

Course Syllabus (updated 07/22/2021)

PSY 311 – Research Methods in Psychology

Fall 2021

Course Reference Number (CRN): 11271

Instructor:	Dr Joel Suss, Associate Professor of Psychology
Preferred Method of Contact:	e-mail: joel.suss@wichita.edu . See detailed instructions under “Contact Policy”
Secondary Contact Method:	Office phone: (316) 978 3821
Virtual Office Hours:	I really enjoy speaking with students one-on-one, whether you have questions related to assignments, the course, psychology, career options, grad school, or just life. Just email me and we’ll make a time to talk or video chat.

Prerequisite: PSY 301 – Psychological Statistics

Hi!! Before we get into the formal part of the syllabus, I want to inform you about a few important things that you should know before you commit to this course:

- This course is amazing and I am really excited to be teaching it!
- There are **no** videos of me lecturing to you in this course.
- This course is all about active learning. Yes, there will be a few videos to watch, but mostly you’ll be reading and then actively completing assignments.
- There is a course web site with links to all the resources you need; **there is no course textbook.**
- You will be required to engage with other students, through Discussion Boards and small group chats.
- There are no tests or exams. But there are many small assignments designed for you to practice and acquire new skills.
- Consistent with WSU’s policy regarding credit hours, you are expected to work on this course 2 hours per day, six days a week. If you can’t devote that amount of time, then please consider whether you should be enrolled in this course.

How to use this syllabus

This syllabus provides you with information specific to this course, and it also provides information about important university policies. This document should be viewed as a course overview; it is not a contract and is subject to change as the semester evolves. Any needed changes will be communicated by email and Blackboard announcement. The most up-to-date version of the syllabus can always be found on Blackboard.

Academic Integrity

Students at Wichita State University are expected to uphold high academic standards. WSU will not tolerate a lack of academic integrity. Students are responsible for knowing and following the Student Code of Conduct http://webs.wichita.edu/inaudit/ch8_05.htm and the Student Academic Honesty policy http://webs.wichita.edu/inaudit/ch2_17.htm. When the faculty member determines sanctions are warranted for violations of academic integrity, regardless of severity, the faculty member must report the infraction to the Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards. If you need more information about the process or wish to appeal a decision, please visit

https://www.wichita.edu/about/student_conduct/ai.php

At the instructor's discretion, penalties for violating academic integrity can include:

- requiring the student to redo the assignment for a reduced grade.
- assigning the student a failing grade for the assignment.
- assigning the student a failing grade for the class.

Course Description

PSY 311. Research Methods in Psychology (4). Covers the philosophy of research methods, experimental designs, appropriate data analysis techniques, and historical trends and developments in experimental psychology. The laboratory exposes students to representative experimental lab techniques in the major subdivisions of psychology. Actively involves all students in research project(s). Prerequisite: PSY 301 (Psychological Statistics).

Measurable Student Learning Outcomes

After successfully finishing the course, you'll be able to

1. find, read, and understand scientific articles and synthesize scientific results;
2. effectively communicate ideas, critical evaluation, and research through analytic writing and engaging narrated presentations;
3. think critically, examine links between method and results, consider alternative explanations, and knowledgeably consume research;
4. generate testable hypotheses and design psychological research using different methods, data collection tools, and analysis techniques;
5. correctly interpret and convey statistical results via text, tables, and graphs;
6. use key principles of science, including use of evidence, scientific reliability and validity, and fair and thorough evaluation of research inside and outside the classroom;
7. understand that ethical principles, behavior, and decision-making pertain to all aspects of the research process; and
8. identify how psychological science can inform societal practices policies, review, and apply what you learn.

FAQ: Who Teaches PSY 311 online?

Professor: Dr Joel Suss, Associate Professor

Please call me: Joel (I don't really like the Professor/Dr./Sir thing)

About me: I'm from Melbourne, Australia. I came to the USA in 2007 for graduate school and have been here ever since (except for about 1.5 years in Canada). I specialize in an area of psychology called [Human Factors](#). This is my 6th year at WSU.

