

SPM499: Senior Research Seminar

Fall 2017: Mondays, 1:30–4:20pm

Section A (Prof. Waller): Harris 236 // Section B (Prof. Rottman): Harris 137

Professor Robyn Repko Waller

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Office Hours: Tuesdays, 10:00–11:30 & Wednesdays, 2:00–4:30pm (or by appointment)

Course Description

Intensive research and writing on a topic of the student's choice carried on in a seminar setting. Includes several oral presentations by each student.

Course Objectives

By the end of the semester (provided regular attendance, active participation in class discussions, assiduous completion of all assignments, and adherence to all other class policies), you will attain and cultivate the skills needed to achieve the following objectives:

- Deepen an ability to identify and apply connections between psychology and philosophy.
- Learn to identify gaps in the current state of knowledge and formulate novel, appropriate research questions.
- Gain proficiency in writing interdisciplinary research papers.

Required Texts

- Pinker, S. (2015). *The sense of style: The thinking person's guide to writing in the 21st century*. New York: Penguin.
- All other required readings are available as hyperlinks or PDF files on the Canvas course website.

Recommended Texts

- Papineau, D. (2012). *Philosophical devices: Proofs, probabilities, possibilities, and sets*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Pelham, B. W., & Blanton, H. (2013). *Conducting research in psychology: Measuring the weight of smoke* (4th ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.
- Other relevant resources can be found by searching the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, Google Scholar, PsycINFO, and PhilPapers.

Course Requirements and Grading

You will be assessed by your performance on the following assignments (1,000 points total):

Attendance & participation	Progress log	Paper outline	Paper draft	Peer review	Final paper	Oral presentation	Oral exam
150 pts.	25 pts.	50 pts.	175 pts.	50 pts.	400 pts.	100 pts.	50 pts.

Letter grades will be assigned as follows (decimals will be rounded to the nearest whole number):

A 93–100	A- 90–92	B+ 87–89	B 83–86	B- 80–82	C+ 77–79
C 73–76	C- 70–72	D+ 67–69	D 63–66	D- 60–62	F 0–59

Attendance and Participation

This class requires active engagement and consistently pulling your weight in contributing to the success of your peers. Therefore, attendance is mandatory, and it is absolutely crucial that you come to every class prepared to make progress on your research project and to help your peers to make progress on research of their own. You are expected to be punctual and to bring all assigned readings to class with you. If you have a valid reason for being absent or late, it is your responsibility to immediately notify your professor.

The hands-on, product-driven nature of this course necessitates that class meetings are structured somewhat differently than what you have become accustomed to in other courses. Even though you will be working on an independent project throughout the semester, you will work in collaboration with your classmates to improve the quality of your project and the quality of theirs. For this course to be most productive, many class meetings will involve working through specific issues tailored to each student's research project. In some cases, you will be helping other students, and in other cases you will be benefitting from others in brainstorming, troubleshooting, and moving forward in achieving goals at each step of the research process. Please respect a diversity of opinions and questions, and remain constructive and considerate in your interactions.

You are required to meet one-on-one with your professor for 30 minutes on a weekly or bi-weekly basis, during which you will discuss your current struggles and received individualized feedback. The more you prepare for this meeting, the more productive it will be.

Written and Oral Assignments

Progress Log

You will be required to keep a running log of decisions you make with respect to your research project. This should take the form of a Google Doc or Sheet that you will share with your professor so that feedback can be continually provided throughout the semester. Be sure to update your progress log at least 12 hours in advance of each weekly meeting with your professor.

Paper Outline

This initial outline of your research paper, due on 10/2, should include a thesis statement and bullet points describing the relevant background literature. If you are proposing an empirical research project, you should additionally include some ideas about the methodology. If you are proposing a theoretical research project, you should instead include a first pass of your criticisms of the target work. You must include a reference list with 10 or more papers that have served as inspiration for your research. The full outline should be at least 1,000 words (not including references).

