PSY 5133 RESEARCH METHODS IN CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY

Thursdays, 11:30-2:30; Winter 2010
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The course is designed to increase familiarity with the general principles of psychological research design as they pertain to research conducted with clinical samples or on clinically relevant topics. We will cover experimental, quasi-experimental, and correlational research designs. Additionally, we will discuss specific methodological issues that arise in designing studies and making measurement and sampling decisions. Over the term, we will review issues related to internal and external validity, the generalizability of research, meta-analysis, and the clinical significance and clinical application of research results.

Throughout the course, the emphasis will be on the application of sound methodological principles to concrete research problems. Each class will focus on a specific methodological design or domain, and the readings will provide a general background on the topic. For most classes, at least one of the readings will provide an empirical example of the design or domain. For students who require greater depth in reading on a given topic, a list of further readings is provided in addition to the list of required readings. (This should be particularly helpful in developing the required research proposal for the course and for expanding your knowledge of methodological issues relevant to your dissertation work.)

Accurately recognizing the impact of human diversity on psychological phenomena is critical in the planning and interpretation of research. Accordingly, many of the readings assigned as empirical examples of a research domain or design include some aspects of human diversity (e.g., age, gender, ethnicity, and sexual orientation). In addition, classes focused on measurement and sampling considerations address a range of diversity issues in detail in order to sensitize students to the myriad ways in which diversity affects the valid conduct of empirical investigations.

There are 5 components involved in the evaluation of students in the course:

A. Students must submit, by the beginning of class on March 4, a detailed methodological critique (approximately 8 manuscript pages, double-spaced) of an empirical article. Students should select 1 of the 2 articles provided by the instructor to critique. This paper is worth 20% of the final mark.

B. Students must submit, by the beginning of class on March 25, a quantitative research proposal on a topic of their choice (previously approved by the instructor). The proposal (approximately 20 manuscript pages, double-spaced, excluding references and appendices) should present a brief review of the relevant literature, the hypotheses to be investigated, the research design (including measures, subjects, and procedure), and a brief description of planned
statistical analyses. Appendices should include copies of measures, coding manuals, or other material necessary to conduct the research (if readily available). As the focus of this course is on methodology, the literature review section of the proposal should be relatively brief (e.g., 4-5 pages).

In most instances, this document should be a preliminary version of your planned thesis work. For those of you who have already defended your thesis proposal, the paper cannot be your thesis proposal. This paper is worth 40% of the final mark. Please submit 2 copies of the paper— one electronic copy sent to my email address and one paper copy submitted in class. The graded paper will be returned on April 8.

C. Students must submit, by the beginning of class on April 8, methodological critiques of a research proposal submitted by another member of the class. The critique should be briefer than the one described in A (approximately 6 manuscript pages each, double-spaced). This paper is worth 15% of the final mark. Please submit 2 copies of each critique— one electronic copy sent to my email address and one paper copy submitted in class (1 for the instructor and 1 for the author of the research proposal).

D. A revised research proposal must be submitted by noon on April 19— sent to my email address. Please take into account the comments made by the 2 reviewers (the instructor and the student) when making your comments. Please include a cover letter indicating how you addressed the comments from the 2 reviewers. The revised paper is worth 25% of your final mark.

E. A letter grade based upon the marks for all assignments will be determined by the instructor. This letter grade will be adjusted by as much as one grade increment based on class participation (e.g., an A- based on the assignments could, depending on class participation, result in a final mark of B+, A-, or A).

Required Text:


The required book is available at the university bookstore. Additionally, for each class, there will be supplemental required readings (provided to you at the beginning of the term).
CLASS TOPIC AND READING LIST

January 7  Organizational meeting/Professional models and values

Chapter 1 Introduction: Science in the service of practice

Additional Resources


January 14  General issues in research design and analysis

Chapter 4 Validity: Making inferences from research outcomes


Additional Resources


**January 21** Case studies, single subject designs, qualitative research

Chapter 7 Single subject designs


*Additional Resources*


**January 28 Quasi-experimental and experimental designs**

Chapter 5 Group designs


Weiss, B., Catron, T., Harris, V., & Phung, T. M. (1999). The effectiveness of traditional child

**Additional Resources**


**February 4 Advanced correlational designs**

Chapter 6 Correlational methods


**Additional Resources**


Streiner, D. L. (2002). Breaking up is hard to do: The heartbreak of dichotomizing continuous
data. *Canadian Journal of Psychiatry, 47*, 262-266.


**February 11 Measurement issues**

Chapter 2 Understanding measurement


**Additional Resources**


March 4  Sampling and sample size issues

Chapter 3 Sampling issues


Additional Resources


**March 11 Designing survey studies**


*Additional Resources*


**March 18  Issues in psychopathology research**


**Additional Resources**


**March 25 Issues in psychotherapy research**

Chapter 13 Effectiveness versus efficacy studies


Additional Resources

http://www.consort-statement.org/

http://www.ebbp.org/randomized_controlled_trials/launcher.htm?
(Evidence-Based Behavioral Practice website, training module on Randomized Controlled Trials)


Oxford University Press.


**April 1** Meta-analysis and clinical research

Chapter 9 Meta-analysis

[http://www.ebbp.org/systematic_review/launcher.htm?](http://www.ebbp.org/systematic_review/launcher.htm?)

(Evidence-Based Behavioral Practice website, training module on Introduction to Systematic Reviews)


Additional Resources


**April 8  Conducting research, from start to finish**

Chapter 11 Review the literature and evaluating existing data

Chapter 12 Planning data collection and performing analyses


**Additional Resources**


