



PSY 203H1: Psychological Research
Lectures: In Person, VC (Victoria College) 212

Instructor and Teaching Assistant Information



Professor:

Amanda Sharples, Ph.D.
amanda.sharples@mail.utoronto.ca

Instructor Office hours:

By appointment. See course website
Online. Zoom link provided on course website. Personal meeting room:
<https://utoronto.zoom.us/j/8493969802>. No Password.

Teaching Assistants: (Please contact the TA listed next to the first letter of your surname as noted below)

A-M: Logan Doyle: logan.doyle@mail.utoronto.ca
N-Z: Savannah Tremblay: savannah.tremblay@mail.utoronto.ca
Office hours: by appointment

Course Description and Objective

In this course, we will examine how to develop research questions and design studies to test our hypotheses. We explore the entire research process including theory development, research ethics, study design, interpretation of findings, and scientific writing, with a discussion of the strengths and limitations of various approaches. This course will facilitate the development of skills that allow students to consume scientific literature and produce empirical research. There will be a focus on the following learning objectives:

Learning Objectives:

1. *Knowledge:* By the end of this course, students should understand how psychological theories are developed and tested. Students should understand the advantages and disadvantages of different methodological approaches.
2. *Application and Scientific Thinking:* By the end of this course, students should feel comfortable evaluating scientific studies, developing scientific theories, and using a variety of

- methodological approaches to test their research questions.
3. *Research Ethics*: By the end of this course, students should understand the process of obtaining research ethics and the importance of adhering to ethical standards when conducting scientific research.
 4. *Communication*: By the end of this course, students should have improved their ability to construct arguments and to communicate their thoughts. Students should understand APA style and its purpose, and how to write an APA style research report.
 5. *Professional Development*: By the end of this course, students should have improved their time-management skills and ability to respond appropriately to constructive feedback.

Class Structure: Classes will be in person and primarily take a traditional lecture format with some opportunities to complete in class activities and participate in workshops (workshops listed on the course schedule).

Note about prerequisites: It is your responsibility to ensure that you have met *all* prerequisites listed in the Psychology section of the A&S Calendar for this course. If you lack any prerequisites you WILL BE REMOVED. No waivers will be granted.

This Document

This is the course syllabus and contains all the important details regarding this course; what you will learn, what you will need, how you will be evaluated, available resources, and the schedule for the course. The course syllabus is a contract between you and I, which means that we both agree to abide by its terms. At the beginning of the course, we will go through the syllabus together, make any changes we mutually agree on, and acknowledge our acceptance of its terms.

Course Resources

Required Readings:

Textbook: Link to course text available openly online (no cost):

Jhangiani, R.S., Chiang, I.A., Cuttler, C., Leighton, D. C., & Metz, M.A. (2020). *Research Methods in Psychology* (3rd Canadian Ed.). <https://dx.doi.org/10.17605/OSF.IO/HF7DQ> ISBN: 978-1-9991981-0-7

Read for free here! <https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/psychmethods3ecan/>

Additional readings, videos, and podcasts will be posted on the course site. I will provide reading guides for all academic journal article readings that include the key questions you should be able to answer after completing the readings. I will not include reading guides for the textbook chapters.

Quercus: All course materials will be made available on the Quercus website, including lecture slides, lecture videos, announcements, and supplementary materials. You are advised to regularly check the announcements section of the Quercus website because you are solely responsible for staying on top of all course announcements made through Quercus

Ongoing feedback: I've created a survey that students can fill out anonymously after each class to provide me with feedback on lectures. This gives you the opportunity to let me know if I am going through the material too quickly, if there is a particular concept you are really struggling with, if there is something that could be improved about the structure of each class, etc. The link to this survey is

available on Quercus. I cannot promise that I will be able to touch on every concern expressed in the feedback surveys. I will be looking for common concerns being expressed by students.

