

Psych 3V03 – Laboratory in Human Memory & Cognition – Winter 2008

Instructor: Dr. Scott Watter

Office: Psychology 408, ext. 23031

Contact:

- **To contact the instructor, please EMAIL: 3v3@cogsci.mcmaster.ca - this is *by far* the quickest and most reliable way to contact me! (Again, note the address: 3v3@COGSCI.mcmaster.ca)**
- **Please send email from your McMaster account!!! – hotmail, yahoo, etc. is often filtered as spam!!!**

TAs: Meredith Young youngme2@mcmaster.ca

Dave Thomson thomsodr@mcmaster.ca

Classes: Tuesday, 2:30pm-5:30pm, BSB 117

WebCT:

In this course we will be using WebCT. Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of this course, private information such as first and last names, user names for the McMaster e-mail accounts, and program affiliation may become apparent to all other students in the same course. The available information is dependent on the technology used. Continuation in this course will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure please discuss this with the course instructor.

The course website is available to registered students by logging into WebCT: <http://webct.mcmaster.ca> You will need to learn how to use WebCT to access the course content, announcements, and discussions. Detailed instructions for logging in and using WebCT can be found on the website above.

Text / Reference Materials:

There is no textbook to purchase for this course. We will be using the two online resources below as reference material and extra reading for topics in experimental design and research methods in general. (There are both more or less Psychology Research Methods texts.) I would encourage you to read and refer to these sources often as we proceed through the course, in addition to specific sections we may refer to in class.

- <http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/contents.php>
- <http://www.researchmethodsinpsychology.com>

Course objectives and content:

The primary objective of the course is to teach students the skills necessary to conduct independent research. This objective will be achieved primarily by having students engage in research projects, with discussion and practice of important concepts and skills along the way. The following four skills are emphasized:

(1) Identifying a research question. There will be a series of assigned readings related to the research projects, and these readings will give students the background necessary to identify the research question of interest. Class time will be devoted to discussion of the assigned readings, how they relate to the research question, and in general how to ask good research questions. (2) Basic research skills. Students will be responsible for aspects of experimental design, data collection, data analysis, and data interpretation in the research projects. (3) Interpretation of data. Students will be expected to learn the types of inferences that can be drawn from a set of data, the implications of various patterns of data for experimental hypotheses, and what kinds of follow-up research are encouraged by particular sets of data. (4) Oral and written reporting of research results. This objective will be addressed in two ways. First, each student will be responsible for one 20-minute oral presentation based on one of the assigned readings. Second, each student will be responsible for written reports of the research projects undertaken in the course.

Assessment:

- 25% Project 1
- 25% Project 2
- 20% Oral Presentation
- 20% WebCT Discussion Assignments (5% x 4 topics)
- 10% Class Contribution and Participation

Projects 1 & 2:

These assignments are reports on research projects conducted in the class. They should be written as APA-style research papers, as for submission for publication in a typical cognitive psychology journal. **It is YOUR responsibility to figure out what correct APA style is, and to adhere to it correctly.** This should include abstract, introduction, methods, results, discussion, and references. You should ensure your methods section is both complete and accurate; your results section should include reporting of appropriate statistics; your introduction should introduce the field broadly, and situate and motivate your particular experiment with respect to the broader field; your discussion should consider what your results show, what they imply for your hypothesis, and how they fit into the broader field (relating back to issues in your introduction).

Oral Presentation:

You will present a research paper to the class (which most people in the class will not have read, or only read briefly). Your presentation will be responsible for teaching the class about this paper, particularly the hypotheses tested, the methods used, and the results found. It is important that you have a good understanding of your paper – **YOU** will be the expert on this paper, and will need to educate the class on your topic. The presentation should be no longer than 20 minutes. You should make an appointment **PRIOR** to your presentation, to go over your paper and presentation with me or one of the TAs.

