

Welcome to Research Methods Lab!

Instructor: Cassie Whitt, PhD (she/her/hers)

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Office Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays, 11:30am - 1:30pm & 3:30pm - 4:30pm
Tuesdays, 10:00am - 2:00pm

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REQUIRED MATERIALS AND SOFTWARE:**Required Materials:**

1. A device that connects to the internet (e.g., laptop, tablet, etc.)

Course Website: This course site will be using the Ultra Experience within Blackboard. As a result, the course site may look different from what you are accustomed in a good way. It is a much simpler layout, and the various components are easy to access. Please review the [Introduction to Blackboard Learn with the Ultra Experience for Students video](#). This website provides you with quick access to course materials including lecture videos, homework assignments, and class updates. You should check this site frequently as it will be updated on a regular basis.

Zoom: You have the option to meet with me over Zoom. Please make sure that you have the most up-to-date version downloaded and installed.

Course Description. Laboratory course to accompany PSY 210. Laboratory exercises involving research design, methodology, data collection, methods of organizing and presenting data, and research report writing.

Prerequisite(s): (PSY 100 with a minimum grade of C or PSYC 100C with a minimum grade of C or PSYS 100 with a minimum grade of C or Psychology with a score of 3)

Corequisite(s): PSY 210

Course Mission Statement. My mission for this course is to provide students with an understanding of how to read and evaluate research studies, especially those that have been published in academic journals, so that they possess the scientific literacy skills necessary to be critical consumers of scientific research.

Course Goals.

1. Students will understand the basic overview of what a scholarly article is, how to search for research articles, and how to cite them in research papers using APA format.
2. Students will learn how to read scholarly articles, as well as evaluate the quality of abstracts and titles.
3. Students will learn how to review the introduction section of a scholarly article and the literature review included within that introduction.
4. Students will learn how to evaluate the samples that are used in research studies.
5. Students will understand how measures are used, developed, and evaluated as a crucial part of their scientific literacy.
6. Students will learn to evaluate how well a researcher has designed their experiment/experimental procedure.
7. Students will learn some of the ways to evaluate the reported results of a study.
8. Students will learn the components of a Discussion section and how to evaluate its quality.
9. Students will understand the principles of ethics and inclusivity as they relate to research methodologies.
10. Students will learn what peer review is and why it is important to science.
11. Students will understand what the replication crisis is, its antecedents, and its implications for science.
12. Students will learn what open science is and how it is applied in psychology research.
13. Students will learn how to be critical, but not cynical, about science.
14. Students will learn to critically think about, and evaluate, scientific literature.

Course Assessments:

This course is structured with 14 Blackboard modules with each spanning the course of a week. Each module covers a new topic and will become available one week prior to its applicable start date (the exception is Module 1, which opens the first day of the semester). Generally, each module will contain 1) a description of

the module with relevant learning objectives, 2) an opening reflection assignment, 3) module content (e.g., readings and lecture videos), 4) an assessment (e.g., worksheet or discussion board), and 5) a closing reflection assignment.

Here is an outline of the assessments in this course. Note that there is a column where you can keep track of the points you earn over the course of the semester.

Course Component	Point Value (1000 points total)	Your Grade
Self-reflection 1 (part of Module 8)	10	
Self-reflection 2 (part of Module 14)	10	
Module 1 Opening Reflection	10	
Module 1 Closing Reflection	10	
Article Search & Citation Activity	50	
Module 2 Opening Reflection	10	
Module 2 Closing Reflection	10	
Evaluating Titles Activity	25	
Evaluating Abstracts Activity	25	
Module 3 Opening Reflection	10	
Module 3 Closing Reflection	10	
Evaluating Introductions Activity	50	
Module 4 Opening Reflection	10	
Module 4 Closing Reflection	10	
Evaluating Samples Activity	50	
Module 5 Opening Reflection	10	
Module 5 Closing Reflection	10	
Evaluating Measures Activity	50	
Module 6 Opening Reflection	10	
Module 6 Closing Reflection	10	
Evaluating Experimental Procedures Activity	50	
Module 7 Opening Reflection	10	
Module 7 Closing Reflection	10	
Evaluating Results Sections	50	

Module 8 Opening Reflection	10	
Module 8 Closing Reflection	10	
Evaluating Discussion Sections Activity	50	
Module 9 Opening Reflection	10	
Module 9 Closing Reflection	10	
CITI Training – Ethics Activity	50	
Module 10 Opening Reflection	10	
Module 10 Closing Reflection	10	
Peer Review Activity	50	
Module 11 Opening Reflection	10	
Module 11 Closing Reflection	10	
The Replication Crisis Activity	50	
Module 12 Opening Reflection	10	
Module 12 Closing Reflection	10	
Open Science Activity	50	
Module 13 Opening Reflection	10	
Module 13 Closing Reflection	10	
Critical-Not-Cynical Activity	50	
Module 14 Article Review Activity	70	
		Total number of points earned:

You can calculate your final grade by dividing the total number of points earned by the total number of points possible in the class (1000 points.)

