RESEARCH METHODS IN BEHAVIOR ANALYSIS (BEHV 5140)

Fall 2023
Hours
Tuesdays 6:00 pm - 8:50 pm
Location
Chilton 270
Instructor
Chris Varnon, PhD
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940 - 565 - 2907
Office hours
Chilton 360B
Thursday 3:00 pm – 4:00 pm and by appointment

Course materials are posted on Canvas.

Course Description and Goals:

This course provides an overview of research methods in behavior analysis. We consider the overall concepts of how scientific knowledge is obtained and disseminated, as well as standard research methods. The strengths and weaknesses of the major types of research design will be considered. The primary emphasis of the course will be on within-subject designs in both applied and experimental settings.

In this course, students will:
1. Learn the basic types of research designs
2. Explore common forms of within-subject design
3. Develop skills to critically evaluate research designs
4. Understand how to evaluate data through visual and statistical means
5. Become proficient in developing research designs
6. Cultivate effective written and oral skills to communicate about research design

Required Materials:

Articles and book chapters posted on Canvas.
Course Requirements and Policies

1. Attendance and Participation
Regular attendance and participation are required to be successful in any course. Attendance will be checked each class. Please be on time, late arrivals may be marked absent. If you are unable to attend in case of emergency or other academic events, please let me know as soon as possible.

2. Missed assignment policy
Late assignments will be accepted with a 20% penalty per day late. Make-up and exams assignments may be given at the discretion of the professor. If a make-up is permitted, it may vary in format and content from the original version of the exam or assignment. If you know you will miss an assignment or exam, please let me know immediately.

3. Electronic Devices Policy
You may use any electronic device during class time if it helps you with the class material. However, if I, or other students, find the device distracting, I will not allow you to use it. Please disable sounds on your devices. In this class, you may use computers, calculators, or cell phone apps to help with mathematical formulas. You may also use a computer, cell phone, or other device to record lectures. However, make sure you are also focused on the lecture during class.

4. AI Policy
Artificial intelligence software such as ChatGPT can be powerful tools, but effective use requires validation from an expert. I encourage you to stay up to date with all variety of tools and software in your careers. For this class, however, use AI software is prohibited. Use of AI tools will be considered academic dishonesty. Please revisit these tools after you graduate and become an expert in your field.

5. Grading
To provide you with the best feedback, grading takes time. Tests may take 1-2 weeks, and papers and other assignments may take 3 weeks.

6. Classroom discussion (120 points, 30% of class grade)
Classroom discussions are a significant aspect of this course. Weekly participation is expected. To ensure preparation, please submit discussion questions on the assigned material 24 hours before each class. Discussions will be facilitated by either me or a student, and every student will have the opportunity to lead at least one session. If you're leading a discussion in a particular week, you will submit an outline of your discussion objectives in lieu of specific questions.

7. Three Exams (150 points, 38% of class grade)
The course will include three concise, cumulative exams, focusing on concepts related to research methods. Specific research findings from assigned papers will not be the focus, but broad questions may still be asked. Exams will consist of short answer and essay-style questions.
8. Research Proposal (125 points, 32% of class grade)
Each student will develop a research proposal on an applied or experimental topic from any area within, or closely related to, behavior analysis. The topic may be related to your actual research, but the proposal should not be your current or immediate future research. The proposal must be novel. The proposal should follow APA formatting. Your proposal should encompass:

- An introduction detailing the research objective and relevant literature.
- Two method sections: one using a within-subject design and another using an alternative research design.
- A results section, showcasing hypothetical data for both methods. This section should also elaborate on data interpretation, both visual and statistical, based on whether the results confirm or refute the hypothesis.
- A reference section.

A draft of the proposal will be due mid semester, with the final proposal due at the end of the semester. The final day of class will be reserved for research proposals presentations.
**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

**Classroom Civility**
Each student is encouraged to help create an environment during class that promotes learning, dignity, and mutual respect for everyone. Students who speak at inappropriate times, sleep in class, display inattention, take frequent breaks, interrupt class by coming to class late, engage in loud or distracting behaviors, use cell phones or other electronic devices in class, use inappropriate language, are verbally abusive, display defiance or disrespect to others, or behave aggressively toward others could be asked to leave the class. Class discussion is integral to this course, and all others, and the classroom must maintain a civil and safe place for everyone to participate, ask questions, and learn the material.

**Academic Integrity Standards and Consequences**
According to UNT Policy 06.003, Student Academic Integrity, academic dishonesty occurs when students engage in behaviors including, but not limited to cheating, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, forgery, plagiarism, and sabotage. A finding of academic dishonesty may result in a range of academic penalties or sanctions ranging from admonition to expulsion from the University.

**ADA Accommodation Statement**
UNT makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide a student with an accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding one’s specific course needs. Students may request accommodations at any time; however, ODA notices of accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. For additional information see the ODA website at disability.unt.edu

**Emergency Notification & Procedures**
UNT uses a system called Eagle Alert to quickly notify students with critical information in the event of an emergency (i.e., severe weather, campus closing, and health and public safety emergencies like chemical spills, fires, or violence). In the event of a university closure, please check your email for contingency plans for covering course materials.

**Other policies can be found at** policy.unt.edu