

Psyc 52A-1: Research Methods

Contact Details

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Communication

Email is the best way to reach me, outside of office hours. I will do my best to respond within 24-48 hours.

Continuity

This course will be taught remotely in its entirety. All course announcements will be posted on Latte and sent via Latte email. In case you experience difficulties with the access to course materials and/or have trouble keeping up with the lectures and the assignments, please let me know as soon as you can.

Meeting Times/Locations

Classes

Mon/Tue/Wed/Thur 9:10AM – 11:20AM

<https://brandeis.zoom.us/j/96987785375>

Student Hours

by appointment

<https://brandeis.zoom.us/j/91887681970>

Accommodations

Brandeis seeks to create a learning environment that is welcoming and inclusive of all students, and I want to support you in your learning. If you think you may require disability accommodations, you will need to work with Student Accessibility Support (SAS) (781-736-3470 - access@brandeis.edu - brandeis.edu/accessibility.edu). You can find helpful student FAQs and other resources on the SAS website, including guidance on how to know whether you might be eligible for support from SAS. If you already have an accommodation letter from SAS, please provide me with a copy as soon as you can so that I can ensure effective implementation of accommodations for this class. In order to coordinate exam accommodations, ideally you should provide the accommodation letter at least 48 hours before an exam.

Course Description

Learning Goals:

Psychology is the scientific study of the mind and behavior. In this course you will learn what makes psychology a science, including the reasons why we cannot simply use logic and intuition to analyze and predict human behavior. Scientific method follows a specific set of rules for all the steps of the process involved in conducting an empirical study: forming a hypothesis, creating a study method, gathering data, analyzing data, and writing the results. Importantly, we will also learn about the need to abide by the ethical code of research.

Course Objectives:

The major objective of this course is to teach you how to conduct psychological research and understand the theoretical and practical aspects of the process that represents the core of psychology as a science.

By the end of this course, you should be able to:

- Understand what science is and what it isn't.
- Critically evaluate published research and research reports in the media
- Learn how to use scientific principles to conduct research (and have fun/no fear while doing it!)
- Know how to formulate and test a scientific hypothesis.
- Understand the importance of the measurement and its psychometric properties (reliability and validity)
- Identify various research techniques and know how to choose the appropriate ones.
- Know the basics of using and interpreting descriptive and inferential statistics in research.
- Write a full APA style research report.
- Recognize ethical issues and their implications.

Writing-Intensive Course:

This course is writing intensive. The assignments include three major written assignments. If you find writing challenging, please make sure to consult Brandeis Writing Center, and do so as early as we begin writing. This will help you progress faster and avoid end-of-semester stress.

Experiential Learning Course:

This course is listed as an experiential learning course. For more information, see

<http://www.brandeis.edu/experientiallearning/>.

Credit Hours:

Success in this four-credit course is based on the expectation that students will spend the combined total of in-class and outside-of-class work of 36 hours per week for a five-week course (lectures, readings, reviewing, writing). The condensed format of summer semesters means that there will be more work that needs to be done faster. If you feel that you are falling behind, we need to act fast, so contact me as soon as possible and I will do my best to help you.

Course Requirements**Attendance**

Attendance is strongly encouraged. This course requires consistent work and practice, and timely completion of assignments, so you will likely have trouble catching up if you miss too many classes.

Assignments

This is writing intensive course, and you will be asked to complete and submit three research papers, as outlined below.

Content Analysis Study (15%)

The first big writing research assignment in this course will involve the use of existing data. You will work in small groups to design, complete, and write an informal report of a study. Each member of the group will get the same grade, and this grade will count towards 70% of the final grade for this assignment. The remaining 30% will be based on how each member evaluates the contribution of the others in the group (only I will see these and include them in the final grade calculation). The peer assessment will help evaluate individual participation, and hopefully promote engagement of all group members.

First Research Project (20%)

This project will involve conducting a simple, two group design experiment. You will complete all steps of the research process: data collection and analysis, followed by writing all four sections of an APA style research paper (introduction, method, results, and discussion). After this paper is graded, you will be able to re-write and re-submit all four sections. Initial submission and the re-write will each contribute towards the final grade for this project.

