

Welcome to Research Methods Lab!

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

Office: Gary Ransdell Hall, 3043

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:

The purpose of this laboratory course is to teach students how to critically read and evaluate research articles using the content and experiences gained in PSY 210. The goal for students, by the end of the course, is that they will become critical consumers of research and have the competencies necessary to evaluate, reflect, and create elements of a good research article. This course will run online asynchronously.

COURSE PREREQUISITE/COREQUISITE

PSY 100 or PSYS 100 with a C or better/PSY 210 Research Methods

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

1. Understand the steps of the scientific method used in behavioral research
2. Understand how to find and read scientific articles
3. Apply the scientific method to real-world problems in behavioral science
4. Analyze peer-reviewed scientific articles
5. Cultivate a sense of healthy skepticism surrounding empirical research
6. Understand how to be proponents of reproducibility and open science

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

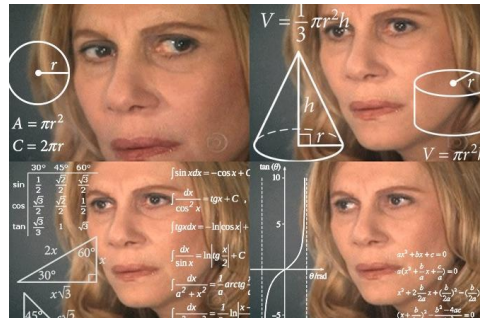
This going to sound wild, but nothing in this class will be graded - attendance, readings, quizzes, activities – all of it will not be graded. All you have to do is attempt something and turn it on time. That's it – you just have to try! The only assignment that will result in a grade is the *final grade proposal* (details below). It is required in that, if you don't turn one in, I will submit an F as your final grade in the class. I think you are likely having two reactions to this news about the class:

1) Reaction #1:



Basically, you don't believe me...but you should! For this class to be a beneficial experience for us both, we need to trust each other. Specifically, I need you to trust that 1) I know what I am trying to teach you, 2) I will treat you fairly and with respect, and 3) I will never lie to you, especially about this course. In return, I am going to trust that 1) you know what is best for you and your goals (both educational and personal), and 2) you will act in a way that functions in accordance with those goals.

2) Reaction #2:



You are freaked out and confused because you don't know what to do for this class. My guess is that you haven't had a class structured like this before, and it drastically deviates from the "game of school" that you are used to playing. In the game, the answer to, "What do I do for the class?" is: "Do what the teacher says." To be clear, this is probably beneficial in our early educational experiences, but we are all adults here, and I have no desire to establish a power differential between us. My job is to create an environment that gives you opportunities to learn about psychology via lectures, discussions, and activities, etc., BUT ultimately, what you do is up to you; how much you engage and contribute to our class is your choice.

In sum, here are things we will be doing in this class:

- 1. Readings (not graded):** Reading your assigned readings will be helpful for you to gain a greater understanding of the subjects we are going over in class. They are short, and I think most are truly fun to read.
- 2. Activities/assignments (not graded):** Activities and assignments will take on various forms - a worksheet, a short quiz, a discussion-based activity, etc. Again, how much effort you put into it is up to you; I won't be giving you a grade on it. I (or the class TA) will be focusing on giving you quality feedback.
- 3. Self-reflections (not graded):** Twice over the course of the class, I will give you the option to turn in a self-reflection about your learning and experiences in PSY 211. I will read this and give you feedback! It's meant to be an opportunity for you to deeply consider your progress as a student, and it is an opportunity for me to help you with anything you are struggling with – and to give you praise and encouragement!
- 4. Class Participation (not graded):** This is the most important aspect of this class. To make a course worthwhile, we need to create a sense of community; this necessitates everybody showing up, engaging, and learning to care for one another. This may, at times, require you to move beyond your comfort zone, and I am here to facilitate those experiences.
- 5. Final grade proposal (REQUIRED and results in a grade):** This brings us to the only required component of the class: the final grade proposal. As much as I dislike grading, at the end of the semester, I am required by the university to enter a grade that will go on your transcript. I must do this. So, I will give you a document that outlines all the course components, and you will grade yourself. As part of this assignment, you will be required

to explain what grade you think you deserve and why. This will require you to think about what you learned, and gained, from this class. Did you form new relationships with your peers? Did you do all the readings and think about them in ways that helped you gain new knowledge and grow as a human being? Did you write and submit your work? Did you show up to class? Did you engage with the material?

I reserve the right to change the final grade in an upward direction. For example, if I think you deserve a B, but you give yourself an A, I will NOT change the grade. BUT if you give yourself a B and I think you deserve an A, then I WILL change the grade.

There are 3 ways you can do poorly in this class:

- 1) You assign yourself a bad grade
- 2) You **don't submit the final grade proposal assignment (automatic F)**
- 3) You don't try. I will check to see if your final grade proposal matches your submissions over the course of the semester. For example, for you to assign yourself an A on an activity, you must have attempted it and turned it in on Blackboard. I will check to see if you did submit it. The work doesn't have to be perfect or even great. BUT you must try to do it. **Should you have more than 4 missing assignments, you fail this class.**

COURSE POLICIES:

My Open-Door Policy: You are welcome to meet with me outside of class time 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 UA. 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?

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 have the opportunity to 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.

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 211" 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.

Regular and Substantive Interaction: The U.S. Department of Education requires that distance education courses must include regular and substantive interaction between students and faculty. For more information about Regular and Substantive Interaction at WKU, please visit the Regular and Substantive Interaction in Online and Distance Learning webpage.

In this course, regular and substantive interaction will take place in the following ways:

- Opportunities for synchronous sessions with faculty and students during office hours,
- Faculty participation in weekly discussion assignments,
- Weekly announcements, and
- Timely and detailed feedback on assignments

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.

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 can be found on Blackboard.

Dates	Topics	Notes
Week 1 (Aug. 22-26)	Introduction/Background/Searching for Articles	
Week 2 (Aug. 29–Sep. 2)	Reading and Summarizing Research	
Week 3 (Sep. 5-9)	Evaluating Titles and Abstracts	Labor Day Sep. 5
Week 4 (Sep. 12-16)	Evaluating Introductions and Literature Reviews	
Week 5 (Sep. 19-23)	Evaluating Samples	
Week 6 (Sep. 26-30)	Evaluating Measures	
Week 7 (Oct. 3-7)	Evaluating Experimental Procedures	
Week 8 (Oct. 10-14)	Midsemester Review	Fall break Oct. 13 and 14
Week 9 (Oct. 17-21)	Evaluating Results Sections	
Week 10 (Oct. 24-28)	Evaluating Discussion Sections	
Week 11 (Oct. 31-Nov.4)	Peer Review	
Week 12 (Nov. 7-11)	Understanding the Replication Crisis	
Week 13 (Nov. 14-18)	Intro to Open Science	
Week 14 (Nov. 21-25)	Thanksgiving – No class/assignments	
Week 15 (Nov. 28-Dec. 2)	Conclusion/Putting it all together	
Week 16 (Dec. 5-9)	Finals Week	