

Psych 100: Paper Assignment (Fall 2007)

Goals:

- To become familiar with the process of reading a psychology-style empirical research report (i.e., a journal article).
- To learn to accurately and concisely summarize primary research.
- To critically evaluate/critique the rationale, methods, results, and conclusions drawn from psychological research.
- To think about the “real world” implications of research findings, as well as the impact of research on psychological theories.
- To use the PsycInfo database to find articles.
- To identify and articulate links between research studies.
- To think about future research on a particular topic.

General process:

- *Step 1:* Pick one of the research articles that have been provided. Skim over each and then pick the one that is most interesting to you.
- *Step 2:* Summarize the theory behind this work, the objectives for the study, the hypotheses being tested, the methods employed, the general pattern of findings, and conclusions drawn from this research. Also discuss the strengths and limitations of this work (i.e., in your opinion, are there problems with this research?). How did the researchers ensure the validity of their work?
- *Step 3:* Use PsycInfo to find a second journal article that is somehow related to the first paper, and repeat Step 2 for this paper (i.e., summarize and comment on it). In searching for your second article, think about what intrigues you most about the first paper. What angle do you find interesting or want to know more about? There are many different directions that you can go, depending on your own interests.
- *Step 4:* Discuss how these two papers complement and/or contradict each other. How are these research studies related to each other? In what meaningful ways do they differ? How are the methodologies different from one another, and how might that have impacted their results? It is okay if the association between the two papers is a loose one, but you must be as clear and explicit as possible in explaining the relationship that you see between the two articles.
- *Step 5:* Taken together, what are the “real world” implications of these studies? What do they tell us about human cognition, behavior, or affect? Why might this information be useful (or is it useful)? What do they tell us about the particular psychological theories that are being tested?
- *Step 6:* After reading these papers, are there still questions that remain unanswered? If you were going to do a research project on this topic, what would you study (generally speaking; no need to layout all the specifics of a new study)? How do these two studies contribute to your thinking on future research ideas on this topic?

Specific details:

- You must use PsycInfo to find your second paper; the second paper cannot be by the author(s) of your first study and cannot be listed in the references section of the first study.
- The second article must be a research article (i.e., a report of original research findings in which you can easily identify a methods and results section). Book chapters, general review articles, newspaper reports, and opinion pieces are not appropriate for this assignment. Please ask if you are unsure about the suitability of your selected article.
- You must include a hard copy of the paper that you find, in "journal format" (i.e., from a .pdf or photocopy of a journal; not printed .html). Please staple it, and then paperclip it to your paper (which should also be stapled).
- Provide a reference list at the end of your paper that provides the full citations, in APA style, for the two papers you selected.
- Grades may be adjusted downward for poor/unclear writing, typos, failure to follow directions, and/or tardiness.
- The text of your paper should be approximately 8-10 double-spaced pages, with 1" margins on all sides in a 10-12 point font.
- Your paper is due by **Wednesday, November 14th (in class)**, in hard copy form (no e-mailed papers, please).