WebCT Discussion Assignments 1-4:

There will be four topics assigned throughout the semester, for which you will need to write a 300-500 word discussion paper. This paper is to be posted online in the appropriate WebCT discussion forum. In addition, you need to write a response to one or more other discussion papers posted on a given topic. So, for each topic, you write one original paper, plus one response. For each topic (5%), 3% is allocated to the initial paper, and 2% for your response. There are four assignments in total, each worth 5%. Please don't wait until the last moment to post these papers – your initial papers are required so that there is some time to respond to them.

Class Contribution and Participation:

Much of the class will involve discussion and collaborative development of important topics. Contribution to and participation in this process is one of the things that will help you consolidate these ideas. Marks allocated to this part of class will be allocated in consideration of quality of contribution as well as general participation.

Changes in course requirements: Details of the course requirements may be subject to change. If requirements are altered, a revised course outline will be posted on the webpage and announced in class.

PLEASE NOTE! – Class Attendance Is Important!

Because a great deal of the organizational and informational content of this class will be delivered during our weekly meeting times, class attendance is extremely important. If you know in advance that you must miss a meeting, then please let it be known with as much advance warning as possible. Any excuses for missed assessment must be submitted through the office of the Associate Dean of your faculty, as described below under “Missed Assessment”.

Academic Integrity Policy:

You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behaviour in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity.

Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage. This behaviour can result in serious consequences, e.g. the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: “Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty”), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university.

It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty please refer to the Academic Integrity Policy, located at <http://www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity>

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

1. Plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one’s own or for which other credit has been obtained.
2. Improper collaboration in group work.
3. Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

Missed Assessment:

All excuses for missed exams, assignments, etc. must be submitted through the office of the Associate Dean of your faculty. It is then also **YOUR** responsibility to speak with your professor as soon as possible.

Final Grades: All assessment components will be assigned numerical grades, and the total converted to a letter grade according to McMaster’s standard grading scheme:

A+ 90-100%	A 85-89%	A- 80-84%	B+ 77-79%	B 73-76%	B- 70-72%	
C+ 67-69%	C 63-66%	C- 60-62%	D+ 57-59%	D 53-56%	D- 50-52%	F 0-49%

Class Schedule:

Date	Activity	
Jan 8	Introduction – experimental psychology & scientific method Ethics in research with human participants	
Jan 15	Discussion of Focal Reading 1a Research Methods 1	
Jan 22	Discussion of Focal Reading 1b (& 1a) Research Methods 2 ** WebCT Discussion 1 Due: Tues. 22 Jan, 2:30pm (start of class)	
Jan 29	Oral Presentations 1-3 Discuss Methods of Project 1 <i>Data collection for Project 1 begins: Wed. 30 Jan.</i>	
Feb 5	Oral Presentations 4-7 <i>Data collection for Project 1 ends: Thurs. 7 Feb, 5pm</i>	
Feb 12	Discuss results of Project 1 ** WebCT Discussion 2 Due: Tues. 12 Feb, 2:30pm (start of class)	
Feb 19	<i>(SPRING BREAK – NO CLASS)</i>	
Feb 26	** Project 1 Due: Tues. 26 Feb, 2:30pm (start of class) Discussion of Focal Readings 2a & 2b	
Mar 4	Oral Presentations 8-10 Discuss Methods of Project 2 <i>Data collection for Project 2 begins: Wed. 5 Mar.</i>	
Mar 11	Oral Presentations 11-14	
Mar 18	Data collection & project consultation <i>Data collection for Project 2 ends: Thurs. 20 Mar.</i> ** WebCT Discussion 3 Due: Tues. 11 Mar, 2:30pm (start of class)	
Mar 25	Discuss Results of Project 2	
Apr 1	Project 2 discussion & consultation ** WebCT Discussion 4 Due: Tues. 1 Apr, 2:30pm (start of class)	
Apr 8	** Project 2 Due: Tues. 8 April, 5pm	