PSY 610: Advanced Research Methods in Psychology (3 units)
San Diego State University
Spring 2012

INSTRUCTOR: Allison A. Vaughn, Ph.D.
EMAIL: avaughn@sciences.sdsu.edu (best way to reach me)
OFFICE HOURS: Monday 2pm-3pm, LS-175 (or by appointment)
PHONE: 619.594.5536
LECTURE: Monday 9:00am-11:40am, LS-246
COURSE WEBSITE: https://blackboard.sdsu.edu/webapps/login/

“Each problem that I solved became a rule, which served afterwards to solve other problems.”
~Rene Descartes~

COURSE OVERVIEW:
The goals of this course are threefold. First, it will serve as a graduate overview of methodological issues in psychological research. Second, it will highlight methodological issues within specific areas of psychology (e.g., social, clinical). Finally, students will be encouraged to think critically about their own research by making links between course content and their own thesis.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:
By the end of this class you will know how to:
1. Evaluate internal, external, construct, and statistical conclusion validities.
2. Evaluate experimental, quasi-experimental, and non experimental methodologies.
3. Classify and operationally define variables.
4. Integrate course topics and apply them to your specific research area and thesis topic.
5. Communicate research ideas effectively and accurately by
   • writing weekly papers and
   • actively participating in class discussion

READINGS:
There is one required* text for the course and weekly readings will be posted on blackboard.


Below is a list of suggested texts on methods, both general and area-specific, but you do not need to purchase these for this course.
Suggested general text:

Area-specific texts:

Developmental

Clinical

Social

CLASSROOM POLICIES:

- **Attendance and Participation:** Active participation in class helps comprise a large part of your grade so attendance is crucial.

- **Students with disabilities:** ADA/Accommodations: San Diego State University seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services and activities for people with disabilities. If you will need accommodations in the class, reasonable prior notice needs to be given to the Student Disability Services (SDS), 619.594.6473 or online at http://www.sa.sdsu.edu/sds. SDS will work with you and the instructor to make arrangements for accommodations. All written information in this course can be made available in alternative format with prior notification to the SDS.

- **Academic dishonesty:** The Student Code of Conduct is online at http://www.sa.sdsu.edu/sr/conduct1.html. The academic dishonesty code specifies actions for behaviors such as cheating on tests, plagiarism, and/or inappropriately collaborating with others. I will enforce the code in the course; cheating or other violations will result in appropriate penalties, including a failing grade on the assignment or in the course, and the reporting of that incident to the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities. Students have the right to appeal such action in accord with the due process.

- **Withdrawals and incompletes:** The last day for dropping the course is January 31st and for withdrawal without penalty is February 2nd. Incompletes are given “only when the faculty member concludes that a small clearly identifiable portion of course requirements cannot be met within the academic term for unforeseen reasons. An incomplete will be not given when it is necessary for the student to attend a major portion of the class when it is next offered.”

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADES:

- **Thought papers.** During the first part of the semester, you will write weekly thought paper (topics will be posted with the readings). These will be one-page type-written papers (do not exceed one page). They will be graded on a check-plus (exceptional performance), check (expected performance), or check-minus (unacceptable performance) basis. They will be due at the beginning of class each week on that week’s topic. Your weekly thought papers and active participation in class will count as 50% of your final grade.
• **Group projects.** During the second part of the semester, you will be exploring methodological issues specific to different areas of psychology (e.g., social, neuroscience). Your **group’s performance** and your **active participation** (via questions and during discussion) during other group’s projects will count as 25% of your final grade.
  
  o **During the week your group is presenting…**
    - (Prior to the week that you are presenting) your group will be responsible for picking topics and selecting readings for your week.
    - Your group will collect discussion questions from other students in the class and facilitate class discussion.
    - Note: you will not need to “turn in” questions for your own presentation.
  
  o **During the week your group is NOT presenting…**
    - Your assignment for the week will be to formulate three questions about the assigned readings. These will be due to both me and to the group who is presenting by 5pm on the Friday prior to class.

• **Final paper.** Your final paper will be worth 25% of your final grade and will be due Monday, May 14th (the day of your final exam) by noon. Details of this paper will be posted.
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<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>01/23</td>
<td>Introduction to course/Planning research</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>01/30</td>
<td>Writing</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>02/06</td>
<td>Types of validity</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<td>Experimental designs</td>
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<td>Non experimental designs</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>03/05</td>
<td>Independent/predictor variables &amp; Dependent/outcome variables</td>
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<td>8</td>
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<td>Statistics</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>03/19</td>
<td>Cultural influences in psychology</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>03/26</td>
<td>Spring Break—No Class</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>04/02</td>
<td>Group projects – developmental neuroscience</td>
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<td>12</td>
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<td>Professional development</td>
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<td>Group projects – health psychology</td>
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<td>17</td>
<td>05/14</td>
<td>Final papers due by noon</td>
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(I’ll be available for office hours during class time)

Notes: