METHODS OF PSYCHOLOGY  
PSYC 8, Fall 2015  
Tuesdays and Thursdays: 12:00pm-1:15pm  
Location: Alpine Hall 138

Professor: Casey Knifsend, PhD  
Email: casey.knifsend@csus.edu  
Office: Amador Hall 351C  
Office hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays 1:30pm-3:00pm, or by appointment  
Phone: 916-278-6191

CATALOG DESCRIPTION:  
Introduction to methods of the science of psychology. The topics include psychology as a way of knowing, the role of science in psychology, the nature of psychological research, research ethics, psychological literature and report writing, psychological measurement, and the design and analysis of case studies, survey research, field studies, correlational methods, and experimental methods. Requires three hours of participation as an experimental subject. Corequisite: PSYC 2. 3 units.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS:  


COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES:  
This course was designed to introduce you to the range of methods used in the field of Psychology. There are three main goals that I hope to accomplish in this course:

1. Give you an understanding of the main research methods (i.e., non-experimental, quasi-experimental, and experimental) used in the scientific study of psychological problems and questions.

2. Teach some of the skills necessary to conduct research, including:
   - how to formulate a testable research question or hypothesis
   - how to design a study testing that hypothesis
   - how to interpret your results
   - how to communicate your findings in written and oral presentations

3. Spark your interest and excitement in conducting research in psychology.
**EVALUATION:** Possible Points | Your Points | Point Distribution
---|---|---
In class activities 40 | | 370-400 A 290-305 C
Poster presentation 60 | | 358-369 A- 278-289 C-
Exams 150 | | 346-357 B+ 266-277 D+
Written assignments 150 | | 330-345 B 250-265 D
**Total Points Possible** 400 | | 318-329 B- 238-249 D-
| | 306-317 C+ ≤ 237 F

*In class activities:* There will be unannounced activities in class for which you will receive points (4 points per activity). These may include discussions, group work, peer reviews of writing, individual/group writing assignments, etc. There will be 10 in class activities, for a total of 40 points. These points cannot be made up if you are not in class.

*Poster presentation:* Students will present their research findings to their fellow students in a 10-minute group presentation. The 60 points will be distributed as follows: 30 group points for the physical poster, and 30 individual points for each student’s individual performance. Individual points will include both the quality of oral presentation and the extent of knowledge of one’s own project, as well as at least one question asked during one of the other group presentations. I reserve the right to also consider group feedback on each member’s participation in collective efforts throughout the semester in the individual portion of the grade. **Students who do not attend both poster session dates, December 8 and 10, will forfeit 10 points from their individual grade.** Detailed instructions will be posted on SacCT.

*Exams:* The exams will consist of multiple choice and short answer questions based on the material in the text, assignments, and class meetings. There will be three noncumulative midterm exams, the lowest of which will be dropped (100 points). The final exam is cumulative and is **mandatory** (50 points). **No make-up exams will be given, so please plan accordingly.**

*Written assignments:* Students will complete assignments over the course of the class pertaining to their research project. Detailed instructions will be distributed throughout the term on SacCT (Assignments – Assignment [X]). Each assignment folder will contain a link to submit the assignment, instructions for completing the assignment, and a rubric for grading. **You are responsible for locating this information on SacCT, and for notifying me by the second week of the semester if you are unable to find or access instructions and rubrics.**
COURSE GUIDELINES

ACADEMIC HONESTY: As a student in this course (and at this university) you are expected to maintain high degrees of professionalism, commitment to active learning and participation in this class, and also integrity in your behavior in and out of the classroom.

Sac State's Academic Honesty Policy & Procedures

“The principles of truth and honesty are recognized as fundamental to a community of scholars and teachers. California State University, Sacramento expects that both faculty and students will honor these principles, and in so doing, will protect the integrity of academic work and student grades.”

Read more about Sac State's Academic Honesty Policy & Procedures at http://www.csus.edu/umanual/AcademicHonestyPolicyandProcedures.htm

Definitions

At Sac State, “cheating is the act of obtaining or attempting to obtain credit for academic work through the use of any dishonest, deceptive, or fraudulent means.”

“Plagiarism is a form of cheating. At Sac State, “plagiarism is the use of distinctive ideas or works belonging to another person without providing adequate acknowledgement of that person’s contribution.”

