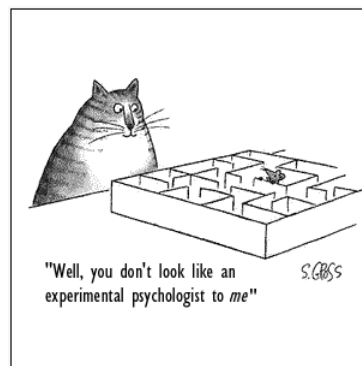


Directed Readings

PSYC 484

Fall 2009

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WF 10:10 to 11:30
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Course Description:

As a first course in a series of two, the Directed Readings seminar is designed to prepare students for the senior thesis capstone course PSYC 485. In collaboration with a faculty mentor, the student will develop an idea for an original research project, conduct a review of the relevant literature, and generate an appropriate research design. The final product of the class will be an APA format paper describing the final design. Prerequisites: PSYC 251 and senior standing.



Required texts and reserve articles:

American Psychological Association (2009). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th edition). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

American Psychological Association (2002). *Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association. (download from APA Web site <http://www.apa.org/ethics/>)

Mitchell, M. L., Jolley, J. M., & O'Shea, R. P. (2004). *Writing for psychology*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning.

Psychology Department Participant Pool Policies and Procedures (rev 08-01-2008). Download from <http://www.shepherd.edu/psychweb/participation.html>



Tentative Semester Schedule:

Week	Date	Topic	Readings	Assignments
1	08/17	Syllabus		
2	08/24	Choosing a topic		Topic paragraph due via email by 12:00 noon Friday 08/28
3	08/31	Searching the literature		
4	09/07			
5	09/14	APA Format: General issues, title page and abstract	APA Manual, Mitchell et al. book	Reading log
6	09/21	APA format: Introduction section		
7	09/28	APA format: Methods section		
8	10/05	APA format: Results section		Reading log
9	10/12	First day of fall break		
10	10/19	APA format: Discussion section		
11	10/26	APA format: Reference list		Reading log
12	11/02	APA format: Tables and Figures		
13	11/09	Research Ethics	APA Guidelines	Preliminary draft due
14	11/16	Research Ethics	APA Guidelines	IRB forms due
15	11/30	Student presentations		Final draft of proposal
	12/07	Student presentations		



Research Proposal:

One of the goals of the psychology program at Shepherd is to expose the student to the nature of scientific explanation and scientific research within psychology. The best way for a student to demonstrate an understanding of the science of psychology is to conduct a research project. Therefore, the major assignment in this class is the development of a research proposal which you will then implement in PSYC 485 Senior Thesis.

The project you develop should be novel and designed to add to the body of psychological literature. It should not, therefore, be a simple replication of a previous study. Nor should it be largely a replication with a simple demographic variable added. Your goals are to demonstrate 1) your knowledge of a specific area of psychology, 2) your ability to ask meaningful questions in that area, and 3) your ability to design a methodology to answer those questions. This does not mean that you must propose to work on a completely novel topic, only that your specific proposal must be unique. It also means that you must do a thorough review of the professional literature on your topic (see Reading Log below).

The final product of this process will be a written proposal in APA format. We will be covering APA format as part of the course. Your paper should include the following sections: Title page, Abstract, Introduction, Methods, Results¹, and References. The project you design should:

- Be meaningful as outlined above
- Be of sound scientific design
- Conform to APA Ethical guidelines
- Be realistic. Your project should be within your means. Don't propose to do CAT scans of 100 schizophrenic patients if you don't have access to the technology or the sample.

¹ In your paper for this class the results section will not actually contain results. Instead it will contain your statistical analysis plan as discussed in class.

Many of the course assignments relate directly to the development of your proposal. These are:

Topic paragraph

The first step in developing your project is to choose a topic. A common mistake among first-time researchers is to begin by trying to think of a procedure. Developing a procedure should come much later in the process and the procedure should be designed to address a specific research question. The only way to know what questions have been answered and which have not is to review the literature and to review the literature you need to know what topic to review. So, you need to select a topic first thing.

Selecting a topic may seem overwhelming, but think about what brought you into psychology in the first place. What was so interesting to you that you decided to be a psychologist? That's a potential topic. Or, think about other psychology courses you've taken – what most interested you there? Once you've decided on a potential topic, I want you to submit a paragraph that identifies your potential topic and why you selected it. If you have some questions that you want to ask about that topic (potential research questions), include those as well. Your paragraph should be typed in 12 point font and turned in to me as a Word document via email before the due date and time listed above.

Please remember that this is a science class. Your topic must, therefore, fall within the purview of science. Topics that do not or theories that have been disconfirmed (e.g., orgone theory, extrasensory perception, Freudian dream interpretation) will not be approved as topics.

