Seminar in Psychological Research  
PSY 4321

Professor: Dr. James Forbes  
Office & Office Hours: A204B Academic Building: MTWF 10:00-11:00 am & 1 – 2 pm; or by appointment
E-mail & Phone: James.Forbes@angelo.edu; 325-486-6120
Course Web site: http://blackboard.angelo.edu/

Required Text


Course Description and Objectives

The purpose of this seminar is to give you practical experience in conducting empirical research and disseminating your findings. Because this is an experiential seminar, you will formulate a research question, then design and conduct a research project to empirically test your ideas. A written report of your research project will be due at the end of the semester. You may collaborate with others on the same project, but each of you will turn in individually written reports.

To help you with your research project, we will discuss the myriad details of doing research and communicating findings. We will also read and discuss individual research articles with the aim of learning directly from the work of successful researchers.
Student Learning Outcomes

You will learn how to:

- Formulate a testable research question.
- Design an empirical study to test your research question.
- Write an IRB proposal for conducting empirical research project.
- Recruit participants and obtain empirical data.
- Give a verbal APA style poster presentation of your research project.
- Write an APA style manuscript to report your research project.

Methods of Assessing Learning Outcomes

Research Project, Written Report, & Project Talk (40% of course grade). You will conduct one research study and write a report of your project using the format and APA style outlined in the Sherri Jackson textbook. You will also give an APA style poster presentation talk about your project at the end of the seminar.

Research topic selection process. The entire class will discuss topics suitable for a research project. Each of you will formulate a specific, testable research question. The entire class will then decide which questions to pursue. The selected research projects may be conducted individually or collaboratively.

Each of you will write your own individual report of your project. So, while conducting the research may be a collective effort; your written project report is an individual effort.

You are responsible for the conduct of your research project, which must conform to the guidelines for classroom projects: [http://www.angelo.edu/forms/doc/GuidelinesforClassroomProjects.doc](http://www.angelo.edu/forms/doc/GuidelinesforClassroomProjects.doc).

Research Paper Format (APA style). Your written research report will include a title page, an abstract, an introduction, a method section, a results section, a discussion, references, and any tables or figures you find necessary. Your paper will also include appendices of any materials used in your study (e.g., photos, prose passages, questionnaires,...). The body of your research report (introduction through discussion section) should be about 10 pages. The research project may be a collaborative effort; the written report will be an individual effort.

Institutional Review Board (IRB) Approval & Mid-Term Exam (20% of course grade). Before you can begin collecting data to address your research question, you must submit a proposal to the IRB ([http://www.angelo.edu/forms/doc/asu.doc](http://www.angelo.edu/forms/doc/asu.doc)) requesting permission from the IRB to conduct your research project. The proposal will include an overview of your topic, a description of the research design and method, an explanation of experimental procedures, descriptions and copies of all materials to be used, an informed consent form ([http://www.angelo.edu/forms/doc/SampleInformedConsent.doc](http://www.angelo.edu/forms/doc/SampleInformedConsent.doc)), as well as a debriefing document.

After obtaining IRB approval, you will recruit participants via Sona-Systems and collect data. Immediately after you finish collecting data the names of participants must be given to me so that I can give your participants extra credit.
Your individually written Institutional Review Board research proposal will be graded and count as 20% of your final course grade.

Your verbal research report will be an APA style poster presentation consisting of a 5-10 min. extemporaneous talk given at the end of the semester.

**Homework Assignments (20% of course grade).** You will be given homework assignment each class period. These assignments will help you learn skills needed to conduct and disseminate empirical research. Each assignment will have a specific due date and must be handed in during class. **No late assignments will be accepted.** Most of your assignments will be graded satisfactory or unsatisfactory and will count as 20% of your course grade.

**Participation & attendance (20% of course grade).** The primary format of the course is guided participation and discussion, which will comprise 20% of your final course grade. You will learn many of the techniques and details of conducting competent research as a result of participating in seminar discussions. Consequently, I expect you to prepare for each class by completing all assignments and readings before class, actively participating in seminar discussions, collaborating with other students, attending class, and refraining from boorish behavior (viz., not completing assignments before class, gaming course policy, texting, habitually arriving late). The benefits of taking an active part in learning is a more satisfying classroom experience.

**Cell Phone Policy.** You may bring your cell phone with you to class; you may not use your cell phone during class, except for an emergency.

**University Policy**

**GENERAL POLICIES RELATED TO THIS COURSE**
All students are required to follow the policies and procedures presented in the following documents:

- Angelo State University Student Handbook located on the ASU website
  

**Honor Code.** Angelo State University expects its students to maintain complete honesty and integrity in their academic pursuits. Students are responsible for understanding the Academic Honor Code, which is available on the web at: [http://www.angelo.edu/forms/pdf/honorcode5.pdf](http://www.angelo.edu/forms/pdf/honorcode5.pdf)

**STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

1. “Angelo State University is committed to the principle that no qualified individual with a disability shall, on the basis of disability, be excluded from participation in or be denied the benefits of the services, programs, or activities of the university, or be subjected to discrimination by the university, as provided by the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act of 2008 (ADAAA), and subsequent legislation.”

2. The Office of Student Affairs is the designated campus department charged with the responsibility of reviewing and authorizing requests for reasonable accommodations based on a disability, and it is the student’s responsibility to initiate such a request by contacting the Office of Student Affairs, University Center, Room 112 at (325) 942-2047 or (325) 942-2211 (TDD/FAX) or by e-mail at
studentservices@angelo.edu to begin the process. The Office of Student Affairs will establish the particular documentation requirements necessary for the various types of disabilities.

Reasonable accommodations will be made for students determined to be disabled or who have documented disabilities.

**STUDENT ABSENCE FOR OBSERVANCE OF RELIGIOUS HOLY DAYS**
“A student who intends to observe a religious holy day should make that intention known in writing to the instructor prior to the absence.”

**Grade Scale (%)**

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<td>A</td>
<td>90-100</td>
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<td>B</td>
<td>80-89</td>
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<td>C</td>
<td>70-79</td>
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<td>D</td>
<td>60-69</td>
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**Course Schedule**

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<th>Topic</th>
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<tr>
<td>Aug-Sep</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
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<td>American Psychological Society</td>
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<td>Where do Research Ideas Come From?</td>
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<td>Asking Empirical Questions</td>
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<td>Conducting a Literature Review: Library &amp; Web Adventures &amp; Interlibrary Loans</td>
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<td>Drafting Hypotheses &amp; Operational Definitions</td>
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<td>Experimental Design Assignment: Create Excel file for Data Entry: label all variables, conditions, levels, …</td>
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<td><strong>In Class Informal Presentations of Proposed Research Seminar Project &amp; Gentle Feedback</strong></td>
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<td>Obtaining Institutional Review Board (IRB) Approval</td>
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<td>Oct</td>
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How to Treat Participants; Obtaining and Running Subjects; Keeping Records of Psychology Student Participants’ Extra Credit

**Begin Collecting Data**

How to Write an Introduction

How to Write a Method Section

How to Write an Introductory Paragraph

**Nov**

How to Analyze & Interpret Your Data

How to Write a Results Section; How to Construct Figures & Tables

How to Write a Discussion Section

Disseminating Research Reports to Professional Psychologists

How to Write an Abstract

APA style Oral Poster Presentations

**Dec 9**

**Individually Written Research Report/Final Exam Due**

*Note: The course outline and schedule are subject to modification at my discretion.*