

Graduate Research Methods

HLP 6535 | Class #17422 | Section K115 | 3 Credits | SP 26

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Course Information

INSTRUCTOR

Diba Mani, Ph.D.
Pronouns: she/her

Method of Contact: **Canvas Messaging** for presently enrolled students
Use Canvas messaging to ensure your communication is prioritized and not lost amid a professor's UFL inbox!

Email: dmani@ufl.edu for non-course related communications or for communications involving those outside the course

OFFICE HOURS

Virtual two hours/week; details posted on Canvas

MEETING TIME/LOCATION

Access course through Canvas on [UF e-Learning](#) and the Canvas mobile app by Instructure. There are no in-person meetings for this course.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The course is designed to introduce basic research methodology and design, which includes statistical analysis techniques used in applied physiology and kinesiology. Students will demonstrate their knowledge of the course materials by analyzing, interpreting, and summarizing research writing in professional journals and by planning a research study.

PREREQUISITE KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

Undergraduate degree. Some background in math and science. Introductory statistics is not required but is helpful. At this level of education, you are expected to maintain organization and responsibility of your involvement in classes (e.g., seeking additional resources to further critically think and problem solve, maintaining a schedule that fits with your needs and abilities). Students enrolling in this course must have at least the following minimum technical skills to succeed:

- General computer literacy is expected in this course. Ensure that your internet browser and extension are up to date before taking any exams.
- Using the learning management system, Canvas
- Using e-mail with attachments
- Operating Microsoft Office: Word, PowerPoint, Excel
- Using Zoom video conferencing
- Downloading and installing software such as Google Chrome with extension for HonorLock
- Problem solving any download issues for software used in the course
- Incorporating applications associated with Canvas, such as YellowDig, YouTube, Zoom, and VoiceThread
- Critical thinking in using web resources

REQUIRED AND RECOMMENDED MATERIALS

The required textbook for this course is Ian Jones and Chris Gratton's, "Research Methods for Sports Studies" (3rd Edition by Taylor & Francis Group). Print ISBN: 9780415749329. e-Book ISBN: 9781317749899. *Although there is an updated 4th Edition, either the third or fourth will suffice for the purposes of attaining content relevant in this course.*

You may access this book for free through the UF Libraries or purchase your own. Information on acquiring this textbook via UF may be found via [ProQuest e-Book Central](#). Additional information for Distance Learning and UF Online Students is available on the [Distance Learners and UF Online website](#).



Additional content will be accessible through online resources, which are provided at no cost to you if you sign in with the UF VPN. Additionally, you will have access (via internet) to John H. McDonald's "Handbook of Biological Statistics" (3rd edition) and several reports on topics such as bioethical issues in biomedical sciences. Access to the internet, a computer with functioning webcam, microphone, and speaker (or headphones/earbuds) are required. Please refer to "UF Computing Requirements" below for additional information on this. All additional material will be provided online through Canvas.

COURSE FORMAT

This class is 100% online. Pre-recorded lectures and assigned readings are organized within modules. The class is designed to be flexible to your schedule. Assignments are due throughout the semester, with at least one work week to complete each. There are two examinations (one midterm and one final) and one "research project". The research project will focus on a research problem you are interested in. This research project will comprise a research plan you will work to develop throughout the semester. This is a scaffolded assignment, meaning the larger project is broken into smaller assignments that focus on skills or types of knowledge required to successfully complete the larger assignment. It will cumulate in a poster presentation (which includes a recording <3 minutes in duration).

The Canvas course will close about one week after the last day of class. Please retain any notes you require prior to this time, especially in preparation for your program's comprehensive exam, if and as applicable.

COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Discuss issues related to research ethics, responsible conduct of human and animal research, and data collection, as well as recognize how to avoid plagiarism.
2. Utilize effective techniques for conducting a literature search using online databases and managing references.
3. Critique research articles and determine the quality of publications, identifying issues related to methodology and guidelines to improve scientific rigor and reproducibility.
4. Identify and apply the steps involved in the scientific method by formulating a research question, building effective scientific aims, generating a research hypothesis, and designing an experimental plan (study) to address the question.
5. Generate and store data in an effective format and then select and perform appropriate statistical calculations to analyze data.
6. Interpret visual representations of data (e.g., tables, graphs).
7. Utilize scientific principles and inductive reasoning to translate and interpret results.
8. Present aspects of the scientific method, including experimental design and results, in an accurate and professional manner.
9. Outline the processes related to manuscript reviews, writing, authorship, and journal impact factors.
10. Demonstrate a clearer understanding of possible careers and how acquired skills and interests match up to a given career path.

