San José State University  
Department of Psychology  
Psyc 121A, Advanced Research Methods in Social/Personality Psychology, Secs. 10/11, Spring 2012

Instructor: Arlene G. Asuncion, Ph.D.

Office Location: Dudley Moorhead Hall 322

Telephone: (408) 924-5609

Email: Arlene.Asuncion@sjsu.edu

NOTE: When contacting me by email, please put “PSYC 121A” in the subject line

Office Hours: TR 9:00 – 10:15 am and by appointment only

Class Days/Time:  
Seminar, TR 12:00 – 1:00 pm  
Lab, TR 1:30 – 4:30 pm

Classroom:  
Seminar, DMH 353  
Lab, DMH 339

Prerequisites:  
Psyc 1 (Introductory Psychology)  
Stat 95 (Elementary Statistics)  
Psyc 100W (Writing Workshop)  
Psyc 120 (Advanced Research Methods)  
Psyc 154 (Social Psychology) or Psyc 139 (Personality Psychology)  
*** If any of these prerequisites are not met, you must get instructor permission for course registration ***

Faculty Web Page and MYSJSU Messaging

Copies of the course materials such as the syllabus, major assignment handouts, etc., may be found on my faculty web page:

http://www.sjsu.edu/people/arlene.asuncion

They are also accessible through the Quick Links>Faculty Web Page links on the SJSU home page. You are responsible for regularly checking with the messaging system through MySJSU for important announcements/information from your instructor.
Course Description
This course will provide students with an overview of the research methods used in Social/Personality Psychology. In this course, students will be given the opportunity to experience and evaluate various research methods from the perspective of the experimental participant and the experimenter.

Students’ main activities may include acting as a research assistant for an experiment conducted by Dr. Asuncion and her students. As research assistants, students are responsible for scheduling and running participants through the experimental protocol as well as data coding & analysis. Students will also propose & design an independent research project individually and in small groups (3-4 people). Each student/group will study a particular social psychological phenomenon of their interest, form hypotheses, design a methodology to study these predictions, and prepare a written proposal describing their research as well as an oral presentation of their project to be given at the end of the semester.

Learning Outcomes
Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs): Upon successful completion of the Advanced Research Methods in Social/Personality Psychology course, students should have gained the following:

- CLO 1: Experience with and knowledge of the intricacies and other important issues in experimental and non-experimental research
- CLO 2: Skills in stimulus construction, data collection, analysis, and interpretation
- CLO 3: Knowledge to conduct their own social psychological research and to critically evaluate the research of others
- CLO 4: Experience with reporting research through oral presentations and through written reports in APA format
- CLO 5: Knowledge about the rights and responsibilities of research participants and the role of ethics in research

Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs): Upon successful completion of the psychology major requirements …

- PLO 1 -- Knowledge Base of Psychology -- Students will be able to identify, describe, and communicate the major concepts, theoretical perspectives, empirical findings, and historical trends in psychology.

- PLO 2 -- Research Methods in Psychology -- Students will be able to design, implement, and communicate basic research methods in psychology, including research design, data analysis, and interpretations.
• **PLO3 -- Critical Thinking Skills in Psychology --** Students will be able to use critical and creative thinking, skeptical inquiry, and a scientific approach to address issues related to behavior and mental processes.

• **PLO4 -- Application of Psychology --** Students will be able to apply psychological principles to individual, interpersonal, group, and societal issues.

• **PLO5 -- Values in Psychology --** Students will value empirical evidence, tolerate ambiguity, act ethically, and recognize their role and responsibility as a member of society.

**Optional Texts & Required Readings**

**Textbooks (optional)**

Although these textbooks are optional, it is highly recommended that students have them as resource materials.


