Psych 241: Methods of Inquiry in Psychology – Fall 2016

Instructor: Matt Davidson   **Time and location:** TuTh 10-11:15 AM – Hasbrouck A-20
Office Hours Tobin 2nd floor patio: MoWe 11:30-12:30, or by appointment (see me or send me an email)
Course email: *psych241-nosdivad@courses.umass.edu*   **Course website:** moodle.umass.edu

Texts: 1) Shaughnessy *et al.,* (2015). Research Methods in Psychology, **10th Edition e-version**
       2) Course Packet for Method of Inquiry in Psychology (Kohler & Davidson, **Fall 2016**) *(required)*
You have paid for access to an e-version of the textbook materials and <u>want</u> to have the packet.

Course Overview: Methods is <u>one of the most important courses</u> you will take as a Psych Undergrad. Throughout the course, we will work together to develop an in-depth understanding of scientific inquiry and research methods in Psychology. This understanding will help you comprehend and critically evaluate research you encounter in your other courses and in everyday life. To help develop this understanding we will discuss various research designs, starting with true- and quasi-experimental designs and concluding with different forms of observational research and case studies. This wide range of topics will provide you with a solid foundation for future college courses and for the diverse career paths available to you in Psychological and Brain Sciences.

Course Objectives: Our primary objectives are to <u>sharpen your intellectual skills</u> in critical reading, thinking, and understanding of scientific research methods in Psychology (read those again, please). An additional objective is for you to <u>learn some things about yourself</u>, as a person and as a student. You can achieve these objectives by attending class consistently and by digging in to the research topics and lab projects to see what piques your interests. The lab projects have been designed to mesh with the lecture material (despite being out of synch at times) and you are strongly encouraged to make connections between these course components. One will give you a theoretical perspective while the other provides practical hands-on experience. Together they will help you truly master the material.

Course Requirements: As a foundational course, we will take the more is better approach and require you to read, think about, and work with this material multiple times to maximize your understanding. As part of this approach, the lecture component will include 4 exams, 12 in-class assignments, and 12 on-line preparation assignments. The lab component will include 3 main projects along with a few smaller homework assignments. Please dig-in to these projects, to learn and to make them yours.

1) On-line preparation: There will be assigned readings and on-line materials for each of the 12 main sections in the course. Each will be worth 5 points. The top 10 scores will count towards your grade, for a possible 50 points out of 500 or 10% of your grade (like acing an exam, only longer).

2) In-class assignments: There will be 12 unannounced in-class assignments/quizzes (~1 per week). These will be based on material covered that day or previous class meetings. Each assignment will be worth 5 points. The top 10 scores will count towards your course grade, for a possible 50 points out of 500 or 10% of your grade (like acing an exam, only easier).

3) Exams: There will be 3 in-class exams; each covering recently discussed material. In addition, a 4th cumulative exam will be offered for students who missed an exam or who wish to improve their final grade slightly. The top 3 scores from all 4 exams will contribute to your final grade (50 points each). The cumulative exam will be offered during the final exam period, as scheduled by the Registrar.

Grading: The grade you earn will be determined by your performance on the following assessments:
      Lecture will include: 3 exams (3 x 50 points), 10 in-class assignments (50 points total), and 10 on-line assignments (50 points total).
      Lab will include: Project 1 (50 points), Project 2 (70 points), Project 3 (100 points) plus lab assignments (30 points total).
      <u>This complex combination gives us 250 from Lecture and 250 from Lab, for 500 points in total.</u>

As you can see, the lecture and lab are equally important components of the course.

Your final letter grade will be based on the following scale:

Total points	Percent	Letter Grade
465-500	93-100	A
450-464	90-92.9	A-
435-449	87-89.9	B+
415-434	83-86.9	B
400-409	80-82.9	B-
390-399	78-79.9	C+
360-389	72-77.9	C
350-359	70-71.9	C-
340-349	68-69.9	D+
300-339	60-67.9	D
0-299	0-59.9	F

Extra credit: You have an option to earn up to 10 extra credits by participating in human research studies at: http://psych.umass.edu/undergraduate/sona-humansubjects/

Alternatively, your may complete multiple homework assignments to earn up to 10 extra credits. These may include 4-6 assignments, and you need to let me know that you chose this option within the first two weeks.

Each extra credit will convert to 0.5 percentage points, and added to your final percent total from lecture & lab (**5%** max).

Incomplete grades: Will not be issued, except for fully documented medical reasons. If you are having difficulty (in or out of the classroom) please let me, or your TA, know as soon as possible. We are here to help.

Attendance Policy: You are strongly encouraged to attend all class and lab meetings (an all-inclusive course). However, due to the nature of this course there is a limit of four missed lab meetings, including excused absences (with documentation). You will be docked 10 points from your total Lab points for each lab meeting missed beyond this limit of four. See the Course Policy Statement on Moodle for more information. **The last day to withdraw with a W is October 22nd.** *If you will be absent for University sanctioned events (academic, athletic, performance) please let me know the dates within the first two weeks).*

Classroom Behavior: You and I have a shared responsibility for maintaining a positive and supportive learning environment. I will strive to treat all students with dignity and respect, to guide classroom discussion effectively, and to set reasonable limits on the ways we all express opinions. Mutual courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with differences of ethnicity, culture, religion, politics, and sexual orientation, etc. Diversity comes in many wonderful forms and we will strive to be respectful in all our interactions with others (in or out of the classroom).

Individuals with Disabilities: I encourage students with special needs to meet with me to discuss specific arrangements that may be needed to facilitate your mastery of methods. Please contact me during the first two weeks of classes to coordinate any special arrangements. As you may know, Disability Services is located in 231 Whitmore and information about Disability Services at UMass-Amherst can be found at 413-545-0892 or at: http://www.umass.edu/disability/index.htm.

UMass Policy on Academic Honesty: You are expected to adhere to the University policy concerning academic honesty. Cheating, in any way, shape, or form will not be tolerated. Please see: www.umass.edu/dean_students/academic_policy for the University policy on academic honesty. You are responsible for reading and understanding the information on this web site.

We will be using the Turnitin originality detection software for all written assignments. All lab papers **must** be submitted as hard copy documents to your lab instructor **and** as electronic versions to Turnitin on Moodle. If you do not do BOTH you will get a zero for that lab paper (and then we'll have a problem).

Lastly, we will be using the iClicker system in the classroom. You are on your honor with this device and the ID # connected to your unit. Your honor is one of the most valuable characteristics you possess, and I trust you will preserve it at all costs.

Any violations of the academic honesty policy will be detected and vigorously pursued.

** THIS SYLLABUS IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITH APPROPRIATE DISCUSSION AND FOREWARNING **