

PSY 796: Selected Topics in Psychology (3 units)
Advanced Research Methods in Psychology
San Diego State University
Spring 2011

INSTRUCTOR: Allison A. Vaughn, Ph.D.

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OFFICE HOURS: Tuesday/Thursday 9:30am-10:30am, LS-175 (or by appointment)

PHONE: 619.594.5536

LECTURE: Monday 9:00am-11:40pm, LS-111

COURSE WEBSITE: <http://its.sdsu.edu/blackboard/>

“Each problem that I solved became a rule, which served afterwards to solve other problems.”

~Rene Descartes~

COURSE OVERVIEW:

The goals of this course are threefold. First, it will serve as a graduate overview of methodological issues in psychological research. Second, this course will highlight issues within specific areas of psychology (e.g., social, clinical). Finally, students will be encouraged to think critically about their own research by making links between course content and their own thesis research.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

By the end of this class you will know how to:

1. **Evaluate internal, external, construct, and statistical conclusion validities.**
2. **Evaluate experimental, quasi-experimental, and non experimental methodologies.**
3. **Classify and operationally define variables.**
4. **Integrate course topics and apply them to your specific research area and thesis topic.**
5. **Communicate research ideas effectively and accurately by**
 - writing weekly papers and
 - actively participating in class discussion

READINGS:

There is no required text for this class. Instead, weekly readings will be posted on blackboard.

Suggested general text:

Leong, F.T., & Austin, J.T. (2006). *The Psychology Research Handbook: A guide for graduate students and research assistants* (2nd Ed). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Area-specific texts:

Developmental

Teti, D. M. (2005). *Handbook of Research Methods in Developmental Science*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.

Clinical

Kendall, P.C., Butcher, J.N., & Holmbeck, G.N. (1999). *Handbook of research methods in clinical psychology* (2nd ed.). New York: Wiley.

Social

C. Sansone, C.C. Morf, & A.T. Panter, (2004). *The Sage Handbook of Methods in Social Psychology*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

CLASSROOM POLICIES:

- ***Students with disabilities: ADA/Accommodations:*** San Diego State University seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services and activities for people with disabilities. If you will need accommodations in the class, reasonable prior notice needs to be given to the Student Disability Services (SDS), 619.594.6473 or online at <http://www.sa.sdsu.edu/sds>. SDS will work with you and the instructor to make arrangements for accommodations. All written information in this course can be made available in alternative format with prior notification to the SDS.
- ***Academic dishonesty:*** The Student Code of Conduct is online at <http://www.sa.sdsu.edu/srr/conduct1.html>. The academic dishonesty code specifies actions for behaviors such as cheating on tests, plagiarism, and/or inappropriately collaborating with others. I will enforce the code in the course; cheating or other violations will result in appropriate penalties, including a failing grade on the assignment or in the course, and the reporting of that incident to the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities. Students have the right to appeal such action in accord with the due process.
- ***Withdrawals and incompletes:*** The last day for dropping the course and for withdrawal without penalty is February 1st. Incompletes are given only for extraordinary circumstances. An incomplete will be not given when it is necessary for the student to attend a major portion of the class when it is next offered.

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADES:

- Each week you will write a thought paper (topics will be posted with the readings). These will be one-page type-written papers. They will be graded on a check-plus (exceptional performance), check (expected performance), and check-minus (unacceptable performance) basis. They will be due at the beginning of class each week on that week's topic. Your weekly thought papers and active participation in class will count as 75% of your final grade.
- Your final paper will be worth 25% of your final grade and will be due Monday, May 17th (the day of your final exam) by noon. Details of this paper will be posted.

SCHEDULE: (subject to change)

Week	Date	Topic
1	01/24	Introduction to course/Planning research
2	01/31	Writing
3	02/07	Types of validity
4	02/14	Experimental designs
5	02/21	Quasi-experimental designs
6	02/28	Non experimental designs
7	03/07	Independent/predictor variables & Dependent/outcome variables
8	03/14	Statistics
9	03/21	Cultural influences in psychology
10	03/28	Spring Break—No Class
11	04/04	(rest of schedule TBA)
12	04/11	
13	04/18	
14	04/25	
15	05/02	
16	05/09	
17	05/16	Final papers due by noon

Notes: