

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

Fall 2008
2:30 - 5:20 Thursdays

Instructor: Dr. Joanne Wood

Office: PAS 3042

Office Hours: Wednesday 2 – 3 or by appointment. You can also try during my 291 office hours from 10:20 to 11:20 on certain dates (Sept 18, 23; Oct 2, 7, 9, 28, 30; Nov 4, 18, 20, 25, 27).

Please contact me if these times do not suit you; I'm sure we can find a time to meet.

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TA: Justin Cavallo

Office: PAS 3240B

Office Hours: Thursdays 1:30 – 2:30 or by appointment

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Course Aims

By the end of this course: (1) you should be competent consumers of social psychological research, able to evaluate empirical articles as well as media messages about research findings; (2) you should be prepared to conduct your own social psychological research.

Course Components

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 list of concepts. The quiz will involve applying the concepts to a short empirical article. These concepts are so crucial to your training in psychology that you must achieve a certain standard on the quiz. If you earn less than 80%, you will have to re-take the quiz with a new empirical article, and continue to re-take it until you have achieved at least 80%.

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 critiques over ACE.

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.

The grades will be assigned as follows: Each group of 4-5 students will be given a grade out of 40 on their presentation. You will then evaluate yourself and each group member's

contribution to the presentation by assigning each person a grade out of 10. The sum of all individual grades cannot exceed the total number of points that you were assigned (out of 40).

For example, say your group receives a mark of 36/40. You will then have 36 points to divide amongst the group members. For example, if everyone contributed equally, you may choose to assign each person an 8/10 (i.e., divide the points equally). If contributions were not equal, you may choose a different arrangement. For example, if you feel that someone else worked very hard on the presentation and you did not put as much effort into it, you may assign that person 10/10 and assign yourself a 6/10 (and then assign the remaining 16 points to your other group members accordingly for a total of 36 points).

You will submit these ratings after each presentation and they will be confidential. Your final grade for each assignment presentation will be determined by averaging the ratings that you received from your group members (including yourself).

Theory groups. Over the course of the term, students will develop a research proposal for an experimental study (to be described in more detail below). These research projects will be relevant to a theory prominent in social psychology. Toward that end, students will select a theory to work on and will work in small groups of fellow students also interested in that theory. A table with references relevant to that theory will be provided to you. At a minimum, each group member should read the articles/chapters listed on that table. You will read several more papers as you prepare your research proposal.

Research proposal. Although students will work in theory groups, each student will create an independent research proposal. Your proposal may test a hypothesis drawn from the theory, extend the theory in a new direction, or challenge the theory. 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.

In the 4th and 6th weeks of class, meet with the instructor or TA about your research proposal ideas (meet with the instructor one week and the TA the other week). Before the meeting in the 4th week, read one of the good research proposals written by a previous student in this course (available on ACE page).

You will submit your research proposal in two parts. First, in Week 9 or later, you will turn in a 3-4 page (before references) double-spaced paper concerning your hypothesis and theoretical rationale. 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.

Research proposal presentation. In Weeks 8 – 12 of the term, students will present their research proposals to the class. 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 (see list of suggestions). Encourage your fellow students to give you candid, constructive feedback about the strengths and weaknesses of your project.

Opportunity: If you volunteer to present your proposal first (in Week 7), you will receive no lower than a 95% on your presentation. Your presentation will be critiqued in class, with strengths and weaknesses noted, so that the rest of the class can learn from your example.

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)	8%
Quiz on basic concepts	4%
3 Assignment presentations	15%
3 Article critiques	24%
Research proposal presentation	5%
Research proposal paper—theory and hypothesis	22%
Research proposal paper —method	22%

Late assignments will be docked 5% each day.

Academic Integrity

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 someone to copy your assignment, are prohibited. Cheating on examinations or assignments and plagiarism will result in a grade of zero for the course and will be reported to the Chair of the Department of Psychology and to the Dean of the Faculty of Arts. Additional disciplinary action could include probation, suspension, or expulsion.

How to Avoid Plagiarism and Other Written Offences: A Guide for Students and Instructors (<http://watarts.uwaterloo.ca/~sager/plagiarism.html>).

The Faculty of Arts now requires that the following message be included on all syllabi distributed in the Faculty of Arts:

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.

Discipline: A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, 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 professor, 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 – 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 - 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 - Student Appeals, <http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy72.htm>

Avoiding Academic Offences:

http://arts.uwaterloo.ca/arts/ugrad/academic_responsibility.html

Message from Heather Smith

Psychology majors should check the Psychology Undergraduate Web Site (<http://www.psychology.uwaterloo.ca/ugradprog/>) regularly for important notices, postings for research positions, course information for the coming year, etc.

All students should activate their UW computer accounts each term. The accounts give students access to applications such as word processing, statistical and graphics packages, and electronic email as well as access to the Internet. For those who are not planning to use their UW email addresses, please do one of the following things: (1) change your email address on QUEST to the one that you want posted on the University Directory, or (2) activate your UW account and forward your email from your UW account to your alternate email address.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Week</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Due dates</u>
Sept 11	1	Introduction to course	Sept 15, noon—submit your top 3 choices for theory. Students who submit late will be assigned to a theory group.
Sept 18	2	Quiz on Basic Concepts Practice critique Assignment 1 group work	Prepare practice article critique
Sept 25	3	Go over Article Critique#1 Assignment 1 presentations Assignment 2 group work	Article Critique#1 due 5 p.m. Sept 22
Oct 2	4	Assignment 2 presentations	Read research proposal of previous student in class—available on ACE. Meet with instructor or TA this week to discuss your ideas for research proposal.
Oct 9	5	Go over Article Critique#2 Assignment 3 group work	Article Critique#2 due 5 p.m. Oct 6
Oct 16	6	Assignment 3 presentations	Meet with instructor or TA this week to discuss your ideas for research proposal.
Oct 23	7	Go over Article Critique#3 Research proposal presentation by volunteer RefWorks demonstration by Tim Ireland	Article Critique#3 due 5 p.m. Oct 20
Oct 30	8	Research proposal presentations	
Nov 6	9	Research proposal presentations	Hypothesis papers for students who presented on Oct 23 or Oct 30.
Nov 13	10	Research proposal presentations	Hypothesis papers for students who presented on Nov 6.
Nov 20	11	Research proposal presentations	Hypothesis papers for students who presented on Nov 13.
Nov 27	12	Research proposal presentations	Hypothesis papers for students who presented on Nov 20.
Dec 2	FINAL EXAM PERIOD		Hypothesis papers for students who presented on Nov 27.
Dec 5			Method papers for students who presented before Nov 27.
Dec 8			Method papers for students who presented on Nov 27.

