CCP 570: Research Process and Techniques

Fall 2012

Wednesday, 5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.

CREDITS: 3

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Course Description: This course will provide a comprehensive overview of principles, concepts, methods, tools, and techniques used in counseling and psychotherapy research. Question formulation, hypothesis development, data collection methods, data analysis, and the interpretation of findings are addressed. The course will be augmented with topics such as: online literature searches, critical thinking, the research process, and ethical treatment of human subjects.

Knowledge, Value, and Skill Learning Objectives of the Course

Knowledge
1) Gain knowledge of basic research methodology
2) Understand research problem formulation and conceptualization
3) Learn about different data collection methods

Value
4) Discuss ethical concerns related to research
5) Recognize the value and importance of human research subject protections
6) Explore implications of research design

Skills
7) Utilize computer database searches to review the literature
8) Critique existing research
9) Interpret study findings

Respect for Diversity, Confidentiality, and Fellow Students: Discussing patients, clinical material, and patients’ impact on clinicians can be intense; students are expected to be sensitive to their colleagues’ during class discussions, and to protect confidentiality of clinicians and their patients. In addition, students are expected to be respectful of the opinions of others while at the same time striving to support the values of clinical counseling.

Students with Special Needs: Students with special needs or difficulties in learning and completing courses assignments are strongly encouraged to notify instructors as soon as possible so that appropriate resources and accommodations can be provided.

Student Evaluation and Grades: Classroom instructors grade students on their course work and submit written evaluative reports on the caliber of each student’s work. Practicum consultants/supervisors grade students and submit reports each semester evaluating their work. Students’ overall performance will be monitored each semester by the Student Progression Committee.

Grading: The purpose of grading is to provide a learning tool for students, i.e., to provide feedback on progress, strengths and weaknesses, and issues that need to be addressed.

Grading Standards
Grades are assigned according to the following standards:
A Superior Work 4.0 value
Grading Decision

A
90-100 pts Superior Work evidenced by assignments and class participation that reflect outstanding understanding of class materials, consistent demonstration of critical and analytical skills, and creativity.

B
80-89 pts Satisfactory Work evidenced by assignments and class participation that reflect essential understanding of class materials and frequent demonstration of critical and analytical skills.

C
70-79 pts Marginal Work evidenced by assignments and class participation that reflect some understanding of class materials and occasional demonstration of critical and analytical skills.

F
< 60 pts Failure evidenced by assignments and class participation that reflect insufficient understanding of class materials and limited critical and analytical skills.

• Grades will be calculated as (Total Number of Assignment Points)/100
• **A grade of INC (incomplete) requires the instructor’s written approval. Incomplete grades should be reserved for extenuating circumstances. If an incomplete grade is given, the student must finish any work required to complete the course requirements by the end of the semester. If the course is not completed by this deadline, the student automatically receives an F (Fail) grade for the course.

Papers:
• Papers should include the following elements: 12-point Times New Roman or Arial font, with 1” margin, numbered pages, a cover page, and a reference page if sources are cited. Points will be deducted from assignments that are not formatted according to the current APA citation style and formatting guidelines (including the cover and reference pages). Papers should also make ample use of headings and subheadings.
• All papers submitted for class requirements are to conform to the style guide in the “Institute for Clinical Social Work Style Manual,” which is located on the ICSW website in the academic resources section
  /_resources/ICSW%20Style%20Manual%2020%20Apr%202009.pdf
• Insofar as is practicable, ICSW style follows the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, commonly referred to as the “APA style manual.” A handout on APA citation style 6th edition is available in the Robert Morris University Library website, which is located in the APA Guide section
  http://www.robertmorris.edu/library/webresources/courseresources/APAStyleCitationHandout6ed.pdf
• **Additionally, the Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL) has many examples and paper format guidelines (including information on the mechanics of writing, correct grammar, and proper punctuation)
  http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/
• It is recommended to submit assignments electronically over email or the BlackBaud system; however, assignments can be submitted in paper form at the beginning of the class held on the due date.
• Late assignments will be dropped one letter grade every subsequent week after the due date.

Academic Dishonesty: Any student who engages in academic dishonesty, which includes giving or receiving unauthorized aid to any assignment or examination, plagiarism or tampering with grades or irregularities shall be subject to disciplinary action. Such action may include a failing grade in the course, suspension, or dismissal from the program.

Students are expected to review the OWL website regarding quoting, paraphrasing, and summarizing:
Plagiarism Policy: When plagiarism is suspected, students may be asked to submit their papers electronically to a third party plagiarism detection service. If a student is asked to submit the paper and refuses to do so, the student must provide proof that all work is correctly cited and/or original.

Readings: Students are required to read all assigned material and should be prepared to discuss the reading material assigned for each class.

Class Attendance and Participation: Active discussion of the ideas contained in the readings and lectures as well as class attendance and participation in class exercises are central to the success of this course. Excessive absences (more than a total of TWO classes) may result in a lowered grade. Students must notify the instructor in advance by email if you will not be attending class.

Required Textbooks:


*Earlier or later editions of this textbook may be used with the understanding that the student is responsible for locating assigned readings.

Course Assignments: Grades will be based on four criteria: a mid-term exam (30%), a final exam (30%), 12 weekly reaction papers (30%), and class participation (10%).

