Alternative to Research Participation
PSYC273: Brain and Behavior
Due Wednesday, April 26th, 11:59 pm Central

Note: This assignment is an alternative to the research participation assignment. You will be given credit for one or the other, NOT BOTH.

Find two empirical research articles related to a topic covered in class. Both articles should be about the same topic (e.g., drug tolerance, circadian rhythms, short-term memory). These should be articles that each discuss a specific study in detail, not a literature review. You can look at the articles posted on Canvas for ideas, but do not use any of those specifically. Alternatively, you can search specific terms on PsycINFO, a free resource you can access with your UNL credentials. If you use Google Scholar, be sure the source is from a credible psychological/related journal. You must send PDFs of your articles to Catie for approval.

Psycinfo: http://0-search.ebscohost.com.library.unl.edu/login.asp?profile=psyinfo
Library Research Help: http://libraries.unl.edu/askus-1
UNL Writing Center: http://www.unl.edu/writing/home

Your paper should include a summary of each of the two articles and should address what they contribute to our understanding of the topic. How you choose to do that is up to you, but the questions below will help guide your reading and writing. You do not have to answer all of the questions. However, your paper should consist of more than just a string of answers. It should be a well-thought-out and organized reflection on what the studies found, how they found it, and what it means to the scientific community.

Questions to consider: What is the purpose of the study? Does the study build upon other findings? Does the study seek to disprove other findings? What question(s) do the authors try to answer? What do the authors hypothesize? Do the authors make any assumptions? Who were the participants? How many were there? How might the participant sample have affected the outcomes of the study? How did the authors test their hypotheses? What were the independent and dependent variables? Were there potential confounds? Did the authors make note of any confounds? What were the major findings? Do the results support the authors’ hypotheses? Do the authors make a fair conclusion based on their findings? Do the authors offer any alternative explanations? What does the study tell us that we didn’t know before? What questions are still unanswered? What further questions does the study raise? What was surprising to you? What was interesting or unexpected to you? How are the two articles’ approaches similar or different? Are the findings related? Are they contradictory, or are they in agreement? Does one study seem more credible to you than the other--why?

Note: Don’t get bogged down in the Results section if the statistics are confusing to you. Just try your best to get the main points—what hypotheses do the stats support? What don’t they support?

Turn in your paper and PDFs of the 2 articles on Canvas.
Grading Rubric

Content – 14 points
7 pts. paper summarizes both studies’ approaches, methods, and findings
7 pts. paper discusses if/how the findings contribute to our understanding of the topic

Style, Formatting, and Grammar – 6 points
2 pts. paper is in APA Style. This includes a title page, reference page, and proper in-text citations. http://www.apastyle.org/
1 pt. paper uses 11- or 12-point font and uses Arial, Times New Roman, Cambria, or Calibri
1 pt. paper is double-spaced and has standard margins no greater than 1” on all sides
1 pt. paper has few to no spelling or grammatical errors
1 pt. student turns in PDFs of both articles

Length
If your paper does not reach 3 pages, the percentage of length that is missing will be deducted from your final score. For example, if your paper is 2.5 pages, that’s only 83.33% of 3 pages, so a score of 20/20 on the paper would be knocked down to 16.67/20 (since 20 x .8333 = 16.67).

Academic Integrity
One way to avoid plagiarism is to read the article thoroughly, then put it aside and don’t look at it while you write the summary. Force yourself to come up with the words on your own. You can always double-check the details later. Never, ever, copy and paste anything onto your paper.

These papers must be written by individual students and must be original work. Plagiarism is academic dishonesty, and papers will be checked for evidence of plagiarism using an online utility. The UNL Student Code of Conduct can be found here http://stuafs.unl.edu/dos/code. Any student found guilty of academic dishonesty in this course will receive a Final Grade of “F”. Please don’t cheat!