

PSCH 242 Introduction to Research Methods in Psychology (CRN: 12128)

3 Credit Hours

Fall 2020

Instructor: Krista Miller, M.A.
Email: kmille47@uic.edu
Office Hours: W 12-1 pm; by appointment

Welcome to PSCH 242! I'm excited to be teaching this course this semester!

I view my role in this course as a mentor and instructor. If you have any problems or concerns throughout the class, I'm here to help! This is a challenging course, but I'm confident that you will learn a lot.

Course Overview: This course is going to cover how psychologists design, conduct, and interpret research. How do we know that opposites attract? What is the best way to measure job satisfaction? Can we predict who succeeds in graduate school? What parts of the brain are implicated in mental disorders? These are just some of the questions psychological research can answer, and this semester, we'll be learning about the tools used to answer them.

Course Goals:

- Learn an overview of research methods in psychology
 - Describe the scientific foundation of psychological research and the importance of experimental methods in psychology
 - Develop an overall understanding of the research process, including: development of hypotheses, selection of research designs, and use and interpretation of appropriate statistical tests
 - Identify the distinguishing features of different research designs and understand the strengths and limitations of each one
 - Understand that ethical principles, behavior, and decision-making pertain to all aspects of the research process
- Develop a scientific mindset
 - Critically evaluate reports of psychological studies in scientific papers and popular media
 - Find, read, and understand empirical journal articles and be able to synthesize the results
 - Develop a relevant research question and design an appropriate study to answer that question.
 - Correctly interpret and convey statistical results via text, tables, and graphs
 - Write a literature review, methods section, results section, discussion section, and reference section using APA style
- Apply knowledge of research methods to the world and everyday life

Prerequisites: Introduction to Psychology (PSCH 100)

Course Format

Our class will take place asynchronously, meaning our course does not have required synchronous (live) class sessions for you to attend. You will, however, be expected to devote an amount of time similar to what you would have spent in lecture and discussion (approximately 3 hours) viewing videos, reading assigned materials, and completing class assignments for this course. In addition, you will be expected to devote time to the following class activities: studying the material, researching and writing drafts for papers and other project-based assignments, active participation in online discussion boards, etc.

Course Materials: Cozby, P.C., & Bates, S.C. (2019). *Methods in behavioral research* (14th ed.). New York, NY: McGraw-Hill Education; Access to McGraw-Hill's Connect platform.

Additional readings will be posted to Blackboard.

Recommended Materials: American Psychological Association. (2019). *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (7th ed.). Washington, DC: Author.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS, METHODS OF EVALUATION, & GRADING POLICIES

Exams (45%)

There will be four exams offered during the course; three exams during the semester and a final exam. **Your lowest grade of the four will be dropped.** The exams will be worth 45% of your final grade. Exams offered during the semester will be non-cumulative. A cumulative final exam will be offered during the week of finals.

As mentioned above, the lowest of the four exams will be dropped. This eliminates the need for make-up exams – if you miss the exam (for whatever reason), that exam will be dropped. It also accounts for the fact that everyone can have a bad day. If you are not satisfied with an exam score, you always have the option to take the final and potentially boost your grade. If the score on your final is better than one of your previous exams, the earlier exam would be dropped from your final grade calculation. However, this can only happen if you take the first three scheduled exams. In addition, if you are happy with your first three exam scores, you are not required to take the final.

All exams will be offered for a 24-hour period (12:01 am – 11:59 pm) on the scheduled exam date. See below for dates. You will have a typical class period (1 hour) to complete the exam. **This course requires the use of LockDown Browser and a webcam for online exams.** The webcam can be built into your computer or can be the type that plugs in with a USB cable. More information on LockDown Browser will be provided prior to the first exam.

An extra credit opportunity will be offered after each exam (with the exception of the final). To take advantage of this opportunity, you must a) identify the questions (multiple choice and short answer) you got incorrect, b) reflect on why you answered as you did, and c) identify the correct answer. Additionally, you must provide a short paragraph that a) describes the study strategies you used to prepare for the exam and b) reflects on those strategies by identifying what worked and what you may want to do differently for future exams. This exam post-mortem will be worth 10 extra points and must be completed within a week of receiving your exam grade.

