

PSYCH 63: EXPERIMENTAL STUDY OF SOCIAL BEHAVIOR

Fall 2011
Moore 303
MWF 11:15 am – 12:20 pm

Catherine J. Norris
Moore 356
catherine.j.norris@dartmouth.edu
(603) 646-3123
Office Hours: Mon 9 – 11 am

Sarah Henderson
Moore 145
sarah.e.henderson@dartmouth.edu
(603) 646-0446
Office Hours: Wed 2 – 4 pm

This course deals with the ways in which social psychologists collect data to answer questions about social motivation, social perception, and interpersonal behavior. Theoretical issues and methodological problems are dealt with in class discussions, laboratories, and small group research projects on selected topics.

Required Reading

All readings will be posted on Blackboard.

Assignments and Evaluation

Assignment 1: Annotated Bibliography	10%	Due September 30
Assignment 2: Individual Research Proposal	10%	Due October 7
Midterm Exam	25%	In Class October 14
Assignment 3: Group Research Proposal (IRB)	10%	Due October 28
Participation & Group Presentation	10%	
Final Project – Experiment Report	35%	Due December 7

Assignment 1. Choose one of the four topics we discuss in class (or seek permission if you wish to consider an alternative topic). Conduct an electronic literature search using available resources. Choose 5 of the most relevant articles and find them in the library or online. [Note: Do NOT disregard sources that are not online; many classic papers were written before the existence of the internet!] Provide an annotated bibliography of those articles. An annotated bibliography means that you provide a very brief (75-125 words) summary of each article that is similar in length to the abstract but represents your evaluative judgment and summary of the paper. Write a brief (2 page) paper that discusses how the studies test or examine the psychological construct under consideration. Assignment 1 is due September 30 by 4 pm (blitz both Sarah and me).

Assignment 2. Choose from among the four general topics and design a study that tests a hypothesis related to your chosen topic. Readings will be available for each topic and we will discuss them in class. You will write a research proposal on your topic. This proposal should be about 5-6 pages long. It should review recent and relevant research on your selected topic (2-3 pages), present what you consider to be reasonable empirical hypotheses, and propose at least two experimental designs for pursuing your research questions (1 page each, describing the methods, predicted results, and interpretation). This is an independent project; you should not discuss your proposal with other class members. Assignment 2 is due October 7 by 4 pm (blitz both Sarah and me).

The Research Project

In class on October 19 Sarah and I will organize the class into groups based on student interests. It is anticipated that there will be 3-4 groups, depending on course enrollment. It will be the task of each group to jointly design, conduct, analyze, and orally report the results of an experiment on the chosen topic of interest (likely one of the four topics discussed in class). If a group seeks permission, they may design a study on a different topic; but permission must be sought as early as possible. It is expected that during this class meeting, as well as additional meetings as necessary, each group will come up with a general study idea and two experimental designs for testing it. This will involve deciding on hypotheses, a research design sufficient to test the hypotheses, and specific procedures and materials necessary to implement the design.

Group Design Meetings (Oct 24 – 26). Sarah and I will arrange 1-hour meetings with each group in which we will play the role of professional consultants. We will answer questions, make comments, and offer suggestions based on your own discussion. However, we will not tell you what to do and we will not make comments and suggestions that are independent from the group discussion (i.e., we will not take an active role in leading the group). We will make comments intended to push you to improve (or possibly rethink) your proposal. You are expected to have a general question, hypotheses, and at least **two** experimental designs prepared for your meeting, to be scheduled on Oct. 24 or 26. If necessary, additional meetings will be scheduled to finalize design issues. **All group members must attend meetings.**

Assignment 3. Each group will work together to write a research proposal following the format of an ethics proposal (the Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects [CPHS] forms will be available). Make sure to include your hypotheses, a research design, and a detailed description of your experimental procedures – this includes a formal description of the design in ANOVA format (i.e., your independent variables) and a list of dependent variable(s). Your group will complete all of the relevant sections of the IRB form. Assignment 3 is due October 28 by 4 pm (blitz both Sarah and me).

Project Execution. After you have decided on a design, Sarah and I will help you in every way possible to obtain materials and equipment that you deem necessary for your project. A word of caution: Do not become too dependent on sophisticated technology (e.g., computers, video cameras, psychophysiological measures). Keep in mind that many classic social psychology studies require no more than simple observation (and some method of quantification) of human behavior under experimentally-controlled conditions.

Materials should be prepared and brought to class on Friday, October 28; Sarah and I will review your materials and verify that you are prepared to begin your study. You will have the opportunity to pilot test your procedures on members of the class on October 31 and November 1 (**NOTE: X-Hour**). On November 2, each group will briefly present the design of their study to the class; you will only have 10 min to do this so please be succinct. These brief presentations will allow other members of the class to provide constructive feedback before you begin testing real participants.

Starting on November 2 you will have approximately 4 weeks to conduct your experiment and analyze and interpret your data. We will meet as a class only once a week during this period; however, Sarah and I are available at any time to discuss problems or concerns that arise. You have priority in our work schedules and should not feel bashful about stating your needs. In fact, I would be surprised to NOT meet with each group at least once during this period to discuss your progress. I will present workshops devoted to a variety of topics to help you analyze your data and write your final report.