When I'm not thinking about how to improve students' learning experiences, I spend my time thinking about research, designing experiments, and analyzing data. I also like to run, listen to Aussie hip-hop, cook, and practice Brazilian jiu-jitsu (not all at the same time.)



I am genuinely interested in making sure you succeed in this course. If you encounter any barriers to your success, please let me know. I'm always available by email at joel.suss@wichita.edu.

Important Attribution for this Course

It is important for me to let you know that this course is based on—and is essentially the same as—an existing online course by [Professor Morton Ann Gernsbacher](#) at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. I am using Professor Gernsbacher's [Research Methods course](#) because I think it is simply amazing (for many reasons). I have taught Research Methods in Psychology as an on-campus course several times in the past—so I am familiar with that how the course works in that mode. When I volunteered to teach Research Methods as an online course, I spent considerable time evaluating how to create an exceptional online course. I *could* have just created my own online Research Methods course by taking the on-campus course and shmooshing it into an online format. But I felt that there might be a better way. I searched and searched

(yes, I did research!). When I finally found Professor Gernsbacher's course, I knew I was onto something great. You are going to learn so much—and more importantly, gain many valuable skills. Professor Gernsbacher has taken the time to help me understand her motivation for designing the course the way it is. If you are interested in learning about that, then I am happy to chat with you—just email me and we'll make a time!

- I am using her course under the following license: Open-Access Active-Learning Research Methods Course by [Morton Ann Gernsbacher, PhD](#) is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License](#).
- Although we have our own dedicated course web site (<https://psy311.wichita.edu>), her original course can be viewed at <https://online225.psych.wisc.edu/>

FAQ: How Will I Learn in this Course?

The pedagogy of this course is driven by empirically proven principles of learning, including the principles of

- active learning, which is more beneficial than passive learning, and
- frequent incremental practice, which is more beneficial than sporadic practice ([Gernsbacher, 2014](#)).

The course comprises 14 units. There are six assignments per units. In total there are 84 assignments (14 units × 6 assignments). Therefore, in this course, you will acquire skills every day by completing the 84 incremental assignments across the semester. You will be expected to engage with the course, and with your peers, **daily** (via online discussion, including synchronous text-based chat).

There are NO timed exams in this course, and you will NOT need to purchase a textbook.

“Course How To” Guide

There are several tasks that you will need to know how to do (e.g., post on discussion boards, participate in group chats). To help, there is a “Course How To” guide that provides step-by-step instructions on how to do accomplish those tasks. Please refer to the “Course How To” guide on Blackboard.

Required Equipment

Online students are required to have complete access to a functioning laptop or PC with internet capabilities. This laptop or computer must have Microsoft Word. If you do not have Microsoft Word on your PC or Laptop, Wichita State does provide free access to Microsoft Office 365 for students. Follow the instructions below to get Microsoft Office:

1. Log in to [MyWSU](#)
2. Click on Office 365 located on the “Home” tab
3. Follow the Office 365 wizard instructions

Before you begin your coursework, [ensure that your computer meets technical standards](#) (software, computer equipment, general skills, program management skills, communication skills, and managing your WSU e-mail) for use in online courses.

FAQ: What if I Don't Have Access to the Internet?

This is a completely online course. You're required to have access to high-speed Internet EVERY DAY during the ENTIRE semester of the course. Not having access to high-speed Internet (because you're traveling or you forgot to pay your cable bill or your roommate is hogging all the bandwidth playing video games) will NOT be a valid excuse for not completing your work. You must have access to the Internet.

FAQ: How Much Time Do I Need to Spend on this Course?

- According to the WSU policy for distance learning (https://www.wichita.edu/about/policy/ch_04/ch4_08.php): “One credit hour for distance learning is defined as three (3) hours of instruction and/or student work per week that leads to equivalent learning outcomes required for an on-campus course.”
- PSY 311 “Research Methods in Psychology” is a 4-credit course.
- Because PSY 311 is a 4-credit course, you're expected to spend a total of 180 hours on the course (4 course credits × 3 hours/week × 15 weeks = 180 total work hours for the entire course).
- You are expected to work on this course **2 hours per day**, six days a week.

