

## EXPERIMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY

### *and Contemporary Methods of Psychological Science*

Tu/Th 12:30-1:45pm, Jones 108

**Instructor:** Mike Hoerger, Office in Stern 3070, mhoerger@tulane.edu

#### **Lab Instructors:**

Xzania White Lee

Lab meets Fridays at 9am in Stern 3023

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Lab meets Fridays at 11am in Stern 3023

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**Course Web Site:** <http://psychmike.com/exp>

We will rely mainly on this web site, while grades, data files, and readings will be posted on Blackboard.

**Prerequisite:** PSYC 3090 – Univariate Statistics

**Corequisite:** Experimental Lab section. Each student is personally responsible for enrolling in their desired lab section. Students cannot attend lab sections other than the one they are enrolled in, and students in different lab sections cannot work together on the few joint assignments.

**Course Overview:** Psychology is the scientific study of human behavior. This course will provide an overview of the research methods used to study people, including correlational studies, lab experiments, clinical studies, and other approaches. After completing this course, successful students will be able to do the following:

- Develop testable hypotheses and design simple correlational and experimental studies that have the potential for significance and innovation
- Read and critically evaluate research articles and scientific claims
- Conduct basic statistical analyses of broad relevance to psychological science
- Contribute to the scientific infrastructure of the nation that will allow the coming generation of psychologists to flourish

#### **Required Textbooks:**

- Main textbook: Reading assignments are posted as PDF documents on Blackboard.
- American Psychological Association. (2009). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association – 6th edition*. Washington, DC: Author. ISBN = 1433805618 or 978-1433805615  
<http://www.amazon.com/Publication-American-Psychological-Association-Edition/dp/1433805618>

#### **Other Materials:**

- Simple calculator without text entry capabilities
- USB-style “flash” or “jump” drive
- Access to the internet and SPSS (in on-campus labs)

**Format:** Students are responsible for preparing for class by keeping up on assigned readings and homework. You are responsible for all information and announcements made in class, regardless of whether you are there. In accordance with University policy, you are also required to check your e-mail each day. Attendance correlates ( $r = .50$ ) with good grades. Advising wants to be contacted if you are not meeting expectations.

**Academic Dishonesty:** Students are responsible for adhering to the Academic Honesty Policy at Tulane (<http://tulane.edu/college/upload/Academic-Honesty-at-Tulane-2011.pdf>). Violations include plagiarism, looking at notes during an exam/quiz, looking at another student's paper during an exam/quiz, turning in assignments with answers paraphrased or copied from another classmate, and more. In the typical situation, two friends work together and turn in the same incorrect, bizarre answers, or someone copies directly from the internet. Work should be conducted independently, unless otherwise indicated. The Policy states that "Students are required to act in accordance with The Code of Academic Conduct. Any suspected violations will be brought before the Newcomb-Tulane College Honor Board," which can result in an automatic course failure, probation or expulsion, and a letter in one's permanent record.

**Plagiarism:** Plagiarism means presenting someone else's ideas as your own without properly giving credit. In a nutshell, this means your assignments must be your own, unless otherwise stated. It is not okay to work together to solve specific homework problems. For papers, use a citation when expressing another's idea that is not common knowledge. Use a citation and page number when paraphrasing closely, providing a figure, or providing a number/statistic. Use a citation, page number, and quotation marks when directly copying.

**Classroom Civility:** Students are responsible for adhering to the Tulane Policy on Disruptive and Threatening Student Behavior (<http://tulane.edu/studentaffairs/upload/Disruptive-and-Threatening-Student-Behavior-Final.pdf>). Violations include persistently arriving late or leaving early without prior authorization, talking incessantly during lecture, making frequent interruptions, belligerence, threats or bribes (written, spoken, or non-verbal, even jokingly), substance use, and inappropriate use of electronics. Violations will be handled informally where possible. Repeated or severe violations may result in dismissal from the classroom, referral to the Office of Judicial Affairs, and/or police response.

