Course Materials: All course materials are available on-line at: http://psych.unl.edu/psycrs/index.html

Objectives: The major intent of this course is, along with Psyc941, to prepare you to participate in collaborative research with faculty and other graduate students and to conduct your Master’s research project (or its equivalent). I chose topics for this course based on an ongoing review of recent Master’s Theses, the research being conducted by the faculty in your departments, and attention to both the “standards” and the “hot topics” in research design and statistics.

Emphasis: With respect to design issues, we will pay special attention to the "rules of evidence" for the analysis of cause-and-effect relationships and the important differences between experimental, quasi-experimental, and concomitant measurement designs. With respect to data analytic issues, we will give primary attention to the family of least-squares techniques that includes analysis of variance and multiple linear regression. Emphasis will be on the pragmatics of hypothesis testing, data analysis and the communication of findings, at a level that is more like “driver’s education” and less like “mechanical engineering.”

Activities: How we will be spending our time this semester reflects the three “kinds of things” I want you to be able to do with these research/statistical techniques: 1) Be able to talk/write about them using either the proper jargon or “plain English” (assessed by the Short Answer portion of the quizzes); 2) Be able to start with a research hypothesis or question and a data set and to complete and report an appropriate data analysis (assessed by the homework); and 3) Be able to “think on your feet” about the theory and application of these techniques (assessed by the Story Problem portion of the quizzes).

Time and Effort: Most graduate courses in this department meet weekly. Because of the workload, this course has multiple weekly meetings in order to allow you to “spread out” the considerable amount of reading, studying and homework (this is intended as a kindness, honest). Don't thwart the system by procrastinating! Things you should be doing between class meetings include ...

1) review your notes and the handouts from the previous lecture
   • Determine what part of your notes relate to each of the study questions
   • Determine if there is anything you would like to have clarified
   • Identify difficulties early gives us more of a chance of painless remediation
2) do the homework
   • The online exercises allow you to practice working with the language, techniques and procedures
   • The computational homework is your best chance to learn what you do and don’t understand. Some are shorter, some longer, but all represent what you will do with real research data
3) prepare for the next class
   • Look over the study questions and materials that will be covered next
   • Preview the next lecture using the web site
   • The better prepared you are the “better” the lecture will be!

Homework: There are two kinds of homework in this class.
   Online assignments give you practice with the language, identifications, discriminations and decision making that are central to the course topics. These assignments are all conducted using a single-event mastery format. Each assignment has one or more topics and the online software will present you with items (questions, answers, & feedback) until you have gotten the criterion number of items correct in each topic. You are expected to complete each EDU assignment before the class meeting following its assignment. The last day to hand in homework assignments that will be graded and included in your course grade is the Friday of Finals Week.

   Computation assignments usually involve statistical analysis and presentation of the results in a prescribed format and style. There is a website at which you can check your computational results and many of your decisions and interpretations before completing the write-up and handing in the assignment. Be sure to print out the completed online check and hand it in with your assignment. The last day to hand in homework assignments that will be graded and included in your course grade is the Friday of Finals Week.
Quizzes:
The Short Answer portion of each quiz will ask you to respond to a selection of the study questions. There will be some choices, but don't get brave. Your answers should be complete yet concise and must take "sentence and paragraph" form (no lists, phrases, or dependence upon figures, except where specified). All of the questions can be answered in 4-5 sentences (though some take more care to do this). Overly long answers will be carefully perused and richly punished for repetition, wondering off topic, and other trickery designed to prevent me from noticing that you don't really know the answer.

The Story Problem portion of each quiz will involve identifications, calculations, written interpretations, comments about “someone else’s” interpretations, etc. For the Story Problem portion of each quiz you should bring a calculator. I'll provide whatever computators, tables, etc. are necessary.

Quizzes and retakes will be scheduled in the Testing Center in the DLC in Love Library – be sure to check the testing dates and the times when the Testing Center is open! You may retake any particular quiz once to improve your score (and must retake it if your score is less than 90%). Different quizzes have different constructions and each has a specific retake policy that will be discussed during the preparation for that quiz.

Grades: Your grade for this course will be based upon performance on quizzes (20% for each of three), homework (40%). Attendance and participation in lecture will be noted and used in the assignment of the final grades, especially decisions about “borderline” grades. Letter grades generally will be assigned using: “A+” 100-99, "A" = 98-92, "A-" 91-90, "B+" = 89%, "B" = 88-82%, "B-" = 81-80%, "C" = 79-70%, "D" = 96-60%, "F" = <60%.

Academic Honesty: Students often "gang-up" on the study questions and the homework assignments. This is encouraged, within the following guidelines. When preparing “your share” of the study questions, don’t try to write the perfect 5-minute answer. Rather, assemble the pertinent information from your notes and the readings, organize it into meaningful subtopics (often information will have to be drawn from more than one day’s lecture, for example), and indicate those portions of the information that are most “central”. This will allow each of you to compose your own best answer. This process is often improved by having two or three persons working on each question. Evidence of “sharing” during the exam will result in a failing grade for the exam and possibly for the course, and presentation of the occurrence of the incident to the Graduate Committee, etc. When working on homework, it is a really good idea to brainstorm the issues and procedures of each question, and perhaps even to develop the necessary SPSS code and necessary interpretations. However: 1) The output must result from your computer work; and 2) The written portions of homework assignments (interpretations, formal presentations of the results, etc.) must be in your (unique) own words. You’ll have an opportunity to redo the first set of homework that does not meet both of these requirements; further occurrences will be scored zero (and can not be redone).

Accommodating Persons with Disabilities: Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact the instructor for a confidential discussion of their individual needs for academic accommodation. It is the policy of UNL to provide flexible and individualized accommodation to students with documented disabilities that may affect their ability to fully participate in course activities or to meet course requirements. To receive accommodation services, students must be registered with the Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) office, 132 Canfield Administration, 472-3787 voice or TTY.