

Course Project

You are required to conduct an empirical research project for this class and write an APA-style research paper describing it. While you may work in a small group with other students (***at most, three students per group***), each student must turn in an individually written paper.

Regardless of whether you work in a group, you will be fully responsible for the conduct of this study from the beginning to the end, including: study design, review of relevant literature, study feasibility, ascertainment of ethical considerations and human subjects approval, collection of data, analysis of data, and interpretation of results.

Types of Projects:

- (1) Test construction, validation --- development of a paper and pencil test designed to measure one or more attributes or traits (e.g., quantitative ability, values, anxiety, attitude toward school, war, etc.). The instrument would be given to a sample of subjects and appropriate reliability and validity issues investigated.
- (2) Scaling project --- design an instrument for scaling some stimulus domain of interest (e.g. personality trait adjectives, behaviors, children's toys, political figures). The instrument would be given to a sample of subjects and the fit of the scaling model would be assessed. Different populations could be sampled to test hypotheses about differences (or lack of differences) in scaling solutions.
- (3) Critique an instrument or methodology --- review and critique the literature on the research or methodology associated with some instrument. You would be expected to propose improvements to the instrument. An empirical study for this type of project would demonstrate that your proposed changes to the instrument or methodology are better or more appropriate than the existing one.
- (4) If there is some other type of project that you would like to do that does not fall into one of the above categories, see me for possible approval.

Initial Project Proposal :

An initial proposal outlining the rationale and methodology of your project is due **March 7**. Specifically, proposals for test construction, scaling projects, and instrument/methodology critiques should include :

- (1) An outline of the rationale and methodology of your project.
- (2) Specification of the attribute, trait, or stimulus domain you want to measure or study.
- (3) Brief review of other research on the attribute or domain (include references).

Final Project Proposal :

The final project proposal is due **April 18**. You should have finalized your plans for your course project by this point. Beside the items 1-3 from your initial proposal, your final proposal should include any revisions to your initial proposal and

- (4) As much detail as possible on the instrument --- instruction, item format(s), length, etc.
- (5) The details of your study, including hypotheses, the number and type(s) of subjects to be measured, sampling plan, procedures, etc.
- (6) Human subjects concerns --- address any possible threats to human welfare and well-being your subjects may experience as a function of participating in your study. If subject anonymity is critical to your design, you should discuss how this anonymity will be preserved.
- (7) A brief discussion of how reliability and validity will be assessed (if relevant) and data analyses that will be performed.

Final Paper:

The final paper is due by **5 p.m. May 16**. Projects will be graded on a 100 point scale. Twenty (20) points will be deducted from the final project grade a student receives for each day is late. You should turn a paper that is ***type-written and formatted in APA publication style*** (see Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association). They should include the following sections:

- (a) ABSTRACT
- (b) INTRODUCTION --- indicating the nature and scope of the problem investigated and citing other pertinent research; statement of hypotheses, if any.
- (c) METHOD --- descriptions of (a) subject sample; (b) instrument, scales, etc.; (c) administration procedures. Also include an Analysis subsection describing statistical measures used, specification of item analysis, how reliability and validity were assessed.
- (d) RESULTS / DISCUSSION (may be combined) --- presentation of the results of the study; use tables and figures where possible. The discussion section should go into the meaning and significance of major results and relate these to pertinent work; discussion of implications.
- (e) REFERENCES / APPENDICES.