Research Paper

Your primary assignment in this course is to produce a 5,000 word paper. This will be submitted in several stages (for details, see the Semester Schedule). You will be graded on the draft that you submit on 11/13 and the final paper that you submit on 12/15. This paper should take the form of either: (1) a philosophical critique of research in psychological science, (2) a philosophically motivated empirical research proposal, or (3) any other interdisciplinary combination of philosophy and psychology.

Peer Review

A major component of the research process involves submitting one's work to be assessed by colleagues. Nearly all articles that are published in reputable academic journals undergo a rigorous process of peer review. Reviewers are expected to evaluate manuscripts at multiple levels, from basic mechanics (e.g., grammar, clarity) to more essential points (e.g., interpretation of data, novelty of hypotheses, exhaustiveness of literature review). In order to practice this aspect of research and to provide helpful feedback to your peers, you will review a classmate's draft between 10/30 and 11/6.

Oral Presentation

Presenting work orally is a crucial element of disseminating research to broad audiences. To provide you with practice with this component of the research process, you will be required to orally present your findings in a 5–10 minute talk at the SPM Research Symposium during the evening of 12/4.

Oral Exam

The week before the oral presentation, your weekly meeting with your professor will involve a question-and-answer session in which you will be asked about various aspects of your research project. You will be evaluated on your ability to think deeply about your chosen topic, to respond to possible critiques, and to make broader connections to cognitive science or moral psychology.

Course Policies

Grading Policy

You will have the opportunity to submit assignments multiple times. You may submit a draft of any written assignment 72 hours in advance in order to receive feedback and a preliminary grade. Additionally, you may submit one rewrite of any assignment up to two weeks after receiving a grade and comments. Your grade on the assignment will then be updated in accordance with the quality of the final submission.

If you receive a grade that is inconsistent with what you believe you should have earned, you have a week to set up an appointment to appeal your grade. When scheduling this appointment, you must submit a written statement explaining your case. All grades will be considered final after a week has passed, unless you decide to submit a rewrite.

Policy on Late Assignments

You will lose 5% for every day that an assignment is late. In extreme cases when unexpected and unavoidable circumstances prevent you from completing an assignment on time (e.g., officially sanctioned university business, observance of religious holidays, jury duty, family emergencies, hospitalization), please inform your professor as soon as possible, and s/he will use her/his discretion to determine whether to waive the grade deduction. Late penalties will be carried over to resubmissions of graded work.

Policy on Electronic Devices

In order to maximize your success and minimize the possibility for distractions, you should only use electronic devices during times when they are necessary (e.g., working on manuscripts during class, conducting literature searches). Exceptions will be granted for students with compelling reasons for using a laptop to take notes (if this is the case, please speak with your professor privately).

Academic Integrity

We take academic honesty **very** seriously. You risk severe consequences by committing acts of plagiarism (i.e., representing someone else's work as your own), cheating, falsification, impersonating, or other similar offenses, including facilitating another student in committing an act of academic dishonesty. Penalties for these offenses will be carefully assessed on a case-by-case basis, and may include receiving a failing grade in the course or expulsion from F&M. Please refer to the Franklin & Marshall College Catalog for additional details.

Academic Accommodations

Academic accommodations are available for students who require them. Please schedule an appointment with your professor immediately to discuss any accommodations for this course that have been supported by appropriate documentation and approved by the Office of Student Accessibility Services. All information will be kept confidential.

Other Tips

This class will be intensive. You will be expected to consistently keep up with the required work, which may require extensive outside time during certain points in the semester. However, the professors are here to help you succeed. Prof. Rottman and Prof. Waller will be available to talk in their offices during the times listed at the top of the syllabus, by appointment, and anytime when their doors are open. If any issues arise that have the potential to interfere with your success in the course, please be in touch with your professor as soon as possible. Additionally, please feel free to take advantage of the many other resources that Franklin & Marshall has to offer! For example, the Writing Center (located on the second level of Diagnothian Hall) can assist you with writing and other academic skills, and Counseling Services (located in College Square) offers free initial consultations and emergency visits to support your wellbeing, with walk-ins every afternoon after 3pm. Librarians will also be a crucial resource for this course.

