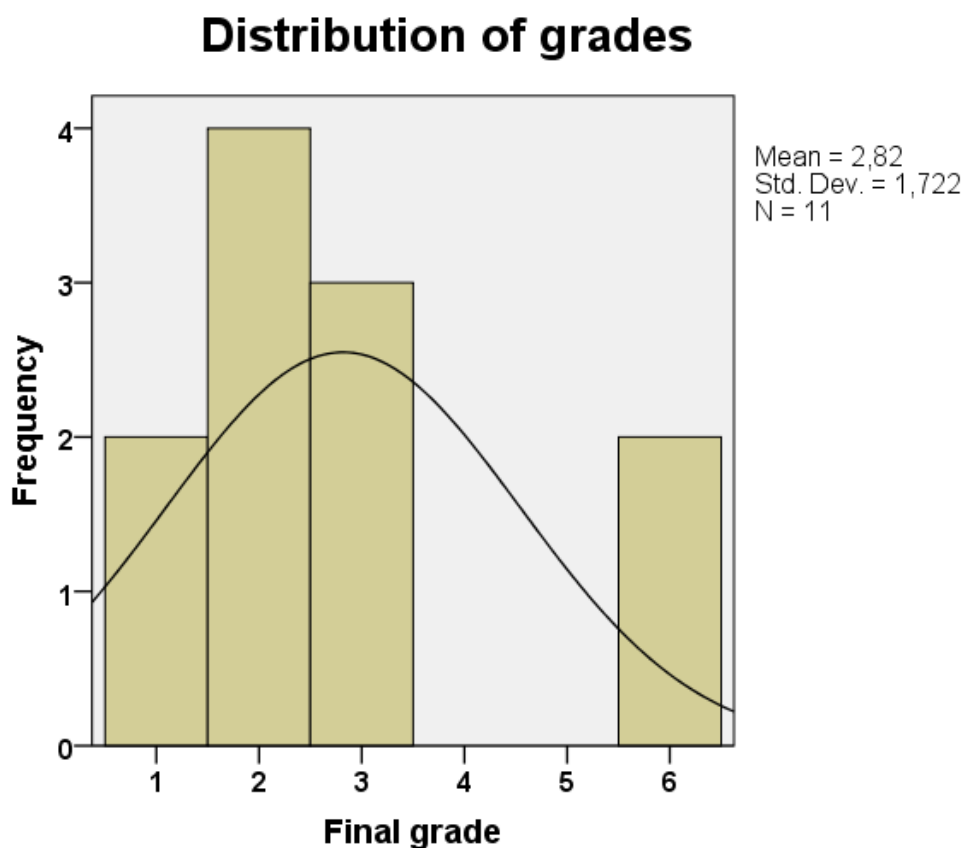


“PSY-3005 Attitudes” exam Autumn 2017: Grading and results

The exam for "PSY-3005 Attitudes" was a home essay. The students' instructions for how to *write* the essay were also the examiners' guidelines for how to *evaluate* it (see Appendix B). The examination committee comprised one internal examiner (the course teacher) and one external examiner (a psychologist who is not employed by the University of Tromsø; this examiner is a native speaker of Norwegian). The committee received the exams in an anonymous form, namely with candidate numbers written onto them instead of the student names. The examiners graded all exams using the written guidelines plus the university's general grading scale that defines the meaning of each grade verbally (see Appendix A). They did this independently first; then they held a conference where they determined the final grades.



Note. 1="A", 2="B", ... , 6="F". Twelve students were registered for the exam, but only 11 essays were available for grading. The mean ($M = 2.82$) corresponds to an average grade of slightly better than "C".

Inter-rater agreement

The two examiners first graded all essays separately, “blind” to the opinion of the other examiner. These *independent* ratings (from before the grading conference) were very similar to each other. On average they differed by circa half a grade.

Paired Samples Statistics

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Pair 1	Examiner 1	2,45	11	1,86
	Examiner 2	3,00	11	1,73

Still, the difference was marginally significant, $p < .09$, two-tailed. This effect was “driven” by one single essay (in case you wonder: that was essay no. 13, so most likely not yours). For all other essays, the independent ratings were identical (7 essays) or exactly one grade from each other (3 essays). With this knowledge it is then not surprising that the two examiners’ independent ratings also showed near-perfect correlation, both with each other ($r = .87$) and with the finally agreed grades ($r_s \geq .93$).

Correlations

		Examiner 2	Final grade
Examiner 1	Pearson Correlation	,87	,93
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,001	,000
	N	11	11
Examiner 2	Pearson Correlation		,97
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,000
	N		11

Overall, then, the grading process was highly reliable, leading to repeatable results.

Appendix A: The university's general grading scale

NORWEGIAN:

Bokstavkaraktertrinnene gis følgende betegnelse og generell, kvalitativ beskrivelse:

Symbol	Betegnelse	Generell, kvalitativ beskrivelse av vurderingskriterier
A	Fremragende	Fremragende prestasjon som klart utmerker seg. Kandidaten viser svært god vurderingsevne og stor grad av selvstendighet.
B	Meget god	Meget god prestasjon. Kandidaten viser meget god vurderingsevne og selvstendighet.
C	God	Jevnt god prestasjon som er tilfredsstillende på de fleste områder. Kandidaten viser god vurderingsevne og selvstendighet på de viktigste områdene.
D	Nokså god	En akseptabel prestasjon med noen vesentlige mangler. Kandidaten viser en viss grad av vurderingsevne og selvstendighet.
E	Tilstrekkelig	Prestasjonen tilfredsstillende minimumskravene, men heller ikke mer. Kandidaten viser liten vurderingsevne og selvstendighet.
F	Ikke bestått	Prestasjon som ikke tilfredsstillende de faglige minimumskravene. Kandidaten viser både manglende vurderingsevne og selvstendighet.

