PSYC 109: Research Methodology
For Psychology Minors

Information in this syllabus is subject to change. This is Version 1, publication date 20 Jan 2014.
Revisions, as well as some course information, are only available on Blackboard.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Staff</th>
<th>Office Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Larry Rudiger</td>
<td>In Williams 301 (the classroom), Tuesdays, 8:00 – 9:45 am; Thursdays, 8:00-8:30 am. John Dewey Hall, 205; by appointment.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How to contact us
- psyc109@uvm.edu
  - Use your UVM e-mail account so we can reply (if needed) with confidential information about your work in the class.
  - In most cases, you will get a reply within 1 business day as e-mail is checked frequently (but not on Saturdays).
  - For most prompt response, send to the class account instead of to individual instructors.
  - If the message is intended specifically for Dr. Rudiger, then note that in the e-mail.

How we contact you
- Most information will be posted on Blackboard. If we need to contact you individually, we will use your UVM e-mail address. Students are expected to manage their own e-mail accounts so that they can receive messages related to the course.

Required Textbook

In addition, there will be required readings available from UVM’s electronic collection and accessible within Blackboard.

Web-based resources
- [https://bb.uvm.edu/](https://bb.uvm.edu/)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>CRN</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Days</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>12058</td>
<td>8:30 – 9:45</td>
<td>Tuesday* &amp; Thursday</td>
<td>Williams 301</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*What is a hybrid course?*

Conventional college courses involve listening to an instructor during class, which is largely a passive endeavor for students; and then doing things outside of class (reading textbooks, doing homework assignments, writing papers, etc.), which are more active. In a hybrid course, the location and timing of these elements is largely flipped: students get their instructor’s take on things outside of class, usually by watching videos that are somewhat analogous to lectures. But then, during class, students are more often engaged in learning activities. For PSYC 109, these will include working on group projects and reading and getting feedback on drafts of research papers.

As a result, on most Tuesdays, there will not be any formal activities (and attendance is not recorded). However, students are expected to keep the scheduled time slot available for small-group-project working sessions or for appointments with teaching staff.

For these reasons, PSYC 109 is a learning community. Active, honest, and committed engagement with peers and instructors is a crucial element of your success.

**Course Objective**

PSYC 109 for psychology minors introduces students to the ways psychologists conceptualize, conduct, report, and synthesize research. This includes an introduction to various tools, including online databases, desktop-
computer software (Microsoft™ Word and Excel), and a web-based bibliography-management platform (Zotero).

Upon successful completion of PSYC 109, you will be prepared for outstanding performance in the department’s 200-level courses because you will have the skills to locate, interpret, evaluate, and synthesize psychological research and the theories that flow from it. You will also be able to apply these skills beyond academic settings where evidence-based decision support is needed.

**Blackboard**

In addition to close attention to the assigned readings, students are expected to monitor the course’s space in Blackboard. It will feature information related to the course content. Some of this material is central to the class and subject to inclusion on exams. This material will be clearly marked. Also, as described below, you will submit online writing assignments and take quizzes via Blackboard. Please note the following.

- You are responsible for understanding the basics of the Blackboard system. If you are having trouble, you can get technical support by calling the UVM Helpline at 1-802 656-2804. Just remember that these support technicians cannot get to the PSYC 109 Blackboard area.
- You are NOT authorized to submit assignments as e-mail attachments. Please plan accordingly, and make it a priority to become familiar with the features of Blackboard that will be used in this course.
- If they cannot be resolved during the class-meeting sessions on Tuesdays, very complex Blackboard-related problems will probably require a visit to the Center for Teaching and Learning's outpost in the Library, where you will log in to the system and show them what's not working. For details, see this web page: [http://www.uvm.edu/ctl](http://www.uvm.edu/ctl).

**Reading**

**Textbook:** The textbook is required and it is an excellent resource. There will not be assignments based on any of the electronic learning tools (such as flash cards) but you may find them useful.

**Journal articles and other material:** We will also be reading original journal articles and other material available through Blackboard. Other readings will be announced throughout the semester and made available in Blackboard. Except where announced, your understanding of the concepts presented in the assigned readings is measured by exam questions.

**Overall Course Design**

There are 4 major elements to the course.

1. **Online learning activities.** These are a combination of an online presentation, readings from the textbook or other sources, and point-bearing assignments, usually submitted through Blackboard. They are, to a degree, self-paced. They are in X groups. The assignments in each group need to be submitted by that group’s deadline to get full credit.
2. **Group project in “RM Consulting.”** One of the main activities of the first 6 weeks will be
3. **Literature review.** During the last 8 or so weeks of the semester, our focus is on student’s individual literature review. The final product is a XX-page paper.
4. **In-class activities.**

**I. Assignments: submitted before class to prepare you and introduce the material, and to apply your knowledge and skills.**

**Purpose.** Writing assignments are intended to guide your thinking about reading assignments, to help you prepare for class, and finally to learn the material. They are designed to be completed immediately after reading a manageable section of the text or journal articles.