Source: Sacramento State University Library

Important Note: Any form of academic dishonesty, including cheating and plagiarism, may be reported to the Office of Student Affairs.

Consistent with Sacramento State’s efforts to enhance student learning, foster honesty, and maintain integrity in our academic processes, this course uses a tool called Turnitin to compare a student’s work with multiple sources. The tool compares each student’s work with an extensive database of prior publications and papers, providing links to possible matches and a ‘similarity score’. The tool does not determine whether plagiarism has occurred or not. Instead, the instructor must make a complete assessment and judge the originality of the student’s work. All submissions to this course may be checked using this tool.

Students should submit papers to Turnitin assignments without identifying information included in the paper (e.g. name or student number), the system will automatically show this info to faculty in your course when viewing the submission, but the information will not be retained by Turnitin.

ASSIGNMENTS AND EXTRA CREDIT BLOG POSTINGS: Assignments and blog postings are always due within the first five minutes of class. All submissions are to be submitted electronically on SacCT. Assignments are to be uploaded under Assignments – Assignment [X] – Submit Assignment [X], and blog postings are to be posted under Course Interactions – Psyc 8 Class Blog. Late submissions will be accepted; however, late work will be penalized 10% per day (i.e., day meaning 24-hour cycle; this includes the day of class if not turned in within the first five minutes of class). Truly exceptional circumstances will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis, with complete documentation. Grading and
return of late work cannot be guaranteed on the same schedule as on-time submissions. Late papers will not be accepted if they are more than one week late and will receive a score of 0.

ATTENDANCE: Students are expected to attend all class sessions as listed on the course calendar. Attendance at class meetings is essential for students’ success.

COURSE RELATED CORRESPONDENCE: Instead of emailing me with questions relating to the lecture and textbook content, post questions on the discussion forum that is part of the course web page on SacCT (Psyc 8 Class Questions) so all students can benefit from my responses. When posting a question on the discussion forum, clearly identify the subject of the question in the post title (e.g., “Differences between internal and external validity”). Before posting on the forum, look over the previous posts to check that the question has not already been answered. Email should only be used when the matter to be discussed is of a personal nature. Include “PSYC 8 TU/TH 12-1:15PM” in the subject line and write the email in a professional manner. Replies on the discussion board or to emails may take up to 48 hours, so please plan ahead. Students are responsible for checking email and the class website daily.

COURSE SCHEDULE, READINGS, AND ASSIGNMENTS: I intend on adhering to the course schedule, but unforeseen events may occur and I reserve the right to change the schedule as necessary.

DISRUPTIVE CLASS BEHAVIOR: It is expected that students will behave in a responsible manner, including attending class on time, prepared to participate fully. Students should be mindful and respectful of their classmates’ learning, comments, and opinions. Laptops and tablets are only permitted for note-taking. Cellphones should be turned off or silenced; no answering calls or texting during class.

EXAMS: Exams must be taken during the date and time listed on the syllabus. Students will have the normal class period to take the exam, regardless of when they arrive to begin the test. However, students who arrive after the first exam has been completed and turned in will not be permitted to take the exam. There are no make-ups; students must review the schedule to ensure they will be in class for each exam. Exams will consist of multiple choice and short answer questions. Bring a pencil and scantron form 882-E to exams.

EXTRA CREDIT: Six points of extra credit will be offered. Twice a semester, you will have the opportunity to write and share a short, 200-250 word blog posting related to a topic discussed in class or in the textbook, on our SacCT site (under Course Interactions – Psyc 8 Class Blog). Each blog posting is worth 2 extra credit points, for a potential total of 4 points. Before each deadline, you can also post one 75-100 word comment on a classmate’s posting. Each comment is worth 1 point, for a total of 2 potential points. Detailed instructions and rubrics will be posted on SacCT.

LECTURE NOTES: Slides will be posted on SacCT before each lecture.

NETIQUETTE: Course email, discussion board postings, and blog postings should follow rules of good netiquette. Namely, use good spelling, punctuation, grammar, respectful language, good tone, and proper salutations. Do not use profanity, slang, or uncommon abbreviations.
OFFICE HOURS: Please come! I have carved out this time for you, and would love to discuss course material, careers in Psychology, opportunities for research involvement as an undergraduate, graduate school, etc. Don’t feel like you need to have a “well-formed” question – I am happy to work through your questions and concerns, however preliminary, with you.

