

# Experimental Psychology

Psy 305

Fall 2018

**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:**

Beins & Beins, *Effective Writing in Psychology*  
Sommer & Sommer, *A Practical Guide to Behavioral Research*  
Stanovich, *How to Think Straight About Psychology*

**The Basics:** Be mindful that a syllabus sometimes shifts a little as the course unfolds – at some point we’ll get behind (or maybe ahead). 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. 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 “Students requesting accommodations for disabilities must go through the Academic Support Committee. For more information, please contact the Director of Disability Resources & Services.” Last... Be advised that only qualified law enforcement officers or those who are otherwise authorized to carry a concealed handgun in the State of Texas are permitted to do so. Pursuant to Penal Code (PC) 46.035 and A&M-Commerce Rule 34.06.02.R1, even license holders may not carry a concealed handgun in restricted locations.

**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 conference poster as well as 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 75 points, and your poster presentation 25 points. I will want you to briefly discuss your research interests, your behavioral observation, your survey project, your interview (or alternative) 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 600 points.

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	550 or greater
B	500 – 549
C	435 – 499
D	370 – 424
F	369 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  
Mr. Adam Ray

**Office Hours:** I should generally be around THE MAIN OFFICE in Binnion every class day. If that is not good for you, see me before/after class and we can find an alternative time for an appointment most any day except Tuesday. You can also contact me at [tracy.henley@tamuc.edu](mailto:tracy.henley@tamuc.edu)

**Schedule of Events:**

<b>Date</b>		<b>Topic</b>	<b>Read this BEFORE</b>	
Aug.	27	M	Review Syllabus	
	29	W	Science and Psychology	SS1
	31	F	Ethics	SS 2; BB 19
			<b>LAB 1</b>	<b>Lab Orientation – Overview of Journals</b>
Sep.	03	M	NO CLASS	
	05	W	How to do a Lit Review	SS 3; BB 3, 4, 5, 9, 10
	07	F	<i>You Discuss</i> Interests	BB 2
			<b>LAB 2</b>	<b>Journal “Homework” Review and Psych Lit</b>
	10	M	APA Style	SS 20; BB 1, 6, 7, 14
	12	W	Reliability, Validity & Generalizability	SS 16
	14	F	Sampling Techniques	SS 17
			<b>LAB 3</b>	<b>APA Style</b>
	17	M	Distributions and Probability	
	19	W	Statistical Significance	SS 18, 19; BB 8
	21	F	Observational Methods and Test 1 <b>OUT</b> , Lit Review <b>IN</b>	SS 4
			<b>LAB 4</b>	<b>Statistics Refresher</b>
	24	M	Pilot work and confounds	
	26	W	<i>You Discuss</i> Observations	
	28	F	Experimental Designs and Test 1 <b>IN</b>	SS 6
			<b>LAB 5</b>	<b>Refinement of Your First Project (Observations)</b>
Oct.	01	M	Survey and Scaling Methods	SS 9, 10
	03	W	Survey and Scaling Methods continued	
	05	F	Making Scales and Writing Questions	
			<b>LAB 6</b>	<b>Presenting Data with Tables &amp; Figures</b>
	08	M	<i>You Discuss</i> Surveys	
	10	W	Other Pen & Paper Stimuli (Photos, Analogies, etc), Behavioral Mapping and Observations <b>IN</b>	SS 5, 14, 15; BB 11, 12
	12	F	Physical Trace methods	
			<b>LAB 7</b>	<b>Refinement of Your Second Project (Survey)</b>
	15	M	Case Studies, Archival Methods, Simulations, Public, Personal Documents, Cognitive Linguistics	SS 7, 12, 13
	17	W	Work through Survey Drafts in Class	
	19	F	In-Class Data Collection for Surveys	
			<b>LAB 8</b>	<b>Work on Surveys</b>
	22	M	Interview Methods and Survey <b>IN</b>	SS 8, 11
	24	W	Phenomenology Exercise	
	26	F	TEST 2	SS 21, 22; BB 13, 15
			<b>LAB 9</b>	<b>Other Methods</b>
	29	M	<i>You Discuss</i> Interview (or Alternative)	
	31	W	<i>You Discuss</i> Final Projects	READ STANOVICH

Nov.	02	F	Presenting your results as a Talk or Poster	BB 16, 17
			<b>LAB 10 Refinement of Your Third Project</b>	
	05	M	Start Stanovich book Discussion	
	07	W	Continue Stanovich book Discussion	
	09	F	Complete Stanovich book Discussion	
			<b>LAB 11 Stanovich book Discussion</b>	
	12	M	TEST 3 and Third Project <b>IN</b>	
	14	W	Set Final Presentations	
	16	F	In-Class Work Session	
			<b>LAB 12 Refinement of Your Presentations</b>	
	19	M	In-Class Poster Presentations	
	21	W	Final Project Drafts <b>IN</b> and TEST 4 <b>OUT</b>	
	23	F	NO CLASS	
			<b>NO LAB THIS WEEK</b>	
	26	M	Drafts Back	
	28	W	Discuss Applications of Psychological Research	
	30	F	Odds and Ends/Catch-up as Needed	
			<b>LAB 13 Work on Final Projects/Presentations</b>	
Dec.	03	M	Start Presentations	
	05	W	Continue Presentations	
	07	F	Conclude Presentations	
FINAL			Final Project <b>IN</b> and Test 4 <b>IN</b>	