Research Methods
Psyc/Soc 205 Course Syllabus

Team teaching Research Methods will be Professors Robert Kelley (lecture portion) and Barbara McPherson (lab portion). The lecture portion is offered online, with the lab portion meeting two hours a week on campus.

Professor Contact Information

Professor: Robert Kelley, Ph.D.
Email: rkelley@miracosta.edu
Voice Mail: 760-757-2121 (ext. 6262)
Office hours: Monday, Oceanside Campus, room 3110, 3:30pm - 4:30pm
Tuesday & Thursday, Oceanside Campus, room 3110, 2:45pm - 3:15pm
Or by Appointment

Professor: Barbara McPherson, M.A.
Email: bmcperson@miracosta.edu
Voice Mail: 760-757-2121 ext. 6549
Office hours: By Appointment

Course Information

Course Web Site: blackboard.miracosta.edu
Lab Meeting: Mondays, 2:00pm - 3:45pm, room 4607, Oceanside Campus

Course Description: An introductory course in the common methodologies employed in conducting research in the Behavioral Sciences. This course emphasizes an appreciation of scientific method, development of research skills, and evaluation of the research of others. Students will participate in designing and conducting experiments, analyzing and interpreting data, and preparing an APA format research report. Not open to students with credit in PSYC 205/SOC 205. Three (3) units.

Prerequisites: Psychology 100 or Psychology 101 or Sociology 101; Psychology 104 or Sociology 104; ENGL 100 (courses completed with a “C” or better).

Important Course Dates for Fall 2009

August 24th: First day of class
August 29th: Last day to add this class
September 5th: Last day to drop the class without receiving a “W”
Last day to drop the class with full refund
Financial Aid drop deadline
November 20th: Last day to drop class with a “W” on transcript
December 14th (Monday): Final Exam from 2:30pm - 4:30pm, in OC4607
Course Materials, Supplies, and Fees


3. Students will need to have regular and frequent access to internet connected computers (e.g., with the ability to display Adobe Acrobat ver. 9.0, files and images, play audio and video files; use Blackboard, flash, etc.).

4. Headphones to plug into computer – for use in computer lab

5. 2 or 3 inch binder; will need to purchase two poster boards (approximately 3’ x 4’).

6. One Print Card (at least a $10.00 one)

7. Supplentary materials may include selected articles, book excerpts, and handouts.

Student Learning Outcomes

A. Read, summarize and evaluate peer reviewed scientific articles

B. Develop a research design to evaluate a hypothesis

C. Communicate background, results and implications of research using APA style

Course Objectives: Upon successful completion of research methods, the student will be able to:

1. Compare and contrast different research methods and sampling techniques.

2. Explain how controls are used to reduce threats to internal validity, external validity, and measurement validity.

3. Discuss the characteristics and benefits of the scientific method, and explain the logic behind hypothesis testing.

4. Design and conduct empirical research project(s).

5. Utilize library research and evaluate the reliability of sources.

6. Critically read, extract information, evaluate, and summarize research in Behavioral Sciences.

7. Analyze research data using a statistical package, demonstrating knowledge of statistics by selecting the appropriate descriptive statistics, inferential statistics, graphs, and tables to evaluate, explore, and communicate findings.

8. Write college-level scientific research papers using American Psychology Association writing style (e.g., abstract, introduction, methods, participants, materials, procedure, results, discussion, reference section). Students shall write essays, sections of an APA paper, and write one or more APA style research papers (for a total of 5,000 - 7,000 evaluated words).

9. Explain ethical issues pertaining to behavioral science research with animal and human subjects.

Course Format and Requirements

Commitment to Learning the Material: The general rule of thumb is that for every hour of lecture, there are two hours of homework outside of class (e.g., reading, homework, etc.). With three hours of lecture online, that represents a commitment on your part to nine hours a week for the lecture portion of the course (3 hours lecture + 6 hours homework).

The two hours of lab each week are primarily for students to consult with the instructor, work on their research projects, and apply statistical software (SPSS) for data analysis.

Online Discussions & Critical Thinking: There will be six asynchronous (i.e., discussion board) discussions. One of the discussions is optional, and worth five points of extra credit. The other five discussions are each worth ten points and graded pass/fail (for a total of 50 points). Each of these graded discussions takes place over two weeks, and provides an opportunity for students to learn and share with one another. Students who participate fully (i.e.,
earning at least an 8/10) in all five of these graded discussions will receive a 5 point bonus at the end of the semester.

**Online Quizzes:** There will be 12 online quizzes during the semester (each worth five points; for a total of 60 points). Quizzes will be based on appropriate reading assignments and lecture material.

**Online Class Activities:** There will be 12 short lecture activities (each worth five points, for a total of 60 points). The lecture activities provide an opportunity for critical thinking and application.

