

Research Laboratory in Madrid

Course Details

Course Designator & Number: MADR 4901

Number of Credits: 3

Language of Instruction: English

Contact Hours: 3

Instructor: Dr. Ksenija Jovanovic or Dr. Julian Taylor

Course Description

The Research Laboratory in Madrid Course aims to offer an opportunity for undergraduates to gain a meaningful research experience while earning the course credit. Students will be required to commit at least 10 hours per week during which they will follow a different format compared to typical classroom-based courses, organized through the Foundation-affiliated research placements. The course has been designed to teach research theory because, as in all the natural sciences, ideas in psychology must be critically evaluated using available research evidence. An emphasis will be placed on critical thinking to encourage students to exercise analytical, independent, qualitative, and quantitative thinking with scientific concepts and not only to memorize the material presented in the class. This is not a textbook course and students will be expected to read and discuss assigned readings, write reports, and listen to and give presentations about current research. [A short description of research sites collaborating in this course](#) can be found on the Learning Abroad Center website.

Course Objectives

- To help students develop or improve critical thinking skills
- To improve scientific writing and communication skills
- To conduct oneself successfully as a member of a research team
- To search and review scientific literature

- To understand how to develop a testable hypothesis and research proposal
- To learn how to collect research data
- To analyze and interpret results leading to a conclusion

Learning Outcomes

Each student will set out their personal learning outcomes at the beginning of the course according to the APA guidelines relevant to acquiring research skills for the 21st Century. Progress at the individual will be monitored by the tutor during the course and at the final course tutorial.

Methodology

We will combine the research internship with one class session per week. Class sessions will include a short introductory lecture on a weekly subject, a look at psychology research and recent trends, time to develop the group and individual research activities, and a final multiple-choice test of the previous week's introductory core knowledge lecture. Progress will be assessed based on a submitted written internship report and presentations during the interim and final exam class. Sessions will be conducted in English, but as the course progresses, the instructor may gradually introduce some useful scientific vocabulary in Spanish.

As a group, the students are expected to actively identify their research question guided by APA-highlighted research area and follow guidance from their internship director. All indicated assignments are to be completed in a timely fashion by respecting deadlines. Late assignments will be penalized with 10% of the final grade for the assignment (10% deducted as each day passes after the deadline).

Course Prerequisites

No course prerequisites are necessary for this course. Opportunities exist for individual and group work, and tutorials have been included with the lecturer during the course.

Required Reading / Materials

The reading required for the course will be assigned throughout the course, posted on the Moodle platform or e-mailed by the instructor before the class.

Grading

Grading Rubric

Letter Grade	Score or Percentage	Description
A	93–100	Achievement that is outstanding relative to the level necessary to meet course requirements.
A-	90–92	Achievement that is significantly above the level necessary to meet course requirements.
B+	87–89	
B	83–86	
B-	80–82	Achievement that meets the course requirements in every respect.
C+	77–79	
C	73–76	
C-	70–72	Achievement that is worthy of credit even though it fails to fully meet the course requirements.
D+	67–69	
D	60–66	
F	0–59	Represents failure (or no credit) and signifies that the work was either (1) completed but at a level of achievement that is not worthy of credit or (2) was not completed and there was no agreement between the instructor and the student that the student would be awarded an I.

Summary of How Grades Are Weighted

Assignments	Percentage of Grade
Weekly research reports	20%
Interim multiple-choice test	5%
Interim group research presentation	10%
Final written research abstract	15%
Final multiple-choice test	5%
Final research project presentation	30%
Research participation/involvement	15%
Overall grade	100%

Class Participation

Students will be encouraged to identify their general learning objectives at the beginning of the course in line with the American Psychological Association recommendations or Open University-BBC All in the Mind highlights, and to develop their own creative thinking and opinions. In addition, compulsory within-class tutorials are programmed with the instructor at the beginning, middle, and end of the course. To consolidate the core knowledge of the course, group and individual exercises, and weekly multiple-choice quizzes.

All classes (including introductory lectures, activities, presentations, and multiple-choice tests) require the student's active participation. In order to receive a high grade, the student must actively participate and understand the literature related to their group and individual research question. Since the reading material is based on original scientific articles the students are not expected to memorize every detail but to understand the big picture of the original report. Students will be supported by compulsory within-class tutorials. Students will develop their group and individual presentations during each class throughout the entire course.

- The interim class exam will be based on the group research project presentation that will be submitted by the Moodle teaching site during the class (10% of total grade) and on a multiple-choice test of the core knowledge (5% of total grade). The work will be evaluated by the course lecturer, Dr. Julian Taylor, and the course coordinator, Dr. Ksenija Jovanovic.
- The final exam will be based on a multiple-choice test of the core knowledge (5% of total grade) and on the presentation of the individual research project presentation (30% of total grade). The work will be evaluated by the course lecturer, Dr. Julian Taylor, and the course coordinator, Dr. Ksenija Jovanovic.
- The remaining marks will be made by continuous assessment by the course coordinator, Dr. Ksenija Jovanovic, of:
 - weekly research reports submitted to her by email (20% of total grade). The first week submission will be a one-page description of the placement research project and general aim of the student work. Each following week a one-page progress report will be submitted and developed continuously throughout the course. The structure of the report will include i) title, ii) research placement objective, iii) description of methods used during week, iv) tasks performed during the week, v) impact of work and progress toward the overall goal.
 - research participation and involvement (15% of total grade). The placement chief will send a final report to the course coordinator based on: work performance, teamwork, use of resources, curiosity, creativity, proactivity, initiative.
 - final written research abstract (15% of total grade).