**Technology:** Cell phones, music devices, and other items that may distract classmates should be silenced, including alerts and vibrations, and put away prior to the start of class. Computers should only be used to access course content, not email, Facebook, Twitter, Tinder, or other content that may distract classmates. Violations will be handled as with the classroom civility policy.

**Special Needs:** Tulane provides reasonable accommodations to participate in educational programs, activities, and services. Students requiring accommodations to participate in class activities or meet course requirements should first register with the Office of Disability Services (<http://tulane.edu/studentaffairs/disability/index.cfm>), and then contact Mike as early as possible. A letter verifying need for accommodation will be provided and should be presented to instructors in the first two weeks.

**Non-Discrimination and Support:** Tulane recognizes the inherent dignity of all individuals and promotes respect for all people. As "One Wave," Tulane is committed to providing an environment free of all forms of discrimination based on race, ethnicity, creed, religion, gender, gender identity and sexual orientation, as well as all forms of sexual harassment, including sexual assault, domestic and dating violence, and stalking. If you (or someone you know) has experienced or experiences discrimination, domestic violence, sexual assault or sexual harassment, know that you are not alone. Resources and support are available ([onewave.tulane.edu](http://onewave.tulane.edu)). Any and all of your communications on these matters will be treated as either "Strictly Confidential" or "Mostly Confidential" as explained online (<http://tulane.edu/studentaffairs/violence/note-on-confidentiality.cfm>)

**Class Schedule:** The course schedule will be updated online and any announcements will be made in class. Dates for exams and papers are final, barring university closings (see online course calendar).

- Drop Deadline: 9/25 (without record), 11/2 (with record)
- Make-up Exam: Tuesday 12/15 at 8am
- Make-up Lab, Re-Writes, ELC: Friday 12/11 at 11:59am

**Innovation Waiver:** Extremely advanced students can waive any-and-all course requirements by putting forth a more challenging alternative. For example, in the past advanced students have negotiated replacing the term paper requirements with the greater challenge of producing a publication-quality manuscript from a mentor's data. Any student requesting an innovation waiver should complete the innovation waiver form ([http://www.psychmike.com/exp/innovation\\_waiver.doc](http://www.psychmike.com/exp/innovation_waiver.doc)) by September 10.

**Grades:** A = 920.00, A- = 890.00, B+ = 860.00, B = 820.00, B- = 790.00, C+ = 760.00, C = 720.00, C- = 690.00, D+ = 660.00, D = 620.00, D- = 590.00, E < 590.00

Statistical procedures (e.g., item analysis, ANCOVA) are used to ensure the fairness of test items and the provision of lab instruction. While there is no rounding (even by 0.001 points), the available extra credit and make-up work will provide students with ample opportunities for titrating their grades. Finally, the top student of the semester will be honored with the Experimental Psychology B. F. Skinner Excellence Award, and the student(s) writing the best paper will receive the Experimental Psychology Frances Kelsey Writing Award.

Category	Number	Points Each	Points Total	Percentage
Extra Credit	--	--	(50)	(5.0%)
Exams	3	160	480	48.0%
Lab Papers	2	120	240	24.0%
Lab Quiz	1	30	30	3.0%
Lab Assignments	5	30	150	15.0%
Lab Attendance	--	--	60	6.0%
Experiential Learning Credit (ELC)	--	--	40	4.0%
<b>Total</b>			<b>1,000</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

**Extra Credit:** There are 50 extra credit points available. Extra credit will come primarily from pop quizzes held in lecture. Students are expected to complete assigned readings prior to class. No additional extra credit opportunities are expected to be offered, and missed quizzes cannot be made up.

**Exams:** Each exam is worth 160 points. All exams are 40 multiple choice questions. In addition to the 3 regularly scheduled exams, there will be 1 optional make-up exam (cumulative, held finals week). The make-up exam can replace a low or missing exam score. If you are content with your scores, however, you may elect not to take the make-up exam.

