

Research Methods Course Syllabus – Fall 2014

**** M - W *** 1:20-2:40 ARM 124**

Instructor Information

Dr. Sarah Allred

Office: 309 ARM

Office Hours: M, free period and by appt.

Phone: 856.225.6141

Email: srallred@scarletmail.rutgers.edu

Course Overview

Welcome to Research Methods 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.

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. Critically consume psychological research presented in the media.
2. Determine whether data support, refute, or are irrelevant to a claim.
3. Summarize and evaluate peer-reviewed psychological research.
4. Define the basic vocabulary of psychological research.
5. Communicate ideas effectively and professionally both verbally and in writing.

Required Materials

1. Textbook. Research Methods: Are You Equipped? by Jennifer Bonds-Raacke. **second edition**. Kendall Hunt Publishing. Textbook available at bookstore and directly from the publisher as a printed version or an eBook. (<http://www.kendallhunt.com/store-product.aspx?id=265208>).
2. iPad. This class will be a digitally-enhanced class, with many in-class activities involving an iPad. Students may check out iPads from the library (see iPad document on Sakai Resources for more information) or use their own. If you use your own iPad, you will be responsible for acquiring apps on your own. All but one of these are free apps. The apps you will need for class are: Google Docs, Google Drive, Socrative (Student Edition), and ExplainEverything. You must come to class on September 8th – this is where you will receive your iPad.
3. 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. Please note that you must now use scarletmail or the rutgers.edu email convention. (clam.rutgers.edu and camden.rutgers.edu will no longer work for students!)

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 assignments, you will receive a failing grade for the exam or assignment and I will report you to the Office of Academic Affairs. I offer no exceptions to this rule. "I didn't know this was wrong" is not an excuse. If you have any questions, please ask. 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 Logistics Overview

1. **Lessons Tool** We will be using the Lessons Tool in Sakai. There will be a tab for each day of class. You are responsible for completing any listed tasks BEFORE the class period listed. Typically this will involve a reading quiz. The questions are designed to be easy if you have read the appropriate section of the book. In addition to posting this on the Lessons Tool, I will provide reminders in class of upcoming due dates.
2. **Class time.** I will do very little lecturing. Instead, much of class time will be spent completing applied problems related to the material you will already have read before class. Thus, attendance is critical.
3. **Team based learning.** Many of the activities we do will be completed in teams. These teams will be assigned, and will be permanent over the course of the semester. You will receive a grade for your contribution to your team, and you will also receive grades for assignments and quizzes based on your team's performance (see grades below). Everyone in your team will receive the same team performance grade. Please note that if you feel your team's performance does not reflect your knowledge, you will have the option of taking additional traditional exam assessments to replace your team grade.

Grading

1. **Reading quizzes.** Required reading is to be done before class. To motivate you to read, each chapter will have at least one quiz that must be completed BEFORE class on the indicated day. Quizzes are to be completed on Sakai, and are open-book open-note, so you may have the quiz open while you read. This is **10%** of your grade.
2. **Quizzes and Exams:** There will be three quizzes and a final exam. The three quizzes will be multiple choice, administered through Sakai in class, and the final exam will be short answer / essay. The dates and chapters covered are listed in the course schedule. The final exam is cumulative. Each of the three quizzes is worth 5%, and the final exam is worth 10%, making exams worth a total of **25%** of your grade. More details about the exams will follow. There will be **no make-up exams given without prior arrangements.**
3. **Team-based evaluation.** You will be sorted into Teams for the semester, and a large part of your grade will be based on activities completed in your team. This grade will have two parts. The first part of your team-based grade will consist of the participation you have provided as part of your team. Each member of the team will evaluate other members of the team. I will also track participation and contribute to this grade. You (students) will decide on 2-4 criteria for evaluating your team members in the third week of class. Examples of criteria include things like preparation, skill, attitude, contribution, etc. The second part of your team-based grade rests on your team's performance on class assignments. Examples of such assignments include group quizzes, short papers, short presentations to the class in response to question prompts. Please note that all team members will receive the same grade. The first part of your team-based grade will be worth 26% of your course grade, and 13% will be assigned on halfway through the semester, with the other 13% being assigned at the end of the semester. The second part of your team grade, the performance part, is worth 25% of your overall grade. Points for individual assignments will be posted throughout the semester.

4. **Final project.** An important objective of this course is to teach you how to evaluate claims about human behavior that you encounter in everyday life. As we go throughout the semester, we will have many opportunities to go from a claim you hear in the media, such as "Violent television increases violent behavior" to peer-reviewed research article on this topic. For your final project, your Team will choose one of these claims and evaluate at least four articles for evidence that supports or contradicts the claim. Your team will make a brief presentation about your findings in the last few days of class. More information on this project can be found on Sakai. This final project (both the verbal presentation and the part you turn in) will be worth **9%** of your grade. Some class time will be provided for working on your project, and you must approve the topic with me.

5. **Be a research subject.** The Psychology Department has stipulated that students in Research Methods should understand real research studies by participating in them. Thus, you will need to participate in 3 hours of experiments. If you show up promptly to the first 2 hours, then you will automatically receive credit for the third hour. This will be **5%** of your grade. Instructions are posted on Sakai in the "General Course Resources" section.

Grade Breakdown

Grades will be calculated with the following breakdown:

Reading quizzes	10 %
Team participation - 1st half	13 %
Team participation - 2nd half	13 %
Team performance	25 %
Quizzes	15%
Final Exam	10%
Final project (Team-based)	9%
Participate in Research Study	5%