ENGLISH:

The above-mentioned letter grades (from A-F) have the following designations and general qualitative descriptions:

Symbol	Designation	General, qualitative descriptions of the assessment criteria
A	Excellent	An excellent performance, clearly outstanding. The candidate demonstrates excellent judgement and a very high degree of independent thinking.
B	Very good	A very good performance. The candidate demonstrates sound judgement and a high degree of independent thinking.
C	Good	A good performance in most areas. The candidate demonstrates a reasonable degree judgement and independent thinking.
D	Satisfactory	A satisfactory performance, but with significant shortcomings. The candidate demonstrates a limited degree of judgement and independent thinking.
E	Sufficient	A performance that meets the minimum criteria, but no more. The candidate demonstrates a very limited degree of judgement and independent thinking.
F	Fail	A performance that does not meet the minimum academic criteria. The candidate demonstrates an absence of both judgement and independent thinking.

Appendix B: The specific student and examiner guidelines for this course

(see the next three pages)

PSY-3005 Attitudes H2017:

Examiner guidelines

“PSY-3005 Attitudes” is an English-taught course in the Masters program Psychology. The Autumn-2017 class included many students from study programs other than psychology, as well as international exchange students.

Before being allowed to submit an essay, all students had to successfully complete the following pass/fail-evaluated coursework:

- an individual, formal presentation to the class (ca. 15 minutes), plus ...
- a minimum of seven written homework assignments (ca. ½ page each).

Although that was a considerable amount of work for the students, the study transcript will later show only the grade for the essay (A to F).

The students received detailed instructions for how to write their essay. These are shown on the next two pages. **The students’ instructions shall also be the guidelines for the examination process.**

If there are any questions, then please contact me: frank.siebler@uit.no

Two pages with the students’ instructions follow =>

PSY-3005 Ten-page home essay: Student instructions

Elements: You need all of the following (everything in APA style):

- A cover-page with the essay's title, your anonymous candidate number, the course code (PSY-3005), the university and department names, and the current semester
- A circa ¼ page abstract, on a page of its own
- 10 pages of text (normal margins, line-spacing 1.5; 1-2 useful figures or diagrams are welcome, but do not count as text) (*Less than 9 pages or more than 15 pages or stretching a too-short text body to 10 pages with generous formatting = "Fail"*)
- References list
- **NOTE:** The text body of the core essay shall have ten pages. Cover-page, abstract, and references list do **not** count for the requested ten pages of text.

Suggested structure of the 10 pages: Recommended, but not binding:

- Introduction (ca 2 pages)
- Theory Part A (ca 3-4 pages)
- Theory Part B (ca 3-4 pages)
- Discussion (ca 2 pages)

In the Introduction, give a preview / an overview / a roadmap of the rest of your essay (it is easiest if you write the Introduction after everything else is done). In Theory Part A, describe one important theory or measurement method or line of research, together with relevant example studies. In Theory Part B, describe a theoretical advancement, together with relevant example studies (f. ex., important critique that has been raised against the theory or method from Part A, or a later refinement that shows that the theory from Part A "works" but only under certain conditions, or a newer theory or method that aims to replace the one from Part A completely). In the Discussion, summarize your Parts A and B, then draw your conclusions (f. ex., is the critique really convincing [why / why not]; is the new theory really better [why / why not]).

Examples:

- *Part A:* The ELM as an important persuasion theory; *Part B:* the HSM as an improvement over the ELM.
- *Part A:* ELM and HSM as dual-process models of persuasion; *Part B:* the Unimodel as a single-process model that aims to replace them both.
- *Part A:* The Implicit Association Test (IAT) as a measure of prejudice that people don't want to admit or are not even aware of; *Part B:* Critique against the IAT.
- *Part A:* Early research on cognitive dissonance as a cause of attitude change; *Part B:* later research that clarified under what conditions cognitive dissonance does versus does not cause attitude change.

You can freely choose any attitude-related theories and methods that were covered in the course. Completely new attitude-related theories and methods are also possible, but must be agreed with me (F. Siebler) beforehand, to avoid unpleasant surprises.

Contents:

PSY-3005 is a course at the Masters level.

You shall not simply take the keywords from the seminar Powerpoint files and reformulate them into full sentences. You also shall not limit yourself to the short, second-hand descriptions of studies from the course textbook (instead, download and read the original research articles).

You shall tell a two-part theoretical story in your own words (e.g., "Theory X is in widespread use, but recently the newer theory Y has been suggested as a better alternative"). You shall back up both parts of the story with empirical evidence (e.g., "To demonstrate this, the authors set up an experiment where they ... The results of that experiment were ... These findings demonstrate that ..."). You shall draw your own, justified conclusions from the material that you have presented (e.g., "There are some differences in the terminology. However, the new theory appears to make exactly the same predictions as the old theory. Therefore, ...").