

**Syllabus for Research Methods (Psychology 200)**

Spring 2013, Oxford College

Lecture: Tues Thurs 3:30-5:10



EMORY

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OXFORD  
COLLEGE

**Professor:**

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Office: Branham Annex #4, across from the writing center

Office Hours: Tuesday 1:45-2:45

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*"Somewhere, something incredible is waiting to be known."*

-Dr. Carl Sagan, astronomer, 1934-1996

Psychology is the scientific study of thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. In this course, you will learn the critical skills to evaluate others' research and conduct your own scientific research in psychology. In other psychology courses you may learn *what* different behaviors are or *why* they occur. This course is important because you will learn *how* to conduct research about behavior and arrive at those conclusions, and how to think like a psychologist. This course is essential for becoming a wise *consumer* of information from sources such as the media, the government, and corporations. This course is also essential for becoming a wise *producer* of research in psychology. However, all of the material covered in this course applies beyond psychology and the university setting, so the course will improve your ability to think critically and logically about any topic that you may encounter in other courses, in job settings, and in your daily life.

<b>Course Overview</b>
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*This course aims to help students improve their skills in scientific thinking from two different perspectives:*

1. **Consumer of Research:** Although only a few of you may pursue a career as a research psychologist, all of you are consumers of research from psychology and other scientific disciplines. As such, a major goal of this course is to develop your capacity for critically evaluating "scientific evidence" that is communicated in academic journals, the popular press, and other outlets such as reports from government agencies, non-profit organizations, and corporations.

2. **Producer of Research:** Another major goal of this course is to sharpen your ability to produce original research in psychology. These include skills in designing and conducting research studies, collecting and analyzing data, drawing appropriate conclusions based on statistical results, and writing up scientific reports. Even if you do not plan to go on further in psychology or another related field of research, many of you will enter fields where your skills as a researcher will be a huge asset, and you may very well find yourself drawing on the material from this course to produce or evaluate original research as part of your job. Moreover, the skills you learn in this course in the producer role will without a doubt improve your skills as a consumer of research as well.

**By taking the perspectives of both the consumer and the producer, you will learn all of the essential skills for evaluating and conducting original scientific research in psychology.**

<b>Course Points</b>
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5 Activity Assignments (5 points each): **25 points**

2 Exams (100 points each): **200 points**

Annotated Bibliography: **25 points**

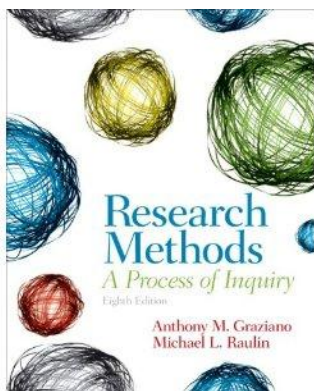
Research paper: **160 points**

- Introduction: 10 points
- Results: 10 points
- Full rough draft and peer evaluation: 10/10
- Final paper: 120 points

Poster Session: **40 points**

**Total Points: 450**

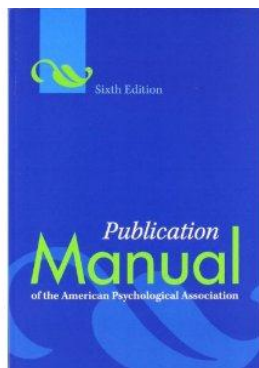
### Required Textbook:



#### **Graziano, A. & Raulin. (2012). Research Methods: A Process of Inquiry (8<sup>th</sup> Edition)**

The readings will make a thorough supplement to what we discuss in lecture. There will be material on exams that will be in the textbook but will not be discussed in lecture, so it is important that you do all of the readings. We shall set a very steady pace throughout the term, so please keep up with the readings as they will make our discussions in class much more lively and informed. In addition, the authors of the text maintains an online learning center for students with quizzes, flashcards, chapter outlines, and more. You are encouraged to use the site for

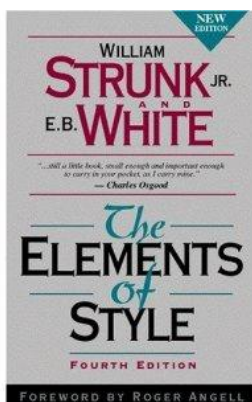
supplemental material, studying, and exam preparation. Here is the link:  
<http://www.mikeraulin.com/graziano8e/default.htm>



#### **American Psychological Association. (2009). *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (6<sup>th</sup> Edition)**

This book is highly recommended for psychology majors, especially those who plan to go on to graduate school. Make sure to get the second printing of the 6<sup>th</sup> edition.