CONTENT ATTESTATION

Instructional materials for this course consist of only those materials specifically reviewed, selected, and assigned by the instructor(s). The instructor(s) is only responsible for these instructional materials.

Course & University Policies

University policies are summarized on the [UF Academic Policies & Resources website](#). This link will direct students to a separate webpage that will provide all required academic policies, such as attendance, grading, personal conduct, DRC and evaluation verbiage, as well as campus academic, health, and wellness resources.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

As an asynchronous online course, there is no specific attendance policy. However, the midterm exam must be completed within the designated assessment time (48 hours) and assignments must be submitted by posted deadlines.

PERSONAL CONDUCT POLICY

Students are expected to exhibit behaviors that reflect highly upon themselves and our University:

- Read and refer to the syllabus.
- Please review all announcements for updates – you are required to receive Canvas announcements and respond to Canvas messages promptly.
- Arrive to live sessions (e.g., scheduled office hours), if applicable, on time.
- Follow the guidelines for appropriate behavior in virtual environments (e.g., name visible, non-offensive background (whether virtual or not), appropriate dress during live sessions).
- Submit assignments by the deadlines. If you miss a deadline, please recognize that requesting an exception is unfair to your classmates and instructor.
- Show respect for the course instructor and classmates in engagement.
- Use professional, courteous standards for any web exchanges (e.g., proper greetings and titles in emails).

- Communicate through the preferred means (Canvas), reserving communication through official UFL email addresses for emergencies.
- UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.” [The Honor Code](#) specifies several behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions.
- You are obliged to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult the instructor in this class.
- The use of software to promote academic integrity through plagiarism detection is advocated for. Although not required, Turnitin is an excellent resource for this and reference/citation assistance.

University of Florida students are bound by the Honor Pledge. On all work submitted for credit by a student, the following pledge is required or implied: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.” The [Student Honor Code and Conduct Code \(Regulation 4.040\)](#) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code, as well as the process for reported allegations and sanctions that may be implemented. All potential violations of the code will be reported to Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution. If a student is found responsible for an Honor Code violation in this course, the instructor will enter a Grade Adjustment sanction which may be up to or including failure of the course.

STUDENT COMPUTING POLICY

Since this course is fully online, and per the UF student computing requirements, UF does not recommend students relying on/regularly using tablet devices, mobile phones, or Chromebook devices as their primary computer, as these may not be compatible with specific platforms used in this course or other UF courses. Access to a fast, secure internet network will be necessary for this course. If a student is in an area with limited internet access, UF students can access eduroam for free with their GatorLink log-in credentials. If you have any problems connecting to eduroam you can call (352-392-HELP/4357) or email the UF Computing Help Desk.

ASSESSMENT PROCTORING POLICY (HONORLOCK SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS)

Exams will be proctored using Honorlock. You will not need to sign-up or schedule a testing time, nor will you need to create an account. To ensure your device is compliant with HonorLock, a series of pre-assessment checks must be performed before gaining access to the exam. Please do so in advance of the exam; we are unable to further accommodate for individual technological issues that may detract from your exam time.

Specifications necessary for HonorLock to work are listed below:

- You need to open Canvas on the Google Chrome internet browser and to download the HonorLock Chrome Extension. Other internet browsers will not be compatible with HonorLock. You must use a PC or Mac.
- Make sure you have a stable Internet connection wherever you are taking the exam.
- Students must install the HonorLock Extension within Chrome
- HonorLock will not support certain operating system versions. You can find the updated Minimum System Requirements and a system compatibility test on the [Honorlock website](#).
- You will need to take the exam on a desktop computer or laptop with a webcam and microphone set up on your chosen device. This will not work on mobile devices or tablets, including iPads and smart phones.
- You need to make sure that the camera is always facing you – if the camera does not stay facing you or if you are out of frame, the exam will pause, preventing you from continuing, even midway through.
- A live proctor pop-in *may* ask you to conduct a 360-degree scan of your testing room/environment, or to demonstrate you do not have a phone or other electronic device around you.

