

Research in Social Psychology PSYCH 395 (002) / PSYCH 389 (003)

Fall 2017

Wednesdays 2:30PM - 5:20PM

RCH 309

Instructor: Dr. Joanne Wood

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Office Hours: _____, or by appointment. Please contact me if this time does not suit you; I'm sure we can find a time to meet.

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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*). (10%) Early in the class, 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 up to 3 times. Your final quiz grade will be the average across your testings.

Article critique assignments. (17%) You will learn to evaluate empirical articles through small assignments and one full critique. For the full critique, please prepare a 1-1.5 page outline summarizing/critiquing the article. Follow the example of the outline posted online.

Assignments and assignment presentations. (18%) In small groups, students will work together to complete two 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. One group member must upload the presentation slides to the assignment dropbox on LEARN by 2:00pm on the day of the presentation.

The grades for assignments will be assigned as follows: Each group of 4 students will be given a grade out of 40 on their presentation; groups of 5 students will be given a grade out of 50. After receiving your group grade, 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 or 50, depending on group size).

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).

If you receive 40/40 (or 50/50) but you do not feel that all group members contributed equally, you may award some group members scores higher than 10/10 (e.g., 11/10) and other group members scores lower than 10/10 as long as the sum of all individual grades does not exceed the total number of points that you were assigned.

You will submit these ratings on LEARN after each presentation and they will be confidential. Peer ratings are due within one week of your presentation. Your final grade for each assignment presentation will be determined by averaging the ratings that you received from your group members (including yourself).

Research proposal. (40%) Over the course of the term, each student will develop a research proposal—a plan for an experiment to be conducted (that you will not actually run). The proposal will be submitted in two parts that will be like the (1) introduction and (2) method sections of a journal article. The hypothesis paper/introduction will include your hypothesis, the rationale behind your hypothesis, and your review of the relevant literature. The method paper will describe the intended sample, the procedure, and measures.

Design your experiment to test an idea relevant to a theory prominent in social psychology. You will have several theories to choose from, or you can choose a different theory if you get it cleared by the instructor. 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.

A table with several possible theories and suggested readings for each theory appears on our course page on LEARN. At a minimum, students should read the articles/chapters for their theory that are listed on that table. You will no doubt read several more papers as you prepare your research proposal.

You will submit your research proposal in two parts. First, 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.

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

Want to do the best possible job you can on your research proposal papers? 1. Familiarize yourself with the marking scheme provided in the “helpful hints” document available on LEARN. 2. Read good proposals from previous years that are also available on LEARN. 3. Visit the Writing Centre. 4. Meet with the instructor or TA as you progress!

Research proposal presentation. (6%) In the final weeks of the term, students will present their research proposals to the class. Each presentation should be clear and engaging (see list of suggestions in the “helpful hints” document). Encourage your fellow students to give you candid, constructive feedback about the strengths and weaknesses of your project.

Opportunity: If you volunteer and are selected to present your proposal first, you will receive no lower than an 85 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. (9%) 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 quantity and quality of your contributions.

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.

Research Participation: Students may earn extra credit of up to 2 points (although the final course mark cannot exceed 100%) through participating in the SONA Psychology Participant Pool. Extra credit will be awarded in this course only for participating in in-lab studies (not online studies). You can also earn extra credit in another way. Instructions appear near the end of this syllabus.

Weighting for Course Grades

Class participation	9%
Quiz on basic concepts	10%
2 Assignment presentations	18%
Article critique – 2 tasks	8%
Article critique Task #3 – full critique	9%
Research proposal presentation	6%
Research proposal paper—theory and hypothesis	20%
Research proposal paper —method	20%

Late assignments will be docked 1% each hour, up to 5% each day.

Terms you will be expected to know for the quiz on basic concepts:

internal validity
threats to internal validity (not individual threats, but what it means to have a threat to internal validity)
external validity
construct validity
experiment
correlational study
between-subjects designs
within-subject designs (aka repeated measures designs)
factorial design
random assignment
manipulation vs. measurement
interaction
reliability of measures: a. internal consistency b. test-retest
independent variable
predictor variable
dependent variable
continuous vs. categorical variables
operational definition (aka operationalization)
confound

Message from Psych Department

It is your responsibility to check e-mail regularly for important and time sensitive messages. You should use your UW account for all e-mail correspondence to UW personnel for reasons such as identification, reliability, and security. Note that higher priority may be given to e-mail received from UW accounts versus other accounts such as hotmail, yahoo, etc. See "Official Student Email Address" for further details:

<https://uwaterloo.ca/information-systems-technology/about/policies-standards-and-guidelines/email/statement-official-student-email-address>

The home page for the psychology department: <http://www.psychology.uwaterloo.ca/>

Messages from the Department of Psychology and the Faculty of Arts

Academic Integrity

Academic Integrity: In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility. See the [UWaterloo Academic Integrity webpage](#) and the [Arts Academic Integrity webpage](#) for more information.