- You should **NOT** register for this course if you will not be able to spend 2 hours a day, six days a week working on only this course, during the course's 14 Units.

Course Web Sites

- Open-access web site: All course materials and instructions (e.g., links to videos and readings) are available on the open-access website: <https://psy311.wichita.edu>
- The Blackboard course web site will be used for submitting assignments, hosting discussion boards and chats, and for posting grades. You can log into Blackboard via the portal at <http://mywsu.wichita.edu> or directly at <http://blackboard.wichita.edu>.

FAQ: How Come there are Multiple Versions of Some Resources on the Course Web Site?

To ensure that course resources (e.g., articles) are accessible to everyone, I often provide multiple versions of each resource (e.g., Microsoft Word, web link to original article, PDF) on the course web site (<https://psy311.wichita.edu>). You only need to look at one version; pick the one that works best for you.

Class Protocol

Though this is an online class, participation is still crucial. "Participation" involves reading the assignments thoroughly, reading all material associated with a given assignment (including watching any linked videos), and completing online assignments. To be successful in this class, you should be checking your student email daily and logging in to our course at least 6 times a week.

Contact Policy

Whenever you have a question, you should email Joel (joel.suss@wichita.edu).

- Make sure to complete Unit 1: Assignment #1 to learn how I would like you to address me.
- Subject line: Always title your email message "PSY 311: Question". Note that "PSY 311 Question" is not valid; neither is "Psy 311: Question" (can you spot the minor differences?). If you follow instructions **TO THE LETTER** and pay attention to details in this course, you'll do just fine.
- Do not describe your question in the subject; do that in the body of the email (e.g., "I have a question regarding Unit 1: Assignment #2...").
- Always email me from your WSU email address. Email sent from personal email servers like Gmail, Yahoo, etc., have a tendency to end up in my spam folder, and I never see them. You may also email me through Blackboard via the Email My Instructor tab.
- Remember to sign your name at the end of the email.
- Do not email me from Blackboard; instead, log into your [student email](#).
- Please do **NOT** email the course TA (Teaching Assistant).

You should **NOT** contact me for tech support.

- Any technical problems involving your computer, or issues regarding file uploading or sharing, should go through the OneStop. You can contact them at 316-978-3909. You can also fill out a request for help form at their [website](#).
- However, if you have a problem with accessing or uploading assignments, you *should* let me know before your assignment is due. You will also have to accompany this notification with the file in question, so I can verify that it is completed by the due date/time.

Response Time

Dr. Suss will respond to your email within 24 hours.

FAQ: How Can I Do Well in this Course?

1. **First, work on the course every day.** The best way to acquire any skill – be it playing acoustic guitar or speaking Portuguese – is to practice every day. Similarly, the best way to do well in this course is to practice (i.e., work on the course) every day. If you've taken other online courses, you might be surprised by how this course works. In other online courses, you might have been able to hang back and then cram in a lot of work at the end of the semester. A hang-back strategy will **NOT** work in this course.
2. Therefore, **the second way to do well in this course is to keep up.** You will have two weeks to complete each assignment. You will also have a one-week extension after each assignment is due to complete the assignment late or to correct any errors you made in your initial assignment.

But after two weeks of regular completion time and after a one-week reasonable extension, you will no longer be able to complete the assignment. The opportunity will be gone, just like in real life.

- Therefore, **the third way to do well in this course is to always try to work ahead.** Your working ahead is the best way to protect yourself against any unexpected mishap.

Grading

The short story is this: You'll get 3 points if your assignment fulfilled all of the requirements. If it didn't, you'll get 1 point and then have the opportunity to correct it and earn a maximum of 2 points (you'll have one week after the due date to do this).

So put in the effort the first time and get your 3 points!

