PSYCH 240
RESEARCH METHODS IN DEVELOPMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY
Spring, 2015

Dr. Debra Roberts

Course Information

Description:
This course examines the techniques of longitudinal, cross-sectional, normative and experimental studies. It is intended to provide a comprehensive overview of current research and theory in the field of developmental psychology, and the various methods used to investigate topics in the field. In order to achieve this goal, a hybrid format will be used where for 70% of course instruction will be conducted in the traditional manner in the classroom, and 30% of the instruction will be offered online. It is important to note that your grade will be determined by how well you meet the requirements of all parts of the course, regardless of the instruction mode. See link about the potential benefits of a blended course: http://www4.uwm.edu/ltc/hybrid/about_hybrid/index.cfm

Although there are no prerequisites for this course, other than satisfying the requirements associated with your admission to our graduate program, it is strongly recommended that you familiarize yourself with the basics goals and tenets of the “scientific method” that we often use to guide our research.

Class Meetings: Fridays: 10:10 - 12:30 p.m.

On-Line Meetings: Per Instructions throughout the course

Office Hours: Mondays: 2:30 – 4:30 p.m. and by appointment
CBP Room 286
You may also schedule a meeting with me via phone or on-line

Phone: 806-9450

Instructor’s Objectives for Students:
1. To understand and appreciate theoretical differences and methodological problems in studying human development.

2. To ask intelligent questions about human development and learn how to seek answers to these questions using the scientific method.

3. To be aware of current research approaches and ethical considerations regarding human subjects.

4. To use various methodological techniques to research developmental topics at a sophisticated level.
Requirements:
The required readings are from both primary (your textbook) and secondary sources (these will be made available to students prior to each class). In class, I will attempt to briefly overview the readings and raise questions or offer observations regarding issues I find important or interesting. All students are expected to participate actively in each class, and the extent of your participation in the class will be taken into account in the determination of your final grade. You are responsible for having read the required readings before coming to class. You are also required to check Blackboard regularly so that you are able to fully engage in the online assignments, discussions, etc. Students will be graded on one exam (a midterm), assessments of material assigned throughout the semester, a term assignment/project (including oral presentation based on the assignment), and class participation/attendance.

Exam:
The midterm exam will be comprised of multiple choice, short answer and essay questions. The midterm will be given on March 6, 2015. The exam will cover all required readings and class discussions (unless otherwise noted).

Term Assignment:
You will be required to complete all sections of a standard research proposal of your choice, based on your research interests at this time. This can be a grant application targeting a particular funding source. Various sections of the grant will be due throughout the semester and the final grant will be due on Friday, April 26, 2015 (I realize this is after the official last day of classes so I will make arrangements for you to submit a hard copy to me).

On-Line Assignments:
Each on-line assignment will have an associated grading scheme. Some will simply be based on whether you completed the assignments or not, and others will have assigned grades based on a rubric that will be used to assess the content/quality of your work. The rubrics can be found in the appendix at the end of the syllabus, along with some helpful supplemental information to help you navigate the course successfully.

Class Participation:
Although 40% of the course material will be completed on-line, it is imperative that you attend class and actively participate in class discussions. Your participation will be evaluated on a deduction basis. You all begin with 10 points and will lose one point for every unexcused absence (due to a documented emergency, etc.). The additional 5 points will be assessed on your active participation in class based on the instructor’s observation. I realize that we are not all extroverts; however, a big part of meeting the learning objectives for this course is to engage in scientific inquiry that includes oral expression of our ideas.

Evaluation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Midterm</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project/Paper</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online Assignments</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Possible</td>
<td>100%</td>
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In addition to the following readings, I will assign supplemental readings at the end of each class. Lectures may also incorporate information from optional readings that may be assigned periodically. All required readings (not including course textbook) will be made available to students; or will be put on reserve in the main psychology office. On a regular basis, assignments and accompanying quizzes will be placed on Blackboard for your review and/or completion prior to the next class meeting, as indicated in the instructions.

Textbooks

**REQUIRED**

*Note: All readings must be completed prior to the class for which it is assigned

**RECOMMENDED**

Outline of Topics and Readings:

**Note: CM=Work to be completed during our class meeting; OL=Work to be completed in the Blackboard environment

**MODULE 1:** Course Introduction & the Scientific Method

After completing the sections within this module, students will be able to:

1) Identify the course instructor and associated contact information

2) Name at least one of their classmates and state at least three facts about this person that was revealed in the introductory videos on Tegrity

3) Identify and describe the main tenets of the Scientific Method

January 16

*Unit 1.1: Course Introduction: Syllabus Review*  
*See “Announcements” Folder in Blackboard*
Unit 1.2: Review of the Scientific Method
See “Assignments” Folder in Blackboard

January 23
Discussion of introductory course videos

Unit 1.3: Psychology as a Science & The Scientific Method
Reading: Shaughnessy et al. - Chapters 1 & 2

MODULE 2: Ethics
After completing the sections within this module, students will be able to:

1) Summarize and restate description of major historical events leading materials related the incorporation of APA Ethics Codes – Common Rule

2) Assess the ethical integrity of a proposed study based on the application of the tenets of the Common Rule

January 30

Unit 2.1: Ethics and the History of the Common Rule
See “Assignments” Folder in Blackboard

Unit 2.2: Ethics and Applying the Common Rule
See “Discussion Board” Folder in Blackboard

February 4

Reading: Shaughnessy et al. - Chapter 3
Role Play based on online assignment from Units 2.1 – 2.2

MODULE 3: Descriptive Methods Observation and Survey Research
After completing the sections within this module, students will be able to:

1) Distinguish between “single story” and “complex story” perspective when framing a research question

2) Produce a summary statement about the importance of being aware of our “worldview” based on the advice presented by Ms. Adichie in her TED talk on the “Danger of a Single Story”
3) Produce a summary statement about the importance of asking good research questions based on the advice presented by Dr. Rosling in his TED talks on “Global Health”

4) Distinguish between a “single story” perspective vs. a “multiple story” perspective when framing a research questions

**February 13**

Unit 3.1: Descriptive Methods & the Danger of a Single Story

*See “Discussion Board” Folder in Blackboard*

Unit 3.2: Descriptive Methods & Asking Pertinent Questions

*See “Discussion Board” Folder in Blackboard*

**February 20** Descriptive Methods Applied

Reading: *Shaughnessy et al. – Chapters 4 & 5*

**February 27** Experimental Methods: Independent Group, Repeated Measures and Complex Designs

Reading: *Shaughnessy et al. – Chapters 6, 7 & 8*

**March 6** Midterm Exam – Chapters 1 through 8

**MODULE 4:** Introduction to Proposal Writing

After completing the sections within this module, students will be able to:

1) Describe the basic tenets of the mission of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) mission statement

2) Identify 5 of the 27 NIH Institutes and/or Centers that may be relevant to their particular research

3) Demonstrate knowledge of the mechanisms within NIH for pre-doctoral and post-doctoral training

4) Summarize the mission of the National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparity (NIMHD)

5) Complete a working hypothesis developed from research questions that will be the foundation of a proposal for funding
March 13


Reading: Shaughnessy et al. - Chapters 9 & 10 CM

Begin formulating your research questions due next class

March 14th – 22nd Spring Break

March 27

Unit 4.1: Proposal/Grant Writing and Navigating NIH OL
See “Assignments” and “Discussion Board” Folders in Blackboard

Unit 4.2: Proposal/Grant Writing and Funding Mechanisms OL
See “Assignments” Folder in Blackboard

Due: Research Questions for Proposal OL

April 3

Analyzing & Reporting Research: Data Analysis & Interpretation CM

Reading: Shaughnessy et al. - Chapters 11 & 12 CM

April 10

Unit 4.3: Proposal/Grant Writing and Research Evaluation OL/CM
See “Assignments” Folder in Blackboard

Due: Introduction and Literature Review for Proposal (Draft)

April 17

Analyzing & Reporting Research: Communicating Your Findings CM

Reading: Shaughnessy et al. – Chapter 13 CM

Due: Research Proposal - Putting it all together

Week of April 20th (Date TBD) Class Presentations
### Important Due Dates for On-Line Assignments (Due by 11:59 p.m.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan. 16</td>
<td>Post introduction video using Tegrity</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>View video and complete short quiz on scientific method</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan. 30</td>
<td>Complete quiz based on review of PP presentation on HU-IRB Codes of Conduct</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Complete discussion board based on viewing of brief video on “do’s and don’ts of conducting research</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Participate in pre-scheduled online tutorial facilitated by instructor (4:10 – 5:30)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb. 13</td>
<td>Complete discussion board and short quiz about content of Adichie TED talk</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Complete discussion board and short quiz about content of Rosling TED talk</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 27</td>
<td>Complete quiz about NIMHD</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participate in pre-scheduled online tutorial facilitated by instructor (4:10 – 5:30)</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 10</td>
<td>Wiki Team Assignment</td>
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*Note: Due dates are subject to change as face-to-face class meetings progress*
APPENDIX

Rubrics for On-Line Evaluation:

**On-line Lectures or Self-Study Assignments**
Your participation in on-line lectures or self-study assignments will be graded on a Y=completed-N=not completed (Y = 10 points, N = 0 points), or in some cases an online quiz will be attached with the assignment and will be graded per instructions. There several assignments whose points will **total 10 of the overall 30 points** allotted for online assignments.

**Discussion Blogs**
Your discussion board postings will be graded on a Y=completed-N=not completed (Y = 5 points, N = 0 points) or a Pass-Fail basis (5 = 1 point, F = 0 points). Instead of grading each posting individually, your contributions will be graded to an entire forum (i.e., all of your entries and replies associated with an assigned topic). **To earn credit, you must fulfill ALL of the following criteria:**

- Posted by the deadline
- Fulfilled the assigned task
- Produced, at least, the minimum number of words and/or entries
- Content is pertinent to topic

There are two discussion blogs whose points will **total 10 of the overall 30 points** allotted for online assignments.

**Descriptive Rubric for the Team Wiki**
You have one Team Wiki assignment that will be evaluated using the following rubric: **Please note that all team members will earn the same grade unless a team member incurs a penalty because of lack of prompt participation.**

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Exemplary = 5</th>
<th>Competent = 4-3</th>
<th>Minimal = 2-1</th>
<th>Inadequate = 0</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Length</td>
<td>Wrote within the assigned word range.</td>
<td>Exceeded the word minimum, but also exceeded the maximum.</td>
<td>Met the word minimum.</td>
<td>Did not meet the word minimum.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Followed the instructions clearly, completing thorough review of the proposals.</td>
<td>Completed good review of the proposals but could be more thorough</td>
<td>Completed the reviews but omitted pertinent feedback</td>
<td>Did not complete the reviews adequately, based on instructions provided</td>
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Supplemental Information

Technology Requirements
Please observe the following requirements so that technology becomes a facilitator rather than a hindrance.

You will also need an email account. Whether you use your @howard.edu account or not, you should update your email address in Blackboard. Note: If you plan to use a non-HU email account, check your SPAM folder for messages I send to the entire class.

Software: At minimum, you need a modern operating system, web-browser, anti-virus software, and a standard word-processing program.

- **Operating System:** PC Users: Windows 2010, XP or VISTA; Mac Users: OS X or higher
- **Web Browser:** Internet Explorer 7.0 or higher. (When you access Blackboard, if you see a message that Java is not enabled, try adjusting the settings in your browser.) Also, disable your pop-up blockers for http://blackboard.howard.edu.
- **Anti-Virus Program:** Norton, McAffee, or other anti-virus software
- **Word-Processor:** Microsoft Word or a word-processor that can save and open files in Word format. If you do not have Microsoft Office, you can download free Open Office. Note: If you have a newer version of MS Office (2007 of higher), whenever possible, save your files as “Word 97-2003” files in case some classmates do not have an up-to-date version of Office.
- **Players and Viewers:** Acrobat Reader, MS Word, Power Point, Quicktime, Flash, Shockwave, Real Player, and Windows Media Player. Click here to download any programs you do not have. As for Acrobat Reader, Windows Media Player, and Flash, although they were probably pre-installed on your computer, you may need to download a more recent version. Downloading now will spare you the inconvenience of having to wait for a download when you're trying to complete an assignment.

Computer Skills: It is critical that you know how to create, copy, paste, download, and hyperlink files. With the help of online tutorials (click the following links), you will also need to learn how to manage Blackboard, a wiki, and a blog. These skills are critical because you must submit assignments via the class Blackboard site, your team wiki, and personal blog. Remember if you are sending attachments, you should scan documents with up-to-date anti-virus software.