*APA Publication Manual* (most current edition)


**Required Readings**

These two articles are available for download from Dr. Asuncion’s faculty page:

[http://www.sjsu.edu/people/arlene.asuncion](http://www.sjsu.edu/people/arlene.asuncion)


**Classroom Protocol**

Out of respect for myself and your fellow classmates, I ask that everybody try to practice the following guidelines to help the class run more smoothly as well as to limit the amount of distractions that occur.
1. Please turn off all cell phones prior to entering the classroom and DO NOT TEXT during class time. If you receive an important call/text during class that requires your response, please step OUTSIDE the classroom.
2. If you arrive late, please come in as quietly as you can and sit in the back of the room.
3. If you have to leave early, please do so quietly and sit next to the door so you don’t distract other people.
4. Don’t talk when your instructor is speaking or when other students are asking questions.
5. Please be respectful of other people’s experiences and comments even though you might not agree with what they are saying.

USE OF LAPTOPS IN THE CLASSROOM

Laptops are permitted in the classroom for **CLASS-RELATED PURPOSES ONLY**. Use of laptops for any other purpose (e.g., non-class-related activities like emailing friends or surfing the web) will not be permitted. Students not abiding by these guidelines will be asked to turn off their laptop and will not be allowed to bring it into the classroom in the future.

**Dropping and Adding**

Students are responsible for understanding the policies and procedures about add/drops, grade forgiveness, etc. Refer to the current semester’s Catalog Policies section at [http://info.sjsu.edu/static/catalog/policies.html](http://info.sjsu.edu/static/catalog/policies.html). Add/drop deadlines can be found on the current academic calendar web page located at [http://www.sjsu.edu/academic_programs/calendars/academic_calendar/](http://www.sjsu.edu/academic_programs/calendars/academic_calendar/). The Late Drop Policy is available at [http://www.sjsu.edu/aars/policies/latedrops/policy/](http://www.sjsu.edu/aars/policies/latedrops/policy/). Students should be aware of the current deadlines and penalties for dropping classes.

Information about the latest changes and news is available at the Advising Hub at [http://www.sjsu.edu/advising/](http://www.sjsu.edu/advising/).

**Assignments and Grading Policy**

Your grade in the course will be based on the following activities/requirements:

1. **Overall course participation (15 pts)**: CLOs 1, 2, & 5

A portion of your course grade will be based on your participation in class activities/discussion. These activities may include collecting data outside of class and reporting your results and acting as an experimenter for a research project conducted by your instructor. Students’ participation grade will be based primarily on your reliability, competence, conscientiousness, and timeliness in completing course activities. **So it is very important that you take an ACTIVE role in this course and be conscientious about completing tasks for which you are responsible in a timely manner.**
2. Non-experimental (correlational) study (45 pts): CLOs 1-5

Your course grade will also be based on your active participation/contribution to the non-experimental (correlational) study that you will design & conduct in SMALL GROUPS (3-4 people). In this project, each group will design a simple non-experimental study in which you will examine the relationship between two or more variables. Some examples of projects may include looking at the relationship between age & the number of hours spent on the internet; level of prejudice (e.g., modern racism) and attitudes towards social issues; level of self-monitoring (high vs. low) and use of social media; and socio-economic status and number of hours work per week, etc.

You will be responsible for the following activities regarding this non-experimental study:

a. **Study design and hypotheses** regarding the predicted relationships among the variables of interest. When stating the hypotheses, it is IMPORTANT that you explain the RATIONALE underlying each hypothesis & CITE appropriate references to support your hypotheses.

*** Each GROUP will turn in a BRIEF paper (5 pages max, including reference page) summarizing their main research questions, proposed design & hypotheses for instructor approval. Worth 10 pts. Due (TUESDAY, 2/21)

b. **Stimulus construction and data collection**. Once you have instructor approval of your study, you will also construct the stimulus materials needed and run participants through your procedures.

** You may not run participants until I have approved ALL of your stimulus materials.

Your instructor can help you recruit participants in her courses and/or you can run students outside of class. Your group should run a MINIMUM of 75 participants. Worth 10 pts.

b. **Data analysis/group results section**. After data collection, your group will also analyze your data (using SPSS) to examine the predicted relationships among your variables.