How to get help with the course: The fastest way to get help with the course is to book a student hour with me. If you have a short question that can be answered via email, then please email myself or the TA. Before emailing, however, please check the course syllabus as most of the important information about the course can be found there.

Sharing Course Materials: Lectures, slides, assignment instructions, course assessments, and rubrics are the intellectual property of the instructor. Students are free to use all lecture videos, slides, and other materials for their own use, however, they are NOT permitted to share any course material without the explicit permission of the instructor. Uploading course materials to the web or shared server is expressly prohibited. I do not want to discover that a student has put any of my materials into the public domain or has sold my materials. If I discover this has happened, I will contact the university and they will assist me in asserting my rights in these matters.

Course Evaluation

<i>Component</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Weight</i>
Peer Feedback	November 13th	3%
Midterm Assessment	October 23rd	23%
Paper Draft	October 30th	1%
Final Exam	During final exam period	33%
Final Paper	November 27th	30%
PackBack Discussions	Throughout the semester	10%

Throughout the course there will be a combination of summative and formative forms of assessment. Summative forms of assessment are meant to test your knowledge of the content and see what you are learning in the course. These include The Midterm and Final Exam, as well as the final written paper. Formative assessments are meant to provide feedback to you so you may improve your work, and to provide feedback to me regarding how you are learning so I can make adjustments and provide clarification. These include submitting a paper draft, providing peer feedback, and participating on the Packback discussion board.

Packback: Participation is a requirement for this course, and the Packback Questions platform will be used for online discussion about class topics. Packback Questions is an online community where you can be fearlessly curious and ask open-ended questions to build on top of what we are covering in class and relate topics to real-world applications. Each week, you will be asked to comment on specific topics. More details will be provided in a course introduction video under module 1.

Packback Requirements: Your participation on Packback will count toward **10% of your overall course grade.**

There will be weekly deadlines for submissions, which are Sundays at 11:59PM EST. This will begin following the second lecture, so **the first due date is Sunday, September 24th.** In order to receive **full credit for the first 5%**, you should submit the following per each deadline period:

1. An open-ended Question every week with a minimum Curiosity Score of 50.
2. A Response every week with a minimum Curiosity Score of 50.

Half credit will be provided for questions and responses that do not meet the minimum curiosity score.

In order to receive **the second 5%**, you must do as follows:

You will receive 3% of the 5% if you *first* complete all required Packback submissions for the first 5% *and* you can maintain an average curiosity score of 85%. You will receive the full second 5% if you complete all required Packback submissions for the first 5% and you can maintain an average curiosity score of 90%.

How to Register on Packback:

An email invitation will be sent to you from help@packback.co prompting you to finish registration. If you don't receive an email (be sure to check your spam), you may register by following the instructions below:

1. Create an account by navigating to <https://app.packback.ca> and clicking "Sign up for an Account"
Note: If you already have an account on Packback you can log in with your credentials.
2. Then enter our class community's lookup key into the "Looking to join a community you don't see here?" section in Packback at the bottom of the homepage.

Community Lookup Key: 65052fc2-3a60-4f4c-a2e4-050206e144c6

3. Follow the instructions on your screen to finish your registration.

Packback may require a paid subscription. Refer to www.packback.co/product/pricing for more information.

How to Get Help from the Packback Team:

If you have any questions or concerns about Packback throughout the semester, please read their FAQ at help.packback.co. If you need more help, contact their customer support team directly at help@packback.co.

For a brief introduction to Packback Questions and why we are using it in class, watch this video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OV7QmigrD68>

Final Paper: The goal of the final paper is to put the research skills you are developing into practice! You will choose a topic and conduct a research review on that topic. You will identify a gap in the current literature (e.g., something we still do not know). From there, you will develop a hypothesis related to this gap in the research and propose a study to test this hypothesis. You will discuss the strengths and limitations of the research design and measurements you choose and possible future directions to overcome these limitations. You will include a 1-page reflection with this describing how you incorporated peer review and the specific skills you feel you developed as you worked on this assessment.

