

**JOMC 890.3—Experimental Design**  
Spring 2016

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**Meeting Times:** Tue. & Thu. 5pm—6:15pm in 340, Carroll Hall.

**Office Hours:** Thursday 1pm—3pm and by appointment.

**Course Overview:** This course will focus on the methodological and design issues in planning an experiment to enable you to fully design an experiment, which you can then carry out as a research paper, thesis, or dissertation proposal. Rather than just reading about controlled experiments and field experiments, single factor experiments and factorial designs, manipulation checks, etc., we will walk through the steps in deciding which of these elements is best used in the creation of your own experiment, including making the stimuli and questionnaire. By the end of the semester you will be ready to submit an application to the IRB. It is important to note that this class differs from experimental design course offered from other departments, such as psychology, which deal primarily with analyzing data with various statistics. While we will cover this aspect briefly, the inner workings of the statistics, formulas, and calculating them by hand will not be part of this class; you should take a traditional experimental design class to complement the conceptual knowledge gained in this course if desired.

**Required Reading:**

1. Bausell, R. B. (1994). *Conducting Meaningful Experiments: 40 Steps to Becoming a Scientist*. Los Angeles: Sage.
2. Shadish, W.R., Cook, T. D., & Campbell, D.T. (2002). *Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Designs for Generalized Causal Inference* Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.
3. Readings posted on the reading list, handed out during class, or available online.

**Course Work & Grading:** The class will be divided into teams of 3-4 students for the entire semester for all coursework except the individual midterm assignment. In general, team members receive the same grades for group exercises and projects. The midterm offers a chance for distinction, since you will have time to work on it and can use essentially all the resources at your command.

Assignment	Weight
Reflection papers	20%

Weekly assignments (8)	30%
Final paper	40%
Class participation	10%

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### **Reflection papers:**

You will submit a total of 5 one-page reflection or thought papers that analysis and synthesizes an idea (or ideas) in one or more of the course readings for that week. All reflection papers are due on TUESDAYS of the week and must be submitted IN-PERSON at the beginning of class. No reflection papers will be accepted late, via email, or from another student on your behalf. There are 10 weeks of assigned reading. You may choose to do the reflection papers any week. Only one reflection paper for the week's assigned reading allowed. The purpose of these papers is to give you the opportunity to think, and more importantly write, about insights gained from the readings so that you will meaningful contribute to the class discussion and further progress on your study. You may critique the reading, write about questions you have, or any other angle you would like. This is not a summary though. Do not summarize any of the readings. Pick a topic and write the whole paper on it. You will get a better grade for one in-depth topic than 2 (or more) superficial ones. This is your opportunity to demonstrate your ability for critical thinking.

### **Weekly assignments:**

There are a total of 8 weekly assignments: 3 ideas, literature review, hypotheses, sampling strategy, stimuli, manipulation check, questionnaire, and IRB proposal. These are opportunities to build and get feedback your experimental prior to submitting the final paper.

### **Final experimental design paper:**

The final paper and presentation should demonstrate the culmination of the entire semester's work. This is a standard research paper written up to the results section. It should be the front half of a paper that would be suitable for a conference submission once you have collected the data and written the results, discussion, and conclusion. The front end should be no longer than 15 pages and include: introduction, theory and literature review, hypotheses, and a complete methods section. This paper is expected to be of much higher quality than the weekly assignments. It needs to be clearly and concisely written and suitable to a peer-review submission process (as soon as the back half is added).

**Grade scale:** I do not use plus/minus grading. Grades are not rounded up.

A 100-90; B 89.99-80; C 79.99-70; D 69.99-60; F 59.99-0

### **Grade categories are defined as:**

- A - The work is intellectually rigorous, shows an exceptional understanding of the material and is error free. **Ready for publication with minor revisions.**
- B - The work illustrates a good effort at understanding the material and has few errors. **Revise-and-resubmit.**
- C & D- The work indicates little progress toward gaining an understanding of the material and has substantial errors. **Reject.**
- F - The work shows no understanding of the assignment or was not completed in a timely manner. **The editor does not even send it out for review – desk reject.**

**Schedule:** The schedule includes the main topics for each week and the reading required for the meeting. Students are expected to have completed the assigned readings BEFORE coming to class.

**Note:** Based on your input and our progress, I reserve the right to amend and change the syllabus, reading schedules, and grading events during the semester.

### COURSE SCHEDULE

Week	Dates	Topic, Reading, & Assignments
1	1/12 1/14	INTRODUCTION & HISTORY OF EXPERIMENTS  <b>Assignment due next Thursday (week 2, 1/21):</b> 3 ideas for an experiment you would like to conduct. Clear and concise statement of the problem, why it is important to scholars, practitioners, society. 250 words per idea.
2	1/19 1/21	OVERVIEW OF EXPERIMENTS, THEORY, & LITERATURE <b>Read:</b> SC&C Ch. 1 & 8; Bausell Ch. 1 & 2, Thorson, Wicks, & Leshner 2012  <b>Assignment due this week:</b> 3 ideas <b>Assignment due in two Thursday (week 4, 2/4):</b> Revise 1 approved idea, add 5 pages of theory and literature review.
3	1/26 1/28	EXPERIMENTAL VARIABLES <b>Read:</b> Baron & Kenny 1986; O'Keefe 2003; Spencer, Zanna, & Fong 2005; Stevens 2012  <b>Assignment due this week:</b> None
4	2/2 2/4	VALIDITY & HYPOTHESES <b>Read:</b> SC&C Ch. 2 & 3; Bausell Ch. 3 & 4; Coleman 2006  <b>Assignment due this week:</b> Revised idea with literature review <b>Assignment due next Thursday (week 5, 2/11):</b> 3+ Hypotheses and any Research Questions
5	2/9 2/11	EFFECT SIZES & SAMPLING <b>Read:</b> Basil, Brown, & Bocarnea 2002; Cohen 1992; Courtright 1996; Crump, McDonnell, & Gureckis 2013; Lang 1996; VanVoorhis & Morgan 2007  <b>Assignment due this week:</b> 3+ Hs and any RQs <b>Assignment due next Thursday (week 6, 2/18):</b> Write up the sampling

