

HOW TO AVOID UNNECESSARY POINT LOSS FOR YOUR PSY 310 UDWR PAPER

Have a good start. Make sure you settle on your research topic **EARLY** in the semester. Talk to your instructor and to ensure your research topic is realistic and appropriate for the class.

SIMPLE is better! Keep your research topic easy. Avoid complicated designs with multiple variables and multiple points of measurement. Have few, clear predictions and a straight-forward way of testing them. Your paper will be more manageable if you keep your study simple. You do not have to solve the world's greatest mysteries- often the most basic questions turn out to be very interesting if you start looking at them in detail. Keep your more complex, ground breaking ideas for your Masters or Ph.D. thesis...

Hand in assignments ON TIME! You lose **ONE (1)** point for every 24 hours your assignment is late. Although they might not be perfect, it is better to hand in assignments **ON TIME**, instead of handing them in late.

Run SPELLING/GRAMMAR CHECK BEFORE you hand in your paper! Good spelling and grammatical correct sentences keep the instructor at a good mood, show you care and also save you from losing points.

Caution: Automated spelling checks do not replace a thorough pass over your paper!! Many words are spelled correctly, but they are not in the correct context! E.g. "There grade point average increased (...)"

Make sure your paper is FORMATTED in CURRENT APA STYLE! These are easy points. Model the format of your paper after the examples in your textbook. **PAY ATTENTION TO THE DETAILS!**

Tables and Figures go AFTER the References! Don't lose points on your reference list! The reference list follows clear rules- make sure you take them into account. Format your references according to APA style and make sure you have an appropriate amount of references. Also, be sure to include all work you refer to in your paper in your reference list.

Show you are making progress! Take your instructor's previous comments into account before handing in the final paper. You usually receive points for making progress on your paper.

REVISING your previous sections is essential for receiving a good grade on your final paper and it also shows you have learned and improved in the course of the semester (this can make up for less than perfect overall quality of your paper).

Come to meetings! If your instructor schedules an individual meeting with you, make sure you take this appointment seriously. Come to your appointed meeting **ON TIME**, and be prepared! Missing your individual meeting casts a very bad light on your motivation in class and will not encourage your instructor go out of her/his way to help you in future. You might also receive attendance points for showing up.

DO NOT PLAGIARIZE! With the up-to-date plagiarism detection software we use, you have **NO CHANCE** of getting away with plagiarizing. Plagiarism includes using the writing of other students as well as internet sources and published work.

TALK with your instructor! Most instructors are resourceful and very motivated to help you succeed in class. However, you have to let them know if you are having problems and what your problems are. **Do NOT** approach your instructor last minute. Anticipate difficulties and talk to your instructor ahead of time.

HOW TO NOT BE SCARED OF 310

1. Take **DEADLINES** SERIOUSLY
 - a. Have a draft or at least some rough ideas on paper a week or latest a few days before the section of the paper is due
 - b. If there is a serious emergency issue meeting a deadline, communicate with your TA or professor beforehand
2. Keep in contact with **TA's**, AND the **Professor** regularly- they should know your name.
 - a. Show them your work BEFORE it is due in recitation, and fix would-be errors before being graded.
 - b. Well before exams, ask the Professor questions every few lectures concerning trouble topics. Even just stopping by after class with a quick question.
3. Avoid losing tiny points—They add up! Some common **mistakes**:
 - a. Double and triple check your **works cited**, every missing *comma* or *capitalization* can be a full or half a point on your grade!
 - b. Pay attention to what is necessary in **formatting** (i.e. Titles, page headers and footers, margins) on the final paper.
 - c. **Proofread ALL** to avoid grammatical errors! Not just SPELLCHECK.
 - d. If given a chance to **revise your paper**, TAKE IT. Do not be late or miss 1-on-1 **appointments** with your TA.
4. Do NOT let time pass by being confused; all topics build up on each other.
 - a. If you **disagree** with your TA on something graded in your paper, respectfully inquire about it and understand why, But **ALWAYS LISTEN** – they know best. Pride does not help to improve your grade, or pass the class.
 - b. Discuss past exams with professor and lecture TAs to prepare fully for the final.
5. **OVERALL**: It's a lot of work, stay focused.
 - a. Consider **the lecture material** (research methods) and the **lab, recitation portion** (writing Research Paper Proposal) **2 separate entities**- but they are related in content.
 - b. You have to keep deadlines on lecture exams and separately know when each part of the paper is due (it is like having 2 classes).
6. Know THAT it's **EASY** if you stick to the follow steps. Highly manageable and a **GPA booster** if you pay attention and keep up, little by little.

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