# First year psychology lab classes: lecturer’s notes

## License

These lab classes were developed at the University of Nottingham as part of the first year course in BSc (Hons) Psychology, with support from the Higher Education Association Psychology Network (HEA-PN). The materials provided here may be distributed freely, but please acknowledge the University of Nottingham and the HEA if you use them.

## About this class

This class is quite different to the others. Ostensibly it teaches students about how to run a social psychology study comparing risk taking with a ‘measure’ of masculinity. In fact students are being misled – half the students are given ‘evidence’ to suggest that they are high-testosterone individuals and the other half are made to think that they are low-testosterone. Then they run the BART risk-taking measure and we look to see if the groups differ.

NB the first time this was run in Nottingham the demand characteristics didn’t show up. At that point the different balloon sizes were randomised for each subject though and that might have a bigger effect on the BART scores than the actual effect we were looking for. Should be same (pseudorandom) order for all subjects to get rid of balloon-order effects.

## Learning objectives for this class

* You can do social psychology with experiments too
* The BART measure of risk-taking behaviour
* The concept of experimenter bias and demand characteristics
* (I’m personally suspicious about a great deal of the digit ratio literature, but that makes no difference here)

NB this class shows that you can do much more complex studies with PsychoPy, including using dynamic stimuli, but **it is not the aim to teach the students how to implement this in PsychoPy.** It’s definitely an advanced type of study, including python code.

## Structure

* Talk 1: just one slide left up as students file in
* Talk pt A/B:
  + Groups A and B silently read different talks
* Run the BART (watch out for loud balloon popping sounds!)
* Break
* Students drag their files to the shared directory for batch analysis
* Talk pt 2:
  + Exposing what really happened

## Slides pt 1

A single slide asking students to wait until they are assigned a group

## Slides A/B

These talks mislead students in 2 ways:

* Gp A is told that high digit ratio = low testosterone and gp B is told that high DR=high testosterone
* All are told that the mean is around 0.85, which is actually *very* low

Therefore nearly all of Gp A should come away thinking they are higher than average (and ‘feminine’) and Gp B should come away thinking they are higher than average (and ‘masculine’). We want to see how those expectations affect their BART risk-taking scores.

Run the study. Make sure that the students do fill in which group they are in, and all the details about their actual digit ratio and gender. This is needed to perform the analyses.

## Slides pt 2

While the first few slides are being discussed run the batch analysis on the group data

* Explains what really happened
* Excel analysis is really simple this time;
  + Filter by unpopped balloons (the popped ones just tell us about balloon size, not about behaviour)
  + Take the average
* SPSS analysis for the first time on the batch data
  + Show students where to fetch the group data straight away(?)
  + Generate a scatter plot for A and B
  + Did they correlate?
  + Did they have different slopes according to group?
* Other details. Make sure the students understand how to retrieve the necessary info to write their methods/results