

Psychology 395 (Section 2) -- Research in Social Psychology

Fall 2007

2:30 - 5:20 Thursdays

HH 334

Instructor: Dr. Joanne Wood

Office: PAS 3042

Office Hours: Wednesday 2 - 3. You can also try during my 291 office hours from 10:20 to 11:20 on certain dates (Sept 20, 25; Oct 4, 9, 30; Nov 1, 6, 20, 22, 27, 29). Please contact me if these times do not suit you.

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Course Aims

This course will introduce students to issues involved in research design and the operationalization of variables in social psychology. By the end of the course: (1) you should be competent consumers of research, able to evaluate empirical articles as well as media messages about research findings; (2) you should be much more prepared to conduct your own research.

Course Requirements

Quiz on Basic Concepts (or, Memories of 291). During the second class session, we will have a quiz on basic research methods concepts. See the attached list of concepts. Students will create this quiz; you will be assigned a concept the first day of class. Please turn in a question about this concept through the course ACE page by noon, Tuesday, Sept. 17th. The more entertaining or thought-provoking the question, the better.

Article critiques. You will evaluate 3 empirical articles. Please prepare a 1-1.5 page outline summarizing the article. Follow the example of the outline attached. Your papers must be typed, single-spaced, and typed in no smaller than 12-point font (i.e., the size of this font). Please turn in assignments over ACE.

Ethics tutorial. The Office of Research Ethics website has a link to an ethics tutorial on the web that you will complete. You will then receive a certificate! The tutorial is under "resources" and "TCPS policy statement and tutorial." <http://pre.ethics.gc.ca/english/tutorial/>

Assignments and assignment presentations. In small groups, students will work together to complete three assignments and to make short presentations to the class on these assignments. The goal of the assignments is to lead you through the basic steps of creating your own research projects.

Theory presentation. Students will work in small groups on a theory in social psychology. Each group will give a 20-30-minute presentation to the class to introduce the class to the theory, the key research questions being addressed on that theory, and to describe, briefly, an empirical study or two. In your presentation, try to be informative, clear, organized, and engaging. Introduce the topic; don't overwhelm the audience with detail. Make use of overheads or PowerPoint, demonstrations, etc.

Research proposal. Over the course of the term, you will develop a research proposal for an empirical study. Although students will create their proposals independently, your proposal must be drawn from the theory covered in your group presentation. The hypothesis may either be (1) original *or* (2) the same as one already addressed empirically, but for which you propose a novel, superior method for addressing it.

So that classmates can learn from and help each other as your projects unfold, you will discuss your research ideas in our class meetings in 2 "cycles." First, you will give a 10-minute presentation to the class concerning your ideas for your hypothesis and the theoretical rationale behind your hypothesis. Second, you will give a 10-15-minute presentation to the class concerning any refinements to your hypothesis as well as your plan for a research design and method to test your hypothesis. Although these presentations will be grouped according to the theory, the presentations will be presented by individual students, because they are independent projects. Each presentation should be clear and engaging. Encourage the other students to give you honest feedback about the strengths and weaknesses of your project.

In Week 9 or 10, you will turn in a 3-4 page (before references) double-spaced paper concerning your hypothesis and theoretical rationale. This paper will be read by every member of your theory group. One week after the final day of class, you will turn in a 5-6 page double-spaced paper concerning the method. These papers will be evaluated for soundness and clarity of the theoretical rationale, the care with which you selected your design, procedure, and measures, and clarity of the writing. Plagiarism on your research proposal will result in failure; please discuss any concerns about the originality of your work with me or the TA.

Class participation. Classroom activity will revolve around small- and large-group discussions that will involve: assignments, preparing your research project, critiquing empirical articles, and commenting on other students' research proposals. Because the success of this course depends greatly on class participation, class participation will enter into your course grade. Your class participation mark will be based on the quality of your contributions in both small group discussions and whole classroom discussions.

Given the importance of class participation, class attendance for each *entire* class session is mandatory. For every 10 minutes absent, you will be docked 2% off your class participation mark. Unexcused absences for entire class sessions will result in 20% off your class participation mark. For excused and unexcused absences, you are responsible for finding out what material was covered in class and any announcements.