Research Proposal (20%)

You will write a research proposal for this class. It will be worth 20% of your final grade. The research proposal is broken into three assignments: 1) an annotated bibliography, 2) a draft of the methods and proposed results section, and 3) the full research proposal. Each assignment will build off the ones before it and culminate in a full research proposal due at the end of the semester. See below for due dates.

The annotated bibliography will ask you to summarize and evaluate 6-8 empirical articles for the introduction section of your paper. It will be worth 2.5% of your final grade. The draft of the method and proposed results section will help you work through a) the best way to test your research question and b) what pattern of results will support your prediction. It will be worth 2.5% of your final grade. The annotated bibliography and the method/results section draft will be graded pass/fail. This is done to give you a low-stakes opportunity to receive feedback before turning in the final product. Use this opportunity wisely! Please note these assignments must be at least 75% complete to receive a passing grade (e.g., the annotated bibliography must include summaries for 4 of the required 6 references). Incomplete assignments will automatically receive a failing grade.

The research proposal will ask you to a) include an introduction that describes the topic of study and background research, b) state specific hypotheses at the end of your introduction, c) describe a method for testing your hypotheses, d) describe the type of results you expect to find, and e) describe the theoretical implication of your expected results. It will be worth 15% of your final grade.

Writing a research proposal in a research methods class is important for several reasons. For starters, it is an excellent way to apply the knowledge you will have gained throughout the semester. One of the most exciting things about research is getting to design an experiment that tests a question you're curious about, and, through this class, you will gain the tools necessary to do just that. Your research proposal is a way to show-off that knowledge. It will also prepare you for advanced psychology/science-based courses. It may also help you in your future career. For example, in several different industries, you may be asked to write formal reports or even encounter grant proposals at work.

Papers must be submitted via Blackboard and are due on the date indicated in the class schedule.

Retrieval Practice – SmartBook Assignments (10%)

SmartBook is a web-based application created by the textbook publisher that helps to reinforce concepts we're learning in class. You can complete the assignment by answering questions (multiple choice, true/false, matching, fill-in-the-blank) and rating your confidence in your answers. SmartBook assignments do not have to be completed in one sitting! So take your time and balance your reading and self-testing throughout the week.

Twelve SmartBook Assignments have been assigned throughout the semester. You must complete ten (10) to receive full credit.

SmartBook Assignments must be completed by 11:59 pm on the Sunday due date.

Homework Assignments (10%)

You will have a total of five homework assignments over the course of the semester. Homework will be worth 10% of your final grade (See below for homework due dates).

Homework assignments will be skill-based and interactive. As such, these assignments will require substantial effort and time so make sure you plan accordingly.

Homework assignments must be submitted via Blackboard and are due on the date indicated in the class schedule.

Weekly Discussion Posts (10%)

Initial Post | DUE each week by Thursday, 11:59 PM CST

Initial posts are your first post of the week in which you answer 2-3 specific short essay question(s) or prompt(s), posed by the instructor. The initial post should be a minimum of 300 words and is due each Thursday at 11:59 PM CST.

Response Posts (2) | DUE each week by Sunday, 11:59 PM CST

You will be asked to post thoughts and reflections thrice per discussion forum (an initial post to the prompt and a response to at least two peers). You are encouraged to read each other's posts and respond, reflect, and/or support peers. I will periodically respond to discussion posts, but will not respond to each individual discussion thread as this is a space for students to interact. Response posts should extend the discussion by adding information to the discussion and asking quality questions. This is an opportunity to comment on the posts made by peers, share knowledge, and explore topics in more depth. Please note that simply agreeing with your peer (e.g. "I agree" or "That's great!") is not a substantive response. Response posts should be at least 100 words and are due by the Sunday of that week by 11:59 PM CST.

Muddiest Points (5%)

Each week you will be asked to reflect on the material we covered in class that week. Is there something that is still unclear? Are you struggling to understand a particular concept? Write it down! Please be as specific as possible so we can best address your concern. Everything make sense? Great! Instead, tell us (in 3-5 sentences) about the most interesting thing you learned in class that week. Responses such as, "Everything was clear this week," without further elaboration will receive an automatic 50% grade deduction. Remember this is an opportunity for you to reflect on your own understanding of the material!

Your TA will respond to select "muddiest points" each week. Muddiest points are due each Sunday at 11:59 PM CST.

