

COURSE INFORMATION & SYLLABUS

Research Methods in Psychology - PSYC 4703 201
TR 2:00 – 3:20 Room: PY 101 Office: OD 117

INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Don Knox
Email: don.knox@msutexas.edu
Office hours: by appointment
TEXTBOOK:

Required

Gravetter and Forzano Research Methods for the Behavioral Sciences 6th ed. Cengage

Recommended

APA Style Guide

General Description:

Review of basic research processes, including ethics, designs, and data analysis, and application to the fields of psychology and counseling.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

- Explain why scientific research is needed in counseling.
- Understand the APA and ACA ethics codes for research.
- Able to find and evaluate professional research materials.
- Describe the strengths and weaknesses of the types of research used in counseling.
- Explain the basic designs of experimental and non-experimental research.
- Describe techniques of measurements and sampling,
- Explain basic principles of probability and the normal curve.
- Understand when to use basic descriptive and inferential statistics.
- Read and explain the results of major statistical techniques in counseling journals.
- Apply knowledge to evaluate an area of counseling research.

Grading:

ASSIGNMENT OVERVIEW

Exams: 3 exams (non-comprehensive) The intention is to assess that students are keeping up with the reading and comprehending the main points in the chapters. Questions will focus on core terms and concepts. 45%

10 article reviews - 20%

IRB application – 10%

Research proposal – 25%

Additional Information: This is a tough course, no matter who teaches it. There are a couple of good reasons for this statement.

1. This is a course that is quantifiable in nature and to this point; most of your coursework (and your eventual practice for that matter) has been qualitative. This course is quantitative and your research

proposal must be quantitative. The statistics coursework presented here will be reflected in your certification exam. Your papers need to be objective “I feel...” “this paper”... type of statements will not work. These are not to reflect your opinion but rather they are to evaluate current research is out there over a subject you may encounter in practice. Please do not pick a topic because you are emotionally attached to it, for instance, autism if you know an autistic child. This is not a place for self-exploration.

2. Student anxiety about the course. Nothing I can do here except to tell you we all have gone through this class. I took it in both of my Masters’ programs and in my Doctoral program as well. It is always the same. My goal is to get everyone through this class with a “C” or better. This does not always occur because some students believe that they are exceptions to rules and can do whatever they want instead of what I ask them to do. For instance, they have late homework, turn in shoddy papers, use wikipedia, write a qualitative research paper and/or commit plagiarism.

Instructor goals:

1) Your basic knowledge of people, terms and characteristics will be evaluated by a series of exams and written assignments. There are 3 exams.

2) You will also complete a research proposal during the term. Your research question(s) needs to be approved by me no later than the end of week 2. Do not send me a private email. This proposal will involve searching for published scientific articles relating to a specific question, reading and evaluating the articles and writing a report that describes what we know and don’t know about this area of research and about where you think the research should go next. See pages 20 -21 and chapter 16 of your textbook. Start this project (and I recommend that you START THIS NOW – or very soon!) by thinking about a question that needs to be addressed. Try to choose a specific question. A few examples: Do antidepressant medications really increase suicides in adolescents? Is ADHD diagnosed too often? Are medications necessary to treat ADHD? Has high-stakes testing in public schools improved math achievement? I encourage you to choose a topic that would be relevant to work that you see happening around you right now. Teachers and counselors, and the organizations they work for, are often involved in evaluating the effectiveness of the work that they do. This can involve surveys to determine needs or attitudes or experiments to determine outcomes, as well as other issues. Counselors might also become involved in testing more theoretical issues about the aspects of specific counseling techniques or about the nature of a particular disorder.

Once you have a question, you will need to begin to read and find out what is already known about the area. It will need to draw exclusively on professional sources like research articles published in scientific journals. Time magazine, Psychology Today and Lifetime are NOT professional sources. Here you will get lots of good ideas about how real research is done. You will also begin to learn a lot about the subtleties and complexities of your question. You may find issues you had never really considered! AN IMPORTANT CAUTION: In order to get a complete set of journal articles for your topic, you will likely have to use interlibrary loan. Our library databases carry a number of journals, but there are thousands out there and we cannot subscribe to them all. We can, however get virtually any article that you need (for free!) if you put in a request to the library. This process usually takes a week or two – so DO NOT WAIT TO START looking for and requesting articles!

