

GRANDE PRAIRIE REGIONAL COLLEGE
PY 2120 RESEARCH METHODS IN PSYCHOLOGY
WINTER, 2004
LECTURE TIMES: TBA
(3-0-0) UT (3)

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Pre-requisites: PY 1040, PY 1050, ST 1510.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOK:

Shaughnessy, J.J. & Zechmeister, E.B. (2003). Research methods in psychology, 5th edition, McGraw-Hill.

THE COURSE: This course is designed as an introductory course in research methods in psychology. It will concentrate on the students= development of critical thinking skills through developing hypotheses, designing research strategies and data collection tools, analysis and interpretation of descriptive and inferential statistical results, and research report writing.

GOALS:

This course requires students to develop cognitively and behaviourally in the following areas:

1. Knowledge structures; organized, related and interrelated information; the what of critical thinking and psychology research.
2. Procedural knowledge; research methods and procedures, and communication of ideas; the how of critical thinking and psychology research.
3. Metacognitive judgement; critical and analytic thought concerning the proper use of the procedures; the where and when of critical thinking and psychology research.
4. Attitudinal considerations; understanding the value of this work and its application; the why of critical thinking and psychology research.

GOALS: As a result of participating in this course, students will demonstrate the abilities to:

1. find sources in the library through the use of search techniques.
2. understand and apply the concept of Atheory@ to various ideas concerning natural phenomena, and evaluate theories according to established criteria.
3. understand and apply the concept of empirical evidence, to differentiate what is and what is not evidence.
4. to formulate questions and hypotheses that are appropriate for systematic investigation, recognizing and distinguishing descriptive, correlational, explanatory, basic and applied designs.
5. Understand the APA=s guidelines of ethics in human experimentation by evaluating the ethics of research proposals.
6. design research strategies to investigate the problems they have formulated.
7. construct the data collection tools that will be necessary to conduct their research.
8. analyse and interpret the data their research might generate.
9. evaluate their own research and that of others.
10. write research reports in APA style.

TOPICS:

1. Science and scientific enquiry; approaches to knowledge, common sense versus science.
2. Ethical issues in research.
3. Using the library; literature searches, reviewing, and critical synthesis of research literature.
3. Descriptive research; defining the question, observation, sampling, data analysis. Core concepts in the quantitative approach; variables, hypotheses and theories.
4. Interviews and surveys.
5. Descriptive research; correlational methods. Criteria for evaluating quantitative research.
6. Controlled experimental methods.
7. Program evaluation.

TEACHING STYLE:

My preferred teaching style is interactive lecture, derived from the teaching philosophy that little is learned until responses are made (either verbally or written).

- I am extremely available for student consultation, and I will be more than happy to proof students' rough drafts and to further discuss course material.

- Late papers will be marked, but penalized 2 points per class day. As adequate time is allotted between the assignment and the due date, no excuses other than medical and major emergencies will be accepted. Papers with spelling and grammatical errors will be penalized. Papers with multiple errors will be returned unmarked.

ASSESSMENT:

"A grade is an inadequate report of an inaccurate judgement of a biased and variable judge of the extent to which a student has obtained an unidentified level of mastery of an unknown proportion of an indefinite amount of material."

-Paul Dressel, 1955.

Research psychology recognizes the authority of, and bases its judgements on, carefully collected data, as opposed to "tradition" or "authority figures." In keeping with this philosophy, students will be assessed according to their position with respect to the rest of the class, rather than according to the arbitrary judgements of the instructor based upon non-standardized tests.

Assessment will consist of 3 quizzes and 3 lab reports, each worth 15%. The final 10% will be for take-home assignments, library work, and class contributions. No dates are given, but each will be announced in class; I intend to let student abilities direct the speed of the course.