

## Method and Theory Course Syllabus – Spring 2014

**T - Th \*\*\* 9:30-10:50 (Section 1) \*\*\* ARM 224**

**T - Th \*\*\* 11:00-12:20 (Section 2) \*\*\* ARM 224**

### Instructor Information

Dr. Sarah Allred  
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### Course Overview

Welcome to method and theory in psychology. Here we will apply the scientific method to behavioral research with the aim of improving the ways in which you consume and produce psychological research. We will also learn how to produce research papers.

### Learning Objectives and Goals

The learning objectives of this course are consistent with the goals of the department. Course activities are designed to assess these learning objectives. Upon successful completion of this course, you should be able to:

1. Describe the scientific method and apply it to psychological research
2. Define the basic vocabulary of psychological research
3. Design both non-experimental and experimental studies to answer questions about psychology
4. Consume critically psychological research presented in the media
5. Write a research paper

### Required Readings

1. Cozby and Bates *Methods in Behavioral Research* (11th edition). McGraw Hill. Textbook available at bookstore and most online booksellers. Prices vary, so you might want to look around. There is a paperback version that is less expensive. The ISBN is: 978-0078035159. You need to read this book; you will not be able to do well in the class without it.
2. Class information. All lectures will be posted as pdfs *after* class. There is often important information about exams and grades on these slides, so please reference them.

### Course Rules

#### Use your Rutgers Email

When I email the class, I use the list that the Registrar gives me. I can not change this list, and it is your responsibility to either use your Rutgers email account or set up your Rutgers account so that you receive emails in your personal account.

#### Academic Honesty

You are expected to read and understand rules regarding academic misconduct. Ignorance of these rules will not be accepted as an excuse for academic misconduct. If you are found cheating on exams or plagiarizing on your paper, you will receive a failing grade for the paper and I will report you to the Office of Academic Affairs. Period. I offer no exceptions to this rule, ESPECIALLY ignorance of what plagiarism is. Rutgers maintains a website with specific guidelines concerning academic honesty. You are expected to read and understand all of these rules and the consequences of breaking them: <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/integrity.shtml>

### Course Etiquette

No cell phone use during class. This disrupts the course for me, your classmates, and decreases your ability to pay attention in class. If I notice you using your phone in class, I will ask you to stop; if use continues, your attendance / class participation grade will be decreased (see below).

### Course Requirements

1. **Attendance and class participation:** You are expected to attend class and participate in class discussions. You are advised to do so for at least three reasons: (1) You will learn more if you do; (2) Exams will have questions based on class discussions; often, an exam question will be identical to an example used in class; (3) Attendance will be taken approximately 12 times during the semester, often with a short in-class activity. No make-ups are possible. This is approx 20% of your grade.
2. **Exams:** There are three exams in this course, two mid-terms and one final exam. The points for each exam are listed at the end of the syllabus, the dates and chapters covered are listed in the course schedule. The final exam is cumulative. The two mid-term exams will be given online on sakai and will be open book, open note. You should not expect this to make the exam easy. You can take the exam at any time on the scheduled day. More details about the exams will come closer to exam time. There will be **no make-up exams given without prior arrangements**. You are grown-ups. Prepare. You have the exam dates ahead of time. Make appropriate arrangements.
3. **Research in the real world:** An important objective of this course is to teach you how to evaluate claims about human behavior that you encounter in everyday life. You will sign up for one day on which you will do a brief, informal presentation to the class (about five minutes) on an example of research in the real world (e.g. reported in a newspaper or magazine, on the radio). This should NOT be a peer-reviewed article. The goal is to think about how to evaluate claims you hear in the media. In your five minutes, you will discuss the claim that is made about human behavior, and the evidence that is offered to support that claim. If no evidence is offered, you may speculate as to how researchers might obtain evidence. After you briefly summarize the claim, I will lead you (and the class) in a brief discussion evaluating the claim. This is designed to get you engaged with questions about behavioral research. You will receive full credit by being adequately prepared. I am happy to answer questions prior to your date if you have them. If you feel uncomfortable making a verbal presentation, you have the option of writing a two page paper in which you present a discussion of a media report and outline and critique the methods and conclusions. If you wish to write the paper rather than present in class, the paper must be turned in no later than *Tuesday, April 8th*.
4. **Research paper:** To showcase your developing understanding of research methods and your improving writing skills, an important part of your grade is writing a research paper. There are several parts to this process. Please see the Paper Description for a detailed guide of each part. Together, the paper homework and parts are worth almost 40% of your final grade.

### Grading

There are 560 points possible in this course. Grades will be calculated as follows:

Attendance	100
Research in the real world	20
Paper (homework)	50
Paper (written parts)	150
Exam 1	70
Exam 2	70
Final Exam	100