Weighting for Course Grades

Class participation (in small groups and in whole class)	7%
Memories of 291 quiz	2%
Ethics tutorial	4%
3 Assignment presentations	12%
Theory presentation	14%
3 Article critiques	21%
Research proposal—theory and hypothesis	20%
Research proposal—method	20%

Late assignments will be docked 5% each day. Please type all assignments.

Academic Offenses

Plagiarism is the use of someone else's words or ideas as if they are one's own. It includes the use of quotations without proper referencing. All students must complete their assignments and papers on their own. Copying someone else's assignment (or portion thereof), or allowing another to copy your assignment, is prohibited. Cheating on examinations or assignments and plagiarism will result in a grade of zero for the course and will be reported to the Chairman of the Department of Psychology and to the Dean of the Faculty of Arts. Additional disciplinary action could include probation, suspension, or expulsion. If you run into difficulties with deadlines or course material, talk with the instructor or TA. Additionally, we suggest you read, carefully, Academic Policy #71 which can be found on the university's web site at the following address: <http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy71.htm>.

All students registered in the courses of the Faculty of Arts are expected to know what constitutes an academic offense, to avoid committing academic offenses, and to take responsibility for their academic actions. When the commission of an offense is established, disciplinary penalties will be imposed in accord with Policy #71 (Student Academic Discipline). For information on categories of offenses and types of penalties, students are directed to consult the summary of Policy #71 which is supplied in the Undergraduate Calendar (p. 1:11). If you need help in learning how to avoid offenses such as plagiarism, cheating, and double submission, or if you need clarification of aspects of the discipline policy, ask your course instructor for guidance. Other resources regarding the discipline policy are your academic advisor and the Undergraduate Associate Dean.

Terms you will be expected to know before beginning this course:

internal validity	random sampling
threats to internal validity	manipulation vs. measurement
external validity	interaction
construct validity	reliability of measures
experiment	-internal consistency
correlational study	-test-retest
demand characteristics	independent variable
experimenter bias	dependent variable
between-subjects designs	continuous vs. categorical variables
within-subject designs (repeated measures designs)	operational definition
factorial design	confound
random assignment	error vs. bias

<u>Date</u>	<u>Week</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Readings and Items Due</u>
Sept 13	1	Introduction to course and RefWorks demonstration	Sept 17, noon—your top 3 choices for theory Sept 18, noon—your quiz question
Sept 20	2	Quiz, practice critique, Assignment 1 group work	Quiz on Basic Concepts Read article for practice critique
Sept 27	3	Go over Article Critique#1 Assignment 1 presentations Assignment 2 group work	Article Critique#1 due noon Sept 24
Oct 4	4	Go over Article Critique#2 Assignment 2 presentations Assignment 3 group work	Complete ethics tutorial by now Article Critique#2 due noon Oct 1
Oct 11	5	Go over Article Critique#3 Assignment 3 presentations theory presentation group work	Article Critique#3 due noon Oct 8
Oct 18	6	Theory presentations & Research proposal group work	
Oct 25	7	Theory presentations & Research proposal group work	
Nov 1	8	Research proposal presentations Cycle 1: Hypothesis	
Nov 8	9	Research proposal presentations Cycle 1: Hypothesis	Hypothesis papers for students who presented on Nov 1.
Nov 15	10	Research proposal presentations Cycle 2: Method	Hypothesis papers for students who presented on Nov 8.
Nov 22	11	Research proposal presentations Cycle 2: Method	
Nov 29	12	Research proposal presentations Cycle 2: Method	
Dec 6			Method papers

Outline for article summaries (if the article includes multiple studies, summarize the first study only)

Article reference: (e.g., Rosenberg et al., 1995—you don't need to include the rest of reference)

Authors' hypothesis:

Why this issue is important (e.g., theoretical contribution, practical implications):

Main independent or predictor variables (**brief** descriptions):

Conceptual level—

Operational level—

Main dependent or outcome variables (**brief** descriptions):

Conceptual level—

Operational level—

Brief overview of method:

Most important finding (or two):

Strengths of the study: (use point form)

Weakness of the study: