

# Experimental Psychology

Psy 305

Fall 2015

**Catalog Description:** Four semester hours. This course is designed to familiarize the student with typical methods and techniques employed in psychological research. In addition to the three hours per week of classroom instruction, the student attends one two-hour laboratory per week and performs experiments in psychology. Prerequisite: Psy 302.

**Course Description:** This course is intended as a hands-on introduction to the basic and most common methods of collecting psychological data. To start, we will cover ethics in research, the concepts of reliability, validity, generalizability and the fundamentals of experimental design. Then we will work with observational, survey, and interview methods primarily, but will discuss a variety of other techniques. Special attention will be given to writing in the style of the American Psychological Association.

**Texts:**

Sommer & Sommer, *A Practical Guide to Behavioral Research* (5<sup>th</sup>)

Stanovich, *How to Think Straight About Psychology* (10<sup>th</sup>)

APA, *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (6<sup>th</sup>)

**The Basics:** Keep in mind that a syllabus sometimes shifts a little as the course gets underway. I say that by way of noting the importance of class attendance, as you will be held responsible for any change in plans announced in class. The other basic admonition every syllabus must include is that cheating (broadly defined) is not allowed. If you have any questions about what constitutes cheating please see me. Or, as the university likes me to say: "All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. (See Student's Guide Handbook, Policies and Procedures, Conduct)." If you have any questions about what constitutes cheating please see me. Also, note that "Texas A&M-Commerce will comply in the classroom, and in online courses, with all federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination and related retaliation on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age, genetic information or veteran status. Further, an environment free from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression will be maintained." Additionally...

"The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:"

Office of Student Disability Resources and Services  
Texas A&M University-Commerce  
Gee Library- Room 132  
Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835  
Fax (903) 468-8148  
[StudentDisabilityServices@tamuc.edu](mailto:StudentDisabilityServices@tamuc.edu)

**Course Format:** In general, I will lecture. There are some days indicated on the syllabus where I have put “discuss” – this translates into you making brief progress reports and me reacting to them in class. And, I would like for you to make a very brief presentation over your final project.

**Grades:**

Assignments - There will be two take-home tests each worth 50 points, and two in-class tests worth 50 points each. There will be four small projects, each worth 50 points. The final project will be worth 100 points. I will want you to briefly discuss your research interests, your behavioral observation, your survey project, your interview project, and your final project before you get started on it. Doing so coherently will be an easy way to earn 10 points each time (another 50 points). I also want a draft of your final project, and for you to make a very brief final presentation -- each will be worth 25 points, and again, if you take these seriously they will be an easy way to make another 50 points. This totals 700 points.

The lab portion of the class accounts for 100 points of your final grade (approximately 15%).

Extra Credit - I am a believer in extra credit. At this point however it is unclear as to what our range of options will be here (e.g., taking part in studies, doing extra papers). I will provide more information subsequently.

Final Grades - Final grades will be based on total points and any extra credit earned. The distribution will be as follows:

A	650 or greater
B	600 – 649
C	525 – 599
D	470 – 524
F	469 or below

**About the Projects:** Since a major component of this course will be learning to write in APA style, I will not discuss the format of the projects in much detail here. But, I imagine the first four projects will average about 10 pages each, and the final one ought to be around 20. I am not a word counter, so these are very general guides.

**Working in Groups:** You are free to work in groups for any, and/or, all projects. Groups cannot be larger than four. If you are interested in forming a group for one or more of the assignments the entire group needs to meet with me first so we can go over some ground rules.

**Late Penalties and Make-Ups:** Take-home tests and Projects will not be accepted late without prior arrangement. You are welcome to turn them in early. If you miss a test see me concerning the make up as soon as possible.

**The Instructors:**

Dr. Tracy B. Henley

Ms. Jane Bednarz

**Office Hours:** You are invited to drop by and speak with me at any time that you find me in my office. Beyond that, see me after class to schedule a meeting. Or, you can always reach me at [tracy.henley@tamuc.edu](mailto:tracy.henley@tamuc.edu).

**Schedule of Events:**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Reading</b>
Sep. 01	Tu Review Syllabus	
03	Th Science and Psychology	SS1
<b>01/03</b>	<b>LAB 1 Introduction to the Lab</b>	
08	Tu Ethics	SS 2
<b>08/10</b>	<b>LAB 2 Ethics in Research</b>	
10	Th How to do a Lit Review Discuss Interests	SS 3
15	Tu APA Style	SS 20
<b>15/17</b>	<b>LAB 3 Literature Reviews and APA Style</b>	
17	Th Reliability Validity Generalizability	SS 16
<b>22/24</b>	<b>LAB 4 Statistics Refresher</b>	
22	Tu Sampling Techniques	SS 17
24	Th Distributions, Probability Statistical Significance	SS 18, 19
<b>29/01</b>	<b>LAB 5 Article Assessment/Write-up</b>	
29	Tu Observation Methods and Test 1 <b>OUT</b> , Lit Review <b>IN</b>	SS 4
Oct. 01	Th Discuss pilot work and confounds Discuss Observations	
<b>06/07</b>	<b>LAB 6 Draft Revisions</b>	
06	Tu Experimental Designs and Test 1 <b>IN</b>	SS 6
08	Th Survey and Scaling Methods	SS 9, 10
<b>13/15</b>	<b>LAB 7 Observational Studies</b>	
13	Tu Survey and Scaling Methods continued Making Scales and Writing Questions	

	15	Th	Discuss Surveys	
	<b>20/22</b>	<b>LAB 8</b>	<b>Observational Studies Cont.</b>	
	20	Tu	Other Pen & Paper Stimuli (Photos, Analogies, etc), Behavioral Mapping and Observations <b>IN</b>	SS 5, 14, 15
	22	Th	Physical Trace methods	
	<b>27/29</b>	<b>LAB 9</b>	<b>Survey Research</b>	
	27	Tu	Case Studies, Archival Methods, Simulations, Public, Personal Documents, Cognitive Linguistics and Survey <b>IN</b>	SS 7, 12, 13
	<b>03/05</b>	<b>LAB 10</b>	<b>Survey Research Cont.</b>	
	29	Th	Interview Methods	SS 8, 11
Nov.	03	Tu	Phenomenology Exercise	
	<b>10/12</b>	<b>LAB 11</b>	<b>Case Studies/Interviews</b>	
	05	Th	TEST 2	SS 21, 22
	10	Tu	Discuss Interview	
	<b>17/19</b>	<b>LAB 12</b>	<b>Interviews cont./Final Report</b>	
	12	Th	Discuss Final Projects	READ STANOVICH
	17	Tu	Start Stanovich book Discussion	
	<b>24/26</b>	<b>Thanksgiving Week--NO LAB!</b>		
	19	Th	Complete Stanovich book Discussion	
	24	Tu	TEST 3 and Drafts <b>IN</b> TEST 4 <b>OUT</b> and set Presentations Interviews <b>IN</b> and Drafts Back	
	01/03	<b>LAB 13</b>	<b>Final Research Report/ Presentations</b>	
	26	Th	NO CLASS	
Dec.	01	Tu	Discuss Final Project Feedback	
	03	Th	Start Presentations	
	08	Tu	Presentations	
	10	Th	Presentations	
FINAL			Final Project <b>IN</b> and Test 4 <b>IN</b> Conclude Presentations as needed	