Internet Basics: To succeed in this course, you need to know how to use email, search library databases and the World Wide Web, and protect your computer from viruses. If you do not, please see the following resources:

- HU Email: illustrated instructions from ISAS
- Web and Database Searches: HU Library guide
- Anti-Virus Protection: CETLA’s Protecting Your PC Tutorial
**Emergency Plan:** If a server is “down” for an hour or more, email ISAS’s technical support (e.g., ugiri@howard.edu for Blackboard) and “cc” me at ddroberts@howard.edu so that I can advise you about the best way to complete or submit an assignment. If the network goes down, note the time so that I can confirm it later. However, try to avoid such problems: Don’t wait until the last minute to start your online assignments.

**Manuscript Conventions**
Most of the time you will post your work online by typing or copying and pasting into a text box (e.g., in a wiki, blog, or discussion board). However, if I request files, please double-space and type your text, using a 12-point font and leaving 1” margins on all sides. **Include your initials and the name of the assignment in the filename** (e.g., “Stylistic Analysis” DDR).

**Incomplete Grades and Withdrawals**
A grade of **Incomplete (I)** is given only if an emergency prevents you from taking the final exam. Such an emergency must be documented by your dean or advisor.

If you run into computer-related difficulties, here are some tips:

- If you experience computer problems at home, go to a lab, library, workplace, or friend’s house where you can complete your work.
- If you encounter a problem in a lab, ask the lab assistant to email ddroberts@howard.edu so that you won’t lose credit.
- If the Blackboard server goes down, IMMEDIATELY email ugiri@howard.edu. Also, “cc” ddroberts@howard.edu so that you won’t lose credit.
- If the network goes down, note the time so that I can confirm it later.

**Academic Integrity**
Because instruction and interaction do not occur face-to-face, distance-learning offers tempting opportunities to cheat. Make sure you know what constitutes cheating and what the consequences will be. Read the “Academic Code of Conduct,” which is published in the **H-Book**. On the other hand, if you are caught cheating, you will automatically receive a “0” for the assignment. Please note that I reserve the right to upload your work to an online plagiarism detector such as Safe Assign or Turnitin.

**Netiquette**
When you participate on the DISCUSSION BOARD, you must not only post your observations, but also give your classmates substantive feedback. Your replies as well as your initial postings will be graded according to the checklist in the Grading Rubrics Folder in Blackboard’s COURSE INFORMATION area (see Appendix B below). This rubric demands quality as well as quantity; simply saying “Good job” or “I agree” will not earn credit.

Like missing feedback, rudeness, or “flaming,” will destroy a sense of community. **Follow this rule of thumb:** Post one positive comment and one tactful suggestion in
response to a classmate’s posting. For advice about netiquette and a key to emoticons and abbreviations commonly used online, see the COURSE DOCUMENTS Folder in the COURSE INFORMATION area.

Although certain types of participation are required, I encourage you to participate on your own. If you click COMMUNICATION, you can post questions or observations (anonymously, if you wish) in the STUDENT LOUNGE and TEACHING & LEARNING FORUMS on the DISCUSSION BOARD. In addition, you can click VIRTUAL CHAT, to see whether any classmates are browsing the web together or simply “shooting the breeze.”

OTHER COURSE-SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Support Services
American Disabilities Act (ADA) Accommodation: Howard University is committed to providing an educational environment that is accessible to all students. In accordance with this policy, students who need accommodations because of a disability should contact the Dean for Special Student Services (202-238-2420), as soon as possible after admission to the University or at the beginning of each semester. If you need a special accommodation required by the American Disabilities Act, please document and discuss your disability with me during the first week of classes.

Blackboard Support: Blackboard FAQs for Students is the fastest way to find the answer to a question about Blackboard. You can also consult the student manual on your TOOLS menu. If all else fails, contact ISAS’s System Administrator Umesh Giri (ugiri@howard.edu).

Library Support: If you have questions about databases or search strategies, you can contact the reference staff in Founders’ Library or the librarian assigned to your department.

Privacy Notice
To facilitate learning and to fulfill course requirements, students must review and/or respond to one another’s classwork. However, to improve teaching and learning, I may share sample student work with HU faculty or, anonymously, with other HU classes unless I receive a written request from a student to withhold his or her work. On the other hand, if I wish to publish student work, I will solicit permission from students via an Informed Consent Form. Rest assured that your response will not affect your grade.

http://www.howard.edu/policy/academic/student-conduct.htm
http://www.albion.com/netiquette/corerules.html