**Proctored Exams:** There will be two exams each worth 80 points (for a total of 160 points). The exams are to be taken at the Academic Proctoring Center (locations at Oceanside and San Elijo campus). There will be a one week window for students to take the exam. The exams will cover lecture material, the textbook (Graziano & Raulin), and supplemental reading.

**Final Exam:** The final Exam is worth 100 points, and is comprehensive. The final will be taken during finals week, 2:30pm - 4:30pm, in OC4612

**SPSS assignments:** There will be twelve SPSS lab assignments (each worth five points; for a total of 60 points). Students will have lab time to complete the SPSS lab assignments.

**Project Notebook:** The project notebook is worth 100 points (25 points for units 1 & 3; 50 points for unit 2). It includes all of your literature reviews, annotated bibliographies, data analyses, research notes, proposals and rough drafts (e.g., introduction, methods, final papers). The notebook will be due at the same time each unit project is due.

**Research Projects:** Every student (working within a group of 3 members) will design and conduct 3 research projects. For each research project, a written report must be submitted. **Project 1** - The mini research paper is worth 25 points. **The deadline for the project 1 is Monday, September 28, 2009, at start of lab.** **Project 2** - The APA paper is worth 50 points. **The deadline for the project 2 is Monday, November 9, 2009, at start of lab.** **Project 3** - The APA poster is worth 50 points. **The deadline for the project 3 is Monday, November 30, 2009, at start of lab.** Any project received after its due date will receive severe point reductions.

**Research Presentation:** Students will present two posters in the lab; unit 3's poster and then your choice of either unit 1 or unit 2 research findings. The development of the second poster, and presentation of both posters is worth a total of 25 points. The presentation is made using a large poster board (approximately 3’ x 4’). Presentations may be video recorded and/or pictures taken. Videos and/or pictures may be posted in Blackboard. Pictures may be presented publically on the MiraCosta website or in the school newspaper.

**Extra Credit:** Some avenues of extra credit will be available. Students may earn up to a maximum of 15 points of extra credit.

**Course Policies and Procedures**

1. **Academic Honesty:** Cheating and/or plagiarism (using the work or ideas of another as your own) are unacceptable academic behaviors. The student who violates academic honesty will fail the test or assignment. In addition, all students who violate academic honesty will have their name forwarded to the Vice President of Student Affairs.

2. **Class Involvement/Drop Policy:** Students are expected to read the course material, actively participate in discussions, complete assignments and homework activities, and take the quizzes and exams. Students that
miss either two lab meetings or go longer than 7 days without checking into Blackboard may be dropped from the course.

3. **Grading Policy:** Grades are computed on a percentage basis (90%=A, 80%=B, 70%=C, 60%=D, <60%=F).
   
   There are a total of 750 points. Without any curve, the grade cut-offs would be as follows:
   
   - **Course Grade:** A: 675 points, B: 600 points, C: 525 points, D: 450 points
   
   At the decision of the instructor, a curve may be applied (but only if it will benefit the students).
   
   **Pass/No Pass:** Student may petition Admissions and Records to receive a Pass/No Pass in place of a letter grade, but are recommended to first consult with their academic counselor (by the deadline).
   
   Minimum points needed to earn a 'Pass' is **547 points** (note: for letter grades, a C- becomes a C, so the letter grade C actually requires fewer points than earning a 'Pass')
   
   **Incomplete:** Students seeking an "I" (incomplete) must file a petition, with their instructors citing "unforeseeable, emergency and justifiable" reasons. The deadline to do so is **December 7, 2009**.
   
   **Withdrawal:** Withdrawing from the course is ultimately the student's responsibility. If you stop attending, you must go to Admissions & Records (by the specified deadline) and drop the course or you may receive an "F" at the end of the semester.
   
   **Blackboard:** Blackboard does not keep an accurate count of the total points possible. It excludes from the total points possible any tests/assignments that you did not complete. **There is a total of 750 points.**

4. **Student services:** A student with a verified disability may be entitled to appropriate academic accommodations. If you have a disability and believe that you will need accommodations, you are encouraged to contact both your instructor and/or the Disabled Students Program & Services Office (760-795-6658).