Between November 21 – 23 Sarah and I will schedule meetings with each group to talk about data analysis. These are hands-on consultations, and each group should come prepared with what data they

have collected (preferably in Excel or SPSS). We will discuss your specific data analysis needs and perform initial analyses together.

We will meet again with groups on November 28 to talk about remaining issues. Your group should be ready to present your study in class on November 29 and 30 (**NOTE: X-Hour**). Presentations will be 15-20 minutes each; groups should plan on using Powerpoint to present hypotheses, design, data, and discussion. We will allow about 10 min for discussion following each presentation. Other members of the class are expected to provide constructive feedback and comments.

Participation & Group Presentation. Sarah and I will meet at the end of the course to discuss our impressions of the quality of each person's contributions to their group and to the class discussion more generally (10% of your final grade). We encourage each of you to let us know if members of your group have been unusually unhelpful in completing the project.

Final Research Report. You will submit a written report on your project by 4 pm on Wednesday December 7 (blitz both Sarah and me). Your report should be in journal format (abstract, introduction, methods, results, discussion, references). The method and results sections can be done in collaboration with the other members of your group or can be written individually. The abstract, introduction, and discussion sections must be written by you alone. These papers should be 10-15 pages long, excluding abstract and references. A suggested outline is as follows: Introduction (3-5 pages), Method (2-3 pages), Results (2-3 pages), Discussion (3-5 pages). The abstract is separate from this total and should be on a separate (single) page; references are also separate. In addition, you should present at least one table or figure to present your results graphically. Papers must be double-spaced with 1 inch margins and in a readable font (preferably 12 pt Times). The Final Research Report is worth 35% of your grade.

Other Policies

Attendance. It is assumed that you will attend and actively participate during all class sessions. If you must miss class for some reason, please notify me in advance. You are responsible for what transpires during class sessions whether you are there or not.

Cheating, Plagiarism, and Other Forms of Academic Dishonesty... will not be tolerated and are grounds for failing the course. In addition, those found to have engaged in academic dishonesty will be reported and are subject to penalties imposed by the college. This course adheres to the guidelines of Academic Honor published in the Dartmouth College Bulletin: Organization, Regulations and Courses, 2011-2012.

Classroom Respect. It should go without saying that you are expected to treat Sarah, myself, and your fellow classmates with respect at all times. Although you are not required to agree with all ideas expressed in the course, criticism should always be constructive.

Disabilities. Students with disabilities enrolled in this course and who may need disability-related classroom accommodations are encouraged to make an appointment to see me before the end of the second week of the term. All discussions will remain confidential, although the Student Accessibility Services office may be consulted to discuss appropriate implementation of any accommodation requested.

Laptops & Cell Phones. I expect you to pay attention and contribute during lectures – this means that you should NOT be checking email or Facebook, surfing the web, IMing or texting, etc. at any time during class. If I determine that laptops and/or cell phones are being abused, I will ban them.

Late Work. Late assignments without an official documented College excuse (health or family emergency) will be accepted but penalized by one letter grade (e.g., A to B) for every additional 24-hour period.

Course Schedule

- September 21 Intro
23 Review: Finding Research Ideas & Conducting a Literature Search (Sarah)
Readings: Hand-outs on Journals and Impact Factors

26 Research Design Review
Readings: Aronson, Wilson & Brewer (1998)
28 Attitudes & Persuasion
Readings: Festinger & Carlsmith (1959); Wells & Petty (1980); Jones & Sigall (1971)
30 Stereotyping & Prejudice
Readings: Bargh et al. (1996); Dovidio et al. (1997); Hebl et al. (2002)
***** Assignment 1 Due by 4 pm *****
- October 3 Emotion & Affect
Readings: Schachter & Singer (1962); Schwarz & Clore (1983); Gilbert et al. (1998)
5 Individual Differences & Personality
Readings: Schwartz et al. (1996); Gosling et al. (2003); Cacioppo & Petty (1982)
7 Remaining Issues
Readings: AECG Chapter 2
***** Assignment 2 Due by 4 pm *****

10 Ethics
Readings: AECG Chapter 3; Belmont Report (1979); Nuremberg Code; Beecher (1966)
12 Review Session
14 ***** EXAM *****

17 Overview: How to Design a Study (Sarah)
19 Group organization & Brainstorming
21 NO CLASS – Go Green!

24 – 26 Individual Group Meetings (1 Hour)
28 Bring your materials to class, be ready to conduct your experiment
***** Assignment 3 Due by 4 pm *****
- Oct 31 & Nov 1 Pilot studies using class members (**X-HOUR**)
November 2 10 min oral presentation of design; Data collection begins
4 NO CLASS/Consult with Sarah as needed

2 – 20 Collect Data

9 Statistics Review
16 Writing and Presenting Research Reports
Readings: Bem (2004)

21 – 23 Data Analysis Consultations by Appointment (1 Hour)

28 Group meetings by Appointment
29 & 30 Research Presentations (**X-HOUR**)
- December 7 ***** Written Research Report Due by 4 pm *****