PSYC211 – Graduate Research Methods in Psychology

Department of Psychology
Brandeis University
Fall 2015

**Instructor:** Prof. Sarah Lupis

**Room:** Rabb 117
**Phone:** tbd
**Email:** slupis@brandeis.edu
**Office hours:** Friday noon-2 pm + by appointment

**TA:** William Goodman

**Room:** Brown 105
**Phone:** x63262
**Email:** wgoodman@brandeis.edu

**Class Meetings:** Friday 9-11:50 am, Goldfarb Library 230

**Course Website:** http://latte.brandeis.edu/

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**About the Course**

The goal of this graduate-level course is to review and extend coverage of the essential elements of controlled empirical research in psychology. You will learn how to:

- conduct scientific literature reviews via online databases
- utilize citation management software (Endnote) for citing and references
- reduce general conceptual questions to concrete, answerable form
- apply observational methods, survey methods, and experimental methods to answer research questions
- present data in a meaningful and appealing way
- apply ethical guidelines that must be followed in scientific research, particularly those pertaining to research with human subjects
- provide useful critiques of the research of others

Finally, you will gain the skills needed to clearly communicate in writing the purpose, methods, results, and implications of research in a format suitable for submission to psychology journals.

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**Readings**

If you are required to read articles or book chapters, those readings will be made available through LATTE. I.e., there is no textbook you need to purchase for this course. If readings are posted on LATTE, please complete those before the class date listed in the syllabus (see Course Schedule and Topics for a list of readings).

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**Course Requirements**

**Class participation** (20% of final grade)

This is a significant portion of your grade. Class participation includes 1) attendance, 2) timely completion of reading assignments (by the date listed in the syllabus), 3) thoughtful contribution to class discussions, 4) occasional in-class quizzes, in which you will be asked to reflect on the implications of the day’s readings.
Mid-term exam (20% of final grade)
The exam will be distributed on October 2 and it will be due on October 16. Part I of the exam involves reading one or two short journal articles and answering questions about the methods with a focus on design, measurement, ethics, and conclusions (not statistics). Part II requires the critique of a manuscript in the form of a journal review.

Poster presentation (20% of final grade)
Each student will present the findings of a research paper or own findings from earlier own research as a poster presentation similar to a conference presentation. The poster presentation will take place November 6. You will get feedback on your presentation skills by the instructor and your fellow students.

Final Paper / Research Proposal (40% of final grade)
The final paper should be similar to your 1st year / MA research proposal due end of January 2016. Most topics and assignments throughout the course thereby aim at ensuring that you have all the skills and tools to develop a research project and to write the respective research proposal. This includes handing in:

   a) September 25: a detailed abstract clearly outlining your research idea, hypotheses, study design, and operationalization of dependent and independent variables.
   b) November 20: a draft of your actual research proposal.

On both you will receive feedback from your peers, the course instructor, or the course TA.

MA students who are not planning to conduct empirical research for their MA project should contact the instructor ASAP.

Guidelines for writing assignment:
The final paper / research proposal has to be submitted to slupis@edu by email by the respective deadline as a Microsoft Word document. Please note that your paper should be properly formatted according to APA style.

Grading
The various course requirements are worth the following proportions of your final grade:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class participation</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mid-term exam (Oct 16)</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Poster presentations (Nov 6)</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final paper</td>
<td>40%</td>
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Your grade will be on a standard grading scale out of a total of 300 points (A > 92.5%, A- 90-92, B+ 87.5-89.5%, B 82.5-87, B- 80-82%, C+ 77.5-79.5%, C 72.5-77%, C- 70-72, D+ 67.5-69.5%, D 62.5-69, D- 60-62%).

LATTE
A copy of this syllabus will be available on LATTE. Additional readings will be uploaded to LATTE before class. PowerPoint slides will be made available after each class. Additionally, the instructor will use LATTE’s grading capabilities so that you will be able to check your grades online.

Late Work and Extensions
Papers submitted after the deadline will be penalized by lowering the grade by 10 percent points for each day late. If you have some extenuating circumstances that would make it impossible for you to hand in an
assignment on time, please contact the instructor before the deadline to see if a reasonable extension plan can be arranged.

**Special Needs**

If you are a student with a documented disability on record at Brandeis University and wish to have a reasonable accommodation made for you in this class, please see me as soon as possible.

**Academic Honesty**

You are expected to be honest in all of your academic work. The University policy on academic honesty is distributed annually as section 5 of the Rights and Responsibilities handbook. Instances of alleged dishonesty, including plagiarism, will be forwarded to the Office of Campus Life for possible referral to the Student Judicial System. Potential sanctions include failure in the course and suspension from the University. If you have any questions about these expectations, please ask.

**Re-Grading Policy**

If you believe that a mistake has been made in the grading of a quiz, the exam, or the paper, you may ask for a re-grade. This request must be made in writing and must include a justification in writing of why you believe that a re-grade is warranted. Written requests must be submitted to the professor within 1 week of when you received your grade for that quiz, exam, or paper. Once you turn in a written request, a re-grading of your entire quiz/exam/paper will be done. Any mistakes in grading (either in your favor or against you) will be corrected. This means that any time you ask for a re-grade, it is possible for your grade to go up, go down, or stay the same.
### Course Overview > will be updated to reflect actual schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATES</th>
<th>TOPICS</th>
<th>DUE DATES</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Fri</td>
<td>August 28 Introduction, syllabus review, backgrounds and interests</td>
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<td>2 Fri</td>
<td>Sept 4 Endnote Workshop- please come with software installed</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Good Science-Bad Science</td>
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<td>3 Fri</td>
<td>Sept 11 Developing a research idea, introduction to introductions</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Idea to hypotheses to study design</td>
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<td>4 Fri</td>
<td>Sept 18 Choosing dependent and independent variables</td>
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<td>5 Fri</td>
<td>Sept 25 Peer-review of unpublished data</td>
<td>Abstract proposal</td>
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<td>6 Fri</td>
<td>Oct 2 Ethics in research: IRB proposal</td>
<td>Hand out exam</td>
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<td>7 Fri</td>
<td>Oct 9 Conferences 101 Presenting findings in a poster format</td>
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<td>8 Fri</td>
<td>Oct 16 Graphing findings</td>
<td>Mid-term exam due</td>
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<td>9 Fri</td>
<td>Oct 23 Handling SPSS, good data practice</td>
<td><strong>Revisit abstract proposal</strong></td>
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<td>10 Fri</td>
<td>Oct 30 APA review, Methods &amp; Results</td>
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<td>11 Fri</td>
<td>Nov 6 Poster Presentation</td>
<td>Poster presentation</td>
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<td>12 Fri</td>
<td>Nov 13 Thinking about relevance and implications of research findings</td>
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<td>13 Fri</td>
<td>Nov 20 Grants, collaborations, and peer review (oh, my!)</td>
<td>Submit DRAFT of research proposal</td>
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<td>** Nov 27 No class: Thanksgiving Break</td>
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<td>14 Fri</td>
<td>Dec 4 Responding to reviewer feedback on proposal draft</td>
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<td>26 Fri</td>
<td>Dec 11 &gt;&gt;no class- proposals due by email (11:59 pm)</td>
<td>FINAL proposal due</td>
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**NOTE: William and I will schedule individual meetings to revisit your original abstracts / proposal ideas. Please make sure to update your abstract and submit it by Oct 23.**