

New Psychology Course

Course Number: PSY 295

Course Title: Behavioral Research Technologies

Credits: 2.0

Prerequisite: PSY 200

Enrollment limit: 16

Room: SC 1009 (psychology computer lab)

Instructor: Tom Ludwig

Offered: Fall 2008 (first half of semester)

Description: This course will help students build skills in using computer software tools for controlling behavioral studies and analyzing the results. Students will gain these skills by working in teams on three or four simple research projects, each demonstrating a different experimental paradigm with different stimulus materials and statistical analysis techniques. The software tools will include experiment generators, image editors, audio/video editors, web page editors, spreadsheets, statistical programs, and presentation tools.

Rationale: The psychology department does a very good job of helping students build a solid knowledge base in psychology, but we put less systematic effort into helping students build skills. This course is intended to give students hands-on practice with a range of technologies they are likely to encounter in graduate school or in B.A.-level jobs in the human services. Students who take this course will also be more prepared for the Advanced Research course or for independent research projects.

Tentative Course Plan:

Week 1 → Introduction to Computer Control of Experiments

Week 2 → Creating Stimulus Materials: Text and Images

Week 3 → Creating Stimulus Materials: Audio and Video Clips

Week 4 → Constructing the Studies

- Reaction time task (using text and images)
- Rating task (using audio and video clips)
- Survey task (conducted online)
- Physiological measurement task ??

Week 5 → Collecting and Tabulating the Data

Week 6 → Analyzing and Interpreting the Results

Week 7 → Presenting the Results