**Lab Papers:** Each paper is worth 120 points. Details will be provided in lab and lecture. Students are expected to back-up their work frequently and print the night before to avoid catastrophes. Late papers can be submitted by email before midnight (email your lab instructor and CC Mike) and will be marked 30% off. Students will be allowed to substantially revise and re-submit the 2nd paper to earn back half the points they missed.

**Writing Intensive.** The lab papers can be used to fulfill Tulane's "Writing Intensive" requirement. For students completing the Intensive, the only differences are that students are required to work alone on both papers and revise the 2nd one, each of which are normally optional (<http://tulane.edu/liberal-arts/undergraduate-writing-intensive-requirement.cfm>). This is a good option for many students but may not be recommended for students who think they will prefer a partner due to lower statistical or writing skills. This is a part of Tulane's broader mission of making graduates more competitive, as writing skills have historically been underemphasized here. Implementation of the "Writing Intensive" program has moved Tulane from a "D" (underdeveloped) to a "B" (effective) rating in this quality domain (Dunn, McCarthy, Baker, Halonen, & Hill, 2007). In contrast, A-level (distinguished) programs have systematic, multi-tiered writing requirements.

**Lab Quiz:** There is one multiple choice lab quiz worth 30 points, which will cover knowledge of APA style citations and referencing.

**Lab Assignments:** Each of the 5 assignments are worth 30 points. All assignments must be typed. Allow ample time for SPSS assignments, and remember to backup your work. Late or incomplete assignments can be submitted by e-mail before midnight (email the lab instructor and CC Mike) and will be marked 30% off. At the end of the year, there will be one make-up assignment offered, which is optional and can be used to replace a low or missing score *on a lab assignment OR the lab quiz*.

**Lab Attendance:** Lab attendance is mandatory. Students will lose 10 points per absence, 5 per tardy. Students missing 6 labs automatically fail the course. The lab instructor can excuse an absence if notified the same day or earlier and subsequently presented with evidence of an urgent doctor's visit or funeral attendance. The available extra credit should more than offset the loss of points for other potential absences (e.g., vacations, interviews, cleaning up dog pee, oversleeping).

**Experiential Learning Credit (ELC):** A great philosopher Wang Yangming once argued that, "to know and not to act is not to know." Students are to complete 4 hours of ELC in psychology for 40 points; it's **all or nothing**, so if you do 3.8 hours, you get no points. Students only get credit for participating in activities above-and-beyond what they normally do (i.e., no credit for existing school, work, or volunteer responsibilities). Students attending an event at Tulane's downtown campus will receive an extra ½ hour of credit to incentivize interdisciplinarity. Hours can be completed using any combination of the following options:

**Research Study Participation.** Students can serve as research participants through SONA, Tulane's psychology research web site (<https://tulane-psych.sona-systems.com/>). Participating in psychological research will yield firsthand knowledge of research materials and methods, allow for introspection, provide exposure to research labs potentially worth joining, and support the Tulane research infrastructure that underlies much of the university's prestige, funding, and contribution to society.

**Creative Activities.** These must be approved by Mike in advance. They can be anything that allows you to use psychology skills in the real world. Some options:

- Attend an on-campus event that can be linked to psychology
- Advocate for causes valued by psychologists, e.g., human welfare, science, teaching, equality
- Write a letter to a newspaper editor regarding an issue involving psychology, human welfare, statistics, or research
- Interview someone who does work you are interested in pursuing in your career
- Research and compose an educational and career development plan

**Article Reviews.** I have posted several recent articles from *Psychological Science* on Blackboard under the Course Materials section, which can be reviewed for 1 ELC hour each. Read the article and write a 1.5+ page (double-spaced) review that answers these questions: (1) What are the main conclusions of the article? (2) What are the strengths and weaknesses of the study or article? (3) Are their conclusions valid—that is, do you buy what they're selling? (4) Given these findings, what should researcher examine next and why? Reviews that are < 1.5 pages or with 2 or more spelling/grammatical errors will be returned.