Reaction Papers: Reaction papers on assigned readings are due before the start of class (e.g., the Class 2 Reaction Paper is due on the day of Class 2). Students may submit only one reaction paper per week, they cannot submit reaction papers ahead of time or retroactively, and are expected to keep track of how many reaction papers they have previously submitted. Students can select the dates they submit their reaction paper as long as the number of weekly reaction papers equals ten by the date of the last class. If students submit less than twelve reaction papers, they will receive a grade of 0 points for each missing reaction paper. Reaction papers should be an APA citation style formatted, single typed page, double spaced, with a cover page (and potentially a reference page) that summarizes a research article assigned for that week and contains at least three questions and at least one critical comment in bold type which the student is prepared to discuss in class.

WEEKLY COURSE SCHEDULE

Class 1
Introduction to Research
• Review of Syllabus & Assignments
• Practice: The distinguishing characteristic of social research
• Critical thinking
• Evidence-informed vs authority-based practice
• Understanding parts of a research article

Readings:
No required readings

Class 2
Discussion of Published Research

Select three of the papers located at the end of this syllabus. Be prepared to share and discuss information about the research questions addressed, problem formulation, any ethical concerns, measurement issues, study design, sampling, data analysis, application to practice/policy of your selected paper, and any concerns you may have about the study. Ask questions in class if there are any aspects of the paper you do not understand. Please note that your understanding about this paper will deepen as we learn more throughout the course and this preliminary discussion is considered to be an introduction to the research process rather than a graded assignment.

Class 3
Scientific Inquiry and Social Research
• Philosophy and Theory in Science and Research
• On-Line Literature Search Procedures
• Concepts and hypotheses
• Theories
• Causality

Readings:
Monette DR, Sullivan TJ, DeJong CR (2010), Ch. 1: Research in the human services [pp. 1-17]; Ch.2: The logic of social research [pp. 19-48]


Class 4
The Ethics, Politics and Cultural Context of Social Research
• Values, ethics, and the protection of human subjects.
• The minority experience and the need for ethical standards.
• Codes of ethics.
• Local protection for human subjects.
• Research and social justice.

Readings:
Monette DR, Sullivan TJ, DeJong CR (2010), Ch. 3: Ethical issues in social research [pp. 49-75]


Class 5
Problem Formulation
• Asking a researchable question
• Selecting, shaping and refining research problems
• Feasibility of research
• Community involvement in research problems

Readings:
Monette DR, Sullivan TJ, DeJong CR (2010), Ch.4: Issues in problem formulation [pp. 76-102]


Class 6
Measurement I
• Levels of measurement
• Discrete and continuous variables
• Measurement error
• Validity and reliability of measures

Readings:
Monette DR, Sullivan TJ, DeJong CR (2010), Ch. 5: The process of measurement [pp. 104-133]


Psychiatry, 190, 248-254.

**Class 7**
Measurement II
• Constructing scales
• Scale formats
• Scale bias

Readings:


**Class 8**
Take Home Midterm Examination & Class Review
• Midterm Evaluation

**Class 9**
Single-system Evaluation Designs
• The clinical research approach
• Individual rating scales, paper and pencil tests, and existing data
• Designs
• Assessment of effects

Readings:
Monette DR, Sullivan TJ, DeJong CR (2010), Ch. 11: Single subject designs [pp. 291-318]


**Class 10**
Experimental Designs
• Correlation designs
• Experimental designs
• Quasi-experimental designs
• Internal and external validity

Readings:
Monette DR, Sullivan TJ, DeJong CR (2010), Ch. 10: Experimental research [pp. 259-290].


**Class 11**
Sampling
• Populations and their samples
• Probability and non probability samples

Readings:
Monette DR, Sullivan TJ, DeJong CR (2010), Ch. 6: Sampling [pp. 134-162]

Class 12
Survey Research
• Designing questions
• Questionnaires
• Interviews
• Online surveys

Readings:
Monette DR, Sullivan TJ, DeJong CR (2010), Ch. 7: Survey research [pp. 163-198]
Bledsoe, S.E., Weissman, M.M., Mullen, E.J., Ponniah, K., Gamero, M.J., Verdeli, H., Mufson, L.,
Fitterling, H., & Wickrararatne, P. (2007). Empirically supported psychotherapy in social work
training programs: Does the definition of evidence matter? Research on Social Work Practice, 17,
449-455.
Kryson, M., Schuman, H., Scott, L.J., Beatty, P., Response rates and response content in mail vs.
face-to-face surveys.

Class 13
Program Evaluation
• Process (formative) evaluation
• Outcome (summative) evaluation

Readings:
Monette DR, Sullivan TJ, DeJong CR (2010), Ch. 12: Evaluation research [pp. 319-348]
counseling, and shelter services for victims of domestic violence: A statewide evaluation. Journal of
Interpersonal Violence, 19, 815-829.

Class 14
Take Home Final Exam & Qualitative Research Methods
• Field research
• Case studies
• Focus groups
• Qualitative data analysis

Readings:
Monette DR, Sullivan TJ, DeJong CR (2010), Ch. 9: Evaluation research [pp. 223-258]; Ch. 16:
Analysis of qualitative data [pp. 431-457]
Morse, J.M. (1996). Editorial: Is qualitative research complete? Qualitative Health Research, 6(1), 3-
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participatory research on schizophrenia: Recovering the person in theory and practice. Journal of
Social Issues, 53, 767-784.

Class 15
Quantitative Data Analysis
• Data entry
• Graphic displays
• Description and inference

Readings:
Monette DR, Sullivan TJ, DeJong CR (2010), Ch. 14: Data preparation and presentation [pp. 375-
402]; Ch 15: Descriptive and inferential statistics [pp. 403-430]
Selected Articles for Class 2


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