

San José State University
Department of Psychology
PSYC 18-01
Intro to Research Methods, Fall 2026

Course and Contact Information

Instructor: Sisi Dong
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Office Hours: Mon Wed 9:30 - 10:30 pm
Class Days/Time: Mon Wed 10:30 – 11:45 pm
Classroom: Boccardo Business Center 124

Prerequisites: PSYC 001 or equivalent and STAT 095 or equivalent

Course Description

SJSU Course Catalog Description: Psychological research methods and design (experimental, quasi-experimental [correlational], and descriptive investigations) covering observation, instrumentation, and the collection, analysis, interpretation, and reporting of research data as illustrated through a review of original research in a variety of the subdisciplines of psychology. Prerequisites: PSYC 1 and STAT 95.

Course Format

This is an in-person course. You are expected to attend the lecture in person. Assignments will be submitted on Canvas so you will need a mobile device. If you need a working laptop, please see the Student Technology Resources section below for more information.

CANVAS and MYSJSU Messaging

Copies of some course materials such as the syllabus, major assignment handouts, etc. may be found on Canvas. Messages to the class may be sent through Canvas or MYSJSU.

Course Learning Outcomes (CLO)

Upon successful completion of this course:

- CLO 1 – Demonstrate knowledge of the research process as it relates to behavioral research.
- CLO 2 – Distinguish between non-experimental, experimental, and quasi-experimental research methods.
- CLO 3 – Assess the threats to validity within a study.
- CLO 4 – Analyze a body of research findings.

- CLO 5 – Construct a research design that effectively tests original hypotheses.
- CLO 6 – Develop a research proposal in APA format
- CLO 7 – Discuss the importance of ethical principles when conducting research with human and animal participants
- CLO 8 – Present on completed research proposal and/or research topic

Upon successful completion of the SJSU baccalaureate degree program in Psychology:

- *PLO1 – Knowledge Base of Psychology* – Students will be able to identify, describe, and communicate the major concepts, theoretical perspectives, empirical findings, and historical trends in psychology
- *PLO2 – Research Methods in Psychology* – Students will be able to design, implement, and communicate basic research methods in psychology, including research design, data analysis, and interpretations.
- *PLO3 – Critical Thinking Skills in Psychology* – Students will be able to use critical and creative thinking, skeptical inquiry, and a scientific approach to address issues related to behavior and mental processes.
- *PLO4 – Application of Psychology* – Students will be able to apply psychological principles to individual, interpersonal, group, and societal issues.
- *PLO5 – Values in Psychology* – Students will value empirical evidence, tolerate ambiguity, act ethically, and recognize their role and responsibility as a member of society.

Textbook

Cozby, P.C., & Bates, S. (2020). *Methods in Behavioral Research*, 15th edition, McGraw Hill education. ISBN 9781260205589

American Psychological Association. (2009). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (7th Ed.). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association. ISBN: 1433805618

Library Liaison

Lauren DeCelle is the Reference Librarian assigned to assist Psychology students in using databases, helping with keyword searches, etc. She will be available throughout the semester to meet with individual students.

Email: lauren.decelle@sjsu.edu

Course Requirements and Assignments

Students are expected to attend all meetings for the courses in which they are enrolled as they are responsible for the material discussed therein, and active participation is frequently essential to ensure maximum benefit to all class members. Success in this course is based on the expectation that students will spend, for each unit of credit, a minimum of 45 hours over the length of the

course (normally three hours per unit per week) for instruction, preparation/studying, or course related activities, including but not limited to internships, labs, and clinical practica. Other course structures will have equivalent workload expectations as described in the syllabus.

Exams

There will be 4 non-cumulative exams and 1 final exam which may cover everything we learn during the semester. The exams will be given in class on the class days listed on the schedule at the end of this syllabus. Exams will cover material from lectures and from the textbook. Exams will be mostly multiple-choice, but may also include questions of other formats.

Class Activity Assignments

There will be 3 class activity assignments. You will complete the activity in class on the class days listed on the schedule at the end of this syllabus. Details and rubrics of the activities will be provided on Canvas.

Final Research Proposal

You, or your research team (up to two people) will develop an original research hypothesis guided by the instructor. Project work will take place during lecture, and outside of class time.

Each research group will submit a full research proposal: write a professional level APA-style experimental research proposal, and give a quality presentation of your proposal in class. The paper will be a **minimum of 6 pages** in length (not including references, double-spaced, typed, 12-point font) and include a minimum of **6+ peer-reviewed, scholarly references**. If you choose to group with a peer, each group will need to decide how to divide the writing of the introduction, literature review, and methods (along with deciding how to divide all of the other responsibilities involved in completing the project). The research proposal is a shared project.

Plagiarism of any kind will not be tolerated. Please refer to the section on Academic Integrity for information about the consequences of plagiarism. You must cite all the sources that your information comes from and also use quotations when you are directly quoting information from a source.

Final Research Proposal Presentation

You, or your research team will present a short slideshow outlining your project and findings. Clear instructions are provided on Canvas. Each student is responsible for submitting their own presentation slideshow. Late reports will not be accepted.

Extra Credit Opportunity

There will be bonus opportunities throughout the class periods.

Requests for extensions: As the pandemic continues, you may find yourself facing unanticipated, emergency situations outside of your control that impact your schooling. When these situations arise, please reach out ASAP so that I can work with you to find a successful path forward. Please email me the requests 48 hours before the due date of any assignment or the research proposal. **Extensions are not guaranteed**, but I take all requests seriously and will work with you to find appropriate resources.

Late assignments: If you did not request or receive an extension, assignments that are turned in past the due date will receive a 10% penalty from your earned score per late day. In-class assignments and exams cannot be made up or submitted late. However, as noted above, there will be multiple extra credit opportunities to earn back any missed points.

Grading Information

Exam: $6 * 4 \text{ points} = 24 \text{ points}$
Bibliography: $1 * 6 = 6 \text{ points}$
Class Activity Assignments: $3 * 10 \text{ points} = 30 \text{ points}$
Mid-term milestone: $1 * 10 \text{ points} = 10 \text{ points}$
Oral Presentation: $1 * 15 \text{ points} = 15 \text{ points}$
Final Proposal $1 * 20 = 20 \text{ points}$

Determination of Grades

A = 93 to 100 points
A minus = 90 to 92.9 points
B plus = 87 to 89.9 points
B = 83 to 86.9 points
B minus = 80 to 82.9 points
C plus = 77 to 79.9 points
C = 73 to 76.9 points
C minus = 67 to 72.9 points
D = 60 to 66.9 points
F = 59.9 points or lower

Fall 2026 Course Schedule

The schedule is subject to change with notice.

	Topics, Readings	Textbook Readings	Assignment
Week 1 8.19	Syllabus		
Week 2 8.24 – 8.30	Scientific Understanding of Behavior	Chapter 1	
	Where to Start	Chapter 2	
Week 3 8.31 – 9.6	Ethics in Behavioral Research	Chapter 3	
	Fundamental Research Issues I		
Week 4 9.07 – 9.13	Labor Day - No class	Chapter 4	Bibliography Due
	Fundamental Research Issues II		
Week 5 9.14 – 9.20	Exam 1	Chapter 5	
	Measurement Concepts		
Week 6 9.21 – 9.27	Class Activity 1	Chapter 6	Class Activity 1
	Observational Methods I		
Week 7 9.28 – 10.04	Observational Methods II	Chapter 7	
	Exam 2		
Week 8 10.05 – 10.11	Survey I	Chapter 7	
	Survey II		
Week 9 10.12 – 10.18	Experimental Design I	Chapter 8	Mid-term paper checkpoint
	Experimental Design II		
Week 10 10.19 – 10.25	Class Activity 2	Chapter 8	Class Activity 2
	Conducting Experiments		
Week 11 10.26 – 11.01	Exam 3	Chapter 9	
	Complex Experimental Designs I		
Week 12 11.02 – 11.08	Complex Experimental Designs II	Chapter 10	
	Single-case, Quasi-Experiment		
Week 13 11.09 – 11.15	Class Activity 3	Chapter 11	Class Activity 3
	Veterans Day - No class		
Week 14 11.16 – 11.22	Generalization	Chapter 14	Final Presentation
Week 15 11.23 – 11.29	Happy Thanksgiving - No class		
Week 16 11.30 – 12.06	Final Presentation		
	Final Presentation		
Final Week 12.07 – 12.13	Exam 5		Final Proposal Due