

**PSYCHOLOGY 461/592
SPRING 2012**

Supervised Practicum in Research Methods and Analysis and Scientific Writing

Class Meets: Fridays 11:00-1:40 or as arranged individually. Small conference room in DK 2007

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Office Hours: 3-5 Fri, and by appointment

Course Description: This is an individualized study course. The aims of this course are several fold, pertaining to expertise in research methods, data analysis and interpretation, and effective scientific writing. Specifically:

I. Research Methods:

- Working on individualized research projects, students will receive supervision to enhance their ability to apply knowledge of research methods to the needs of their specific project
- Participating in discussions of other students' research methods challenges will enhance more general, flexible expertise

II. Data Analysis:

- Students who have advanced to the data analysis stage will receive guidance on:
 - Setting up data entry files
 - Methods for verifying data integrity
 - Data cleaning
 - Preliminary analyses to establish descriptive information, and to become familiar with strengths and weaknesses of observed variables
 - Translating research questions into sound data analytic strategies
 - Interpretation of analytic output
 - Constructing appropriate follow-up analyses
- Participating in discussions of other students' data analytic challenges will enhance more general, flexible expertise

III. Scientific Writing:

- Students will receive supervision in some combination of the following aspects of scientific writing
 - Strategies for writing integrative literature reviews
 - Strategies for writing research proposals
 - Strategies for writing empirical articles for peer reviewed publication
 - Familiarity with the peer review process and strategies for responding effectively to feedback
 - Skills as a constructive peer and professional reviewer
 - Skills in writing for audiences outside of academic circles who might benefit from students' research and ideas (practitioners, policy makers, the public, participants themselves)
 - Ways in which to effectively reach out to these non-scientific audiences
 - Familiarity with ethical issues that may arise in the dissemination of research and with ethical guidelines for authorship
 - Development of strategies and habits that make good writing more automatic and tolerable, perhaps even enjoyable.
- Participating in discussions of other students' writing projects will provide exposure and familiarity with each of the above aspects of scientific writing

Prerequisites: Psychology graduate students, psychology undergraduate honors students, HERL members, or permission of the instructor.

Course Structure: Each student will be asked to identify three projects they wish to integrate into the course: (1) a planned or not-too-far along research proposal or a manuscript describing empirical data in hand, and (2) a rejected manuscript or grant proposal (or extended feedback on #1 provided by the instructor), and (3) a written summary of #1 or #2 (reworked) for a non-academic audience, including a plan for dissemination. These will become the heart of your work during the semester.

What to bring to class: Soft and hard copies of your most recent drafts, copies of current literature of greatest interest, and, if relevant, author guidelines for proposal or article.

Course Requirements: Requirements include (1) weekly attendance and participation, (2) assigned group readings (see below), (3) an individualized reading list to be developed over the course of the semester, (4) substantial progress on the individually identified research proposal or manuscript, (5) written reply to the reviews/feedback on a rejected manuscript or grant proposal, or to faculty member regarding feedback on a draft, and (6) a written summary of individualized project for a non-academic audience, including a plan for dissemination.

Grading will be determined as follows:

Attendance and Participation - 20%

Individualized Reading List- 10%

Individualized Research Proposal or Manuscript 50%

Response to Critiques 10%

Summary for Non-Specialist and Plan for Dissemination 10%

The final course grades will be determined by using the scale below:

A+ 98-100	A 93-97	A- 90-92	B+ 87-89
B 83-86	B- 80-82	C+ 77-79	C 73-76
C- 70-72	D 60-69	F 0-59	

Dropping/Adding the Course: The last day to add the course is January 31. The last day to drop the course is February 24 (January 31 with no tuition penalty).

Academic Integrity and the Honor Code: GMU is an Honor Code university; please see the University Catalog for a full description of the code and the honor committee process. The principle of academic integrity is taken very seriously and violations are treated gravely. What does academic integrity mean in this course? Essentially this: when you are responsible for a task, you will perform that task. When you rely on someone else's work in an aspect of the performance of that task, you will give full credit in the proper, accepted form. All aspects of this course are bound by the GMU Honor Code which states that, "Student members of the George Mason University community pledge not to cheat, plagiarize, steal, or lie in matters related to academic work." All students are expected to be familiar with and abide by the University Honor Code. Any student who engages in scholastic dishonesty, inadvertently or not, will be reported directly to the Honor Committee. Another aspect of academic integrity is the free play of ideas. Vigorous discussion and debate are encouraged in this course, with the firm expectation that all aspects of the class will be conducted with civility and respect for differing ideas, perspectives, and traditions. When in doubt (of any kind) please ask for guidance and clarification.

GMU Email Accounts: Students must activate their GMU email accounts and frequently check these accounts to receive important University information, including messages related to this class.

Office of Disability Services: If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS) at 993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through the ODS. <http://ods.gmu.edu>

Other Useful Campus Resources:

- **Writing Center:** A114 Robinson Hall; (703) 993-1200; <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu>
- **University Libraries:** "Ask a Librarian" <http://library.gmu.edu/mudge/IM/IMRef.html>
- **Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS):** (703) 993-2380; <http://caps.gmu.edu>
- **University Policies:** The University Catalog, <http://catalog.gmu.edu>, is the central resource for university policies affecting student, faculty, and staff conduct in university affairs.

Required Texts:

American Psychological Association. (2010). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th ed.). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Silvia, P. J. (2007). *How to write a lot*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Highly Recommended Readings (depending on where student is in the research process):

Baumeister, R.F., & Leary, M R. (1997). Writing narrative literature reviews. *Review of General Psychology, 1*, 311-320.

Bem, D. J. (1995). Writing a review article for *Psychological Bulletin*. *Psychological Bulletin, 118*, 172-177.

Fowler, R.D. (1996). Giving psychology away. *APA Monitor, 30*, 3. <http://www.apa.org/monitor/may99/rc.html>

McGue, M. (2000). Authorship and intellectual property. In B.D. Sales & S. Folkman (eds.). *Ethics in the conduct of research with human participants* (pp 74-95). Washington DC: American Psychological Association.

Sommer, R. (2006). Dual dissemination. *American Psychologist, 61*, 955-958.

Tangney, J. P. (2000). Training. In B. Sales & S. Folkman (Eds.), *Ethics in research with human participants* (pp. 97-105). Washington DC: American Psychological Association.

Tesser, T., & Martin, L. (2000). Reviewing empirical submissions to journals. In R. J. Sternberg. *Reviewing scientific works in psychology* (pp. 3-29). Washington DC: American Psychological Association.

Zinsser, W. (2001). *On writing well*. New York: Quill. Chapters 1-7

Recommended Readings (depending on where student is in the research process):

McCloskey, D.N. (1987). *The writing of economics*. New York: Macmillan Publishing Co.

Sternberg, R. J. (2000). *Guide to publishing in psychology journals*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Strunk, W. & White, E.B. (1979). *The elements of style*. New York: Macmillan Publishing Co.

Zinsser, W. (2001). *On writing well*. New York: Quill. Chapters 8-10, 20-24.