**Recommended books:**



Strunk, W., Jr., & White, E. B. (2000). *The elements of style* (4th ed.). New York: Longman.

This book is a standard reference book for writers. It will be very useful to you as you write your papers for this course. It will also be useful for future coursework and even writing projects after you graduate.

### Course Components

**Lecture:** One of the main goals of the lecture sessions is to develop your skills as a consumer of psychology research and will also provide you with tools to be a skilled producer of research. The lecture sessions will include review and explanation of selected textbook material, active learning that will teach you how to critically evaluate others' research and produce high quality original research, elaboration of some topics with information not provided in the textbook, and in-class exercises. You are expected to take responsibility for what is covered in class. The most important way to do this is to show up and be an active participant in lecture. I will use a combination of PowerPoint presentations, discussion, illustrative examples, and in-class exercises to teach the main concepts. Whenever appropriate lectures slides and outlines will be posted on Blackboard. Note that these documents serve to outline the lecture and are by no means comprehensive. You should not rely on these posted documents for your course notes; rather, you should use them to organize the notes that you take during class.

**In-Class Activity Assignments:** At least five times throughout the term, a graded in-class activity will be assigned for you to complete. No preparation is required, and each activity assignment is due at the end of class that day and will be worth 5 points each. **Activity assignments cannot be made up.** Five of these activity assignments will count toward your final grade. This means you may miss at least one activity assignment without penalty.

**Exams:** There will be two exams throughout the term, one during the course and one scheduled for final exam week (see Course Calendar for specific dates). Each exam will cover the textbook chapters listed in the course calendar in addition to the lecture material we covered in class.

**Research Paper:** This component of the course will focus on skills required to produce original research in psychology. It will give you hands-on experience designing, conducting, analyzing, and writing up your own research study. The majority points will be based on successful completion of three items. The first is an annotated bibliography in which you will review the past research on a topic in psychology. You will then use this information to design and conduct a correlational study of your own. The results will be analyzed and written up in an APA style paper. You will then be asked to present your work to the class during a poster session. More information on these will come later in the semester.

### Grading

In general, written work in this course will be graded based on form (i.e., proper APA formatting, spelling, grammar, sentence structure, length), critical thinking (i.e., how well you display knowledge of the material, how well you have analyzed and evaluated the material, and how well you effectively communicate the information), and the assignment criteria that are outlined in each assignment (i.e., completing all aspects of the work assigned based on the instructions and guidelines of the assignment).

The final grade assigned for the course should reflect the student's overall performance in the course, as described by the following guidelines:

A *excellent* work, complete mastery of course material  
B *good* work, grasps most of the important concepts  
C *average* work, grasps many but not all aspects of course material  
D *poor* work, insufficient understanding of material  
F failing

Grades will be assigned based on your total points in the course:

A+ 99-100% C 72-77%  
A 92-98% C- 70-71%  
A- 90-91% D+ 68-69%  
B+ 88-89% D 62-67%  
B 82-87% D- 60-61%  
B- 80-81% F 59% and Below  
C+ 78-79%

**Attendance and Participation:** Attendance and participation are critical to earning a good grade for the course. I do not take roll, however, it is very important that you show up to class to participate. This class will be guided by University Policies that entails a standard of responsibility, honesty, and integrity for me, your classmates, and the work that you do. This also means that you should do your absolute best to attend every class meeting, and to come to class prepared and ready to participate in our discussions. There will be some topics in lecture that are emphasized less in the textbook, and there will be exam questions based on lecture material and activity assignments.

**Active Learning and Work Outside of Class:** Doing well in this class requires an active involvement with the course content; merely reading the material and showing up for class are not enough. It is important to think about what you are reading, watching, and discussing, and relate it to experiences in your own life, rather than just remembering facts. As a 4-credit class, you are expected to spend **12 hours per week outside of class** working on relevant material.

**Blackboard:** Blackboard will be used in this course as an online resource for the syllabus, lecture materials, handouts, assignments, and APA formatting resources. Please note that while you may have access to the lecture and lab materials, attending both lecture and lab will be crucial to doing well in the course. The materials alone will not teach you the core concepts

required for this course. I also require that you check your email and the Blackboard website often as I will post important class information.