Format and should be 5-6 pages long. These should be double-spaced, 12-point font.

Draft: Before submitting the final paper, you will submit a draft. This will allow you to get feedback from your peers before submitting the final paper. If you submit this on time, you get 1%. There will be no extensions and you will not be able to get feedback from peers if this is not submitted on time. Drafts will be examined to ensure there was a reasonable effort put in. If there is not reasonable effort put in, you will not receive the full 1%.

Peer Feedback: After drafts are submitted, you will be randomly assigned 3 peers and you will need to read their papers and provide each of them with one piece of constructive feedback to help improve their final paper. More information on how to provide constructive feedback will be provided in class. There are no extensions available for this, so please plan ahead and make sure you have time to provide feedback. **Important: If you do not submit a draft you will not automatically be assigned peers and you need to contact me so that I can manually assign you peers. You need to do this within two days of the draft due date (by November 1st at 11:59pm).** Otherwise, you will not be able to provide feedback and you may receive 0 for this.

Final Paper: After receiving feedback from your peers, you will incorporate the feedback that you feel is useful in the final draft of your paper. You will also submit a brief reflection explaining why you chose to incorporate each piece of feedback, or not to, how you felt about the assignment, and what you learned from the assignment. This reflection should be about 1 page long (no more than 1 page), double-spaced, 12-point font. This should be submitted as a separate document with the final paper. Note: It is your responsibility to ensure both documents are submitted.

A few important details: Your entire research report should be written in APA style and be 5-6 pages long.

Policy on Lateness: I understand life gets challenging and things may come up that make it difficult for you to complete your work on time. I am happy to support you and work with you so that you can successfully complete this course and have a positive learning experience. For the main course assignments (paper draft, peer feedback, and final paper), you do not need to contact me so long as your assessments are submitted within 24 hours of the due date. Following this, a 2% late penalty may apply. If you are concerned about meeting a deadline or need assistance making a plan for getting work completed, please contact me as soon as you can so we can work this out together. Please contact me in advance to the due date unless this is not possible. Unfortunately, the 24-hour extension does not apply for the Midterm and Final but you can contact me as soon as possible if you think you are not able to write these on the scheduled date.

Midterm and Final Exam: There will be two timed assessments over the course of the semester. These will test your knowledge of content discussed in lecture and in the assigned readings and podcasts. Please check the reading and listening guides carefully to get a sense of what you might be asked about as some content you are tested on will be *only* from the readings or podcasts.

Both of these will be take-home tests and will include a timed set of multiple-choice, fill in the blank, matching, t/f style questions, and short and medium written response questions getting you to apply your knowledge and think critically about the course content. The assessment will be timed. For the midterm, you may start it anytime within the 24 hour period (starting at 12:00am the day of) but once started, you will have a time limit of 2 hours to complete the midterm assessment. **For the final exam, you will have a set 3 period within which to complete the final assessment and this will be scheduled by Test and Exam services.** The date and time for this will be announced later in the term. h your internet access. These need to be completed online, but **I highly recommend saving your responses somewhere** (e.g., a word document for written responses) in case you have any issues witThe final assessment will be held during the final exam period and **will** be cumulative.

Missed Assessments. If you miss a deadline for an assessment, please contact me. You have one week from the date to get in touch with me and declare your absence on ACORN.

Specific Medical Circumstances. If you become ill and it affects your ability to do your academic work, consult me right away. Normally, I will ask you for documentation in support of your specific medical circumstances. This documentation can be an Absence Declaration (via ACORN) or the University's Verification of Student Illness or Injury (VOI) form. The VOI indicates the impact and severity of the illness, while protecting your privacy about the details of the nature of the illness. If you cannot submit a VOI due to limits on terms of use, you can submit a different form (like a letter from a doctor), as long as it is an original document, and it contains the same information as the VOI (including dates, academic impact, practitioner's signature, phone and registration number). For more information on the VOI, please see <http://www.illnessverification.utoronto.ca>. For information on Absence Declaration Tool for A&S students, please see <https://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/absence>. If you get a concussion, break your hand, or suffer some other acute injury, you should register with Accessibility Services as soon as possible.

