

## Research paper instructions

*From syllabus:*

**Research paper.** The research paper is intended to provide you with the opportunity to more fully explore your class discussion topic, as well as examine it from a more empirical perspective. Details of the requirements for the assignment are available on my website. The paper should be approximately 10 pages in length (not including a cover page or references). It should consist of at least 3 empirical research articles from reputable aging journals (acceptable journals include: Aging, Neuropsychology and Cognition; Experimental Aging Research; Experimental Gerontology; Journal of Adult Development; Journal of Clinical Geropsychology; Journal of Gerontology; Psychology of Aging; The Gerontologist). Inclusion of materials from popular magazines or the web can be used in the paper, but do not count toward the article requirement. You should strive to find articles from the past decade. **You are also required to attach the first page (that includes the abstract) of the articles to the end of your paper.** The paper will be written in **APA style** for review articles (see my website for a hand-out regarding APA style that should be followed for this paper). **A rough draft of the paper is due on the day that you lead** the class on the topic. The final paper is due **2 weeks after** your class moderation date, but no later than the day of the final exam. (See late policy in syllabus.)

### **Research paper instructions:**

The paper is required to be written in APA style for review articles (see department website for APA style guides, and my site for an example paper). It should consist of *at least* 3 empirical research articles from reputable journals. Rough drafts are welcome for feedback (must be given to me at least one week before paper is due). The paper is due 2 weeks after your presentation, but no later than at the time of the final exam.

*Things to do list:*

1. Try to find review articles and other basic information to use for background (outside of what is provided in textbook)
2. Find 3 empirical articles (papers have method/results sections)
  - a. I prefer that you use PsycINFO database to search for articles
3. Write the paper
  - a. Background information to topic; research question/hypotheses
  - b. Describe/summarize empirical articles
  - c. Critically analyze topic; synthesize findings from articles
  - d. Propose future directions/research (be as specific as you'd like)

*Requirements:*

1. The 3 “empirical papers” must have methods/results sections. You may use as many extra review articles or other empirical articles as you would like, but there must be at least 3 studies that are discussed and critiqued in detail.
2. Describe the background, method, results, and conclusions of the 3 empirical papers.
3. Provide your own “take” on the topic in the form of a critique and future research ideas. You **MUST** show that you have gone beyond a summary, and have critically thought about the topic.

4. The paper must be written in APA format. There are 2 primary ways you will use APA formatting: referencing and use of section headers.
  - a. *Referencing* must be in APA style. Please see below for details or my website for APA style information sheets. You can use your textbook as an example of how to reference. Any ideas or conclusions that are not your own (information that you have learned), you must cite – give credit to the person that had that idea!
  - b. *Section headers* are required in your paper. These should be descriptive of the paragraph(s) in that section (e.g. “Overview of false memories and children” then “Theories for false memories” then “Examination of familiarity”, etc.). The headers should be italicized and on their own line.
5. There is not a page requirement or limit, but typical papers are approximately 10 pages, double-spaced, 12-pt font, with additional, separate title page and reference page. Please include page numbers. Other APA style formatting, such as running heads or an abstract, are not required but welcomed.
6. Reference page: Only include references of papers that YOU have read. If you have any questions about how to correctly cite a source, please ask, but also see information below, on my website, or follow your textbook’s examples at the back of the book!
7. Attach the 1<sup>st</sup> pages of your 3 empirical papers to the back of your paper so that I can read the abstracts. Other abstract pages are welcomed but not necessary.

*Grading scheme includes:*

Content: 40 pt

- Full explanation of topic
- Introduction to topic
- Background, method, results, conclusions of 3 studies
- Conclusion to paper

Depth of thought: 30pt

- Provided own conclusions and thoughts
- Critical analysis of research
- Provide future directions

Clarity: 20pt

- Written in clear and understandable language
- Logical order
- Provides connections among papers
- Succinct language
- Grammar/Technical aspect:

APA style / other requirements: 10pt

- Includes section headers
- Referencing within paper
- Reference page at end (with all references from paper)
- Attached 1<sup>st</sup> page of empirical papers

*Specific APA style information:*

**Components of paper**

Title page: Name, title, class, section, date

Body (use headers where appropriate)

References: end of paper with centered title “References”

**Margins** – One inch margins are required on every side. (File > Page setup)

**Spacing** – Double-spaced

**Font** – Times New Roman, 12 point

**Page numbers** – Make sure to put page numbers at top right corner of every page (in header)

**Good writing tips**

USE OTHER LITERATURE REVIEWS AND ARTICLES AS A GUIDE

QUOTATIONS: Quotations should generally not be used.

VOICE: AVOID 1<sup>ST</sup> PERSON (GALVAN, 2004, p. 54)

*Ex. Improper “voice” for academic writing*

In this review, I will show that the literature on treating juvenile murderers is sparse and suffers from the same problems as the general literature ...

Unfortunately, I have found that most of the treatment results are based on clinical case reports of ...

*Ex. Suitable “voice” for academic writing*

The literature on treating juvenile murderers is sparse and suffers from the same problems as the general literature... Most of the treatment results are based on clinical case reports...

AVOID SLANG. USE PROFESSIONAL LANGUAGE

“conducted a study” instead of “did a study”

“examined” instead of “looked at”

“utilize” instead of “use” (where appropriate)

“great deal” instead of “a lot”

“furthermore” instead of run-on sentences

ORGANIZE THE PAPER BY TOPICS NOT CHRONOLOGY: Build paper with a clear thesis. Good writing should provide clear and organized evidence for your argument or theory.

BE CONCISE: Delete unnecessary words, phrases, and sentences to drastically improve your writing. Scientific writing is concise and to-the-point!

REVISE AND REWRITE: Good writing takes hard work. Give yourself enough time to take a break from the paper. Time away from the paper provides perspective regarding organization and allows the opportunity to find technical errors.

CITATIONS: It is imperative that you use good citation habits. It is plagiarism to use other writers’ words and IDEAS.

USE ASSISTANCE OF WRITING CENTER WHEN NEEDED.