Reading log

The next step in the process is to become familiar with the literature. There are several purposes for this. The most obvious is to avoid reinventing the wheel – why design a project to answer a question that has already been answered? So, the first purpose for reviewing the literature is to learn what has already been done and what we already know about your topic of interest. A second purpose is to familiarize yourself with the methods commonly used in your area of interest. The various subfields of psychology often use very different methods and a review of the literature will help you identify the particular methods and measures used in your subfield. A third reason for reading the literature is to learn to write like a psychologist. By immersing yourself in the literature you will become familiar with the tone and style of APA papers and you'll learn which details are important to include and which are not.

We will cover how to conduct a literature search in class, but I want to emphasize one point here. ***Google is not particularly helpful in this type of search.*** You want to search the professional literature in psychology and to do that you should use APA's PsycInfo database². PsycInfo indexes hundreds of psychology journals back to 1887 and is the professional's tool of choice for reviewing the literature.

You will keep a reading log as you conduct your literature search. Your log should be kept in a 3 ring binder (use the kind with 1" rings). For each article you read you should put into your log a typed entry that includes the date, the APA style citation for that article, your notes on the article, and a copy of the first page of the article. Your notes should include information on the major findings, methods, and measures from the study as well as your evaluation of the article's strengths and weaknesses. Your evaluation should be based on knowledge you've gained from other classes about what constitutes good research. You will be turning in your log three times throughout the semester. See the schedule above for the due dates. The entries for each due date should be clearly separated from previous entries. You should plan to have a minimum of 12 new entries each time your log is due. A sample log entry is provided on page 7 of this syllabus.

² Depending on your topic, other databases may also be appropriate. For instance, someone researching a topic in education may wish to consult the ERIC database.

In your final paper you must cite a minimum of 35 references. Be aware that you will have to read more than that in order to get 35 that you can weave into a coherent narrative. Also be aware that an article that seems relevant at the beginning of the semester may become irrelevant by the end. Plan for that. Also plan for the fact that you will most likely have to order a substantial number of articles through interlibrary loan (ILL) and that it may take several weeks for those sources to arrive. *Waiting for ILL articles is not an excuse to have fewer than 12 entries in your reading log when it is due.* Finally, the bulk of your references (90% or more) should be primary sources – original reports of research published in reputable psychology journals. You may use a small number of secondary sources – essentially textbooks or other scholarly books that describe primary sources – but the majority of your references should be primary sources. Avoid sources from the Web (with the exception of reputable sites such as the APA or NIMH) and sources from the popular media (such as *Newsweek* or *Psychology Today*).

Preliminary draft of proposal

In the 13th week of class you will submit a preliminary draft of your proposal. This draft should conform to APA format requirements and should be as complete as possible. Your Introduction section should be in near final form for this draft and you should have a good idea what your methods will be. Your paper should, therefore, include *all* of the sections specified above (see also the Proposal Evaluation Form attached on page 10 of this syllabus). I would like to note that while this is the first draft that you will turn in to me, *it should not be the first draft that you write.* You should do substantial revision and polishing before you turn your paper in to me (note the quality standards below).

Proposal presentations

In the last two weeks of class you will do a short presentation of your proposal. In this presentation you should cover your research question/hypothesis, your planned sampling method, any tests, apparatus, surveys, etc. you plan to use, your procedure, and how you plan to analyze your data. Your presentation should focus on your research question and methods. It should not be primarily a review of the literature. We will have PowerPoint available for these presentations; you should plan on using it.

Final draft

Your final draft is due Monday, November 30. This final draft of your proposal should describe a complete research design. The literature review should be as thorough as possible, all tests and measures should be identified³, all variables should be operationally defined, and the procedure should be described in detail. This paper should also conform to APA format requirements. Your paper must include all of the sections specified above (see also the Proposal Evaluation Form attached to this syllabus as page 10). Keep in mind that you are writing now as a professional. This paper should be your most polished writing. See also the submission and quality standards below. You may also wish to examine the scoring rubric I will use when grading your proposals; it is included as page 10 of this syllabus.

You should turn in with your *final draft* copies of the checklists at the end of chapters 3, 6, and 7 in the Mitchell et al. book. You should complete these checklists as part of your review of your draft before submission to help insure that you meet the quality standards.

Please note the introduction page length (12 to 15 pages) and number of reference (35) requirements. These are the minimums acceptable: failure to meet either will result in a grade of 0 for the paper.

³ If you are creating your own measure a draft of that measure should be included.

Submission guidelines for papers

Both drafts of your paper (the preliminary draft and the final draft) should be printed in black ink using Times New Roman (or an equivalent serif font) sized at 12 points. They should be printed on plain white paper with no printing on the reverse side. Use 1 inch margins on all sides as specified by APA format. Use either a paper clip or a binder clip to hold together the pages of each copy. Do not staple your papers or use folders or plastic report covers.