Final Research Proposal PowerPoint (20%)

For the final assignment, you will have the opportunity to propose your own study. This project will allow you to demonstrate your knowledge of specific research strategies and the multiple steps of creating a research project.

Exams/Quizzes

There will be two exams. Both exams will include multiple choice and short answer questions. The exams will not be cumulative, and will be completed online, via Latte. There is no final exam.

Participation

The required readings should be completed prior to coming to class. You are encouraged to ask questions as soon as course materials seem confusing or unclear. Periodically, there will be various smaller assignments to be completed in class or at home. This will help you consolidate your knowledge and stay on track with the lectures and reading and help me track your engagement over the course of the semester. These assignments will be graded for completion (thus, it should relieve some anxiety related to the final course grade). We will also have multiple writing workshops to help you practice and master academic writing skills.

Although you are not required to attend office hours, this is a great opportunity to address any concerns and or/questions about the course and the course materials. Additionally, you are encouraged to post questions and comments on Latte, where both questions and answers can be accessed by the entire class.

Missed exams: There will be no makeup exams, unless there is a conflict with another exam, or due to documented medical or family difficulties. In case of a scheduling conflict, the makeup exam must be approved at least 48 hours before the originally scheduled start time for the exam.

Late submissions: Students are expected to submit all assignments on time, as indicated on Latte. Late submissions will be reviewed and graded on a case-by-case basis.

Course Materials

Textbook:

Morling, B. (2020). *Research methods in psychology: Evaluating a world of information* (4th ed.). W. W. Norton & Company.

Electronic resources:

- **LATTE:** <http://latte.brandeis.edu>. LATTE site will refer you to all the other electronic resources, including the Zoom link.
- **SPSS statistical software package, Version 29:** SPSS can be installed on your personal PC or Mac from here: <https://brandeis.onthehub.com> [brandeis.onthehub.com]. The Help Desk can assist

with installation. SPSS is installed on computers in Goldfarb Computer Classroom (26 seats, Goldfarb Library Mezzanine), Farber Computer Classroom (32 seats, Farber Library Level 1), Information Commons (27 seats, Goldfarb Library Level 1), Shapiro Library Cluster (16 seats, Shapiro Campus Center Level 2).

Any additional course materials, including required and recommended readings will be provided on Latte.

Course Plan

Please note: This course plan is tentative. Some shifts in the schedule are possible, either due to unexpected circumstances, or to make any needed adjustments. Syllabus updates will be uploaded to Latte, and you will be alerted to changes.

July 8 - July 11

Introduction to the course. Introduction to the scientific method in psychology research. Critically reading and summarizing empirical articles.

July 15 - July 18

Ethics in research. Claims and validities. Defining and measuring variables. Reliability and validity.

July 22 - July 25

July 25: Exam 1(tentative schedule)

Sampling. Descriptive research strategies: content analysis and surveys. Experimental and non-experimental research strategies. Simple experiments.

Content analysis report due by July 25.

July 31 - August 3

Statistics analyses for simple experiments. Writing a simple experiment report.

First report (final version) due by August 4.

August 7 - August 9

August 8: Exam 2(tentative schedule)

Factorial experiment. Reporting factorial experiments. Conclusions.

Research proposal Power-Point due by August 7.

Evaluation and Grading

There will be two exams, each worth 15% of the grade. Various small assignments will contribute towards 10% of the grade, and a short paper summary is worth 5%. The three major written assignments (content analysis study, research project paper, and research proposal PowerPoint) will contribute towards 15%, 20%, and 20% of the grade, respectively.

Class Element	Grade Percentage	Due date
Exams	30%	
Exam 1	15%	July 25 (tentative schedule)
Exam 2	15%	August 5 (tentative schedule)
Scientific paper summary	5%	as noted on Latte
Small assignments	10%	as noted on Latte
Content analysis study	15%	July 25
First research project paper	20%	as posted on Latte, the final version due by August 4
Final project ppt	20%	August 7

N.B. There will be no extra credit assignments for this class (but you do get to resubmit the first research project). The final grade will be calculated using the following formula (all grades calculated as percentages):

Final grade = .15*exam1 + .15* exam2 + .05*paper summary + .10*small assignments + .15*content analysis study + .20*first research project paper + .20*final project PowerPoint.

