation, 10% of your final grade will be awarded for class activity and group participation as determined by myself and the TA.

Of course, you can not participate if you're not in class and attendance will account for another 10% of your final grade. Therefore, there will be a sign-in sheet at each meeting. You must attend at least 18 class meetings (excluding the first one) to receive the 10 marks. In other words, you may miss 3 classes without penalty. Five marks (5%) will be deducted for each additional class you miss. In other words, if you miss 5 classes you will receive 0% for attendance and your participation grade is also likely to suffer.

RESEARCH GROUPS

At the beginning of the term you will be assigned to a research group of about four people based on common research interests. Although each student is expected to pursue their own research, the group will enable you to share some of the tasks and decisions that are part of the enterprise.

Group assignments:

There will be three small group assignments during the early part of the course. These are designed to get you started with your research. Each assignment will require a brief (e.g., 2-3 pages) individual submission that

will be graded. The fruits of your labour will also be shared with your research group so everyone can benefit. Following is a description of the assignments.

1) Literature review: You will perform a literature search for empirical articles in your area of interest. You will then select and find two recent articles from your literature search. You may wish to make a group decision to delegate articles. For each article you will answer the following questions: What theoretical or nominal concepts are being studied? How are they operationalized? How do the authors justify their choice of operationalization? What specific hypotheses do they make? What were their findings for each hypothesis? What sample did they use (i.e., describe the participants and how many there were)? These article reviews will provide a theoretical basis for the research proposal (described later) of each group member. This assignment is worth 10% of your grade.

2) The research question: Formulate a researchable question for your individual research proposal. Briefly articulate your rationale for examining this question and the conceptual hypotheses you are making (i.e., answers to the question). Clearly delineate your independent and dependent variables. Briefly provide some speculation about how these variables might be operationalized. Although you will share this information with your research group, you may also want to work together in formulating your ideas. (NOTE: Although you share a common area of interest with the group, each student must formulate a unique researchable question). This assignment is worth 10% of your grade.

3) Ethics review submission: You will complete a standard ethics review form required for all research conducted under the auspices of the University of Waterloo. Each group will also serve as an "ethics review board" and will provide written feedback to the researchers they review. The entire process will be anonymous. Your mark on this assignment will be based in part on the evaluations of the "review board." This assignment is worth 10% of your grade. You must submit your ethics review form on the due date in order to participate in a review board. Failure to do so will result in a mark of 0% for this assignment.

SEMINARS

The latter part of the course will take on a distinctively different flavour. Classes will consist of the sharing of ideas and problems involved in completing your research projects. The focus will be on applying the knowledge gained earlier in the course.

Presentations:

The seminars will begin on November 1 with individual presentations. The order will be determined by lottery. Each student will be allotted ten (10) minutes to present their research ideas; including some theoretical background, conceptual hypotheses, operationalizations, method design, and expected results. Following each presentation, ten (10) minutes will be given to class discussion and feedback of your research decisions. Although these presentations are an informal sharing of ideas and suggestions, you will be expected to be prepared so you will not waste valuable class time. The presentation will be worth 10% of your final grade. To gain the maximum benefit from these seminars, it is essential that everyone participate.

Following the presentations, the remainder of the class time will be devoted to tutorials and discussion sessions. The tutorials will offer advice for constructing and writing your research proposals. Discussion sessions will centre on specific problems identified during the presentations, new difficulties expressed by students, and general issues of social psychological research. This time will be very flexible and designed to help you through your major term assignment, the research proposal. Students will be welcome to share ongoing issues and ideas as they are putting their proposals together.

THE RESEARCH PROPOSAL

The major project is a research proposal that will be the culmination of your work in the course. Your proposal will be worth 40% of your final mark. As the name suggests, this will be a proposal of the research that you would conduct in order to examine a particular social psychological phenomenon. These proposals are typically written when researchers are requesting funding for their work. In fact, the term "grant proposal" is often used to describe this process. Because this is a proposal, you will not be actually conducting the research, however, you will be expected to present detailed methodology and anticipated results. The topic for your research proposal will be uniquely your own. It cannot be the same as any of your group members. I would recommend that you select your area of interest as soon as possible so you can begin putting your proposal together "in sync" with your work on the group projects.

Your research proposal will be in the format of a standard journal article. The proposal will include: (a) an introduction (in which the hypotheses are proposed and relevant past research is reviewed); (b) a method section (in which the research design is presented with particular attention to instructions to participants and the procedure for measuring the dependent and independent variables); (c) a results section (in which the expected findings are presented); and (d) a discussion section (in which the strengths and weaknesses of the experiment are discussed as well as the potential significance of the study). The seminars will address these issues in some detail.

Your proposal should not exceed 25 pages (double-spaced) of text. In fact, you should attempt to keep it to less than 20 pages! Good writing necessarily means concise expression of your ideas. Specific formatting instructions will be discussed in the seminars but be forewarned: **your proposal should be a professional product, both in content and appearance!**

Your research proposal will be due at 12:00 noon, Friday, December 10, 2010. You must submit both an electronic and hard copy. The electronic copy should be emailed to me and the hard copy may be submitted to my office (slide it under the door) or placed in my mail slot (the Psych Mail Room is situated in the middle of the third floor of the PAS building).

