

**Hagerstown Community College**  
**OFFICIAL COURSE SYLLABUS DOCUMENT**

**COURSE:** PSY 240: Research Methods

3 credits

**INSTRUCTOR:** Melinda Howell

**SEMESTER/YEAR:** Fall, 2016

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** This course discusses the methods employed to conduct research in psychology. During the course of the semester you will learn about different research designs psychologists use and how they measure the phenomena of interest. Although this course is not a statistics class, you will learn about some descriptive and inferential statistical methods as they are directly related to methodological and measurement issues in psychology research.

**TEXTBOOKS:**

American Psychological Association (2001). *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (6th Edition)*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Cozby, P. C. (2012). *Methods in Behavioral Research (11th ed.)*. McGraw Hill: Boston.

**STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

1. To think critically and skeptically
2. To prepare you for other psychology classes
3. To write a research paper in APA format
4. To appropriately interpret psychological findings

**COURSE CONTENT OBJECTIVES:**

1. Identify the parts of a research paper.
2. Write a literature review in APA format.
3. Write a method section in APA format.
4. Write a reference page in APA format.
5. Understand when it is appropriate to use basic statistics such as t-tests, correlations and ANOVAs.
6. Interpret findings from basic statistics such as t-tests, correlations and ANOVAs.
7. Understand the steps in the research process.
8. Understand ethics in psychological research including the consent process, the purpose of the Institutional Review Board, and scientific misconduct.
9. Identify independent and dependent variables in a study.
10. Understand which research designs can determine causality.
11. Write an operational definition of a variable.
12. Define reliability and identify the different types of reliability.
13. Define validity and identify the different types of validity.
14. Describe the problem of reactivity and what can be done to minimize it.
15. Describe the four scales of measurement: nominal, ordinal, interval, and ratio.
16. Use academic search engines.

17. Describe the benefits and drawbacks to case study designs.
18. Compare the two types of surveys: questionnaires and interviews.
19. Distinguish between different sampling techniques.
20. Define a confounding variable.
21. Compare between groups and within groups designs.
22. Describe participant expectations and experimenter expectations and what can be done to control for them.
23. Define a factorial design.
24. Understand main effects and interactions in a factorial design.
25. Identify developmental research designs, including cross-sectional, longitudinal and sequential designs and the advantages and disadvantages of each.
26. Describe the measures of central tendency and variability.
27. Identify the null hypothesis and experimental hypothesis.
28. Define Type I and Type II errors.
29. Identify when it is appropriate to generalize research findings and when it is not.
30. Describe the importance of replication.

**TOTAL HOURS OF COURSEWORK:**

To earn one academic credit at HCC, students are required to complete a minimum of 37.5 clock hours (45 fifty-minute “academic” hours) of coursework per semester. Those hours of coursework may be completed through a combination of hours within the classroom and hours outside the classroom. Certain courses may require more than the 37.5 minimum hours of coursework per credit.

For most classes, students should expect to do at least 2 hours of coursework outside of class for each hour of in-class coursework.

37.5 hours	Class lecture and discussion
22 hours	Reading textbook in preparation for class
30 hours	Studying for quizzes
<u>23 hours</u>	Assignments
112.5 hours	

**SERVICES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:** Students may receive reasonable accommodations if they have a diagnosed disability and present appropriate documentation. Students seeking accommodations are required to contact the Disability Support Services (DSS) office as early as possible. Students may contact a DSS staff member for an appointment at [dss@hagerstowncc.edu](mailto:dss@hagerstowncc.edu) or at 240-500-2530.