

TIPS FOR CHOOSING A PSY 310 TOPIC

Think about your topic ahead of time

This step saves you time that can be better spent developing your project.

Choose more than one topic

Although you only need one topic for your paper, your first topic may be rejected by the instructor so have a backup topic just in case.

Find a topic that interests you

You will be spending an entire semester researching a topic. You will be more inclined to do great research on a topic that actually interests you.

Be realistic about the topic that you choose

Ideally, a researcher would have years to develop a research project. PSY 310 only lasts a limited amount of time so do not try to research too much or pioneer research with this paper.

Choose a topic in which there was previous research

It helps in PSY 310 that you have previous research to help guide you in your paper in terms of structure and content. This just makes your life so much easier. However, stay away from topics that have been overdone.

Choose a topic that can be used in different populations

(different race, gender, married vs. single, different socioeconomic backgrounds, etc.)

Devote time and effort to your topic

This class satisfies a core major requirement and your upper division writing requirement. Do it right the first time.

TIPS FOR FINDING RESOURCES FOR YOUR PSY 310 PROJECT

From the Stony Brook University website (www.stonybrook.edu)

- Click on Libraries at the very top and center of the page
- Under "Main Libraries" click on Frank Melville Jr. Memorial Library
- Under "Online Resources" click on Databases

From this page, you can look for journal articles through any database based on either subject or title. Here is a list of helpful databases for this class:

- WilsonWeb
- PsycARTICLES
- PsycINFO
- Academic Search Premier
- Ebsco Online

HOW TO AVOID POINT LOSS IN PSY 310

- **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.**
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- **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...
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- **Hand in assignments ON TIME!** You loose 1 point for every 24 hours late. It can be **better to hand in assignments on time, even if they are not perfect, instead of handing them in late.**
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- **Run a spelling and 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 loosing 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 (...)"
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- **Make sure your paper is formatted in APA style!** These are easy points. Model the format of your paper after the **examples in your textbook.** Be aware of the details! **Tables and Figures go AFTER the references!**
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- **Don't loose 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.**
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- **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).
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- **Come to meetings!** If your instructor schedules an individual meeting with you, make sure you take this appointment seriously. **Come to your 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.
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- **DO NOT PLAGIARIZE!** With the now installed **plagiarism detection software** you have **NO CHANCE** to get away with it. **Plagiarism includes using other students' work as well as internet sources and published work.**
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- **Talk to 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.**