Quality Standards for papers

The overall goal of APA format is the clear, concise communication of ideas. Therefore, your papers should be the best writing you can produce. They should be thoroughly proof-read and spellchecked prior to submission. For these papers I will be using a “three strikes, you’re out” policy. I understand that mistakes happen, but the purpose of proof-reading is to catch and eliminate them. Therefore, I will not accept more than three spelling and/or grammar errors. If I find more than three errors I will stop reading your paper and assign it a number of points equal to 30% of the total points for that paper.



APA Format:

We will be covering APA format in some detail in this class and many of the sections of an APA-style paper are addressed in the Mitchell et al text. Please bear in mind that one of the main goals of APA format is the clear, concise communication of your ideas. As a result, not only will you need to focus on the specifics of the format (margins, headings, etc.), you will also need to pay special attention to grammar, spelling, and style. Keep in mind that your final paper for this class will not include all of the sections of a final paper and that the contents of the results section are modified for this class.



IRB Forms:

Your proposed project must conform to the APA Ethics guidelines for conducting psychological research. One of the APA requirements is that projects be approved by your institution’s Institutional Review Board (IRB) before the work begins. So, you will be submitting the forms requesting IRB review in the 13th week of class. We will cover the APA guidelines and how to complete the forms in class before your applications are due. A complete IRB packet consists of the following items: a completed IRB application, a consent form, a debriefing form, and a Research Design summary. These forms are all available via the course Sakai site. Further, if you plan to draw your sample from the Psychology Department Participant Pool, you must include a copy of the required Participant Pool forms. These forms include the Request to Use the Participant Pool form, a study protocol, and a second complete copy of your IRB forms. You will not receive credit for this assignment until you receive approval for your project, which may require revisions.



Course grade:

There are a total of 100 points that can be earned in this class. Your topic paragraph is worth 5 points. Your reading log will be due 3 times, each time is worth 10 points for a total of 30 points. Your preliminary draft is worth 15 points and your presentation 10. Your approved IRB forms are worth 5 points. The final draft of your paper is worth 35 points. Your final grade for the course will be based on the total number of points you earn. Specifically, the values are 90-100 = A, 80-89 = B, 70-79 = C, 60-69 = D, below 60 = F.



Mobile Phone Policy:

Cognitive psychology has taught us that learning requires the allocation of attention to the to-be-remembered material and that dividing attention among two or more attention-demanding tasks decreases performance on all of the tasks. Using a mobile phone to engage in any kind of communication is an attention-demanding task and disrupts the classroom learning environment. The Student Handbook prohibits activities that are disruptive in the classroom, therefore use of mobile phones in this class is prohibited. You must turn off your phone when entering the classroom. If you engage in mobile phone use while in class you will lose points equal to 20% of your final course grade per occurrence. If you are concerned about receiving RAVE alerts, I am subscribed to the system and will bring my phone to class. If my phone rings during class time for anything other than a RAVE alert I will award everyone in class that day extra credit points worth 5% of the final course grade.

Attendance:

This class meets Monday from 11:10 – 12:00. Regular attendance is extremely important as we work on developing your final proposals. While there are no specific penalties for not attending class, **you** are responsible for information missed during an absence from class and you are responsible for arranging to make up missed material (see page 51 of the University Catalog and the Late Work Policy below).



Late Work Policy:

Please note: I expect, perhaps as a result of my management background, your best performance on exams and things turned in when they're due. I'll help you prepare for your assignments as much as possible before they're due, but when the time comes, I expect you to be prepared. All assignments have a due date and I **will not** accept late work without prior arrangements. If you know in advance about any situation that would interfere with your ability to meet a deadline (e.g., excused sporting or other campus events, scheduled business travel), see me as soon as possible *before* the deadline. Provided that we discuss it in advance I will be willing to move deadlines slightly to accommodate legitimate needs. If something unforeseeable comes up on the day an assignment is due (e.g., a medical emergency, death in the family), please contact me as soon as possible after the incident to discuss possible rescheduling options. Be aware that I will require you to document the cause of any unforeseen rescheduling of assignments.



Academic Integrity Policy:

From the 2009-2011 University Catalog, page 56:

Cheating in all its forms, including plagiarism and cheating on visual work, is considered an academic matter to be controlled and acted upon by the individual faculty member.

Students guilty of academic dishonesty on examinations in any course shall receive, as minimum penalty, a grade of F in that course. Such action shall be taken by the instructor, with written notification to the appropriate College administrators. Repeated offenses shall subject the student to suspension or dismissal from the college. Students involved in facilitating the academic dishonesty among others, such as the unauthorized dissemination of examination materials, will be subject to

disciplinary action beyond that called for by their own cheating in the course.