Here it is again, but in more detail. On each of the course's 84 assignments, you can earn the following points:

- 3 points:** If you completed the assignment by the due date **AND** your **INITIAL** assignment fulfilled **ALL** the requirements.
- 2 points:** If you completed the assignment before its due date **BUT** your **INITIAL** assignment didn't fulfill all the requirements. However, you corrected your **INITIAL** assignment to fulfill **ALL** the requirements **ANYTIME** before one week after the due date.
- 1 point:** If you didn't complete the assignment before its due date **BUT** you did complete the assignment before one week after the due date. **OR** if you completed the assignment before its due date **BUT** your **INITIAL** assignment didn't fulfill **ALL** the requirements **AND** you didn't correct your **INITIAL** assignment to fulfill **ALL** the requirements **ANY TIME** before one week after the due date.
- 0 points:** If you still haven't completed the assignment one week after the due date.

Your final course grade will be the percentage of points you earn from the available **252 total points** (i.e., 84 assignments \times 3 points each), using the grading scale described in the next section.

- At the end of the semester, there will be one extra-credit opportunity. This will be a 20-question multiple-choice quiz about research methods. Joel will provide the link to the quiz by email on Monday November 29. You will have until 11:59 PM on Thursday December 2 to complete the quiz. If you complete the quiz by the due date, 3 points will be added to your total points *regardless of your actual score on the quiz*. For example, if you accrued 230 points out of the available 252 points **AND** you completed the extra-credit quiz, your final course grade will be $(233/252) \times 100$.

Grading Scale in Percentages

WSU uses a +/− grading scale for final grades and to calculate grade point averages. In this class, grades are assigned according to the following chart. (Other classes might assign grades differently: Be sure to understand the different grading scales in all of your classes.)

Percentages	Letter grade	Grade Points	Interpretation
93-100	A	4.00	<i>The A range denotes excellent performance.</i>
90-92.99	A-	3.70	
87-89.99	B+	3.30	<i>The B range denotes good performance.</i>
83-86.99	B	3.00	
80-82.99	B-	2.70	
77-79.99	C+	2.30	<i>The C range denotes satisfactory performance.</i>
73-76.99	C	2.00	
70-72.99	C-	1.70	
67-69.99	D+	1.30	<i>The D range denotes unsatisfactory performance.</i>
63-66.99	D	1.00	
60-62.99	D-	0.70	
60-59.99	F	0.00	<i>F denotes failing performance.</i>

Warning About Requests to Change Your Final Grade

Your final course grade is based on the breakdown described above. If—at the end of the semester—you think that your final grade has been miscalculated, you may contact me and I will review the calculations. You may not email me and request that your grade be changed for other reasons (i.e., request additional points, “rounding up,” extra credit, redo an assignment, etc.), and is highly unethical for you to do so. Specifically, it is unethical to expect me to provide only one student (you!) with any special accommodations, and it is unethical and illegal for me to report (essentially falsify) an official record. Falsifying an academic record diminishes the value of a university degree.

Warning about Requesting an “Incomplete” (“I”) Grade for this Course

An “Incomplete” (“I”) grade is reserved for situations in which a student has only one outstanding assignment/exam left to submit. That situation simply doesn’t apply to this course, because of the sheer number of assignments. So if you get to the end of the semester and have a grade (e.g., an “F”) that you are not happy with, please **do not** contact me and ask me for an “Incomplete” instead of the grade you earned. Instead, consider withdrawing from the course before you reach that stage.

Grades on Blackboard

You can find your grades for all individual assignments on the Blackboard course web site under “Grades.” There will be a Final Grade that will be displayed as a running total (%). The running total give you an idea of how you are going, based on the assignment up until the current date.

FAQ: How do I Respond to Other Students’ Discussion Posts?

Each response you write to another student **MUST** be at least 200 words long and must include **AT LEAST TWO** of the following four types of response:

- A COMPLIMENT:
 - I like how ...
 - I like that ...
- A COMMENT:
 - I agree that ... because ...
 - I disagree that ... because ...
- A CONNECTION:
 - I have also read that ...
 - I have also seen that ...
 - I have also heard that ...
 - I have also thought that ...
- A QUESTION:
 - I wonder why ...
 - I wonder how ...
 - I wonder who ...
 - I wonder what ...
 - I wonder when ...
 - I wonder where ...