*** Each GROUP will write and turn in a results section reporting the findings of your project. In this results section, you should briefly review your hypotheses and report the findings as they relate to each of your predictions. It is important that you include tables and/or figures to help illustrate your findings (5 pgs max.). Worth 10 pts. Due (TUESDAY, 4/3)
d. **Oral presentation of research project.** Each group will also give a BRIEF (10 min.) presentation of their group project. The presentation should include a discussion of your hypotheses, methods, findings, limitations, & conclusions. Use of overheads or powerpoint, tables and/or graphs are expected. Each group member MUST participate in the presentation. **Attendance/participation expected for all presentations. A portion of your grade will depend on your ability to comply with the 10 min. time limit. **Worth 15 pts.

3. **Independent research proposal (60 pts total): CLOs 1-5**

Another main activity for this course will be to design and propose an original experiment which examines a specific issue in Social/Personality Psychology. You will also prepare an HR-IRB protocol describing this experiment and submit this protocol to me for evaluation.

For instructions on how to prepare the protocol, go to [www.sjsu.edu/gradstudies/irb/](http://www.sjsu.edu/gradstudies/irb/). The links you will need are the IRB checklist, IRB application, Protocol narrative template, and consent form templates. Along with the content of your protocol, you will be evaluated on your ability to follow directions & the completeness of your IRB protocol (e.g., inclusion of consent form, examples of stimulus materials, debriefing form, etc).

You may choose to do this activity individually or in pairs. However, note that if you choose to work in pairs, BOTH individuals in the pair will receive the same grade on the project.

The specifics of this research proposal will be discussed in more detail in class, but here are some general guidelines for you to follow:

**Guidelines & requirements for independent research proposal:**

a. Study must use an *experimental design* (sorry, no correlational studies)

b. Your design must include *at least 2 independent variables*. One of these independent variables may be a non-manipulated variable (e.g., gender, ethnicity, self-esteem, etc), but the other IV must be a manipulated one. So any experiment you propose must be at least a 2 x 2 design.

c. The experiment must be something that can be conducted using resources available at SJSU.

d. I will not accept research projects that are written for another class. For example, you cannot propose the same experiment you conducted in your prior research methods course (e.g., Psyc 120). You can, however, base your research project on the same topic, just as long as it is a different experiment. So if you conducted a
helping experiment in your research methods course that looked at gender, you can propose a different helping experiment which examines ethnicity instead of gender.

The independent research proposal will include the following activities:

- **Summary of proposed experiment** (5 pts) -- Each student/pair will prepare a summary of their proposed research for instructor feedback/suggestions. **2 pages max. Due (TUESDAY, 3/13)**

  This summary should include the following information:
  - Main research question(s) of interest
  - Overview of experimental design
    -- Description of **independent variables** (what IVs are & how they are manipulated), the research design itself (is it a 2 x 2, 3 x 2 design, whether the variables are between or within-subjects factors, etc).
    -- Description of **dependent variables** (what are you going to measure/assess in your experiment, how are you going to measure this, etc.
  - Hypotheses

- **Reference page with justifications** (10 pts) -- This activity will help in your literature search for your research project. Each student/pair should find between **3-5 articles/references** for your project. Make a reference page & indicate why you chose the article and how it relates to your project. **3 pages max. Due (TUESDAY, 4/5).**

- **Outline of final experimental design/methodology** (10 pts) -- Each student/pair will write-up an outline of their final design/method for their proposed research project. This outline should include the following:
  - Main research question(s) of interest
  - BRIEF description of experimental design (IVs & design, DVs, etc)
  - Procedure/methodology -- summarize your experimental procedure, including number of type of participants, how they will be recruited, instructions to participants, stimulus materials, cover story, Debriefing, etc.