- The testing environment should be cleared of any clutter, no notes, or textbooks laying out. These could constitute a violation of the Honor Code (e.g., academic dishonesty).
- Cell phones, tablets, smart watches, calculators, earphones, and other external electronic devices must be removed from the vicinity of the testing space (ideally outside the room).
- Make sure the room you are taking the exam in is well-lit and that you are by yourself (private space). Rooms that are not bright enough may get flagged as “blurry” or “unclear”. Avoid posters or photographs on the wall behind you; try to minimize noise, including talking aloud. These will also flag your exam, which will be reviewed by a member of the instructor team for the course to confirm or refute any academic dishonesty.
- You may not wear a cap or hat, and should be wearing appropriate clothing (e.g., shirt).
- Headphones, earbuds, or other listening devices are not permitted.
- You must have a valid and clear photo identification (ID) card (e.g., Gator ID, driver’s license, passport) to show at the start of the exam. Make sure the image is clear.
 - You may not use an electronic device to perform your photo ID and selfie check-in.
- Only one screen and one web browser tab (which is that is being used for the exam) in Chrome is allowed; you are not permitted multiple monitors.
 - Honorlock has an integrity algorithm that can detect search-engine use, so do not attempt to search for answers, even if it is on a secondary device.
- An Honorlock Practice Quiz will be set up under Quizzes in Canvas. Please go through this practice test well in-advance of taking the exam. This practice quiz allows you to go through all the pre-assessment checks so you will know what to expect when taking the exam itself. Take the practice quiz on the device you intend to take the exam on, in the same environment (building, room, lighting).
- Your exam must be taken at a table or desk, in a private room with no one else inside it. There should be no audio – meaning, no television, music, or radio may be played during the exam.
- If you encounter any issues with the testing platform or the exam, you should immediately contact Honorlock for assistance. If this fails, you need to email your course instructor right away with specific details (e.g., screenshots of your chat conversation with Honorlock with time stamps) of what occurred so that they can assist you as quickly as possible.
- Scrap paper or taking notes or any sort of documentation/recording during the exam is not permitted.
- Failure to meet the items above may result in a zero grade.

APPROPRIATE USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) TECHNOLOGY

The use of AI tools will facilitate student development of skills and knowledge acquisition within the stated learning objectives of the course are permitted in this course. When students opt to leverage AI tools to augment their submitted products, they will be expected to appropriately cite the tool(s) utilized. Further, students will be held accountable under the scope of the UF Student Honor Code & Conduct Code for the content of all work they submit (including the portions that may have been produced in part or whole by an external Entity—including AI). Thus, students should engage in active editorial and underwriting efforts to ensure the totality of the work submitted reflects their intentions and ethical values. In this class, we will use generative AI such as ChatGPT and Gemini, as well as other AI platforms such as: Grammarly, Quinncia, Career.io, Canvas and AI Ease Headshot Generator, and personality/strengths survey inventories that may incorporate AI for interpretation (pending which is selected for use by the student).

MAKE-UP POLICY

Make-up assessments and assignments will be given at the discretion of the instructor (a courtesy adjustment *may* be made under certain circumstances (e.g., when communicated *immediately*, meaning within 24 hours of the deadline, and only a first-time mistake) but with a 50% score deduction, maintaining fairness and consistency with peers). To request and possibly schedule an exam (*not* a re-take; with valid explanation), please contact the instructor via Canvas messaging, and provide relevant information, including documentation.

Requests should be made in advance, sooner than 1-2 business days prior to the original deadline. Ideally, make-ups should be completed before the next assignment deadline.

Unexcused (including “inappropriate excuses”) material cannot be made up and will result in a zero on that item. Please do not ask for an accommodation for inappropriate excuses, which include:

- Procrastinated preparation
- Extracurricular activities
- Out of town/vacation
- Traveling
- Sleeping in
- Sports
- Technological issue due to procrastinated assignment upload
- Volunteering
- Work

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ACCOMMODATING STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the Disability Resource Center by visiting their [Get Started webpage](#). It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs, as early as possible in the semester.

COURSE EVALUATIONS

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at on the [GatorEvals website](#). Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens and can complete evaluations through the e-mail they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under [GatorEvals](#).

PREFERRED NAME

It is important to the learning environment that you feel welcome and safe in this class, and that you are comfortable participating in class discussions and communicating with me on any issues related to the class. I would like to acknowledge your preferred name, and pronouns that reflect your identity. Please let me know how you would like to be addressed if your name and pronouns are not reflected by your name on the class roster. Please kindly correct me if I forget or make a mistake.

You may also change your “Display Name” in Canvas. Canvas uses the “Display Name” as set in myUFL. The Display Name is what you want people to see in the UF Directory, such as “Ally” instead of “Allison.” To update your display name, go to [one.ufl.edu](#), click on the dropdown at the top right, and select “Directory Profile.” Click “Edit” on the right of the name panel, uncheck “Use my legal name” under “Display Name,” update how you wish your name to be displayed, and click “Submit” at the bottom. This change may take up to 24 hours to

appear in Canvas. This does not change your legal name for official UF records. Please keep your preferred name (first and last, if possible) visible when engaging in course activities online (e.g., virtual office hours).

PRIVACY

Aspects of course content may be audio and visually recorded for students in the class to refer to. Students who participate with their camera engaged or utilize a profile image are agreeing to have their video or image recorded. If you are unwilling to have your profile or video image recorded, be sure to keep your camera off and do not use a profile image. Students who un-mute during class and participate orally are agreeing to have their voices recorded. If you are not willing to consent to have your voice recorded during class, you will need to keep your mute button activated and communicate exclusively using the "chat" feature, which allows students to type questions and comments live. By enrolling in this course, you will be required to have audio and video enabled for certain activities (e.g., poster presentation). If you do not want your image in any recording pertaining to course content, please let me know within the first couple weeks of class so that we may seek an accommodation. As in all courses, unauthorized recording and unauthorized sharing of recorded materials is prohibited.

Grading

The following table outlines the point-accruing components of the course.

Evaluation Components	Allocation to Final Grade
Syllabus Quiz	0%
Assignments & Engagement	25%
Exams (2)	35%
Research Project	
Proposal/Literature Review	10%
Methodology	10%
Discussion	10%
Poster Presentation	10%

Syllabus Quiz – The syllabus quiz is based on content found in this syllabus. Students will be given an unlimited number of attempts on the quiz. It is recommended that students complete the quiz as soon as possible to unlock the course material – a score of 100% must be earned to do so. Students will need to contact the instructor for the syllabus to be re-opened in before gaining access to other course components. You will need to complete the syllabus quiz before gaining access to other course material.

Assignments – Assignments include discussion posts, peer evaluations, literature compilation and review, and reference management. “Participation” activities are included in this grading segment: for example, students will be asked to create a short post to introduce themselves to the class. This activity will require the use of audio and visual recording tools. To retain all participation points, students must upload their post and comment on that of a classmate within the first couple weeks of class. Engagement involves communications with peers through digital discussion boards (e.g., YellowDig).

Exams – This course comprises two closed-book exams comprising multiple choice, multiple answer, matching, and/or fill-in-the-blank questions on course content on lectures, readings, and assignments. Students will have access to the exams for 48 hours each, and each exam must be completed in one sitting. Honorlock will be used for the proctoring of examinations. Examinations will span comprehension and knowledge retention but also application and interpretation of material. The final exam is cumulative, comprising course material from the entire semester.

Research Project – Each student will develop an independent research project. This project will be worked on throughout the semester with scaffolded assignments due throughout the term, separating by parts: (1) proposal, which comprises a literature review, specific aims, hypothesis, and purpose; (2) methodology, which includes statistics, sample size, and experimental protocol; (3) discussion, which comprises translation of findings, clinical application, and limitations of research project. The final component of the research project is a (4) poster presentation, which will comprise creating a poster and recording a short recording (audio and visual) through an audio/video program with slide share. You will also submit your final poster in .pdf form. References are required for every assignment submitted in the Research Project and must be in appropriate formatting and relevant to the content of the document submitted. **The experiment designed in the research project of this course will not actually be implemented – it is hypothetical.** The act of developing the research project and then analyzing and interpreting hypothetical data is the focus of research methods and methodology.

GRADING SCALE

Any discrepancies with points displayed in the gradebook must be brought to the attention of the instructor as soon as possible, or before the last day of class. Assignments can be discussed when completed proactively (before assignment deadlines) during the weekly virtual office hour – however, assignments will not be reviewed prior to submission for grading (meaning, you should not expect the instructor to go over the assignment you message her in advance of uploading for official grading). There are no re-grades or re-submissions in this course. If there is something that you believe is incorrect, a re-evaluation of the score may be made. Please recognize that doing so will result in a stricter evaluation of your submission, which may result in additional deductions. Again, any grade adjustments or make-ups *MUST* be completed *before* the last day of class. There is **no** curve for this course and final grades will **not** be rounded up. Any requests for additional extra credit or special exceptions to these grading policies will be respectfully ignored. More detailed information regarding current UF grading policies can be found on the [Course Catalogs website](#).