FAQ: What can I Expect from Joel and the TA?

Joel and the Teaching Assistant (TA) of this course will always abide by the “Seven Principles of Good Practice in Undergraduate Education” (Chickering & Gamson, 1987).

- They will educate using the methods of active learning.
- They will emphasize your spending time on task.
- They will provide rapid feedback to you.
- They will encourage you to cooperate and reciprocate with other students.
- They will communicate high expectations.
- They will respond to your email within 24 hours.
- They will respect your diverse talents.

FAQ: Where Do I Take Concerns About a Teaching Assistant or Course Instructor?

Occasionally, a student may have a concern about a TA or course instructor. If that happens, you should feel free to discuss the matter directly with the TA or instructor. If the concern is about the TA and you do not feel comfortable discussing it with them, you should discuss it with the course instructor.

Concerns about mistakes in grading should be resolved with the instructor or TA in the great majority of cases. If the concern is about the instructor (other than ordinary grading questions), and you don't feel comfortable discussing it with them, make an appointment to speak to the Chair of the Psychology Department, Professor Rhonda Lewis (rhonda.lewis@vichita.edu).

FAQ: How Can I Take Advantage of the Flexibility Accommodation that is Built into this Course?

This course is based on the principles of Universal Design, which prescribes that **instructional accommodations should be built into the environment and available to all students** (just like elevators and curb cuts) rather than needing to be requested ex post facto or available to only some students.

Therefore, in this course, all lecture videos are accompanied by written transcripts and captions; all PDFs are screen-readable (and voice-able with text-to-speech software, as well as searchable and highlightable). For each resource, there are typically several versions (e.g., PDF, original web link). There are no timed tests, no in-person or synchronous lectures or labs, and no in-person attendance requirements.

The course offers nearly a hundred grading opportunities, rather than only three or four, and the course is highly structured with explicit due dates. These accommodations are all built into this course to facilitate all students' success.

Most importantly, the course has a built in flexibility accommodation available to all students. All students have the opportunity to work ahead; to have a reasonable extension on all assignments; and to miss occasional assignments and still earn a good final grade.

Flexibility is built into this course to aid all students, including students with disabilities, as well as students with chronic health conditions, religious conflicts, care-giving responsibilities, unpredictable work schedules, and student athletes—everyone.

To take advantage of the flexibility accommodation, you must do three things.

1. **First, take advantage of the opportunity to work ahead.** The entire course is available two weeks before the first assignment is due; each Discussion Board opens two weeks before it is due. Take advantage of the opportunity to work ahead and complete as many assignments in advance as you can. If, for example, you're a student with a chronic health condition, the work you do in advance when you're feeling well will be like money in the bank for the times later in the semester when you might not be feeling well.
2. **Second, take advantage of the opportunity to turn in work up to one week late.** All students can turn in some assignments late and still earn a good final grade.
It is unnecessary to ask for an extension on any assignment because all students have a one-week extension on every assignment.
3. **Third, take advantage of the opportunity to miss an assignment if needed.** All students can miss an assignments here or there and still earn a good final grade.

Flexibility is built into this course for all students because we know how important it is for everyone to have a built-in flexibility accommodation. Take advantage of it!

Stuff you Probably Don't Want to Know

More than 30 assignments in this course require students to engage in critical reading, logical thinking, and the use of evidence (e.g., Unit 1: Assignments #3 and #5; Unit 2: Assignments #1, #2, #3, #4, and #5; Unit 3: Assignment #5; Unit 4: Assignments #1, #2, #3, #4 and #6; Unit 7: Assignments #2, #3, and #4; Unit 8: Assignments #1, #2, and #3; Unit 9: Assignments #1, #2, #3, #4, #5, and #6; Unit 10: Assignments #3, #4, and #6; Unit 12: Assignments #1 and #6).