  **3 pages max. Due (TUESDAY, 4/19)**

- **Oral presentation of research project** (15 pts) -- Each student/pair will also give a BRIEF (10 min.) presentation of their research project. The presentation should include a summary of the major research questions addressed in your project, why they are important, hypotheses, methods, and conclusions. Use of overheads or powerpoint, tables, & graphs are expected. **Attendance/participation expected for all presentations. A portion of your grade will depend on your ability to comply with the 10 min. time limit.**
• **HR-IRB protocol** (20 pts) – Each student/pair will prepare and submit an HR-IRB protocol to their instructor for evaluation. For instructions on how to prepare the protocol, go to [www.sjsu.edu/gradstudies/irb/](http://www.sjsu.edu/gradstudies/irb/). The links you will need are the IRB checklist, IRB application, Protocol narrative template, and consent form templates. Along with the content of your protocol, you will be evaluated on your ability to follow directions & the completeness of your IRB protocol (e.g., inclusion of consent form, examples of stimulus materials, debriefing form, etc).

There is no page length maximum for the protocol as different research projects will require more/less description. However, students’ goal should be to prepare a CLEAR, CONCISE protocol, keeping in mind that protocol evaluators are typically NOT psychologists.

Keep it simple & straightforward, but complete enough so that the reader knows exactly what your experiment is going to test & how you are going to carry out your methodology.

**EARLY DUE DATE:** THURSDAY, 5/5  (+5 pts bonus)

**FINAL DUE DATE:** THURSDAY, 5/12

**ONLY HARD COPIES OF PAPERS WILL BE ACCEPTED. DO NOT SEND VIA EMAIL. NO LATE PAPERS WILL BE ACCEPTED.**

**GRADING:** Grades for the course will be based on the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall course participation</td>
<td>15 pts</td>
<td>(12%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-experimental (correlational) study</td>
<td>45 pts</td>
<td>(38%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study design/hypotheses</td>
<td>10 pts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stimulus construction/data collection</td>
<td>10 pts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data analysis/results section</td>
<td>10 pts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oral presentation</td>
<td>15 pts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent research proposal</td>
<td>60 pts</td>
<td>(50%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proposal summary</td>
<td>5 pts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reference page w/justifications</td>
<td>10 pts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final design/method outline</td>
<td>10 pts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oral presentation</td>
<td>15 pts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HR-IRB protocol</td>
<td>20 pts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>120 pts</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Final course grades will be computed based on the percentage of total points you earn in the course. For example, 94% of 110 points will be an “A”, 84% will be a “B”, and so forth.
University Policies

Academic integrity

Your commitment as a student to learning is evidenced by your enrollment at San Jose State University. The University’s Academic Integrity policy, located at http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/S07-2.htm, requires you to be honest in all your academic coursework. Faculty members are required to report all infractions to the office of Student Conduct and Ethical Development. The Student Conduct and Ethical Development website is available at http://www.sjsu.edu/studentconduct/.

Instances of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Cheating on exams or plagiarism (presenting the work of another as your own, or the use of another person’s ideas without giving proper credit) will result in a failing grade and sanctions by the University. For this class, all assignments are to be completed by the individual student unless otherwise specified. If you would like to include in your assignment any material you have submitted, or plan to submit for another class, please note that SJSU’s Academic Policy S07-2 requires approval of instructors.

Campus Policy in Compliance with the American Disabilities Act

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, or if you need to make special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible, or see me during office hours. Presidential Directive 97-03 requires that students with disabilities requesting accommodations must register with the DRC (Disability Resource Center) at http://www.drc.sjsu.edu/ to establish a record of their disability.

SJSU Writing Center

The SJSU Writing Center is located in Room 126 in Clark Hall. It is staffed by professional instructors and upper-division or graduate-level writing specialists from each of the seven SJSU colleges. Our writing specialists have met a rigorous GPA requirement, and they are well trained to assist all students at all levels within all disciplines to become better writers. The Writing Center website is located at http://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter/about/staff/.
### Tentative Course Schedule