Ensuring Transparency in Marking: Your final paper and online assessments will be marked by the TAs and I. Marking these types of assignments and tests can be very challenging and somewhat subjective (my perception of a good argument may differ slightly from the TAs'). In order to make this process as fair as possible, I will be creating a detailed rubric for myself and the TAs to use when grading the final paper. I will provide you with a copy of these rubrics at least one week before the assignment or test is due. For the test, you will receive feedback as to why you lost marks and may submit a regrade request if you feel the grade does not accurately reflect your understanding (see below).

Using AI: Artificial Intelligence programs like ChatGPT are becoming more common and this has prompted discussions surrounding how they may impact student learning and academic integrity. I have been learning about the pros and cons of using these tools and allowing students to use these tools for assessments and think that these tools may work as a good starting point (e.g., for brainstorming) or summarization, but they should be used carefully. For this course, you may use generative AI programs for the final paper so long as you appropriately cite the program, so that I know where and how this was used. I also recommend that you discuss your experience using this tool in the reflection you submit with your paper. For the midterm and final exam, you should be submitting work in your own words only and not using generative AI to help you complete these assessments.

Contesting your grade: Please carefully review and consider your feedback before contesting your grade for an assignment or test. Your course instructors and TAs work very hard to mark course assignments and exams as fairly as possible. If you have concerns about how an assignment was graded, you need to submit an official re-grade request form explaining why you think your assignment should be re-graded. This can be found on Quercus under "course materials." You must send this to the person that graded your assignment (either myself or the TA) within 2 weeks of receiving your grade. We will review your request but reserve the right to remark the entire paper, which means you could lose marks in other sections.

If there has been a calculation error, please just let myself or the TA know and we will re-calculate your grade immediately.

Final grades: While I encourage you to focus on what you are learning in the course rather than on any particular grade you receive, I understand the importance of grades to students and their future pursuits. There are times when a grade we obtain does not align with our goals (I have been there!). Grading is not a perfect process, but your final grade should be a fairly accurate representation of your

performance in the course as it is calculated across multiple forms of assessment that range in difficulty. Moreover, you are given many opportunities throughout the course to seek help, to work on assessment related activities in class, and to contest grades if you feel they do not adequately reflect the quality of your work. I encourage you to be proactive and seek help throughout the course if there is a particular grade you are working towards. **I do not make changes to final grades** in the course for the reasons noted above and the fact that requests for final grade increases may lead to systemic biases.

Academic Resources

Accessibility Needs: It is very important to me that students with diverse learning needs feel supported in this course. There is no one-size-fits all approach to course design, so I do my best to build in accessible course policies. For example, all students have a 24 hour extension on assessments as noted above under policy on lateness, and you can also approach me if you need additional support. I understand that some students may have accessibility needs, but may not have the documentation to get specific accommodations. I hope that by having these broader policies those students feel supported in this course. I will do everything in my power to ensure that all students have equal opportunities to succeed in the course. If you have a disability/health consideration that may require accommodations, please feel free to approach me and/or Accessibility Services at (416) 978 8060; accessibility.utoronto.ca

Religious Accommodations: As a student at the University of Toronto, you are part of a diverse community that welcomes and includes students and faculty from a wide range of cultural and religious traditions. I will make every reasonable effort to avoid scheduling tests, examinations, or other compulsory activities on religious holy days not captured by statutory holidays. Further to University Policy, if you anticipate being absent from class or missing a major course activity due to a religious observance, please let me know as early in the course as possible, and with sufficient notice, so that we can work together to make alternate arrangements.