Final Grading

Course grades will be based on exams (45%), research proposal (20%), SmartBook assignments (10%), homework (10%), discussion posts (10%), and muddiest points (5%). Grades will be based on the following scale:

Grade	Percent
A	89.5-100
B	79.5-89.4
C	69.5-79.4
D	59.5-69.4
F	0-59.4

It will be your responsibility to keep track of your scores on Blackboard. Be sure to keep copies of all your graded assignments in case any discrepancies arise. If you notice that a score has been incorrectly entered into Blackboard, show me the original paper with the correct grade so that I can accurately correct your grade. If you are unable to produce the graded work, you will receive the grade that appears in Blackboard.

COURSE POLICIES AND EXPECTATIONS

Blackboard Technical Support

You are required to be knowledgeable with the Blackboard learning system. It is your responsibility to contact UIC's Information Technology department or the Blackboard Help Desk concerning any technical issues they are experiencing navigating the system. Lack of knowledge for Blackboard or technology is not an acceptable excuse for missed or late assignments.

Email Communication

All e-mail communication with me or your teaching assistant must be carried out in a professional manner. You must have an active UIC e-mail account for all course related communication and are responsible for checking e-mails regularly. The following format is required:

- The subject line must include a clear description of the content, and the course name being addressed in the body of the e-mail.
- The body of the e-mail must include a greeting (i.e.: "Dear Prof. Miller:") and must end with your full registered name.
- If attaching a document, this document must contain your name and the course number PSCH 242, Fall 2020 and title related to that document.
- Unprofessionally written emails that do not follow the requirements above will NOT be answered or accepted.

Communication Note

During the semester, emails will be returned within 24 hours during the work week. Emails received on Friday or over the weekend will be responded to by the following Monday.

Disruptive Behavior

It is expected that you will treat your peers with respect at all times. It is imperative that the online learning community be an atmosphere of respect given various individual opinions and perspectives. Actions that disrupt the learning environment are not welcomed and such behaviors will result in a 1-10 point lowering of the student's grade. Continual disruptive behavior will result in the student being dismissed from the class. Up to 10% of the total course points can be deducted from the final grade, at my discretion, for unprofessional behavior based solely on this statement.

Submitting Assignments

All assignments are to be submitted by the assigned posted day and time via the course's Blackboard site. You must submit *readable* files. A corrupted document that will not open, a blank document, or an empty email with no attachment is *not* on-time work. Confirm that you have uploaded or sent the right file—what you see at your end in **Blackboard** is exactly what I see when I evaluate your work. Late points accumulate until you send an appropriate file.

Stuff Happens!

All work is due on the day indicated in the class schedule. At the beginning of the semester, however, you will be emailed a virtual Stuff Happens! Card that you may use to trade in for one free late assignment. This card will entitle you to hand in one written assignment (research proposal, homework assignments) up two days late with no questions asked. The Stuff Happens! Card may be redeemed by forwarding the email to your teaching assistant with a quick note indicating which assignment you are using it for. Please note that the Stuff Happens! Card is YOUR responsibility. Do not accidentally delete it! You will only be sent one and no replacements will be granted. You may also turn in an unused Stuff Happens! Card at the end of the semester for 20 extra credit points.

Besides the one “free” late assignment, additional late assignments will be accepted. Additional late assignments will be penalized 10% for each 24-hour day that they are turned in late. Please also note that you are welcome to submit early if a scheduling conflict prevents you from submitting your work on the due date.

Office Hours

I will hold scheduled online weekly office hours to explain assignments and/or answer specific questions as needed. You are also welcome to communicate with me through email concerning the course and class discussions. Additionally, appointments can be made for online (e.g., BlackBoard Collaborate/Zoom) office hours during a time that is convenient for the both of us.

Academic Integrity

All work should be your own.

Guidelines Regarding Academic Integrity (from the UIC Undergraduate Catalog): As an academic community, the University of Illinois at Chicago is committed to providing an environment in which research, learning, and scholarship can flourish and in which all endeavors are guided by academic and professional integrity. All members of the campus community—students, staff, faculty, administrators—share the responsibility of insuring that these standards are upheld so that such an environment exists. Instances of academic misconduct by students, and as defined herein, shall be handled pursuant to the Student Disciplinary Policy.

Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to:

- Cheating: Either intentionally using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, people, or study aids in any academic exercise, or extending to or receiving any kind of unauthorized assistance on any examination or assignment to or from another person.
- Fabrication: Knowing or unauthorized falsification, reproduction, lack of attribution, or invention of any information or citation in an academic exercise.
- Facilitating Academic Dishonesty/Plagiarism: Intentionally or knowingly representing the words or ideas of another as one’s own in any academic exercise.
- Bribes, Favors, Threats: Bribing or attempting to bribe, promising favors to or making threats against, any person, with the intention of affecting a record of a grade, grade, or evaluation of academic performance. Any conspiracy with another person who then takes or attempts to take action on behalf or at the direction of the student.
- Examination by Proxy: Taking or attempting to take an exam for someone else other

than the student is a violation by both the student enrolled in the course and the proxy or substitute.

- Grade Tampering: Any unauthorized attempt to change, actual change of, or alteration of grades or any tampering with grades.
- Non-original Works: Submission or attempt to submit any written work authored, in whole or part, by someone other than the student.

For any case of academic dishonesty, my policy is to file a complaint with the Office of the Dean of Students. For more information about violating academic integrity and its consequences, consult the website of the UIC Office of the Dean of Students at <http://www.uic.edu/depts/dos/studentconduct.html>

Religious Holidays

Campus Policy States: The faculty of the University of Illinois at Chicago shall make every effort to avoid scheduling examinations or requiring that student projects be turned in or completed on religious holidays. Students who wish to observe their religious holidays shall notify the faculty member by the tenth day of the semester of the date when they will be absent unless the religious holiday is observed on or before the tenth day of the semester. In such cases, the student shall notify the faculty member at least five days in advance of the date when he/she will be absent. The faculty member shall make every reasonable effort to honor the request, not penalize the student for missing the class, and if an examination or project is due during the absence, give the student an exam or assignment equivalent to the one completed by those students in attendance. If the student feels aggrieved, he/she may request remedy through the campus grievance procedure.

Disability Accommodation

Students with disabilities who require accommodations for access to and/or participation in this course are welcome, but must be registered with the Disability Resource Center (DRC). You may contact DRC at 312-413-2183 (v) or 312-413-0123 (TTY). I'm happy to help you.

UIC RESOURCES

If you find yourself having difficulty with the course material or any other aspect of student life, don't hesitate to ask for help! Come to me, or if it is about an issue beyond this class, please contact your college advisors, or get help from any number of other support services on campus.

The Writing Center offers friendly and supportive tutors who can help you with reading and writing in any of your courses, not just English. Tutors are ready to help other writing as well, such as job applications, personal statements, and resumes. The tutor and you will work together to decide how to improve your writing. If you have not started your assignment, that is OK. A tutor can help you brainstorm or make an outline. Tutors understand that you might be using the Writing Center for the first time. They are ready to guide you through your first session. You can choose to work with a tutor in real time using chat and a white board, or submit up to 5 pages of text and receive written feedback within 48 hours. For more information and to schedule an appointment, visit the Writing Center website (<https://writingcenter.uic.edu>).

The Academic Center for Excellence can help if you feel you need more individualized instruction in reading and/or writing, study skills, time management, etc. Phone: (312) 413-0031. They are located in the Student Services Building, located at 1200 W Harrison Street.

Counseling Services are available for all UIC students. You may seek free and confidential services from the Counseling Center <www.counseling.uic.edu>. The Counseling Center is in the Student Services Building; you may contact the staff there at (312) 996-3490. In addition to offering counseling services, the Counseling Center also operates the InTouch Crisis Hotline from 6:00 p.m.-10:30 p.m. They offer support and referrals to callers, as well as telephone crisis interventions; please call (312) 996-5535.