**Organization and communication:** Your success in this course will rely in large part on your ability to stay organized and on top of due dates. Check the syllabus often for important due dates. **A full electronic calendar of all exams, papers, and assignments can also be found in Blackboard under Syllabus.**

**Academic Honesty:** Group work will be a big part of this class, and discussion outside of class is encouraged. However, all written work submitted in this course must be your own and produced exclusively for this course. Although some aspects of the research projects require group work (in-class exercises, design, data collection, and analysis), **group collaboration on the research papers is absolutely prohibited—the work you turn in on homework and papers must be solely your own.** Otherwise, you will not adequately learn the material. I take academic integrity seriously and will not tolerate any instance of cheating or plagiarism. The one exception to this rule is the methods and results section of your final research papers. These sections are expected to be written collaboratively with the other member of your group. You are NOT to write these sections with people outside of your group.

Cheating is defined as providing information to, or receiving information from, another person on an exam or other assignment. Plagiarism is defined as passing off the work of another as your own without properly giving credit. This includes, but is not limited to, directly copying others' writing (in whole or in part) or paraphrasing others' writing or ideas without citing properly. In these cases "others" can include other students in the class, other students or non-students not in the class, and authors of scholarly or mass media work (journal articles, chapters, newspaper articles, blogs, Wikipedia). Rely mostly on your own ideas and words, and support them with properly cited scholarly sources (journal articles, textbooks, book chapters) or popular press media (websites, newspapers). If you are unsure about what is appropriate or allowed, please ask!

All instances of cheating and plagiarism will have serious consequences. At a minimum, you will receive a zero on the assignment and be reported to the university's student conduct coordinator, even if it is your first offense. If the offense is serious, you may also receive an "F" in the course. Repeat offenders will fail the course. Turning in work that is not your own—unless it is specifically described as a group activity—is not acceptable. Copying or paraphrasing information from any source - print or electronic - without citation is plagiarism. The use of sources must therefore be properly acknowledged and documented. The consequences of academic dishonesty will be taken seriously and are noted on student disciplinary records. If you are in doubt regarding any aspect of these issues, please come and speak with me.

**Students with Disabilities:** If you have a documented disability and anticipate needing accommodations in this course, please make arrangements to meet with me. The ADSR Office, located in East Village, will be open and staffed M-F from 9-5.

ADSR contacts

Linda Jefferson 4-4690

Jessalyn Smiley 7-0171

Gloria Weaver 7-9877

<b>Class</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Chapter</b>	<b>Due Dates</b>
1/15			
1/17	Curiosity, creativity, and commitment	Chapter 1	
1/22	Ethics in research	Chapter 2	
1/24	Planning research: Generating a question	Chapter 3	
1/29	Practical issues in planning your research		
1/31	Correlational designs	Chapter 7	Topic Due
2/5	Principals of Survey research	317-324	
2/7	<b>Library session</b>	Appendix C	
2/12	<i>How to write an introduction</i>		Annotated Bibliography Due
2/14	Measurement and Sampling	Chapter 4	
2/19	Statistical Analysis of Data	Chapter 5, Appendix D	
2/21	<b>*open class*</b>		
<b>2/26</b>	<b>Exam 1 (Chapters 1-5, 7 &amp; pages 317-324)</b>		
2/28	<i>How to write a results section</i>		
3/5	Hypothesis testing, validity, and threats to validity	Chapter 8	
3/7	Controls to reduce threats to validity	Chapter 9	Introductions due
<b>3/12</b>	<b>SPRING BREAK</b>		
<b>3/14</b>	<b>SPRING BREAK</b>		
3/19	Conducting an experiment: General principles		
3/21	<i>How to write a discussion</i>		Results Due
3/26	<i>Elements of APA style</i>	Appendix B	

3/28	Single variable, Independent groups design	Chapter 10	
4/2	Correlated groups and single subject designs	Chapter 11	
4/4	Factorial designs	Chapter 12	Rough Draft Due
4/9	<b>*open class*</b>		Peer Evaluation Due
4/11	Field research	Chapter 6	
4/16	Field research part deux	Chapter 13	
4/18	<b><i>Elements of poster design</i></b>		Final Paper due
4/23	Considering culture and individual differences		
<b>4/25</b>	<b>Poster Session</b>		
	<b>Final Exam</b> (Chapters 1-13, Appendices C & D, Considering culture lecture)		