Discipline: A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing academic offences, and to take responsibility for his/her actions. A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offence, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offences (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](#). For typical penalties check [Guidelines for the Assessment of Penalties](#).

Concerns About a Course Policy or Decision

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 (Richard Eibach) is available for consultation and to mediate a resolution between the student and instructor: Email: reibach@uwaterloo.ca; Ph 519-888-4567 ext. 38790

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 [72](#) below for further details.

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. When in doubt, please be certain to contact Richard Eibach, the Associate Chair for Undergraduate Affairs who will provide further assistance; reibach@uwaterloo.ca.

Appeals: A decision made or penalty imposed under Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances (other than a petition) or Policy 71 - Student Discipline may be appealed if there is a ground. A student who believes he/she has a ground for an appeal should refer to [Policy 72 - Student Appeals](#)

Accommodation for Students with Disabilities

Note for students with disabilities: The [AccessAbility Services](#) office, located on the first floor of the Needles Hall extension (1401), 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 AS office at the beginning of each academic term.

Accommodation for course requirements

- Students requesting accommodation for course requirements (assignments, midterm tests, final exams, etc.) due to illness should do the following:
 - seek medical treatment as soon as possible and obtain a completed uWaterloo [Verification of Illness Form](#)
 - submit that form to the instructor within 48 hours.
 - (if possible) inform the instructor by the due date for the course requirement that you will be unable to meet the deadline and that documentation will be forthcoming.
- In the case of a missed final exam, the instructor and student will negotiate an extension for the final exam, which will typically be written as soon as possible, but no later than the next offering of the course.
- In the case of a missed assignment deadline, midterm test, or quiz, the instructor will either:

- waive the course component and re-weight remaining term work as he/she deems fit according to circumstances and the goals of the course, or
 - provide an extension.
- In the case of bereavement, the instructor will provide similar accommodations to those for illness. Appropriate documentation to support the request will be required.
 - Students who are experiencing extenuating circumstances should also inform their academic advisors regarding their personal difficulties.

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 LEARN, the outline on LEARN will be deemed the official version. Outlines on LEARN may change as instructors develop a course, but they become final as of the first class meeting for the term.

Plagiarism

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), and 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 Writing Centre

The Writing Centre works across all faculties to help students clarify their ideas, develop their voices, and communicate in the style appropriate to their disciplines. Writing Centre staff offer one-on-one support in planning assignments, using and documenting research, organizing papers and reports, designing presentations and e-portfolios, and revising for clarity and coherence.

You can make multiple appointments throughout the term, or drop in at the Library for quick questions or feedback. To book a 50-minute appointment and to see drop-in hours, visit www.uwaterloo.ca/writing-centre. Group appointments for team-based projects, presentations, and papers are also available.

Please let the instructor know at the beginning of the term if you wish to be excused for any religious observances during the term.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Week</u>	<u>In-Class Topic</u>	<u>Due dates</u>
Sept 13	1	Introduction to course Review of basic concepts	Read a research proposal of previous students in class—available on LEARN
Sept 20	2	Quiz on basic concepts Preparation for assignments Assignment 1 group work	<u>Bring to class</u> your choice of theory for your research proposal
Sept 27	3	Time for Quiz 2 if needed Preparation for assignments Assignment 1 group work	Article Critique Task #1 due Thursday, Sept 28, at 5pm
Oct 4	4	Assignment 1 presentations Preparation for assignments Go over Article Critique Task #1	Recommended: Meet with instructor or TA this week to discuss your ideas for research proposal
Oct 11	No class—FALL BREAK—Note special class time on Friday, Art Crit. Task due Thurs		
Friday Oct 13	5	PsycInfo and RefWorks demonstration by Tim Ireland Preparation for assignments Assignment 2 group work	Article Critique Task #2 due Thursday, Oct 12 , at 5pm
Oct 18	6	Go over Article Critique Task #2 Preparation for assignments Assignment 2 group work	Mandatory: Meet with instructor or TA this week to discuss your ideas for research proposal
Oct 25	7	Assignment 2 presentations	Article Critique Task #3 due Thursday, Oct 26, at 5pm
Nov 1	8	Go over Article Critique Task #3 Research proposal presentation by a volunteer	
Nov 8	9	Research proposal presentations	
Nov 15	10	Research proposal presentations	Hypothesis papers for students who presented on Nov 1 or 8.
Nov 22	11	Research proposal presentations	Hypothesis papers for students who presented on Nov 15.
Nov 29	12	Research proposal presentations	Hypothesis papers for students who presented on Nov 22.
Dec 7 - Dec 21	FINAL EXAM PERIOD		Hypothesis papers for students who presented on Nov 29 due Dec 7
			Method papers due Dec. 14