		strategy for your study, including a power analysis.
6	2/16 2/18	MEASUREMENT & STIMULI DESIGN <b>Read:</b> Jackson & Jacobs 1983; Tao & Bucy 2007; TBD  <b>Assignment due this week:</b> Sampling strategy <b>Assignment due in two TUESDAYS (week 8, 3/1):</b> Design your stimuli.
7	2/23 2/25	RANDOM ASSIGNMENT & FACTORIAL DESIGNS <b>Read:</b> Bausell 5 & 6; Ho 2008; Smith, Levine, Lachlan, & Fediuk 2002  <b>Assignment due this week:</b> None
8	3/1	MANIPULATION CHECKS, PRETESTS, & PILOT STUDIES <b>Read:</b> Bausell Ch. 7-9; Arpan, Baker, Lee, Jung, Lorusso, & Smith 2006; TBD <b>No class Thursday 3/3</b>  <b>Assignment due this week (on TUESDAY):</b> Stimuli <b>Assignment due next Thursday (week 9, 3/10):</b> Write manipulation check for your study.
9	3/8 3/10	QUESTIONNAIRES & PROCEDURES <b>Read:</b> SC&C Ch. 4 & 5; Coleman, Thorson, & Wilkins 2011  Assignment due this week: Manipulation check <b>Assignment due in two Thursday (week 11, 3/24):</b> Design your questionnaire.
10		SPRING BREAK
11	3/22 3/24	ETHICS & WRITING UP METHODS <b>Read:</b> SC&C Ch. 9; Select any two peer-reviewed, experiment design journal articles, analyze and critique the methods section write-up. Is there a pattern that you prefer (e.g., order of stimuli, sample, procedure, etc.)? Is there enough information to replicate the study? Is one method section better than the other? If yes, why? This purpose of this thought paper should be to closely read and think critically about how methods sections are written (well and/or poorly).  <b>Assignment due this week:</b> Questionnaire <b>Assignment due next Thursday (week 6, 2/18):</b> Prepare your IRB proposal for your study.
12	3/29 3/31	ANALYZING & INTERPRETING DATA <b>Read:</b> O'Keefe 2007; Levine 2002; TBD <b>Assignment due this week:</b> IRB proposal

13	4/5 4/7	WRITING UP RESULTS <b>Read:</b> Select any two experimental design studies, analyze and critique the way the results are written in the same manner as done for methods.  <b>Assignment due this week:</b> None
14	4/12 4/14	CONSULTATIONS <b>Assignment due this week:</b> None
15	4/19 4/21	FINAL PRESENTATIONS Presentation schedule will be assigned (4/19, 4/21, & 4/26). Prepare a presentation with visuals a la AEJMC or ICA conference. No longer than 10 minutes each. You will be timed. Questions from the audience immediately after each presentation.
16	4/26	FINAL PRESENTATIONS CONT. Final papers due on final exam day

**Honor Code:** I expect that each student will conduct himself or herself within the guidelines of the University honor system (<http://honor.unc.edu>). All academic work should be done with the high levels of honesty and integrity that this University demands. You are expected to produce your own work in this class. If you have any questions about your responsibility or your instructor's responsibility as a faculty member under the Honor Code, please see the course instructor or Senior Associate Dean Charlie Tuggle, or you may speak with a representative of the Student Attorney Office or the Office of the Dean of Students.

**Seeking Help:** If you need individual assistance, it's your responsibility to meet with the instructor. If you are serious about wanting to improve your performance in the course, the time to seek help is as soon as you are aware of the problem – whether the problem is difficulty with course material, a disability, or an illness.

**Diversity:** The University's policy on Prohibiting Harassment and Discrimination is outlined in the 2011-2012 Undergraduate Bulletin <http://www.unc.edu/ugradbulletin/>. UNC is committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment for all members of our community and does not discriminate in offering access to its educational programs and activities on the basis of age, gender, race, color, national origin, religion, creed, disability, veteran's status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.

**Special Accommodations:** If you require special accommodations to attend or participate in this course, please let the instructor know as soon as possible. If you need information about disabilities visit the Accessibility Services website at <https://accessibility.unc.edu/>

**ACCREDITATION:** The School of Journalism and Mass Communication's accrediting body outlines a number of values you should be aware of and competencies you should be able to demonstrate by the time you graduate from our program. Learn more about them here: <http://www2.ku.edu/~acejmc/PROGRAM/PRINCIPLES.SHTML#vals&comps>

No single course could possibly give you all of these values and competencies; but collectively, our classes are designed to build your abilities in each of these areas. In this class, we will address a number of the values and competencies, with special emphasis on these six bullet dots under "Professional values and competencies" in the link above.

- demonstrate an understanding of the history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications;
- understand concepts and apply theories in the use and presentation of images and information;
- think critically, creatively and independently;
- conduct research and evaluate information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work;
- write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve;
- apply tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work.