Research Participation/Involvement

Students are expected to spend a minimum of 10 hours per week on their assigned lab projects. Their workload and the specific responsibilities may vary depending on the research placement, type and phase of the project and will be outlined by the research mentor at the beginning of the semester. As the research process and its success depend on many factors, students should be prepared to contribute to new tasks that may come up during the semester.

Students will have the following responsibilities:

1. Participate in the assigned research project. This includes: finding, reading, and discussing published literature in the field to place the current project in a context of past and ongoing research; collecting, analyzing and evaluating data; and writing short reports on the findings. These tasks will be done under supervision and in collaboration with the researcher, a postdoc/PhD student in the lab.
2. Attend and participate in weekly/monthly meetings and journal clubs at the research lab.

3. Participate in special events, visits, and seminars that are set at the beginning of the semester.
4. Write one-page weekly reports and submit them via email every week to the class instructor. The submission due date is Monday at a.m. The journal should describe students' weekly research activities, experiences, and new knowledge they will be acquiring and at the research placement. The students are also encouraged to include in these reports their observations and remarks regarding the differences with respect to their University experience.
5. Make a final oral and/or written presentation of the research they are involved in, depending on what is agreed with their research mentor and the course instructor.

Final Research Project Class Presentation

The final evaluation of the course will consist of a PowerPoint presentation about the research internship the students carried out and a short, written abstract that describes it concisely. Students are required to email the short abstract (250 words max) to the instructor and all the classmates one week before the final presentation. The presentations should be ten minutes long, and students are allowed to use any kind of available support to execute it. The most frequent presentation format is a PowerPoint presentation, but students could present their work as a video, poster, or any other format but should discuss it with the instructor at the mid-course interim tutorial.

- Presentation structure:
 - a. Title, names of the authors and their affiliations
 - b. Introduction
 - c. Material and methods
 - d. Discussion
 - e. Conclusions
 - f. Bibliography
- The written abstract must be submitted electronically and sent to the course director, Dr. Ksenija Jovanovic, by email for assessment.
- Each student will present a 10-minute summary of his/her research. The presentation will be evaluated by the course director, Dr. Ksenija Jovanovic, and lecturer, Dr. Julian Taylor.

IMPORTANT. All the assignments are expected to be completed by the due date. Assignments submitted 4 days after the due date will not be accepted. For every day the assignment is late after the assignment is due, 10% will be deducted from the assignment's final score.

Course Content

Unit 1

Theme

- Course introduction and syllabus: psychological research skills for the 21st Century

Unit 2

Theme

- Focusing on your research question: literature review and note-taking

Unit 3

Theme

- What is the scientific method? Definition, steps, and process

Unit 4

Theme

- Critical reading, thinking, and reporting findings

Unit 5

Theme

- Scientific presentation skills: presentations and posters

Unit 6

Theme

- Let's design a research project: steps from A to Z

Unit 7

Theme

- Interim exam: tutorials and revision, submission of assessed group video presentation, and interim assessed multiple-choice test

Unit 8

Theme

- Examining data and reaching a conclusion

Unit 9

Theme

- Ethical issues and pitching your research proposal

Unit 10

Theme

- Graduate schools and attaining your personal research learning goals

Unit 11

Theme

- Final revision and problems, submission of assessed research placement abstract, and assessed multiple-choice test

Unit 12

Theme

- Final exam: assessed individual research project presentation and tutorial

Policies

Attendance Policy

Students are expected to be on time and attend all classes while abroad. Many instructors assess both attendance and participation when assigning a final course grade. Attendance alone does not guarantee a positive participation grade; the student should be prepared for class and engage in class discussion. See the on-site syllabus for specific class requirements.

University of Minnesota Policies & Procedures

Academic integrity is essential to a positive teaching and learning environment. All students enrolled in University courses are expected to complete coursework responsibilities with fairness and honesty. Failure to do so by seeking unfair advantage over others or misrepresenting someone else's work as your own can result in disciplinary action. The University Student Conduct Code defines scholastic dishonesty as follows:

Scholastic Dishonesty

Scholastic dishonesty means plagiarizing; cheating on assignments or examinations; engaging in unauthorized collaboration on academic work; taking, acquiring, or using test materials without faculty permission; submitting false or incomplete records of academic achievement; acting alone or in cooperation with another to falsify records or to obtain dishonestly grades, honors, awards, or professional endorsement; altering forging, or misusing a University academic record; or fabricating or falsifying data, research procedures, or data analysis.

Within this course, a student responsible for scholastic dishonesty can be assigned a penalty up to and including an F or N for the course. If you have any questions regarding the expectations for a specific assignment or exam, ask.

Student Conduct

The University of Minnesota has specific policies concerning student conduct. This information can be found [on the Learning Abroad Center website](#).