Your final letter grade is based on this scale:

Letter Grade	Percent Value	Corresponding Number of Points
A	90-100%	900-1000
B	80-89%	800-899
C	70-79%	700-799
D	60-69%	600-699
F	<60%	<600

Course Expectations and Policies

My Open-Door Policy: You are welcome to meet with me by attending office hours or by making an appointment. If you have issues or questions about the course, I strongly encourage you to reach out to me. Additionally, I encourage you to come talk to me if you ever have an issue affecting your ability or desire to continue at WKU. Attending college is often a transformative experience for many people, but it is not without its own unique hardships. I want to see you succeed, so if you are having issues, please let me know. Even if I don't know how to help, I can probably direct you to someone on campus who can.

Respect: Meaningful and constructive dialogue is encouraged in this class and requires a degree of mutual respect, willingness to listen, and tolerance of opposing points of view. Respect for individual differences, alternative viewpoints, and levels of learning will always be maintained in this class. One's words and use of language should be temperate and within acceptable bounds of civility and decency. Basically, just be a good person, ya know?

Course Communication: E-mail will be the official mode of communication for this course. You should feel free to e-mail me at any point with questions about course content. When e-mailing, please type "PSY 210" in the subject line to prevent it being filtered into junk mail. Please make sure to put your name on all emails; anonymous emails will not receive replies. Although I am committed to responding to emails quickly, e-mails sent past 5:00 PM *might* not be read until the next weekday.

Pronouns: All people have the right to be addressed and referred to in accordance with their personal identity. In this class, we will have the chance to indicate the name that we prefer to be called and, if we choose, to identify pronouns with which we would like to be addressed. I will do my best to address and refer to all students accordingly and support classmates in doing so as well.

Bias in Science: In an ideal world, science would be objective. However, much of science is very subjective and is historically built on a small subset of privileged voices. In this class, we will try to read about the work of a diverse group of scientists, but limits still exist on this diversity. I acknowledge that it is possible that there will be both overt and covert biases in the material due to the lens through which it was written. Integrating a diverse set of experiences is important for a more comprehensive understanding of science, and I would like to discuss issues of diversity in psychological science as part of the course from time to time. Please contact me or submit anonymous feedback if you have any suggestions to improve the quality of the course materials!

Cultural Diversity and Classroom Citizenship: Sometimes we might discuss controversial topics in class. You may also experience a point of view from another culture or background. You are encouraged to take advantage of the controversy and diversity to learn from the thoughts shared by other students. Please respect others' opinions, even if their opinions are not the same as yours. The Code of Student Conduct requires that students behave in a manner that is conducive to a teaching/learning environment. Students who engage in behavior that is disruptive or obstructive to the teaching/learning environment will be subject to disciplinary sanctions outlined by the Code of Student Conduct.

Late/Makeup Work Policy: Due dates for every assignment are provided on the course syllabus (and posted in Blackboard). Unless otherwise stated, assignments are due on those days. However, I recognize that sometimes “life happens.” In these instances, you may use your allotted two flex day. These days allow you to submit an assignment up to two days late without penalty. You can use these days for any one assignment and for any reason. You do not need to provide me with the reason: simply email me and tell me how many of your flex days you would like to use.

Once you’ve exhausted your flex days, then point deductions will occur for any assignment submitted after the deadline. An assignment submitted 24 hours of the due date will only be eligible for 80% of the maximum number of points allotted. Assignments submitted more than 24 hours after the due date will not be accepted. If you experience extenuating circumstances (e.g., you are hospitalized) that prohibit you from submitting your assignments on time, please let me know. I will evaluate these instances on a case-by-case basis.

Emergency Policy: In the event of a major campus emergency; course requirements, deadlines, and evaluation measures are subject to changes. This may be necessary due to a revised semester calendar or other circumstances. To get information about changes in this course look to Blackboard or email your instructor.

Disability Services: In compliance with university policy, students with disabilities who require academic and/or auxiliary accommodations for this course must contact the Student Accessibility Resource Center located in Downing Student Union, 1074. SARC can be reached by phone number at 270-745-5004 [270- 745-3030 TTY] or via email at sarc.connect@wku.edu . Please do not request accommodations directly from the professor or instructor without a faculty notification letter (FNL) from The Student Accessibility Resource Center.

