Columbia University: Arts & Sciences
A&S Fall 2025 Standard Evaluation

Course: PSYCUN1495_001_2025_3 - Research Methods: Data Science, Justice,: PSYCW1495_001_2025_3_222735

Instructor: Benjamin Silver *

Response Rate: 6/11 (54.55 %)

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1 - What did you learn - in terms of knowledge, skills, or perspectives - in this course?The answer to this question will generally be available in Vergil.

Response Rate	3/11 (27.27%)

• I learned how to code in R. I learned different methods, theories, and perspectives regarding psychology research. The importance of ethical research, and a review of basic statistical concepts like linear regression models, t-tests and descriptive statistics in digestible and applied ways.

• This course strengthened my critical thinking skills, especially in evaluating assumptions and evidence. I learned how meaningful conclusions emerge from complex data and gained foundational skills in designing studies, operationalizing variables, and interpreting results. Overall, the course deepened my appreciation for the scientific process in psychology.

• I learned how to approach research more effectively, especially in crafting and structuring a research paper using data science methods. I also gained a clearer understanding of how quantitative tools can be used to address questions of justice, and I developed more confidence in reading research, analyzing data, and translating findings into meaningful arguments.

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2 - What percentage of the work (including reading) assigned for this course did you complete on schedule?

Response Option	Weight	Frequency	Percent	Percent Responses	Means
All or almost all	(1)	6	100.00%		
Most	(2)	0	0.00%		
Some	(3)	0	0.00%		
This question is not applicable	(4)	0	0.00%		
				0 25 50 100	
Response Rate					
6/11 (54.55%)					

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3 - What is your overall assessment of the course? What are its strengths? In what ways might it be improved? In answering this question, you might address the value of readings and assignments, the structure of the course (including the relationship of sections to lectures), the contribution of the course to your knowledge of the subject matter and to the development of your analytical and reasoning skills, etc. We encourage you to use specific examples where possible.

Response Rate	3/11 (27.27%)

• One of the best courses I've taken at Columbia. This course provides students with the opportunity to conduct research and learn real-world data science skills. The bridge between data science and psychology was particularly interesting for me alongside the major focus on justice and how policy has real-world impact. This class is very consistent and clear on criteria. The only thing I would say might need to change, is the research paper at the end. I'm not sure if a lot of students would find it useful to make a research paper, as opposed to only doing a presentation. I think the presentation is fine, and would nicely top off the course. However, the paper isn't an inherently bad aspect.

• I really enjoyed this course and found it to be one of the most well-structured and engaging classes I took this semester. The weekly organization of lectures, labs, and assignments made the workload manageable and supported steady skill development. The only challenge I encountered was learning R for the first time. Coming into the course with no prior coding experience made the initial lab somewhat intimidating. Perhaps a brief introductory document outlining basic functions, such as how to use visual mode, how to insert or restore a code chunk ({r}), and other foundational interface tips, would be very helpful for students new to R. Overall, the course was highly effective in strengthening my analytical skills and deepening my understanding of research methods, and I found it to be an excellent learning experience.

• This course was overall very strong. One of its greatest strengths was the way it connected data science tools to real issues in justice, which made the material feel meaningful and relevant.

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4 - What is your overall assessment of the course?The answer to this question will generally be available in Vergil.

Response Option	Weight	Frequency	Percent	Percent Responses	Means
Excellent	(5)	4	66.67%		4.67
Very Good	(4)	2	33.33%		
Good	(3)	0	0.00%		
Fair	(2)	0	0.00%		
Poor	(1)	0	0.00%		
				0 25 50 100	Question

Response Rate	Mean	STD	Median
6/11 (54.55%)	4.67	0.52	5.00

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5 - Would you recommend this course to another student?The answer to this question will generally be available in Vergil.

Response Option	Weight	Frequency	Percent	Percent Responses	Means
Definitely recommend	(1)	5	83.33%		
Probably recommend	(2)	1	16.67%		
I'm not sure I'd recommend	(3)	0	0.00%		
Probably not recommend	(4)	0	0.00%		
Definitely not recommend	(5)	0	0.00%		
				0 25 50 100	
Response Rate					
6/11 (54.55%)					

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6 - Please qualify your recommendations if you wish:The answer to this question will generally be available in Vergil.

Response Rate	3/11 (27.27%)

- Very fun, very rewarding, nice discussions about justice and data.