**Note:** The instructor reserves the right to change the dates for activities and papers. However, students will be informed in class and/or email of any changes before they are made.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>R 1/26</td>
<td><strong>Introduction to class</strong> <strong>DUE NEXT CLASS – 1 IDEA FOR GROUP PROJECT</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>T 1/31</td>
<td>Form groups to brainstorm and discuss group research projects Start literature search for projects. Find between 3-5 articles/references for your project.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>R 2/2</td>
<td>Informal group presentations of possible group projects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>T 2/7</td>
<td>Instructor meetings with groups to finalize group projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>R 2/9</td>
<td><strong>NON-EXPERIMENTAL STUDY DESIGN/HYPOTHESES (including reference page) DUE</strong> Groups meet to begin stimulus construction Groups meet to finalize stimulus construction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>T 2/14</td>
<td>Data collection begins for group projects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>R 2/16</td>
<td>Continue with data collection for group projects. Start thinking about ideas for independent research proposals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>T 2/21</td>
<td>Begin data analysis for group projects; <strong>SUMMARY OF PROPOSED EXPERIMENT DUE</strong> Meetings with instructor to discuss independent research proposals Meetings with instructor to discuss independent research proposals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>R 2/23</td>
<td>Meetings with instructor finalize independent research proposals Work on group results sections. Meetings with instructor to finalize independent research proposals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>T 2/28</td>
<td><strong>GROUP RESULTS SECTIONS DUE</strong> Instructor meetings if needed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>R 3/1</td>
<td><strong>NO CLASS</strong> SPRING BREAK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>T 3/6</td>
<td>Groups meet to discuss group results/presentations. <strong>DUE NEXT CLASS – 1 IDEA FOR GROUP PROJECT</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>R 3/8</td>
<td>Informal group presentations of possible group projects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>T 3/13</td>
<td>Instructor meetings with groups to finalize group projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>R 3/15</td>
<td><strong>NON-EXPERIMENTAL STUDY DESIGN/HYPOTHESES (including reference page) DUE</strong> Groups meet to begin stimulus construction Groups meet to finalize stimulus construction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>T 3/20</td>
<td>Data collection begins for group projects. Continue with data collection for group projects. Start thinking about ideas for independent research proposals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>R 3/22</td>
<td>Begin data analysis for group projects; <strong>SUMMARY OF PROPOSED EXPERIMENT DUE</strong> Meetings with instructor to discuss independent research proposals Meetings with instructor to discuss independent research proposals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>T 4/3</td>
<td>Meetings with instructor finalize independent research proposals Work on group results sections. Meetings with instructor to finalize independent research proposals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>R 4/5</td>
<td><strong>GROUP RESULTS SECTIONS DUE</strong> Instructor meetings if needed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>T 4/10</td>
<td><strong>REFERENCE PAGE W/JUSTIFICATIONS DUE</strong>&lt;br&gt;GROUP PRESENTATIONS OF PROJECTS BEGIN (mandatory)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>R 4/12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>T 4/17</td>
<td>GROUP PRESENTATIONS OF PROJECTS (mandatory)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>R 4/19</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>T 4/24</td>
<td><strong>OUTLINE OF FINAL DESIGN/METHOD DUE</strong>&lt;br&gt;Begin working on HR-IRB protocol</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>R 4/26</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>T 5/1</td>
<td>Continue working on HR-IRB protocol</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>R 5/3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>T 5/8</td>
<td><strong>MANDATORY ATTENDANCE AT SPARC</strong> – class will meet in Student Union, make sure to check in with instructor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>R 5/10</td>
<td><strong>EARLY DEADLINE FOR HR-IRB PROTOCOL</strong>&lt;br&gt;Protocols turned in on this date (during class time) will receive 5 bonus points&lt;br&gt;BEGIN ORAL PRESENTATIONS OF RESEARCH PROPOSALS (mandatory)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>T 5/15</td>
<td><strong>FINAL DEADLINE FOR HR-IRB PROTOCOL</strong>&lt;br&gt;ORAL PRESENTATIONS OF RESEARCH PROPOSALS (mandatory)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>Wednesday 5/23</td>
<td>** CLASS MEETS AT 9:45 – 11:00 **&lt;br&gt;Complete oral presentations of research projects (mandatory)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>