Academic Honesty: Under no circumstances will acts of academic dishonesty be tolerated in this course. Dishonesty is a direct violation of the Code of Conduct. Anyone committing such acts will result in a failing grade -- either in that portion of the course or in the course itself. It is up to you to be knowledgeable and familiar with what constitutes academic dishonesty. Ignorance is not an excuse. Determination of the punishment will be handled on a case-by-case basis. Plagiarism detection software will be used in this course

It is expected that you follow the Code of Conduct outlined in the WKU Student Handbook (<http://wku.edu/judicialaffairs/student-code-of-conduct.php>)

Title IX/Discrimination and Harassment Statement: Western Kentucky University (WKU) is committed to supporting faculty, staff and students by upholding WKU’s Title IX Sexual Misconduct/Assault Policy (#0.2070) at <https://wku.edu/eoo/documents/titleix/wkutitleixpolicyandgrievanceprocedure.pdf> and Discrimination and Harassment Policy (#0.2040) at https://wku.edu/policies/hr_policies/2040_discrimination_harassment_policy.pdf.

Under these policies, discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct based on sex/gender are prohibited. If you experience an incident of sex/gender-based discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct, you are encouraged to report it to the Title IX Coordinator, Andrea Anderson, 270-745-5398 or Title IX Investigators, Michael Crowe, 270-745-5429 or Joshua Hayes, 270-745-5121. Please note that while you may report an incident of sex/gender based discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct to a faculty member, WKU faculty are “Responsible Employees” of the University and MUST report what you share to

WKU's Title IX Coordinator or Title IX Investigator. If you would like to speak with someone who may be able to afford you confidentiality, you may contact WKU's Counseling and Testing Center at 270-745-3159.

WKU COVID-19 Statement: All students are strongly encouraged to [get the COVID-19 vaccine](#). In accordance with WKU policy, all students must call the WKU COVID-19 Assistance Line at 270-745-2019 within 4 hours of testing positive for COVID-19 or being identified as a close contact to someone who has tested positive. The COVID Assistance Line is available to answer questions regarding any COVID-19 related issue. This guidance is subject to change based on requirements set forth by federal, state, and local public health entities. Please refer to the Healthy on the Hill website for the most current information. www.wku.edu/healthyonthehill

USEFUL CAMPUS RESOURCES:

Even the best of students can feel overwhelmed by a heavy course load or stressed out from the demands of college life. There are numerous resources available to *all students* on campus that can help you progress through your coursework in a successful and timely manner. Such resources include, but are not limited to:

- 1) The Learning Center (<http://www.wku.edu/tlc/>) -- Student Success Center, Downing Student Union, 2141
- 2) The Writing Center (<http://www.wku.edu/writingcenter/>) -- Cherry Hall, 123 (primary location)
- 3) The Literacy Center (<http://www.wku.edu/literacycenter/>) -- Gary Ransdell Hall, 2066
- 4) Counseling Center (<https://www.wku.edu/heretohelp/>) -- Potter Hall, Room 409

TENATIVE CLASS SCHEDULE

This schedule is subject to change and will be updated via class announcements and email as necessary. Due dates for individual assessments can be found on Blackboard.

Dates	Topics
Week 1 (Jan. 17-22)	Module 1: Introduction, Searching for Articles, & Citing Articles
Week 2 (Jan. 23-29)	Module 2: Reading Research Reports & Evaluating Titles and Abstracts
Week 3 (Jan. 30-Feb. 5)	Module 3: Evaluating Introductions & Literature Reviews
Week 4 (Feb. 6-12)	Module 4: Evaluating Samples
Week 5 (Feb. 13-19)	Module 5: Evaluating Measures
Week 6 (Feb. 20-26)	Module 6: Evaluating Experimental Procedures
Week 7 (Feb. 27-March 5)	Module 7: Evaluating Results Sections
Week 8 (March 6-12)	Module 8: Evaluating Discussion Sections
Week 9 (March 13-19)	NO MODULE – SPRING BREAK
Week 10 (March 20-26)	Module 9: Research Ethics
Week 11 (March 27-April 2)	Module 10: Peer Review
Week 12 (April 3-9)	Module 11: Understanding the Replication Crisis
Week 13 (April 10-16)	Module 12: Introduction to Open Science
Week 14 (April 17-23)	Module 13: How to be Critical, Not Cynical
Week 15 (April 24-30)	Module 14: Putting It All Together
Week 16 (May 1-7)	NO MODULE – FINALS WEEK