In writing papers, avoid plagiarism. Plagiarism is defined as “the act of stealing and using, as one’s own, the ideas, or the expression of the ideas of another.” This includes not only direct copying of the exact words another author used, but paraphrases of the ideas of another author without properly crediting the original. *If you plagiarize in this class you will fail the class.*



Communication:

My intent is to be as accessible to you as possible. Please feel free to stop by my office any time. I’m available by phone whenever I’m in my office and you can leave voice mail if I’m not. If you need quicker response times (especially on weekends), use email. I usually check my email several times each day, even on weekends. Finally, check both the course Sakai site (at <http://courses.shepherd.edu/xsl-portal>) and the course Web page (available off of my page) – both are meant to be resources to help you complete your projects.

NOTICE Email policy

Please be aware that I will not discuss official business (e.g., coursework, course grades, academic advising, etc.) via email unless you use your Shepherd email address. This is mostly for the protection of your privacy. If, for instance, I get an email signed Mary Smith requesting sensitive information about her progress in my class, but it comes from hotgurl46@aol.com, I have no way of knowing whether it is really from Mary Smith or someone else.

Sample Log Entry

Date: January 5, 2007

Citation:

Logie, R. H. & Baddeley, A. D. (1987). Cognitive processes in counting. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Learning, Memory, and Cognition*, 13, 310-326.

Notes:

This paper reports the results of 5 experiments that investigated the effects of articulatory suppression and unattended speech on counting. While there were some small effects of unattended speech on counting (especially when the unattended speech was strings of random digits), the major finding was that articulatory suppression caused significant disruptions in counting. Overall, Logie and Baddeley conclude that their results support the idea that counting involves both the subvocalization of the current count and priming of recently accessed numbers (compare this to Baddeley's later work suggesting that the recency effect is a kind of priming).

Of particular importance to my project is the second experiment. In that experiment, participants were counting sequences of squares that appeared on a computer monitor. There were two IV's: the number of squares to be counted and the condition under which the participant was counting. The three conditions were control (counting only), tapping (counting while tapping with a finger), and suppression (counting while saying the word "the" aloud). The dependent variable was the number of counting errors made. Logie and Baddeley made it more difficult for participants to fall into a rhythm by varying the interstimulus interval randomly from 400 to 900 ms. They also controlled for...

You would continue your detailed notes on the experiment here. Keep in mind that your notes should include information on the study's methods – including sample size, measures, and procedures – as well as the author's theories and findings. While there is no specific page requirement per entry, given the information that should be in your notes a one page (or less than one page) entry is not going to be sufficient.

Example Table for Participants Subsection

(Required per Evaluation Form below)

Table 1. Studies that justify the sample size selected

Study	Sample Size
Mitchell, Kobluk, and Frazier (1964)	34
Denver, Kobluk, and Frazier (1965)	41
Hassilev, Gottlieb, and Yarbrough (1961)	37
Grammer, Hassilev, and Gottlieb (1986)	54
Griffith (1991)	34
Griffith (2002)	62
Wolfe (1989)	48
Wolfe (1990)	44
Buskin and Batteau (1987)	35
Rush (2003)	61
Romanoff, Romanoff, and Rowe (1989)	70
Rogers (1986)	55
Total	575
Average	67

Psychology Research Proposal Evaluation Form

I. Title Page (1 point)..... _____
____ Contains all required elements
____ Title summarizes main idea simply and with style

II. Abstract (2 points)..... _____
____ Coherent and readable
____ Summarizes paper accurately

III. Introduction (10 points)..... _____
____ Coherent and readable
____ Follows correct citation style
____ Literature review thorough
____ Length appropriate (12-15 pages)
____ Introduction builds logically to the hypothesis
____ Statement of the hypothesis/research question is clear

IV. Methods/Participants (4 points)..... _____
____ Coherent and readable
____ Sample selection appropriate to research question
____ Sample size appropriate (include Table for justification) and attainable

V. Methods/Materials/Apparatus (5 points)..... _____
____ Coherent and readable
____ Appropriate to research question
____ Reliability and validity considered for all measures

VI. Methods/Procedure (5 points)..... _____
____ Coherent and readable
____ Procedure appropriate to research question
____ Obvious confounds or flaws discussed and controlled

VII. Results (3 points)..... _____
____ Coherent and readable
____ All appropriate questions from checklist considered
____ Proposed statistics appropriate for research design

VIII. References (5 points)..... _____
____ Reference list in correct format
____ Reference list matches text citations
____ Appropriate number of references (35 or more)
____ Appropriate quality of references (most from peer-reviewed journals)

Total (of 35 points)..... _____