Writing: A key set of skills you are developing as a student are your communication skills, including written communication. Understanding how to communicate clearly is essential for many career paths. The university provides its students with a number of resources to help them develop these skills. For more information on campus writing centers and writing courses, please visit <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/>. More info on writing resources available at U of T will be posted on Quercus. I highly recommend that you make use of these. Moreover, I'm more than happy to give you feedback on your writing during my office hours, so feel free to stop by.

English Language resources: For anyone who would like to advance their understanding and command of English, there are many supports available at UofT: <https://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/current/academicadvising-and-support/english-language-learning>

Academic Integrity and Plagiarism: Academic misconduct will be taken very seriously in this class. Cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated and will be reported through the official university channels. Please refer to the University of Toronto's Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters for more information about what constitutes academic misconduct and how academic misconduct will be dealt with: <http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/Assets/Governing+Council+Digital+Assets/Policies/PDF/ppjun011995.pdf>

Mental Health and Well-being: As a student, you may experience challenges that can interfere with learning, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, substance use, feeling down, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation, financial concerns, family worries and so forth. These factors may affect your academic performance and/or reduce your ability to participate fully in daily activities. All of us benefit from support and guidance during times of struggle; there is no shame in needing help or in asking for help. There are many helpful resources available through your college Registrar or through Student Life (studentlife.utoronto.ca and www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/feeling-distressed). An important part of the University experience is learning how and when to ask for help. Please take the time to inform yourself of available resources and seek assistance from your Teaching Assistant or from me to help learn what supports are available.

Please Find Course Schedule on the Next Page

Lecture Schedule and Assigned Readings

I will try to stick to this outline, but changes may be made. Changes will be announced on Quercus.

Lecture	Date	Topics	Readings	Notes
L1	Sept 11	Course Introduction		
L2	Sept 18	The Scientific Method	Parts 1 & 2: The Science of Psychology and The Scientific Method	
L3	Sept 25	Ethics	Part 3: Research Ethics	Ethics Paperwork workshop
L4	Oct 2	Variables & Measurement	Part 4: Psychological Measurement	Reading a journal article workshop
	Oct 9	<i>Holiday - No Class</i>		
L5	Oct 16	Experimental designs	Part 5: Experimental Research	APA style workshop
	Oct 23	Midterm Assessment		Online - Timed
L6	Oct 30	Survey/observational methods	Parts 6 & 7: Non-Experimental research & Survey design	Paper Draft Due
	Nov 6	<i>Reading Week - No Class</i>		
L7	Nov 13	Sampling and ecological validity	Rad, M. S., Martingano, A. J., & Ginges, J. (2018). Toward a psychology of Homo sapiens: Making psychological science more representative of the human population. <i>Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences</i> , 115(45), 11401-11405. Silan, M., Adetula, A., Basnight-Brown, D. M., Forscher, P. S.,	Peer Feedback Due Pre-registration workshop part 1

			Dutra, N., & IJzerman, H. (2021). Psychological science needs the entire globe, part 2. <i>APS Observer</i> , 34.	
L8	Nov 20	Interpreting Findings and Evaluating Claims	Parts 12 & 1: Descriptive and Inferential Statistics Science Isn't Broken FiveThirtyEight	
L9	Nov 27	Field methods	Ditlmann, R., & Paluck, E. L. (2015). Field experiments. <i>International Encyclopedia of the Social and Behavioral Sciences</i> , 9, 128-34. Field Methods in Social Psychology Chapter: Laboratory in Social Psychology Noba (nobaproject.com)	Final Paper Due
L10	Dec 4	Disseminating findings and maintaining integrity during the research process	Part 11: Presenting your research Podcast: (transcript also available): https://www.npr.org/2016/05/24/477921050/when-great-minds-think-unlikeinside-sciences-replication-crisis	Pre-registration workshop part 2