Semester Schedule

Components of this schedule are subject to change.

Date	Class Topic	Assignments (to be completed before each class)
9/4	Philosophy, psychology, and interdisciplinary research	Assigned Reading: None.
9/11	Narrowing down your thesis	Assigned Readings: (1) Hajek, A. (2017). Philosophy tool kit. <i>Aeon</i> . (2) McGuire, W. J. (1997). Creative hypothesis generating in psychology: Some useful heuristics. <i>Annual Review of Psychology</i> , 48, 1–30. Assignment Submission: Brainstorm of ten possible thesis statements.
9/18	Literature searches in the sciences and humanities	Assigned Readings: (1) www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/reading.html (2) QALMRI instructions. Adapted from Kosslyn, S. M. & Rosenberg, R. S. (2001). <i>Psychology: The brain, the person, the world</i> . Boston: Allyn & Bacon. Assignment Submission: Find ten papers relevant to your area of interest.
9/25	Conceptual analysis, operationalization, and measurement	Assigned Readings: (1) Spector, P. E. (1992). <i>Summated rating scale construction: An introduction</i> (pp. 1–9). Newbury, Park, CA: Sage Publications. (2) Knobe, J. (2016). Experimental philosophy is cognitive science. In <i>A companion to experimental philosophy</i> (pp. 37–52). Assignment Submission: First draft of paper outline.
10/2	Article presentations	Assigned Reading: Begin readings for October 16. Assignment Submission: Final draft of paper outline; article presentation.
10/9	No class (Fall Break)	
10/16	Writing argumentative and empirical papers	Assigned Readings: (1) Pinker (pp. 1–26). (2) Bem, D. J. (2004). Writing the empirical journal article. In <i>The Compleat Academic</i> (pp. 185–219). (3) Waller, B. N. (2005). Chapter 1. In <i>Coffee and Philosophy</i> . Pearson. (4) www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/writing.html Assignment Submission: Rough draft of paper introduction.
10/23	Tips and techniques for scientific and philosophical writing	Assigned Readings: (1) Pinker (pp. 27–56). (2) Waller, R. R. (forthcoming). Science of free will: Neuroscience. In <i>Blackwell Companion to Free Will</i> . (3) Goodwin, G. P., & Darley, J. M. (2008). The psychology of meta-ethics: Exploring objectivism. <i>Cognition</i> , 106(3), 1339–1366. Assignment Submission: Updated draft of paper.

10/30	Peer review and offering constructive feedback	<p>Assigned Readings: (1) Pinker (pp. 57–76). (2) Roberts, L. W., et al. (2004). How to review a manuscript: A “down-to-earth” approach. <i>Academic Psychiatry</i>, 28, 81–87. (3) Moher, D., & Jadad, A. R. (2003). How to peer review a manuscript. <i>Peer review in health sciences</i> (pp. 183–190). Assignment Submission: Polished draft of paper.</p>
11/6	Revision	<p>Assigned Reading: Pinker (pp. 139–169). Assignment Submission: Peer review of classmates’ drafts.</p>
11/13	Polishing a paper; Using different formatting styles	<p>Assigned Reading: Pinker (pp. 170–186). Assignment Submission: Full draft of paper due.</p>
11/20	Presenting original research	<p>Assigned Videos: (1) http://bit.ly/1o1gzpe (2) http://bit.ly/1Jo863j (3) http://bit.ly/2wywcCa Assignment Submission: Draft of presentation.</p>
11/27	Practice run of oral presentations	<p>Assignment Submission: Polished presentation.</p>
12/4	<p>No class</p> <p>SPM RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM: 4:30pm – 7:30pm</p>	