

# Research Proposal

Suggestions and guidelines

# Topic

- A problem of theoretical interest to field of personality
- Of interest to you!
- Can be straight correlational, prefer if experimental with an individual difference parameter

# Requirements

- Systematic review of the literature
  - What is the current understanding of the problem?
  - What has been done before
  - What problems have been detected
- Proposed research technique
  - Method and procedure
- Expected results (how to analyze them)
  - What are they expected to be if your hypothesis is right
  - What are some of the alternatives

# Proposal Requirements (detail)

- Abstract
- Introduction
  - Literature review
  - Hypothesis
- Methods and Procedure
  - What is to be done
  - What instruments will be used
  - Who are the subjects

# Proposal Requirements (continued)

- Expected Results
  - How will the data be analyzed
  - What do you expect to find if your hypothesis is correct
    - (Include a graph of expected results)
  - What are alternative possible results
- Discussion
  - What would the results mean if they turn out the way you expect

# Searching the Literature

- Science does not occur in a vacuum
  - Current research reflects the contributions of previous studies
  - “I can see so far only because I stand on the shoulders of giants” (Newton)
- Published results have been reviewed by peers and judged to make significant contributions

# Searching the Literature

- Read current articles in reputable journals
- Search for articles based upon keywords in their abstracts (PsychInfo)
- Search for articles based upon the previous work they cite (Social Science Citation Index as found in Web of Science)

# Journals

- Not all journals are equal
  - Quality of peer review
  - Breadth of distribution
- General APA, APS journals
  - Psychological Review
  - Psychological Bulletin
  - Psychological Science
- Field specific
  - Journal of Personality and Social Psychology
  - Journal of Experimental Psychology



# Personality Journals

- General
  - Annual Review of Psychology
  - Psychological Review
  - Psychological Bulletin
  - Psychological Science
- Personality Specific
  - Journal of Personality and Social Psychology
  - Journal of Personality
  - Journal of Research in Personality
  - Personality and Individual Differences
  - European Journal of Personality

# Searching the Abstracts

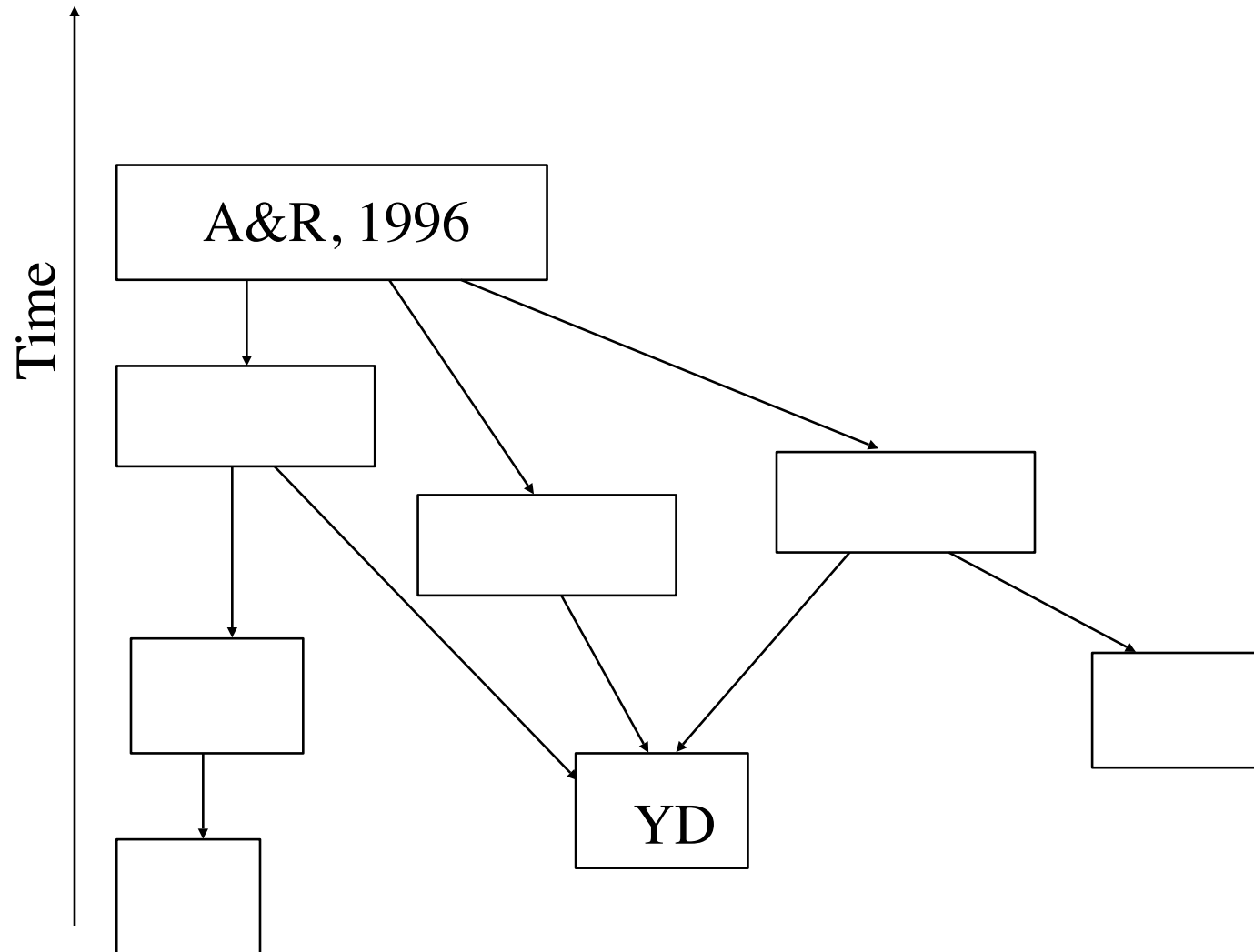
- Examples from Psych Info (<http://gateway.ovid.com/ovidweb.cgi?T=JS&MODE=ovid&PAGE=main&D=psych>) (need to be logged in at NU)
- Boolean logic allows for complex searches
- A and (B or C)
- Example search for terms
- See the very helpful handout from the reference library at  
–[http://www.library.northwestern.edu/reference/instructional\\_services/class\\_pages/psych398.html](http://www.library.northwestern.edu/reference/instructional_services/class_pages/psych398.html)

# Example of Psych Info

Find references to personality, arousal, and cognitive performance

	Search Term	Number of Hits
1	Physiological Arousal	12928
2	Personality	131460
4	1 and 2	1261
6	Cognition	4807
8	Memory	22443
9	1 and 8	288
10	9 and 2	24

# Literature searching by articles



# Literature searching by citations

