

New York University
Department of Psychology
Research Methods in Infant Development

V89.0040.002, V89.0999.003
6 Washington Pl, 4th floor
Lab phone: 998-9058

4 credits per semester
Room 415

Fall 2009—Spring 2010
Tues 6:30-8:30 PM

INSTRUCTOR:

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TEXT:

- Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 5 Ed. You can use lab copy.
- Gibson, E. J. & Pick, A. D. (2000). An ecological approach to perceptual learning and development. Oxford University Press. Use lab copy or order it from the Oxford website. www.oup-usa.org
- **Required reading: Selected papers and articles (see weekly lab notes for your project group).**

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

The goal of this course is to help you to become proficient researchers. You will be involved in every aspect of developmental research (subject payments, laboratory upkeep, experimental design, data collections, data coding and analyses, literature reviews, and presenting results in various formats). In addition to gaining firsthand knowledge about infant learning and development, you will also acquire technical and practical skills that you can use in other avenues of research (critical thinking, oral and written presentations, collaboration, personal responsibility). You will also have the opportunity to participate in professional activities in the academic community (e.g., conference presentations, colloquia, journal articles).

You should understand everything you do. If you don't understand a procedure, lab rule, analysis, concept, etc., ask someone. Please do not do things by rote without understanding the rationale.

- Strive for personal excellence
- Address your questions empirically
- Respect your students, participants, materials
- Careful attention to detail

REQUIREMENTS & EVALUATION:

The methods and tutorial courses provide a year-long research apprenticeship. You must maintain an A or B grade to continue this course in the following semester. Your grade will depend on the following:

- Pass Human Ss tutorial
- Demonstrate mastery of:
 - experimental design and basic statistics
 - relevant psychological theory and concepts
 - results of previous research
 - critical thinking regarding scientific articles and presentations

- Attend & participate in Tuesday night lab meetings.
- In addition to lab meeting, complete 10 hours of lab work per week including:
 - weekly group project meetings
 - weekly lab upkeep
 - data collections
 - coding and graphical and statistical analyses
 - preparing manuscripts for presentation and publication
- Master all hands-on procedures for data collections (up through intakes) for all ongoing studies by end of first semester in lab
- Pass “Lab Quiz” or equivalent on ongoing studies (mastery of design for experimental and descriptive studies)
- Preparation of readings, talks, written material for lab meetings & formal presentations (demonstrating your ability to read and critique research, assimilate results, and relate material to psychological theories and concepts)
- Presentation at the Undergraduate Research Conference
- Written report of your work (depending on the state of the project, this may be in the form of grant proposal, abstract, chapter, or journal article)
- Ability to describe and discuss all ongoing work in the lab

At your weekly group project meeting, you will update a working weekly syllabus and backward calendar. This document represents an agreement among the members of your group about the appropriate goals for the week. The weekly syllabus and calendar will keep your project on track so that you can achieve the goals that you have set for yourself over the academic year.

You will receive formal, written evaluations at the end of each semester that summarize your work and your contributions to the lab.

LAB RULES

- **If you must miss an experimental session for which you have agreed to participate, you must alert us in sufficient time to find a replacement. Failure to do so may result in losing a letter grade or failing the course. Do not arrive late for a data collection (including time for set-up). You are responsible for scheduling that occurs at Tuesday night lab meetings.** For emergencies the night before a data collection or the morning of a data collection, telephone KEA, then email and/or telephone the other researchers on the data collection.
- Allow sufficient time for set-up and clean-up for data collections. Wash & dry all toys and put them away after data collections. Don't leave toys on changing table/counter.
- Keep us updated about permanent and occasional changes in your schedules.
- **Never under any circumstances remove original data from the lab.** This includes all paperwork, videotapes, and coded data. Any original data outside the lab violates guidelines for subject confidentiality and if you were to lose data, we would have to run additional subjects.
- **Be extremely careful about notating data.** Pay special attention to filling out cover sheets, returning altered files to Motorpower (any files not in your personal folder that are left on other computers will be deleted), putting computer files and hard copies in their appropriate folders, and notating the top of each spreadsheet and hard copy. Follow the protocols for set-up and procedures (if protocol is unclear, fix it—cf. “Handrails”)
- Put all supplies and equipment away when you are finished with them. If you are the last to use a supply, put it on the list on the fridge. Take your weekly jobs seriously and be responsible about **keeping the lab tidy and hygienic**. If you are the last one in the lab, turn off video equipment,

computer monitors, and lock all lab doors. Take out the trash. Infants are everywhere in the lab, and it is not cleaned by the building staff.

SECURITY:

Lab doors should be locked at all times when you are not in the lab in sight of the door. You must protect yourself and your belongings from intruders and the lab equipment from theft. If you lose your key, we'll have to rekey the entire lab. First time, you pay half and everyone else splits the rest. Second time, you pay the whole thing.

LAB MEETINGS:

We will meet each Tuesday night from 6:30-8:30 as a group to make plans for the following week, schedule data collections (bring your schedule books to each meeting!), evaluate weekly progress, learn procedures, and discuss presentations or readings. Tuesday night lab meetings and readings are mandatory. You will present the progress of your weekly project meeting.

ATTIRE:

During data collections, you should dress in clean, neat clothes (not blue jeans). Wash your hands after you enter the waiting room with the parents. Wash your hands immediately after you change infants' diapers or help to measure them. Wash your hands immediately after the baby leaves the lab. Keep your fingernails clipped to the skin so that you don't scratch the babies; don't wear fingernail polish; keep your hands looking manicured with no open sores. Do not wear solid black on top. Remove rings on your fingers that stick up, dangling jewelry (necklaces, bracelets, earrings), & all rings not in your ears (tongue rings, eyebrow rings, nose rings). Wear washable shirts that do not gap at the neck & skirts that cover your legs when you sit on the floor. Pin your hair back. Carry parents' belongings, not their babies going in and out of lab/building. Do not answer personal questions from parents and do not ask personal questions of parents. Do not comment about parents' behaviors.

PROFESSIONALISM:

The lab is a professional work situation, which functions in the real world. You are expected to behave in a professional manner at all times while you are in the lab, in your interactions with anyone associated with the lab, and if you are representing the lab in a professional setting such as a seminar or conference (no drugs, no sexual harassment).

COLLABORATION:

There are no projects that can function without the help of many researchers, for some of whom it is not their primary project. As a lab member, you are involved in some way with all lab projects. You should be as careful, meticulous, and responsible with secondary projects as with your primary project. Please use the opportunity to discuss and think about secondary projects as a way to expand your knowledge and further your own work. What you learn in helping others will serve you and your issues.

AUTHORSHIP:

Whenever possible, students and staff will have the opportunity to submit ongoing work to professional conferences. If you would like to participate, names will be listed by order of contribution (conceptual) or alphabetically. Students/staff who make a substantial conceptual contribution to projects will also have the opportunity to be named as authors on the journal articles. Names will be listed by order of contribution or alphabetically. Authors are responsible for preparing the manuscripts and presentations, revising them after review, and reading page-proofs.