Research Experience Marks Information and Guidelines

Experiential learning is considered an integral part of the undergraduate program in Psychology. Research participation is one example of this, article review is another. A number of undergraduate courses have been expanded to include opportunities for Psychology students to earn grades while gaining research experience.

Since experiential learning is highly valued in the Department of Psychology, students may earn a **"bonus" grade of up to 2%** in this course through research experience. Course work will make up 100% of the final mark and a "bonus" of up to 2% may be earned and will be added to the final grade if/as needed to bring your final grade up to 100%.

The two options for earning research experience grades (participation in research and article review) are described below. Students may complete any combination of these options to earn research experience grades.

Option 1: Participation in Psychology Research

Research participation is coordinated by the Research Experiences Group (REG). Psychology students may volunteer as research participants in lab studies conducted by students and faculty in the Department of Psychology. Participation enables students to learn first-hand about psychology research and related concepts. Many students report that participation in research is both an educational and interesting experience. Please be assured that all Psychology studies have undergone prior ethics review and clearance through the Office of Research Ethics.

Educational focus of participation in research

To maximize the educational benefits of participating in research, students will receive feedback information following their participation in each study detailing the following elements:

- Purpose or objectives of the study
- Dependent and independent variables
- Expected results
- References for at least two related research articles
- Provisions to ensure confidentiality of data
- Contact information of the researcher should the student have further questions about the study
- Contact information for the Director of the Office of Research Ethics should the student wish to learn more about the general ethical issues surrounding research with human participants, or specific questions or concerns about the study in which s/he participated.

Participation in LAB studies has increment values of 0.5 participation credits (grade percentage points) for each 30-minutes of participation. Researchers will record student's participation, and at the end of the term the REG Coordinator will provide the course instructor with a credit report of the total credits earned by each student.

How to participate?

Study scheduling, participation and grade assignment is managed using the SONA online system. All students enrolled in this course have been set up with a SONA account. You must get started early in the term.

[Participating/SONA information: How to log in to Sona and sign up for studies](#)

**** Please do not ask the Course Instructor or REG Coordinator for information unless you have first thoroughly read the information provided on this website.****

More information about the REG program is available at:

[REG Participants' Homepage](#)

Option 2: Article Review as an alternative to participation in research

Students are not required to participate in research, and not all students wish to do so. As an alternative, students may opt to gain research experience by writing short reviews (1½ to 2 pages) of research articles relevant to the course. The course instructor will specify a suitable source of articles for this course (i.e., scientific journals, newspapers, magazines, other printed media). *You must contact your TA to get approval for the article you have chosen before writing the review.* Each review article counts as one percentage point. To receive credit, you must follow specific guidelines. The article review must:

- **Be submitted before the [last day of lectures](#). Late submissions will NOT be accepted under ANY circumstances.**
- Be typed
- Fully identify the title, author(s), source and date of the article. A copy of the article must be attached.
- Identify the psychological concepts in the article and indicate the pages in the textbook that are applicable. Critically evaluate the application or treatment of those concepts in the article. If inappropriate or incorrect, identify the error and its implications for the validity of the article. You may find, for example, misleading headings, faulty research procedures, alternative explanations that are ignored, failures to distinguish factual findings from opinions, faulty statements of cause-effect relations, errors in reasoning, etc. Provide examples whenever possible.
- Clearly evaluate the application or treatment of those concepts in the article.
- Keep a copy of your review in the unlikely event we misplace the original.