**Process.** While it can be useful to discuss the course material with your colleagues, except when explicitly directed to do so, **work on the writing assignments individually.** You are not authorized to share your work with other students taking the course this semester. You are also not authorized to consult the work submitted by students who have already taken the course. Any evidence that suggests unauthorized collaboration will be forwarded to the Center for Ethics and Standards.
Format. The writing assignments are in various formats. Some will be a series of questions, which you are invited to answer. In addition, there are two large projects: one conducted in a work-team format, and one that will be largely independent. Early in the semester, they will be more basic to help you develop and apply your understanding of foundational issues. As the semester progresses, the assignments will give you a chance to think about more sophisticated concepts, as well as to demonstrate your understanding of the relationships between various aspects of the course. More details about each assignment, including grading rubrics, will be available in Blackboard.

Software tools. Note that you are expected to post your work in the specified format using the specified tools; facility with them constitutes some of the course’s learning goals. These tools include Microsoft ™ Word and Excel, as well as Zotero, the reference-management platform. **Use of these tools is mandatory**, and if you do not have them installed on your own computer, they are available on all desktop computers in on-campus labs and in the library. As stated above, you are not authorized to submit work using other mechanisms (for example, as e-mail attachments) or in other formats (such as pdf, plain text, or in hard copy).

Quoting the textbook and readings: don’t do it. Unless a question specifically directs you to quote the textbook or other documents, do not. Thinking about the material and developing your own way of expressing that knowledge is a powerful learning exercise. In fact, to get maximum benefit, you should do these assignments without consulting your book or relying on quotations.

Logistics. Writing assignments are submitted online via Blackboard. Assignments are due at **11:55 pm on Mondays**, except where noted in Blackboard.

Grading. Assignments will be checked for completeness and quality. More details on grading are available on Blackboard. Please note that, because of some limitations in Blackboard, you will need to get familiar with the way that the system records and then displays feedback, and to be very clear on how you can see it.

Points. The maximum number of points available for each writing assignment varies. Those assigned earlier in the semester are worth less, and those that are more complex are worth relatively more points. Consult the schedule for details.

Missed and late writing assignments. These are intended to help you prepare for class, so students cannot “make-up” missed assignments by doing them after the class for which they are due. In all cases, other than unforeseeable events, **writing assignments should be submitted by the deadline even when your absence from class is excused**. Late submissions receive credit only in exceptional circumstances. However, if you want to do an assignment after the deadline, then you can. It just will not yield any points.

## Attendance & In-Class Participation

**Attendance expectations**

Attendance is recorded by the Undergraduate Teaching Fellow (or UTF) who is assigned to support your small group. Full credit requires that you are present when class starts and stay until it is over and remain fully engaged in the day’s learning activities.

**In-class learning activities.** During class, you will often be working in groups. These conferences are led by UTFs, who will be evaluating your level of preparedness and the level of your preparation and engagement. In addition, the UTF leading your discussion group will also be the primary reviewer of your writing assignments. If you are less than fully engaged, then you will not earn the maximum number of attendance/participation points for that day.

**Attendance & participation points**

Attendance is not recorded on the first two weeks of class. As with writing assignments, earlier attendance is worth less (.25 points per class meeting) than later attendance (5 points). Further details about how attendance points are calculated are available in Blackboard.
Documentation required for excused absences

1. *Scheduled varsity or club athletic events*: written documentation of dates.
2. *Religious holidays*: notify us at the beginning of the semester about these dates.
3. *Illnesses or family crises:*
   a. If such events are serious, then you may want to contact your Dean’s office; they will then contact us.
   b. In the case of routine illness, you will need to visit the PSYC 109 office in person, during scheduled office hours within one week of the absence. If you are still sick, or contagious, and can’t come within that time frame, e-mail and we’ll record it (and you can come when you have recovered). You will be asked to read and sign a statement documenting that your absence was for a reason that is covered by the UVM policy, and your attendance records will be updated.

Classroom code of conduct

UVM Department of Psychology Code of Classroom Conduct

Faculty and students will at all times conduct themselves in a manner that serves to maintain, promote, and enhance the high-quality academic experience befitting the University of Vermont. The essential characteristic of this policy is respect.

