

**Experimental Psychology (PSY 458)
Spring 2011**

Unique number: 43830

Instructor: Dr. Lawrence K. Cormack

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Phone: tba;

Office hours: F 10a-1p

Meeting time: T.&Th. 2 -5 pm

Meeting place: SEA 2.116

Texts:

Required – Statistics for the Behavioral and Social Sciences, Aron, Aron, and Coups;

Recommended – The Publication Manual of the APA (5th Ed.);
The Elements of Style, Strunk & White.

Webpage:

<http://homepage.psy.utexas.edu/homepage/Class/Psy458/Cormack/>

Additional readings may be assigned.

Prerequisites:

The Psychology Department will drop all students who do not meet the following prerequisites:

(a) a grade of C or better in PSY 301.

(b) a grade of C or better in PSY 418 for Psych. majors, or and equivalent statistics class for other majors.

(c) Current upper-division standing (60 or more credit-hours completed).

(d) A 3.0 gpa or better in psychology classes overall.

There is nothing I can do about this. The only way to add the course is through TEX, and if you don't have the prereqs. you will be subsequently dropped.

Overview:

This course will expose you to some basic issues likely to be encountered if you pursue a career in science. The development of critical thinking will be emphasized. We will conduct four or five research projects. You will perform statistical analysis on the data and write papers in APA format on the research projects. These projects will increase in size and complexity as the semester progresses. You will also have to read and think critically about journal articles from the literature. We do several in-class assignments on Microsoft Excel; if you are unfamiliar with this or a similar spreadsheet program, please budget some extra time for learning this software.

As this course is designed for those entering graduate school, you will be treated as first-year graduate students. You will be expected to do a large amount of work and thinking on your own. You will face questions for which there is no one correct answer, and you have to proceed as you feel best onto uncertain ground. Many students are very uncomfortable with this type of uncertainty, but it is intrinsic to scientific research and is, therefore, intrinsic to this course. Many students have decided that graduate school wasn't for them based upon this course.

This course carries the Writing Flag. Writing Flag courses are designed to give students experience with writing in an academic discipline. In this class, you can expect to write regularly during the semester, complete substantial writing projects, and receive feedback from your instructor to help you improve your writing. You will also have the opportunity to revise one or more assignments, and to read and discuss your peers' work. You should therefore expect a substantial portion of your grade to come from your written work.

I will assume that you are facile with basic statistical and mathematical concepts (e.g. algebra). If you are not, be prepared to spend some extra time and effort on the course.

You should all be more expert than I on such matters as spelling, punctuation, and grammar. These aspects of your writing will be graded.

Exams and Grading

The three exams will cover class discussion, homework, in-class assignments, and the assigned textbook chapters. We do not spend much time discussing the textbook in class; it is your responsibility to keep up with the readings and discuss any questions with Dr. Cormack or the TA.

Important: The exams are cumulative and will cover both the text and all material we have covered in class. There is generally 1) a multiple-choice section that primarily covers the assigned text chapters for that exam and 2) a conceptual short-answer & essay section that will cover new material, old material, and the relationship between the two.

Each of the three exams will represent 10% of your grade. Each of the first two papers will also represent 10% of your grade. The final two papers will each represent 15% of your grade. In-class assignments will represent an additional 10% of your grade. Additional readings and homework assignments will be given during the semester. The final 10% of the grade will reflect performance on these additional assignments and general class participation and effort (including, e.g. attendance).

Symbiotic or Parasitic Manuscript Generation

Each student must turn in an individual paper for each writing assignment. All writing must be your own and unique to this course. Cheating will result in a minimum punishment of zero credit for the assignment. Cheating includes, but is not limited to, submitting writing which is not your own, submitting writing which you have done for another class, and submitting papers that contain writing similar or identical to that of another student. If you have any questions about what is and what is not considered valid, original writing, contact me well in advance of the due date of the relevant assignment.

Warning

The time you will need to spend on this course will steadily increase as the semester progresses. Not only do the experiments steadily increase in size and complexity, but you will also be left to do more of the work on your own. As you are upper-division and mostly grad-school-bound students, you should be able to plan ahead and not be horribly overwhelmed at the end of the semester. This planning includes, but is not limited to, getting ahead in your other courses now (while you have the chance).

For students with disabilities,

The University of Texas at Austin provides upon request appropriate academic accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. For more information, contact the Office of the Dean of Students at 471-6259, 471-4641 TTY.

Tentative schedules:

(The exam. schedule is fairly firm. The paper schedule is rather tentative – things will change depending on how other things go. Unless otherwise noted, papers are due at the beginning of class on the due date. Late papers are subject to penalty.)

| Week | Emphasized Text Chapters (Aron & Aron) | Additional material |
|---------|--|---------------------|
| Exam. 1 | 4 | 1 through 4 |
| Exam. 2 | 9 | 5 through 9 |
| Exam. 3 | 13 | 10 through 12 |

all readings, assignments, and class discussion
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| Week Due | Additional Information |
|-------------------------|--|
| First Paper 3 | APA format, but minimal Intro., Discussion, and Refs. |
| Second Paper 6 | APA format, 2 to 5 Refs. |
| Draft of Final Paper 10 | APA format rough draft of final paper (using either pilot data or anticipated results) |
| Final Paper 14 | The real deal. Full APA final paper with comprehensive Intro and Discussion |