

PSYC S310: Methods for Studying Human Behavior

Spring 2021

1 Course information

Class schedule Section 01: Th 1:00–1:50 pm
Section 02: Th 2:00–2:50 pm
Room M107

Instructor Alan Jern
Email: jern@rose-hulman.edu

Open meeting times Th 3:00–4:00 pm, F 1:00–1:50 pm (On Teams)

Textbook Beth Morling, *Research Methods in Psychology*, 4th edition

2 Overview

This course is about how to rigorously study human behavior. Regardless of your future career, you may at some point need to conduct a survey, perform market research, or do user interface testing. What you learn in this course will provide you with the knowledge to approach these tasks in a rigorous way. Additionally, the critical thinking skills needed to perform research have applications to many problems, even problems that have nothing to do with human behavior. For example, here are several basic questions you may have faced in the past that this course will teach you how to approach.

- Does A cause C ?
- Which works better: A or B ?
- Should I believe claim X ?

2.1 Course learning objectives

In this course, you will learn to:

- Explain why replication is important for science
- Tell the difference between good research methods and poor research methods
- Read and critique a published study

- Critically evaluate media reports of research
- Develop appropriate and rigorous methods for testing a behavioral research question
- Visualize data from a study and draw appropriate statistical conclusions from it
- Communicate methods and results from a study you performed

3 Assessment

Component	Points
Project	500
Assignments	400
Syllabus quiz	10
Ethics training	10
Participation	80
Total	1000

3.1 Project

The second part of this course is centered around a group research project. You are expected to collaborate on the project-related assignments (**except the reflection paper**).

Component	Points
Registration plan	100
Final report	300
Presentation	80
Reflection	20
Total	500

3.2 Assignments

You will complete several assignments designed to give you practice with tools and concepts you will need for your project. Unless otherwise stated, you may **not** collaborate on these assignments.

Component	Points
Assignment 1: Study participation	100
Assignment 2: Media critique	100
Assignment 3: Formr lab and Methods write-up	100
Assignment 4: R lab and Results write-up	100
Total	400

3.3 Ethics training

The online ethics training is a pre-requisite for being able to complete your group project. Therefore, **failure to complete the ethics training on time will mean you cannot contribute to your group's study and you will also receive a 0 for your final project report.**

3.4 Class participation

Participation refers to both online and in-class participation. Online participation means posting thoughtful responses to reading questions in the forums. In-class participation means good attendance and asking and answering questions in class. Please see the participation grading rubric on Moodle for more information.

I will assign participation scores twice over the quarter. Your final participation score for the quarter will be the sum of these two scores.

3.5 Final grade

Grades will be assigned as follows.

Points	Grade
≥ 900	A
870–899	B+
800–869	B
770–799	C+
700–769	C
670–699	D+
600–660	D
< 600	F

4 Course policies

4.1 Late assignments

For the entire course, you will have **two free late days** that can be used for the **individual assignments only** (not for group project assignments). Assignments will be considered one day late if they are submitted any time after the submission deadline up to 24 hours later. Assignments will be considered two days late if they are submitted any time between 24 and 48 hours after the submission deadline. You don't need to notify me in advance if you plan to use one of your late days—I will keep track of your late days and notify you by email when you have no late days remaining.

Any assignments submitted after using your late days will not be accepted. The purpose for this policy is to help me grade and return your work in a timely fashion.

4.2 Blind grading

Do not include your name on anything (including file name) you submit on Moodle, unless I say otherwise. The reason for this is because I use a feature on Moodle called blind grading that lets

me grade your assignments without seeing your names—your names (which Moodle knows) are revealed after I've finished grading the assignment. I do this to keep my grading as fair as possible. If you put your name on the assignment, it undermines the process.

4.3 Asking for help

I highly encourage you to contact me if you ever need help in this course. That's what I'm here for! But I also want you to encourage you to be self-sufficient whenever possible. So if you ever ask me a question that can be easily answered on this syllabus or the Moodle page (a due date, a page limit, whether you can collaborate on an assignment), **I will deduct 1 point from your grade total.**

The corollary of this policy is that if you ever find anything on this syllabus or the Moodle page that looks like a genuine mistake (the wrong date, inconsistent information) and you ask me about it, **I will give you 1 point of extra credit.** (Only the first person to tell me gets the extra credit.)

4.4 Academic integrity

Academic misconduct will be addressed according to the policies described in the Rose-Hulman student handbook. Academic misconduct includes: (1) submitting work that is not your own; (2) copying ideas, words, or graphics from any source without appropriate citation; (3) misrepresenting your work or yourself (i.e., deliberately submitting the wrong assignment or lying to explain a late assignment); (4) collaborating with other students when this is not permitted; and (5) submitting the same work for credit in two courses without prior consent of both instructors. If you are unsure whether something qualifies as academic misconduct, please check with me before engaging in the behavior.

5 Course schedule

Below is a tentative schedule for the quarter. I've left off specific due dates because they may vary from week to week. Check Moodle regularly for updated information.

Weekly reading assignments, including textbook readings, will be also be posted on Moodle, along with exercises and activities to be completed before coming to class that week.

Module	Week(s)	Due
Introduction	0	Syllabus quiz
Foundations	1	Assignment 1
Study design	2/3	Assignment 2 (Week 3)
Open science and ethics	4/5	Assignment 3 (Week 4) Ethics training (Week 5)
Data analysis	6/7	
Project time	8/9	Assignment 4 (Week 8) Registration plan (Week 9)
Presentations	10	Final report

Bring your laptop with you to every class!