FALL TERM

Dividing into groups

In this version of PSYC4170, the class will be divided, beginning in week 7, into 3 groups of equal size, each led by one of the staff persons listed above. Group leaders will be in charge of supervision and grading of their students’ research projects.

Students’ assignments to groups will be made as follows: The 3 group leaders will be available during the last hour of each of the first 5 class sessions to talk to individuals informally about their plans for their studies. Students may talk to as many of the group leaders as they wish, and register with the person of their choice when they are ready. When a group leader’s supervisee list reaches the maximum (1/3 of the class size), however, it will be closed, and the student will need to make another choice. Students who do not make a choice will be assigned to a vacant slot.

Inasmuch as the departmental computer lab (BSB 159) has limited facilities, the class will also be divided in half to provide two groups for the statistics labs, one meeting at 2:30 to 4 and the other at 4 to 5:30. This division will be done in class.

Text material

There will be required reading from a text titled, Making Sense of Psychology, by Margot Northey and Brian Timmins (Oxford Press, 2012), available in paper-bound copy in the University Bookstore. This is a “how to” book, taking the student, step by step, through the process of conceiving, proposing, conducting, and writing a research report in psychology. The required reading material (meaning that which will be covered in the course exam) consists of: Ch. 4 (Information Gathering), Ch. 6 (Writing a lab report), Ch. 7 (Presentation of Data), Ch. 8 (section headed Research Proposals in pages 146-149 only), and Ch. 10, (APA Editorial Style and Documentation), a total of approximately 80 pages.

The balance of the text may be read according to individual student’s needs and will not be included in the course exam. Ch. 11 - 13 are recommended, however, for anyone without experience or with difficulty in writing academic papers.

Lectures

There will be a series of lectures on method and theory by the CD in weeks 2-6. In general, the content of the lectures will not overlap with the assigned material of the text, but lectures will include discussions of how specific text material can best be applied to the research report requirement.

Additionally, a brief demonstration study will be conducted by the class, which will provide the data for the statistics labs to be held in the 2nd semester.
Proposal outlines

Students will meet with their groups in separate seminar rooms (locations to be announced) during the last 6 weeks of the 1st term, and present, individually, their proposal outlines. Presentations will be followed by feedback by the group leader and discussions among course members. Proposal outlines should briefly describe each of the following, in order: (1) hypothesis and theoretical basis, including relevant literature, (2) methodology, including participants and procedures, (3) statistics to be employed, (4) how the results will be interpreted. Students may read or otherwise present their outlines, but presentations should not exceed 15 minutes.

Studies may deal with any area of psychology, and may employ any scientifically acceptable method (e.g. laboratory, naturalistic observation, archival, online), but must represent a test of an original, theoretically based hypothesis. This will be discussed at length in classes.

Proposal

This should not exceed 2500 words, excluding references, and should follow, in general, the format described in Ch. 8 of the text. References should be cited appropriately and listed at the close of the paper. The proposal may incorporate material, verbatim or otherwise, presented in the outline, but should also reflect the comments and suggestions of the group leader where applicable.

The proposal should be posted to the group leader by email attachment, preferably in WORD, on or before Dec 6. Comments, suggestions and proposal grades will be posted back to students by the group leaders, prior to Dec 22.

Exam

This will consist of 40 - 50 multiple-choice items, taken about equally from lectures and text. Time allowed will be one hour.

Schedule: 1st semester

Sep 6      Introduction to the course.*
Sep 13.   Lecture: Research methods.*
Sep 27.   Lecture: Psychological testing. *
Oct 11.   Exam (one hour). Following the exam, research groups will meet in their seminar rooms with their group leaders to arrange schedules for individual presentations of proposal outlines and discuss any other matters that might arise.
Nov 1.  Co-curricular day (no classes)
Nov 8 – 29. Individual presentations of proposal outline (cont.)

* followed by opportunities for individual student/staff conversations
**WINTER TERM**

Jan 10  Statistics lab (in 159 BSB) (Group 1 at 2:30 - 4.  Group 2 at 4-5:30)
Jan 17  Statistics lab (cont.) – (same times and place)

There will be no formal classes for the balance of the semester. Students will carry out their projects with individual consultations with their group leaders, as needed, during class hours or mutually convenient alternative times,

**Final paper.**

This should not exceed 7500 words, excluding references, tables and/or graphs. It should be written in the form of a journal article in terms of organization, writing style and data presentation, using APA format as described in Ch. 10 of the text. Any and all material from the proposal may be incorporated, verbatim or otherwise, in the final paper. Final papers should be submitted by email attachment (WORD) to the group leader by April 8. Comments and grades for the paper and the course will be posted back.

**Grades** - The course grade will consist of the exam score, weighted 15%, the proposal outline, weighted 10%, the proposal, weighted 25% and the research report, weighted 50%. The last date to drop the course without receiving a grade is Feb. 15.