Syllabus: PSY 3113, Research Methods for the Behavioral Sciences, (1761) Fall 2011

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Office hours: Mon/Wed/Fri 1:00-3:00PM Room S236. Office hours will also be conducted via WIMBA Live Classroom by appointment—send email request.


Click here for the publisher’s website (you can purchase the e-text version here).

Course Description: Research Methods for the Behavioral Sciences Psychology is concerned with statistical and other computational methods applicable to a science of behavior, hypothesis testing, sampling problems, and interpretation of results. Practical tips and applications will allow you to make real-world connections and help you to master the material. This course offers comprehensive coverage of both experimental and non-experimental methods, and provides succinct explanations for a full range of methods, including descriptive, correlational, experimental, and quasi-experimental research designs.

The required textbook that has been selected for you provides enough information so that a student with no experimental background will be able to design, execute, interpret, and report simple psychological experiments. This is important because in addition to completing chapter exams (and a cumulative final exam), you will write a formal term paper comprised of a mock research proposal in APA style.

Each Module will be comprised of a podcast based on the corresponding textbook chapter. Occasionally, pdf journal articles, websites, and streaming videos will be provided as supplemental material.

This course requires that you have regular access to a computer that has internet access. Take advantage of the computer help desk when you are having difficulty: (248) 204-2330.

Important Dates: September 13 is the last day to drop this course with a full refund; November 30 is the last day to withdraw from this course.

Grading: Your course grade will be determined by the following four categories:

1. Your performance on the 13 chapter exams.
2. Your performance on the cumulative final exam.
3. Your performance on the term paper.
4. Your performance on the presentation

Each of the four categories will count towards 25% of your grade. However, failure to complete the term paper (regardless of grade) will result in automatic failure of the course.

Exams: The 13 chapter exams will be provided to you via the Assignments section of Blackboard. Each exam will be made available from Friday-Tuesday immediately following the corresponding Module. Therefore, Chapter 1 Exam will be available for you to complete online from 9/9-9/12. The Final Exam will be completed in class on the day of the Final.

Term Paper: This course requires completion of a formal academic paper, totaling at least 2000 words, exclusive of references. You will pick the topic, issue or current debate that is relevant to Research Methods. The instructor will approve the topic. The instructor will help you find references as needed, and will start providing you with a wide range of review papers in a Term Paper folder in the Course Documents section of Blackboard. YOU SHOULD PLAN ON SELECTING A TOPIC AND HAVING IT APPROVED BY October 4. The paper will be typed, double-spaced, and comply with the standards of LTU writing assignments in terms of grammar and language. The paper needs to conform to APA style or MLA style (APA style if you are a psychology major). You will submit both a draft and a final version of the paper
via Blackboard’s SafeAssign to insure that you have not committed plagiarism (described in detail below). The draft of your paper will be edited and returned, with thoughtful written comments. THE DRAFT NEEDS TO BE SUBMITTED BY November 28. THE FINAL PAPER IS DUE December 23. The paper will total 25% of the final course grade.

Both your term paper draft and your term paper final will be submitted via SafeAssign(tm) to check the papers against the internet, a reference library, and all papers previously submitted to SafeAssign. If you have been found to plagiarize on your term paper draft, you will be instructed on how to correct the errors. If your term paper final has been found to contain plagiarism, you will automatically fail the course and the plagiarism will become part of your permanent academic record.

Presentation: This course requires that prepare and deliver a public presentation based on your term paper. Your presentation will be comprised of any audio-visual aids you would like to use, but needs to include, at minimum, overhead slides (PowerPoint presentation). The instructor will assist you in putting your presentation together as necessary. Your goal is to prepare a 10-min presentation that summarizes your term paper. ALL STUDENTS MUST ARCHIVE THEIR PRESENTATION USING WIMBA BY THE DAY OF THE FINAL, December 22. The presentation will total 25% of the final course grade.

Course Schedule: This course is designed according to weekly Modules, each of which is based on a chapter in the book. Your masters of each chapter will be assessed by completion of an online multiple choice that you will complete during the weekend.

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Academic Honesty Is Required: Please refer to the LTU Academic Honor Code available via the following link: http://www.ltu.edu/currentstudents/honor_code.asp

Plagiarism: The term “plagiarism” includes but is not limited to (a) the use, by paraphrase or direct quotation, of the published or unpublished work or creative and/or intellectual property in print, product, or digital media of another person without full and clear acknowledgment; (b) the unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or agency engaged in the selling of term papers, reports, or other academic materials; or (c) the appropriating, buying, receiving as a gift, or obtaining by any other means another person’s work and the unacknowledged submission or incorporation of it in one’s own work. Plagiarism is unethical, since it deprives the true author of his/her rightful credit and then gives that credit to someone to whom it is not due. Examples include:

- Quoting, paraphrasing, or summarizing written material, even a few phrases, without acknowledgment.
- Failing to acknowledge the source of either a major idea or an ordering principle central to one’s own paper.
- Relying on another person’s data, evidence, or critical method without credit or permission.
- Submitting another person’s work as one’s own.
- Using unacknowledged research sources gathered by someone else.
- Copying portions or outcomes of two- or three-dimensional creative property of previously published work.
- Copying items from Internet websites without acknowledgment of the source.

The Lawrence Tech definition of plagiarism as quoted from the honor code is available via the following link: http://www.ltu.edu/currentstudents/honor_code_offenses.asp

Class Policies and Expectations: Lawrence Tech plans to offer you a valuable learning experience, and expects you and the instructor to work together to achieve this goal. Here are some general expectations regarding this course:

- Each student has a LTU email account. If you wish to use a different email address for this course, please change your email address in Blackboard under “Blackboard Tools”, then “Personal Information” and send an email to the instructor so he/she can store your address in the email directory.
- Readings, discussion forum participation, and written assignments must be completed according to the class schedule. If business travel will take you away from regular participation, please clear the dates with the instructor in advance.
- It is essential that all students actively contribute to the course objectives through their experiences and working knowledge.
- All assignments must be submitted on schedule, via Blackboard, and using Microsoft Office compatible software. If you need to submit an assignment via email, contact the instructor in advance. Late work will be reduced in value.
- Be prepared to log into Blackboard at least once each day. Please focus your online correspondence within the appropriate Blackboard discussion forums so that your colleagues can learn from you.
- At midterm and at the end of the course, you will be invited to participate in a University evaluation of this course. Your feedback is important to the University, to LTU Online, and to the instructors, and we encourage you to participate in the evaluation process.

It is important for you as students to know what to expect from your instructor:

- The instructor will be available to you via e-mail and phone, and will promptly reply to your messages.
- The instructor will be available to you for face-to-face and/or Wimba appointments as requested.
The instructor will maintain the Blackboard web site with current materials, and will resolve any content-related problems promptly as they are reported.

The instructor will send out a weekly e-mail update to all class members to guide upcoming work and remind you of assignment due dates.

The instructor will return all assignments to you promptly, and will include individualized comments and suggestions with each assignment.

The instructor will hold all personal written or verbal communications in confidence. The instructor will not post any of your assignments for viewing by the class without requesting your approval in advance.

The instructor will treat all members of the class fairly, and will do his best to accommodate individual learning styles and special needs.

If any of these points need clarification, or when special circumstances arise that require assistance, please contact the instructor to discuss the matter personally.