Week	Read	Watch	Engage	Turn-In	Test
Week 1 August 24-30	Syllabus Ch. 1	Week 1 Materials	Muddiest Point by Sun at 11:59pm Weekly Discussion Forum Initial Post by Thurs at 11:59PM Response Posts by Sun at 11:59PM		SmartBook (Ch 1) by Sun at 11:59pm
Week 2 August 31-Sept 6	Ch. 2	Week 2 Materials	Muddiest Point by Sun at 11:59pm Weekly Discussion Forum Initial Post by Thurs at 11:59PM Response Posts by Sun at 11:59PM	Homework 1 by Fri at 5 pm	SmartBook (Ch 2) by Sun at 11:59pm
Week 3 September 7-13	Ch. 4	Week 3 Materials	Muddiest Point by Sun at 11:59pm Weekly Discussion Forum Initial Post by Thurs at 11:59PM Response Posts by Sun at 11:59PM		SmartBook (Ch 4) by Sun at 11:59pm
Week 4 September 14-20	Ch. 5	Week 4 Materials	Muddiest Point by Fri at 11:59pm Weekly Discussion Forum Initial Post by Thurs at 11:59PM Response Posts by Sun at 11:59PM	Homework 2 by Fri at 5 pm	SmartBook (Ch 5) by Sun at 11:59pm
Week 5 September 21-27	Appendix A		Literature Review Workshop		Wed, Sept 21: Exam 1 (Ch. 1-2. 4-5)
Week 6 September 28-Oct 4	Ch. 6	Week 6 Materials	Muddiest Point by Sun at 11:59pm Weekly Discussion Forum Initial Post by Thurs at 11:59PM Response Posts by Sun at 11:59PM	Annotated Bibliography by Fri at 11:59 pm	SmartBook (Ch 6) by Sun at 11:59pm
Week 7 October 5-11	Ch.7	Week 7 Materials	Muddiest Point by Sun at 11:59pm Weekly Discussion Forum Initial Post by Thurs at 11:59PM Response Posts by Sun at 11:59PM		SmartBook (Ch 7) by Sun at 11:59pm

Week 8 October 12-18	Ch. 8	Week 8 Materials	Muddiest Point by Sun at 11:59pm Weekly Discussion Forum Initial Post by Thurs at 11:59PM Response Posts by Sun at 11:59PM	Homework 3 by Fri at 5 pm	SmartBook (Ch 8) by Sun at 11:59pm
Week 9 October 19-25	Ch. 9	Week 9 Materials	Muddiest Point by Sun at 11:59pm Weekly Discussion Forum Initial Post by Thurs at 11:59PM Response Posts by Sun at 11:59PM		SmartBook (Ch 9) by Sun at 11:59pm
Week 10 October 26-Nov 1	Ch. 10	Week 10 Materials	Muddiest Point by Sun at 11:59pm Weekly Discussion Forum Initial Post by Thurs at 11:59PM Response Posts by Sun at 11:59PM	Homework 4 by Fri at 5 pm	SmartBook (Ch 10) by Sun at 11:59pm
Week 11 November 2-8			Methods & Results Workshop Vote!! (if eligible)		Mon, Nov 2: Exam 2 (Ch. 3, 6-9)
Week 12 November 9-15	Ch. 3	Week 12 Materials	Muddiest Point by Sun at 11:59pm Weekly Discussion Forum Initial Post by Thurs at 11:59PM Response Posts by Sun at 11:59PM	Methods + Results Draft by Fri at 11:59 pm	SmartBook (Ch 3) by Sun at 11:59pm
Week 13 November 16-22	Ch. 12	Week 13 Materials	Muddiest Point by Sun at 11:59pm Weekly Discussion Forum Initial Post by Thurs at 11:59PM Response Posts by Sun at 11:59PM		SmartBook (Ch 12) by Sun at 11:59pm
Week 14 November 23-29	Ch. 13	Week 14 Materials	Muddiest Point by Sun at 11:59pm Weekly Discussion Forum Initial Post by Thurs at 11:59PM Response Posts by Sun at 11:59PM	Homework 5 by Fri at 5 pm	SmartBook (Ch 13) by Sun at 11:59pm

Week 15 November 30- Dec 6	Ch. 14	Week 15 Materials	End of Semester Evaluations	Research Proposal by Fri at 11:59pm	Wed, Dec 2: Exam 3 (Ch. 3, 12-14)
FINALS WEEK December 7-11					

Tentative Schedule*

*This schedule and readings (or something very similar to this) is what you will encounter this semester. This being said, changing a few readings (or flipping the order of a few weeks) is always possible and will be done at the discretion of the instructor. You will be notified ahead of time and it will not impact the way you allocate your time. A revised and organized schedule will be given to you if this is the case. It is always preferable to make changes when something is not “quite right” than to stick to it because it was already organized that way. Stay tuned!