RESEARCH REQUIREMENT: You must complete 3 hours of required research participation, or complete an alternative writing assignment. Students are no longer able to double dip their research (e.g., if you are taking Methods of Psychology and Introduction to Psychology during the same semester you MUST complete 6 hours total). The guidelines to sign up for participation and for writing the paper are available at http://www.csus.edu/psych/participant-page.html.

If you do not complete the full 3 hours of research participation or the research paper then you will be given an incomplete grade (which is a university policy) until the requirement is satisfied. You have a total of one year to satisfy the requirement or your grade will automatically become an “F”. Once you complete the requirement you must notify your instructor so your grade can be changed.

REVIEW SESSIONS: Optional review sessions will take place virtually on SacCT (Exam Preparation – Review Sessions – Exam [X] Review). In addition to replying to discussion board postings within 48 hours regularly, the professor will moderate the discussion board during the following times: Wednesday, September 23rd from 7pm-8pm; Wednesday, October 21st from 7pm-8pm; Monday, November 23rd from 7pm-8pm; Monday, December 14th from 7pm-8pm. Questions posted before 8pm will receive a reply on that date. Students are expected to post specific questions about the course content.

STUDENT PROGRESS: I am very interested in students’ success in this course, and am happy to work with students outside of class if they are having problems with the course readings or assignments. Students should not wait until after an exam or assignment is due or until the end of the semester to discuss concerns. No changes will be made after grades are finalized.

STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS: If you have a documented disability and verification from the Office of Services to Students with Disabilities (SSWD), and wish to discuss academic accommodations, please contact your instructor as soon as possible. It is the student’s responsibility to provide documentation of disability to SSWD and meet with a SSWD counselor to request special accommodation before classes start.

SSWD is located in Lassen Hall 1008 and can be contacted by phone at (916) 278-6955 (Voice) (916) 278-7239 (TDD only) or via email at sswd@csus.edu.

USEFUL LINKS:
www.apa.org
This site includes information on APA style for writing papers and the APA code of ethics.

http://www.apastyle.org/elecref.html
This is a specific guide to citing web based sources from the APA.