5. **Course Conduct:** Students are to practice courtesy and common sense. Students that demonstrate non-courteous behavior (either in the lab or online) will receive a warning describing the violation. The student must respond to the warning with an acknowledgement of the violation and a statement of future compliance to appropriate behavior. If there is a repeat violation, the student's access to the course will be denied and student will no longer be able to attend the lab sessions until he or she meets with the Vice President of Student Services. The student will receive an email notification of the violation and the review proceedings. Then the student may be given the option to drop the course or to agree to comply with the rules of conduct. The student will not be re-admitted into the class until the instructor receives a written statement of re-admittance from the Vice President of Student Services. Continued violations and disturbances will result in the student's dismissal from the course.
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<tr>
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<th>Lab Activities</th>
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<td><em>Research Methods: A Process of Inquiry</em></td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>Mon 8/24 Scientific Method (Ch 1) Basic Assumptions (Ch 2)</td>
<td>Quiz &amp; Activity</td>
<td>A) Welcome to the Research Process B) Google Docs for Collaboration</td>
<td>SPSS Project #1.1 (Develop a Hypothesis)</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Mon 8/31 Developing Research Ideas &amp; Ethics (Ch 3) Data and Measurement (Ch 4)</td>
<td>Quiz, Activity &amp; Discussion</td>
<td>A) Developing a Questionnaire B) Writing the Introduction &amp; Methods</td>
<td>SPSS Project #1.2 (Intro &amp; Methods Draft)</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Mon 9/7 Correlational Methods of Research (Ch 7) <em>Take the Class Developed Questionnaire</em> and e-mail the questionnaire to friends</td>
<td>Quiz, Activity, Discussion</td>
<td>- No Lab Meeting -</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Mon 9/14 Hypothesis Testing (Ch 8)</td>
<td>Quiz, Activity &amp; Discussion</td>
<td>A) Analyzing Class Data for Correlation Between Happiness &amp; __________.</td>
<td>SPSS Project #1.3 (Results, Discussion, References Draft)</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Mon 9/21 APA Empirical Research Reports</td>
<td>Exam 1: Ch. 1-4, 7, &amp; 8 due by Friday</td>
<td>A) Peer evaluation &amp; feedback on draft B) Make corrections</td>
<td>SPSS Project #1.4 (Mini APA Paper Due beginning of lab on 9/28)</td>
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* Exam #1 is due by Friday, 9/25  
Students will have one week to take the exam at the academic proctoring center (which has locations at Oceanside and San Elijo; with morning, afternoon, and evening hours)

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<td>6</td>
<td>Mon 9/28 Sampling Assignment and Validity (Ch 9) &amp; Surveys (Ch 13)</td>
<td>Quiz, Activity &amp; Discussion</td>
<td>A) Literature search for units 2 and 3 B) Order articles through Inter-Library Loan.</td>
<td>Project #2.1 (Develop a Hypothesis)</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Mon 10/5 Statistical Analysis of Data (Ch 5)</td>
<td>Quiz, Activity &amp; Discussion</td>
<td>A) Survey the Literature B) Annotated Bibliography</td>
<td>SPSS Project #2.2 (Annotated Bibliography)</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Mon 10/12 Independent Group Design (Ch 10)</td>
<td>Quiz, Activity &amp; Discussion</td>
<td>A) Begin APA proposal B) Collect data</td>
<td>SPSS Project #2.3 (Proposal draft)</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Mon 10/19 Correlated Group Design (Ch 11)</td>
<td>Quiz, Activity &amp; Discussion</td>
<td>A) Cont. proposal B) Enter data and run statistics</td>
<td>SPSS Project #2.4 (Cont. proposal)</td>
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| 10   | Research Project               |                  | A) Enter data and run statistics  
B) Write APA paper (draft) | SPSS Project #2.5 (convert proposal to paper) |
| 11   | Factorial Design (Ch 12)       | Quiz, Activity & Discussion | A) Peer evaluation & feedback on draft  
B) Make corrections | SPSS Project #2.6 (APA paper due beginning of lab on 11/9) |

* Exam #2 is due by Thursday, 11/12
  Students will have Monday-Thursday to take the exam at the academic proctoring center (which has locations at Oceanside and San Elijo; with morning, afternoon, and evening hours)

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| 12   | Introduction to Content Analysis | Exam 2: Ch 5, 9,  
10, 11, & 13 | A) Surveying the Literature | Project #3.1 (Develop Hypothesis) |
| 13   | Low Constraint Research (Ch 6)  
Inter-rater reliability (p. 87 and p.201) | Quiz, Activity & Discussion | A) Collecting data | SPSS Project #3.2 (Annotated Bibliography) |
| 14   | Differential Research Design (Ch 7) | Quiz, Activity & Discussion | A) Enter data and run statistics  
B) Make poster | Project #3.3 (APA poster) |
| 15   | How to Present Empirical Research using APA guidelines. | Quiz, Activity & Discussion | A) Enter data and run statistics  
B) Make poster(s) | Finalizing Research Fair Projects |
| 16   | Research Project               |                  | Session 1  
Break  
Session 2 | Research Fair |

The schedule is tentative, and may be revised.

** Final Exam is Monday, December 14, 2:30 to 4:30, in OC4607