Department of Psychology Policies

- **Laptop computers and other web-enabled devices**: use of these is prohibited unless authorized by the instructor. For PSYC 109, you are authorized to bring your laptop and use it appropriately. Please limit the use of other web-enabled devices for non-work-related activity.

Student responsibilities

- Students are expected to attend class, arriving promptly and remaining alert and involved until dismissed by the instructor.
- Students are expected to come having not only read and completed assignments but also having thought about them, and be prepared to engage in discussion and pose meaningful questions.

Faculty and student responsibilities

- Faculty and students will promote academic discourse and the free exchange of ideas by listening with civil attention to all individuals.
- Faculty and students will treat all members of the learning community with respect and will not discriminate on the basis of characteristics that include race, color, religion, national or ethnic origin, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, disability, or gender identity or expression.
- Mutual respect extends to turning off cell phones or other web-enabled devices prior to the beginning of class, refraining from leaving the room in the middle of class, and, when authorized, using laptops for course-related activities only.

PSYC 109-Specific Policies

- Much of the communication in PSYC 109 takes place via e-mail. The Classroom Code of Conduct extends to electronic communication. Think before you hit "send." Compose your message carefully, and ALWAYS include a descriptive subject line. **Always and only use your UVM e-mail account.** Messages from students that are aggressive, hostile, or profane will lead to an investigation by the Center for Student Ethics and Standards.
- Cell phones, MP3 players or other web-enabled devices may only be used during the 3-minute break during class for non-work-related activity. No exceptions without instructor permission, including sending text messages. If you need to monitor an unusual or emergent situation, please let the instructor know before class. **The first violation of this policy will lead to a 25-point deduction.** Any further violation will lead to an F in the course and a referral to the Center for Student Ethics and Standards.
• For most class meetings, a version of the presentation slides will be available by 6:00 pm the night before class. If you like, you can print it out and bring it to class. **Note that you cannot expect to be given time to transcribe the slides during class.** A final version will also be available later in the day after each class meeting.

**Checking our records of your work**

Because PSYC 109 has many distinct parts that yield points, we hope that you will take a pro-active role in checking our records of your work. Throughout the semester, we will post announcements on Blackboard to let you know when records are available. After records are posted, you will have one week to alert us if you think there is a discrepancy. Do that by sending e-mail from your UVM account to psyc109@uvm.edu. Do not use Blackboard's internal messaging system. You may also visit the PSYC 109 office, but all such questions should also be posed in an e-mail message. After the one-week review period is over, there will be no changes to our records.

**Final grades**

Blackboard will be set up so that you can see the percentage of points, to date, that you have earned. By the end of the semester, the review period for each aspect of the course will have passed and there will be no further changes. Therefore, except in the event that there was an error in the arithmetic, there will be no modifications to semester grades once they have been computed and reported to the Registrar's office.

If you think there was a mistake in how your grade was computed, e-mail psyc109@uvm.edu. We find that most questions can be resolved through e-mail. However, we do not routinely schedule in-person appointments to discuss grades until the third week of the following semester. If you believe that your grade was calculated in a way that is inconsistent with the syllabus, then you may request an investigation. There are formal processes for appealing grades. You can review them at this URL: http://www.uvm.edu/~uvmppg/ppg/student/gradeappeals.pdf

**Points, bonus points, and grades**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element and details</th>
<th>Possible Points</th>
<th>Bonus Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Writing Assignments</td>
<td>2 - 75 points per assignment</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Project</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literature Review</td>
<td>150</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance/Participation</td>
<td>.5 – 2.5 points for each class where attendance is recorded</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>500</strong></td>
<td><strong>30</strong></td>
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**Penalties**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter grades are based on total points (including bonus), minus penalty points. <strong>There is no rounding up.</strong></th>
<th>0%-2%</th>
<th>3%-8.4%</th>
<th>8.5%-9%</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Important note:</strong> While your final grade is a function of the total number of points earned, you must have at least 75% of the points for each category to receive a passing grade. Failure to earn at least 75% in any category will result in a final grade of “F.”</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>A</strong> = 90%</td>
<td>450-464 = A-</td>
<td>465-492 = A</td>
<td>493-500 = A+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>B</strong> = 80%</td>
<td>400-414 = B-</td>
<td>415-442 = B</td>
<td>443-449 = B+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>C</strong> = 70%</td>
<td>350-364 = C-</td>
<td>365-392 = C</td>
<td>393-399 = C+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>D</strong> = 60%</td>
<td>300-314 = D-</td>
<td>315-342 = D</td>
<td>343-349 = D+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>F</strong> = &lt;60%</td>
<td>&lt;300 points, or &lt;206 points on exams</td>
<td></td>
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