Letter Grade	Percent of Total Points Associated with Each Letter Grade	GPA Impact of Each Letter Grade
A	93.00-100%	4.0
A-	90.00-92.99%	3.7
B+	87.00-89.99%	3.3
B	83.00-86.99%	3.0
B-	80.00-82.99%	2.7
C+	77.00-79.99%	2.3
C	73.00-76.99%	2.0
C-	70.00-72.99%	1.7
D+	67.00-69.99%	1.3
D	60.00-66.99%	1.0
E (F)	0-59.99%	0

Course Schedule

Additional assignments beyond those posted below have variable deadlines, although all assignments and assessments are due at 11:59 PM ET on the date marked unless otherwise noted or mentioned in Canvas via announcements (all assignments may not be included in this summarized table). Please review all announcements for updates – you are required to receive Canvas announcements and respond to Canvas messages promptly. Please reach out in advance for accommodations, including special observances, such as holidays – I am happy to assist however I can.

Week	Dates	Canvas Module	Content	Assignment/Assessment
1	January 12-16, 2026	Orientation	Syllabus & Introductions Research Project Introduction	<i>YellowDig graded engagement posts begin</i>
2	January 19-23	Module 1 Module 2	Monday is Martin Luther King, Jr. Day What is Research? Research Traditions	<i>“Orientation/Syllabus Quiz” Due: Sunday, January 25 at 11:59 PM ET</i>
3	January 26-30	Module 3 Module 4	The Research Process Research Questions, Aims, and Objectives	<i>“Search Databases: A Favorite Research Topic” Due: Sunday, February 1 at 11:59 PM ET</i>
4	February 2-6	Module 5 Module 6 Module 7	Reviewing the Literature Theories, Concepts, and Variables Research Designs	<i>“Ethics Reflection” Due: Sunday, February 8 at 11:59 PM ET</i>
5	February 9-13	Module 8 Module 9	Collecting Data I: The Questionnaire Survey Collecting Data II: Interviews	<i>Research Project Proposal Due: Sunday, February 15 at 11:59 PM ET</i>
6	February 16-20	Module 10 Module 11	Collecting Data III: Unobtrusive Methods Collecting Data IV: Ethnographic Research	<i>“Ethics & The Care and Handling of Precious Data” Due: Sunday, February 22 at 11:59 PM ET</i>
7	February 23-27	Module 12	Sports Research and the Internet	
8	March 2-6	--	Midterm Exam: <i>Sunday, March 1 at 11:59 PM ET – Tuesday, March 3 at 11:59 PM ET</i>	<i>Midterm Exam Closes: Tuesday, March 3 at 11:59 PM ET</i>
9	March 9-13	Module 13	Analyzing Data I: Quantitative Data	<i>“Statistics & Central Tendencies Application” Due: Sunday, March 8 at 11:59 PM ET</i>
10	March 16-20	--	Monday-Friday is Spring Break	<i>Research Project Methods Due: Sunday, March 15 at 11:59 PM ET</i>
11	March 23-27	Module 14	Analyzing Data II: Qualitative Data	<i>Research Project Discussion Due: Sunday, March 29 at 11:59 PM ET</i>
12	March 30-April 3	Module 15	Writing the Research Report	
13	April 6-10	Module 16	Practical Issues Marketing Yourself Career Perspectives in Applied Physiology & Kinesiology	<i>Research Project Poster Due: Sunday, April 12 at 11:59 PM ET</i>
14	April 13-17	--	Research Project Showcase	<i>YellowDig graded engagement posts end</i>
15	April 20-24	--	Exam Preparation Week Wednesday is the last day of classes Thursday and Friday are Reading Days	

16	April 27-30	--	Final Exam: <i>Sunday, April 26 at 11:59 PM ET – Tuesday, April 28 at 11:59 PM ET</i>	<i>Final Exam Closes: Tuesday, April 28 at 11:59 PM ET</i>
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SUCCESS AND STUDY TIPS

Recognizing that people learn in different ways and with no judgement on how they study (e.g., highlighting text, using YouTube, drawing figures), here are some tips for success and studying in this course that haven't been proven useful for many:

- Some of the material presented in this class is reasonably advanced. However, the course is designed so that if you do the assignments, work hard at your research project, and complete all the lectures, you will likely earn a good grade.
- Concentrate on the material and get as much as you can out of material to prepare yourself for a professional life rather than becoming anxious about a high grade. This is a skills-acquisition class; not a "weed out" class. Again, most students who do what is asked of them do very well.
- Look up material that inspires you. If you come across something that connects to class content, share as a Discussion on Canvas. We're lucky to have so many resources through the internet.
- Check Canvas for announcements! Adjustments to the schedule and edits/clarifications to topics discussed in class will be posted there.
- Things happen; that's life. If there are some majorly overwhelming things happening during your semester, send me a message and even schedule a live virtual meeting with me. We'll work together to figure out what steps we should take in hopes of wrapping up successfully wrapping up the course.

"Every student can learn, just not on the same day, or the same way." –George Evans