- Professor is very flexible and very easy to chat with. He is also very knowledgable of the subject, and eager to hear all thoughts in class participation.

- I would definitely recommend this course to students who want to strengthen both their research skills and their understanding of how data can illuminate issues related to justice

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7 - How does the workload in this course compare to Columbia courses with a similar structure (e.g. a lecture, seminar, laboratory, or language course)?The answer to this question will generally be available in Vergil.

Response Option	Weight	Frequency	Percent	Percent Responses	Means
Much heavier workload	(1)	2	33.33%		
Heavier workload	(2)	2	33.33%		
Similar workload	(3)	2	33.33%		
Lighter workload	(4)	0	0.00%		
Much lighter workload	(5)	0	0.00%		
No basis for comparison	(6)	0	0.00%		

Response Rate
6/11 (54.55%)

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8 - How many hours a week did you devote to this course? (Note: Please include all time spent on this class including class time, discussion sections, readings, assignments, studying, etc.)The answer to this question will generally be available in Vergil.

Response Rate	3/11 (27.27%)

- About 7 hours per week (including 4ish hours of class time). Greatly higher during final project.

- 8 (3 hours class time, lots of reading + reading assignments + lab assignments)

- On average, around 8–10 hours per week including class time, readings, assignments, and research work.

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9 - Please evaluate Benjamin Silver. What are Benjamin Silver's strengths? In what ways might their teaching be improved? In answering this question, you might address the clarity of the lectures or presentations and their relationship to the other elements of the course, the ability of Benjamin Silver to generate enthusiasm and facilitate discussion, the quality of feedback, availability, the timeliness of the return assignment, etc. -

Response Rate	5/11 (45.45%)

- Very good instructor. He's very knowledgable and practical. He's also charismatic and often uses his network to build upon our network by inviting guest speakers to give us their information as well. He's good at explaining things, in digestible ways, and is very kind and willing to help students outside of class. Discussions are well thought out, but facilitating the discussions might need work, but I don't think that's a reflection on Benjamin as an instructor, since despite people being low-energy he always tried his best to brighten our moods. Very high quality and consistent feedback.

- Professor Silver is an amazing professor. His teaching style is engaging and encouraging. He is extremely knowledgeable and helpful, providing interesting lectures, clear presentation slides, quick email replies, timely grading, etc. Highly recommend taking this class with him!

- Excellent teaching. Very patient and supportive. Also, very accessible. He is enthusiastic about the coursework. I would take another class with him as a professor.

- Ben is a wonderful instructor whose genuine intellectual curiosity and enthusiasm for the material make the course engaging while also fostering strong intellectual growth. He explains concepts with clarity, and his teaching reflects a clear commitment to helping students develop strong analytical and research skills. His lectures were consistently well-structured and accessible, even when covering complex methodological or statistical topics. I began the semester navigating several personal challenges, and attending his class quickly became a steady and motivating part of my week. His thoughtful approach to teaching and his consideration for students' circumstances had a notable impact on my experience in the course. Overall, his teaching transformed material I had anticipated would be difficult into something genuinely engaging and digestible.

- Professor Silver is extremely effective at explaining complex ideas in a clear and approachable way. His lectures were organized and connected well to the assignments, which made even challenging material feel manageable.

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10 - What is the overall teaching effectiveness of Benjamin Silver? -

Response Option	Weight	Frequency	Percent	Percent Responses	Means
Excellent	(5)	5	83.33%		4.83
Very Good	(4)	1	16.67%		
Good	(3)	0	0.00%		
Fair	(2)	0	0.00%		
Poor	(1)	0	0.00%		

Response Rate	Mean	STD	Median
6/11 (54.55%)	4.83	0.41	5.00

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11 - What are the strengths and weaknesses of (discussion section leader, lab section leader, grader) as an instructor, and how might 's teaching be improved?	
Response Rate	0/11 (0%)

12 - What is the overall teaching effectiveness of ?

Response Option	Weight	Frequency	Percent	Percent Responses				Means		
Excellent	(5)	0	0.00%							
Very Good	(4)	0	0.00%							
Good	(3)	0	0.00%							
Fair	(2)	0	0.00%							
Poor	(1)	0	0.00%					0.00		
				0	25	50	100	Question		

Response Rate	Mean	STD	Median
0/11 (0.00%)	0.00	0.00	0.00