Course Description

Introduces the principles and processes of various research procedures for applying the scientific method to understanding behavior. Includes preparation for conducting, understanding and interpreting laboratory and field studies, documenting principles through research, and applying critical assessment to generic research. Lecture 3 hours per week.

General Course Purpose

This course is designed to introduce students to the process and methods involved in scientific inquiry in psychology. This course will give students the opportunity to learn how testable hypotheses are developed including variable identification and sampling, how realistic, valid, and ethical experiments are designed to test these hypotheses, and how psychology as a science is advanced through hypothesis testing and theory refinement. Specifically, to reach these goals, students will be offered opportunities to hone skills in analyzing published research in psychology, will be offered an overview of the basic designs used in experimental research including a discussion of when each design is appropriate and how data for each design should be collected and analyzed, and an overview of the some of the ethical and practical problems in doing psychological research. This course will also introduce students to the use of APA format in reporting research results.

Course Prerequisite/Co-requisites

Prerequisites: PSY 201 and 202 or PSY 200 and evidence of proficiency in English

Course Objectives

Upon successful completion of the course, the student will be able to:

- Explain research procedures for applying the scientific method to understanding behavior
- Identify dependent and independent variables within a research model
- Explain different research designs and articulate their advantages and disadvantages for a particular research question
- Critique research studies in terms of their operational definitions, validity, reliability, statistics used, and ethics
- Design, conduct, interpret, and report in APA format a research study of behavior

Major Topics To Be Covered

- Introduction to the scientific method
- Ethical issues in conducting research
- Creating and testing hypotheses
- Methods of sampling
- Experimental designs in behavioral research (e.g. within subjects vs. between subjects)
- Correlational research
- Questionnaires and surveys
- Other non-experimental research methods (e.g. archival research, naturalistic observation)
- APA format for sharing research results