https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/
Purdue University’s Online Writing Lab provides an excellent resource for learning APA formatting
## COURSE SCHEDULE:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading Due</th>
<th>Deadlines</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tu, 9/1</td>
<td>Introductions</td>
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<td>Th, 9/3</td>
<td>Science in the Media</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tu, 9/8</td>
<td>Scientific Approach</td>
<td>Ch. 1</td>
<td>Assignment 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Th, 9/10</td>
<td>Generating Hypotheses</td>
<td>Ch. 2</td>
<td>Assignment 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tu, 9/15</td>
<td>Variables and Operational Definitions</td>
<td>Ch. 4, pp. 73-76</td>
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<td>Th, 9/17</td>
<td>Reliability and Construct Validity</td>
<td>Ch. 5</td>
<td>Assignment 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tu, 9/22</td>
<td>Conducting a Literature Review: MEET IN LIBRARY INSTRUCTION LAB 2024</td>
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<td>Th, 9/24</td>
<td><strong>Exam 1</strong></td>
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<td>Tu, 9/29</td>
<td>Non-experimental vs. Experimental Designs</td>
<td>Ch. 4, pp. 81-94</td>
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<td>Th, 10/1</td>
<td>Interviews and Focus Groups</td>
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<td>Assignment 4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tu, 10/6</td>
<td>Observational Methods</td>
<td>Ch. 6, pp. 118-125</td>
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<td>Th, 10/8</td>
<td>Observational Methods</td>
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<td>Tu, 10/13</td>
<td>Survey Methods; Writing Lesson I</td>
<td>Ch. 7; APA Manual 2.05</td>
<td>Assignment 5</td>
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<td>Th, 10/15</td>
<td>Survey Methods</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tu, 10/20</td>
<td>Basic Experiments and Confounding Variables</td>
<td>Ch. 8, pp. 161-167</td>
<td>Blog Posting #1</td>
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<td>Th, 10/22</td>
<td><strong>Exam 2</strong></td>
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<td>Tu, 10/27</td>
<td>Manipulating the Independent Variable; Writing Lesson II</td>
<td>Ch. 8, pp. 168-175; Ch. 9; APA Manual 2.06</td>
<td>Assignment 6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Th, 10/29</td>
<td>Measuring the Dependent Variable</td>
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<td>Tu, 11/3</td>
<td>Factorial Designs</td>
<td>Ch. 10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Th, 11/5</td>
<td>Factorial Designs</td>
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<td>Tu, 11/10</td>
<td>Descriptive Statistics and Correlations; Writing Lesson III</td>
<td>Ch. 12; APA Manual 2.07</td>
<td>Assignment 7</td>
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<td>Th, 11/12</td>
<td>Quasi-experimental Designs</td>
<td>Ch. 11, pp. 220-233</td>
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<td>Tu, 11/17</td>
<td>How to Make a Research Poster: MEET IN AIRC 3008</td>
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<td>Th, 11/19</td>
<td>Developmental Research Designs; Writing Lesson IV</td>
<td>Ch. 11, pp. 234-238; APA Manual 2.08</td>
<td>Assignment 8</td>
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<td>Tu, 11/24</td>
<td><strong>Exam 3</strong></td>
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<td>Th, 11/26</td>
<td><strong>NO CLASS – THANKSGIVING</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Tu, 12/1</td>
<td>Ethics</td>
<td>Ch. 3; Little Albert reading</td>
<td>Assignment 9</td>
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<td>Th, 12/3</td>
<td>Ethics</td>
<td>Op-ed reading</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tu, 12/8</td>
<td><strong>Poster Session</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Th, 12/10</td>
<td><strong>Poster Session and Course Wrap-up</strong></td>
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<td>Blog Posting #2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tu, 12/15</td>
<td><strong>CUMULATIVE FINAL EXAM</strong></td>
<td>12:45pm-2:45pm</td>
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Research Report Written Assignments:
150 points

You will design and conduct an observational research project with one or two other classmates. Assignments 1-5 are designed to give you an early start on thinking about a topic and discovering what scientists have already studied with regards to your topic. Subsequent assignments, Assignments 6-8, allow you the opportunity to receive and incorporate feedback before submitting your final paper, Assignment 9. **Specific instructions and rubrics for all assignments will be posted on SacCT (Assignments – Assignment [X]). You are responsible for locating this information on SacCT, and for notifying me by the second week of the semester if you are unable to access instructions and rubrics.**

Your study should have **one** independent variable and **one** dependent variable, and should be related to a topic that you think would be of concern to students, faculty, or staff on the Sacramento State campus. Examples used in prior classes include cell phone use and engaging with club leaders in the Quad, location of where one eats lunch (e.g., Union vs. Riverfront) and peer interaction, and headphone use and exercise habits in The Well. You should be careful when designing the observational procedure that you are creating a research protocol that will adequately test your hypothesis. As a means of data analysis, you are also required to calculate means and standard deviations. You will write up your observational research project in APA style, including all the standard elements of a research report (Title page, Abstract, Introduction, Method, Results, Discussion, References, Figure, and Coding Sheet). Although your team will work together for many parts of the project, **the final paper and the drafts leading up to the final paper are individual assignments. Assignment 5 is the only assignment that may be completed as a team effort.**

Assignment 1: Science in the Media (5)
Assignment 2: SacCT Scavenger Hunt (5)
Assignment 3: Complete Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative course (5)
Assignment 4: Literature Review (10)
Assignment 5: Team Project Proposal (15)
Assignment 6: Draft of the Introduction (20)
Assignment 7: Draft of the Method (20)
Assignment 8: Draft of the Results (20)
Assignment 9: Final Submission (50)

Assignments 6 - 8 are designed to give you specific feedback before the final research paper is due. You should treat these assignments seriously. You will want to put as much effort as possible into these assignments so that you can use the feedback you will receive to revise before submitting your complete, final paper.

There will be a poster session in class on **December 8 and 10** where you will display your results and discuss them with your classmates. The poster does not have to be of professional quality, but must display all of the important parts of the research project and highlight the results and implications. Students should be prepared to answer questions from classmates and will be evaluated on their knowledge of their project.