I appreciate that the end of term is a busy time, so you may take an extension if you so desire. The extended due date is 12:00 noon, Wednesday, December 15, 2010. If you take the extension, I must be notified in writing prior to the initial due date; otherwise your proposal will be considered late. Failure to meet the appropriate due date will result in the deduction of 3 marks per weekday!

Additional Comment:

Given the nature of this course, attendance at class meetings should be given a top priority. Absenteeism will directly harm the other members of the class and your research group. If you are not willing to commit to regular attendance I strongly suggest (request) that you drop the course immediately.

This course will demand a great deal of effort. However, I believe that you will emerge from this experience with a greater critical appreciation for scientific research, a more intimate knowledge of social psychology, and vastly improved research skills. It is my fervent hope that this course will pay dividends for you throughout your remaining academic and professional life. In other words, the effort should be worth it!

I hope that this course will be fun and interesting for you while simultaneously challenging your abilities. I find research to be an exciting endeavor and I want that excitement to be contagious. Class meetings and group projects have been designed to spark your curiosity in social psychology. Toward that end, I promise to keep the meetings as informal as possible; and to treat you as a fellow researcher engaged in the passionate pursuit of knowledge!

MARKING SCHEME AND IMPORTANT DATES

ASSIGNMENTS

Assignment 1	Wed Sep 29	10%
Assignment 2	Wed Oct 13	10%
Assignment 3	Wed Oct 27	10%

Assignment Total: 30%

PARTICIPATION

10%

ATTENDANCE

10%

CLASS PRESENTATION

10%

RESEARCH PROPOSAL

Fri Dec 10

40%

TOTAL: 100%

COURSE SCHEDULE

Date	Seminar	Readings
Sep 13 Sep 15	Introduction to course Generating ideas	
Sep 20 Sep 22	Reliability and validity Reliability and validity	Cook & Campbell
Sep 27 Sep 29	Reliability and validity Assignment 1: Literature Review Designing experiments	Cook & Campbell Huff Cialdini
Oct 4 Oct 6	Designing experiments Designing experiments	Aronson et al. Kelman
Oct 11 Oct 13	<i>Thanksgiving ~ no class</i> Assignment 2: Research Question Survey and questionnaire designs	Hoyle et al.
Oct 18 Oct 20	Survey and questionnaire designs Quasi-experimental designs	
Oct 25 Oct 27	Quasi-experimental designs Assignment 3: Ethics Submission and Review	APA Standards
Nov 1 & 3	Student presentations	
Nov 8 & 10	Student presentations	
Nov 15 & 17	Student presentations	
Nov 22 & 24	Student presentations	
Nov 29 & Dec 1	Student presentations	
Dec 6	Student presentations (<i>if necessary</i>)	
Dec 10	Proposal due at noon!	Bem + Sternberg

The Official Version of the Course Outline

If there is a discrepancy between the hard copy outline (*i.e., if students were provided with a hard copy at the first class*) and the outline posted on ACE, the outline on ACE will be deemed the official version. Outlines on ACE may change as instructors develop a course, but they become final as of the first class meeting for the term.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

The Office for Persons with Disabilities (OPD), located in Needles Hall, Room 1132, collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with the OPD at the beginning of each academic term.

Concerns About the Course or Instructor (Informal Stage)

We in the Psychology Department take great pride in the high quality of our program and our instructors. Though infrequent, we know that students occasionally find themselves in situations of conflict with their instructors over course policies or grade assessments. If such a conflict arises, the Associate Chair for Undergraduate Affairs (Dr. Colin Ellard) is available for consultation and to mediate a resolution between the student and instructor. Dr. Ellard's contact information is as follows:

Email: cellard@uwaterloo.ca

Ph 519-888- 4567 ext 36852

A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of his/her university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. See Policy 70 and 71 below for further details.

Academic Integrity, Academic Offenses, Grievance, and Appeals

To protect course integrity, as well as to provide appropriate guidance to students, course outlines in the Faculty of Arts must include the following note on avoidance of academic offenses:

Academic Integrity: In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo community are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility. [Check <http://www.uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/> for more informaton.]

Discipline: A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity [check <http://www.uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/>], to avoid committing academic offenses, and to take responsibility for his/her actions. A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offense, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offenses (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about 'rules' for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course instructor, academic advisor, or the Undergraduate Associate Dean. When misconduct has been found to have occurred, disciplinary penalties will be imposed under Policy 71 - Student Discipline. For information on categories of offenses and types of penalties, students should refer to [Policy 71](http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy71.htm) - Student Discipline, <http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy71.htm>

Grievance: A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of his/her university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read [Policy 70](http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy70.htm) - Student Petitions and Grievances, Section 4, <http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy70.htm>

Appeals: A student may appeal the finding and/or penalty in a decision made under Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances (other than regarding a petition) or Policy 71 - Student Discipline if a ground for an appeal can be established. Read [Policy 72](http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy72.htm) - Student Appeals, <http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy72.htm>

Plagiarism detection software (Turnitin) will be used to screen assignments in this course. This is being done to verify that use of all materials and sources in assignments is documented. In the first week of the term, details will be provided about arrangements for the use of Turnitin in this course.

Academic Integrity website (Arts): http://arts.uwaterloo.ca/arts/ugrad/academic_responsibility.html

Academic Integrity Office (UW): <http://uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/>