You can use this formula to estimate your final grade. The final grade will be distributed like this: A+ (97% and up), A (93 – 96.5), A- (90 – 92.5), B+ (87 – 89.5), B (83 – 86.5), B- (80 – 82.5), C+ (77 – 79.5), C (73 – 76.5), C – (70 – 72.5), D+ (67 – 69.5), D (63 – 66.5), D- (60 – 62.5), F (below 60%).

Important Policies and Resources

Academic Integrity

Every member of the University community is expected to maintain the highest standards of academic integrity. A student shall not submit work that is falsified or is not the result of the student's own effort. Infringement of academic integrity by a student subject that student to serious penalties, which may include failure on the assignment, failure in the course, suspension from the University or other sanctions. Please consult [Brandeis University Rights and Responsibilities](#) for all policies and procedures related to academic integrity. Students may be required to submit work via TurnItIn.com or similar software to verify originality. A student who is in doubt regarding standards of academic integrity as they apply to a specific course or assignment should consult the faculty member responsible for that course or assignment before submitting the work. Allegations of alleged academic dishonesty will be forwarded to the Department of Student Rights and Community Standards. Citation and research assistance can be found at [Brandeis Library Guides - Citing Sources](#).

Policy on the Use of Generative AI Tools

The use of an AI content generator such as ChatGPT to complete an assignment without proper attribution and documentation violates academic integrity. By submitting any work as your own in your class, you pledge to affirm that this is indeed your work and that any additional tools and sources are properly credited.

The following are the approved uses of AI for this course:

- Brainstorming and finetuning your ideas
- Checking style and grammar, finding an expression

Learning how to use AI tools ethically and responsibly is quite important these days.

However, be aware of their limitations and the need to properly cite them in your work. To do so:

- Assume that any AI output is the product of its imagination (no matter how convincing it may seem) and fact-check each argument. Errors and omissions are your responsibility.
- Fully acknowledge the use of AI. First, make sure to cite it. For example, text generated with the help of ChatGPT-4 should be credited using the following format: ChatGPT-4. (YYYY, Month DD of query). Text of your query. Generated using OpenAI. <https://chat.openai.com/>. Content generated using other tools should follow a similar citation format. Next, include a paragraph explaining how you used AI. Include the full list of your prompts and the AI-generated responses. This should be submitted as a separate document. Failure to fully acknowledge the use of AI is a violation of academic integrity.

IMPORTANT: The use of generative AI in quizzes and exams is not allowed

Classroom Health and Safety

- Register for the [Brandeis Emergency Notification System](#). Students who receive an emergency notification while attending class should notify their instructor immediately. In case of a life-threatening emergency, call 911. As a precaution, review [this active shooter information sheet](#).

Course Materials/Books/Apps/Equipment

If you are having difficulty purchasing course materials, please make an appointment with your Student Financial Services or Academic Services advisor to discuss possible funding options, including vouchers for purchases made at the Brandeis Bookstore.

LATTE

[LATTE](#) is the Brandeis learning management system. Login using your UNET ID and password. For LATTE help, contact Library@brandeis.edu.

Library

[The Brandeis Library](#) collections and staff offer resources and services to support Brandeis students, faculty, and staff. Librarians and Specialists from Research & Instructional Services, Public Services, Archives & Special Collections, Sound & Image Media Studios, MakerLab, AutomationLab, and Digital Scholarship Lab are available to help you through consultations and workshops.

Privacy

To protect your privacy in any case where this course involves online student work outside of Brandeis password-protected spaces, you may choose to use a pseudonym/alias. You must share the pseudonym/alias with me, and any teaching assistants as needed. Alternatively, with prior consultation, you may submit such work directly to me.

Student Support

Brandeis University is committed to supporting all our students so they can thrive. If a student, faculty, or staff member wants to learn more about support resources, the [Support at Brandeis](#) webpage offers a comprehensive list that includes these staff colleagues you can consult, along with other support resources:

- The [Care Team](#)
- [Academic Services](#) (undergraduate)
- [Graduate Student Affairs](#)
- Directors of Graduate Studies in each department, School of Arts & Sciences
- Program Administrators for the Heller School and International Business School
- [University Ombuds](#)
- [Office of Equal Opportunity](#).

N.B. This course was created with generous help and guidance from Dr. Teresa Mitchell.