More than 30 assignments in this course enable students to develop appropriate style and disciplinary conventions in writing and presenting (e.g., Unit 1: Assignment #6; Unit 2: Assignment #5; Unit 3: Assignments #1, #2, #3, #4, and #5; Unit 4: Assignments #1 and #5; Unit 6: Assignments #1, #2, #4, and #5; Unit 7: Assignment #1; Unit 10: Assignments #1 and #2; Unit 11: Assignments #2, #3,

and #6; Unit 12: Assignments #2, #3, #4, and #5; Unit 13: Assignments #1, #2, #4, and #5; Unit 14: Assignments #1, #4, and #5).

More than 10 assignments in this course require students to make productive use of core library resources specific to the discipline (e.g., Unit 5: Assignments #1, #2, #3, #4, and #6; Unit 6: Assignments #3 and #6; Unit 11: Assignments #1 and #5).

Furthermore, this course includes numerous assignments, spaced through the semester, that culminate, after feedback, in written and non-written presentations. Across the semester, students submit more than 20,000 words of writing, including a dozen five-paragraph essays of 400–500 words; students create, practice, receive peer and instructor feedback, and deliver two formal presentations totaling six minutes; students teach over a dozen non-classmates important lessons on critical thinking, disciplinary conventions in writing and presenting, and library research, during one-to-one teaching sessions; and students read over 100 articles.

In addition, students research, draft, and submit seven literature reviews and two formal research proposals, all using the American Psychological Association writing, citing, and referencing style (commonly referred to as “APA Style”). Students are also responsible for learning from multiple hours of video. For every assignment, students receive immediate feedback and are provided with the opportunity to revise their work for improvement. Students also frequently engage in peer feedback (e.g., Unit 3: Assignment #6, Unit 7: Assignment #6, and Unit 13: Assignments #3 and #6).

Lastly, each student has at least three individual interactions with Dr. Suss (via video conference, phone, text-chat, or email), during which he provides individualized feedback to the student on their communication skills. Students also have multiple other individual interactions with the Teaching Assistant and with their peers via Discussion Boards and in small chat groups of two to three students who are responsible for arranging and conducting 10 one-hour text-based synchronous group chats.

Syllabus Policies and Student Resources available at www.wichita.edu/syllabuspolicies

Information on:

- Important Academic Dates
- Academic Integrity
- Definition of a credit hour
- Video and Audio recording
- Shocker Alert System
- Intellectual Property
- CARE Team
- Counseling and Prevention Services
- Student Health Services
- Heskett Center and Campus Recreation
- Inclusive Excellence
- First Generation Students
- Names and Pronouns
- Disability Services
- Title IX
- Concealed Carry Policy

Course Schedule

Note that a detailed calendar is accessible on the course's home page: <https://psy311.wichita.edu>

Dates	Unit #	Topic
August 17–August 22	1	How to Think Critically about Life
August 23–August 30	2	How to Read Carefully the General Media (and Improve Your Digital Literacy)
August 31–September 5	3	How to Write Analytically about General Topics
September 6–September 13	4	How to Think Critically about Psychological Science
September 14–September 20	5	How to Find and Read Psychological Science
September 21–September 28	6	How to Synthesize Psychological Science
September 29–October 5	7	How to Evaluate Descriptive and Inferential Statistics
October 6–October 12	8	How to Evaluate Scientific Reliability and Validity
October 13–October 19	9	How to Evaluate Alternative Research Hypotheses
October 20–October 26	10	How to Act Ethically as a Psychological Scientist
October 27–November 2	11	How to Design, Administer, and Analyze the Results of Reliable and Valid Online Surveys
November 3–November 9	12	How to Interpret and Create Informative Tables, Figures, and Charts
November 10–November 16	13	How to Communicate Engagingly through PPT, Video, and other Presentation Media
November 17–December 2	14	How to Look Backward (Review What You've Learned) and Forward (Apply What You've Learned)