Another important note – NO INTERNET SOURCES are allowed – please do not try me on this one. Textbooks also do not count as sources – again – do not try to slip one by me. Using a site like Wikipedia or Answers.com is not an acceptable practice at this level (or any level) of education. Using a site like “freetermpapers.com” is plagiarism at its worse form and it will get you removed from the university. I am fanatical about these!

You will then need to read and evaluate the articles, using the principles that you are learning in this class. This also takes some time! Compare the different articles side-by-side to see if they agree. Often you will find research that covers the same topic, but that have different conclusions. You will need to think about why. What conclusion will you make? Compile the information into a report (10-12 pages – not including the cover page, abstract and bibliography and done in APA 6 style that describes, discusses, and evaluates the different pieces of evidence. Draw conclusions about the current state of the research (which may be that we really don't know yet!) and tell where you think research needs to go next – what questions and studies could be done to further our understanding. One important note – NO direct quotes are to be used in your paper.

Research Proposal (see chapter 16 of your text)

Research proposal will consist of:

Title page

Abstract

Introduction (research question/literature review)

 General Introduction

 Literature review (bulk of the paper)

 Hypothesis

 Research Strategy

Bibliography

3. Article Reviews – each student will review 10 scholarly journal articles. A template will be posted on D2L for you to utilize. These reviews will be due (2 a week) starting 2/1. These reviews will help you to write your paper.

4. IRB application – each student will fill out an IRB application for their research project. Please remember that you are NOT actually doing this research.

Assignment	Points	Total points
3 Exams	150	450
Research Proposal	250	250
10 article reviews	20	200
IRB	100	100
Totals		1000

Test 1 Chapters 1 – 5

Test 2 Chapters 6 – 10

Test 3 Chapters 11 – 16

The following scale will be used to grade tests, your paper, and your class participation (1000 points total):

90 – 100%	=	A
80 – 89%	=	B
70 – 79%	=	C
60 – 69%	=	D
0 – 59%	=	F

NO GRADES WILL BE DROPPED IN CALCULATING COURSE GRADES.

Make-up tests: Students who miss one or more tests due to absences will be allowed to schedule make-up exams with permission of the Instructor. There will be no grade penalty for exams missed due to an excused absence. A 25 -point penalty will be assessed for exams missed due to unexcused absences. **Excused absences come from the Dean of Students.** Written work will not be accepted late – no exceptions (really means no exception). Please turn written work in early. I will not accept emailed work.

COVID Class Attendance Requirements and Additional Classroom policies:

Class attendance is expected! Schedule problems can usually be worked out, but must be discussed IN ADVANCE. Bona fide emergencies do sometimes occur, but must be discussed with the instructor as soon as possible after the emergency absence.

COVID teaching modality – this class is structured to be an in-person course in PY 102.

All recommended social distancing and face covering rules promulgated by MSU-Texas will be followed and maintained. As long as the University requires face masks/covers, students MUST wear an approved mask to be in the physical classroom to minimize the potential spread of the Coronavirus. You will be asked to leave if you do not follow the University's policy. At present, face masks are NOT required but are recommended.

IF YOU HAVE MORE THAN Six (6) UNEXCUSED ABSENCES, YOU WILL BE DROPPED FROM THIS CLASS WITH A GRADE OF "F".

An absence may be excused **ONLY** if the student complies with, or provides one of the following:

- a. Negotiates approval for the absence with the instructor **IN ADVANCE**, or in the case of a legitimate emergency, as soon as is reasonable.
- b. Presents a written excuse from a physician or the MSU Infirmary via the Dean of Students
- c. Presents written evidence of participation in a mandatory University function (Band, Choir, Sports, etc.)
- d. Presents written evidence of attendance at a recognized professional meeting or professional educational program.
- e. Presents a written excuse from a physician for a dependent child's illness via the Dean of Students.

Student Code of Conduct:

MSU-Texas' official policy in the University's Code of Student Conduct on page 52, states:

Instructor Drop An instructor may drop a student any time during the semester for excessive absences, for consistently failing to meet class assignments, for an indifferent attitude, or for disruptive conduct. The instructor must give the student a verbal or written warning prior to dropping the student from the class. An instructor's drop of a student takes precedence over the student-initiated course drop of a later date. The instructor will assign a grade of either WF or F through the first 9 weeks of a long semester, the first 6 weeks of a 10-week summer term, or the 12th class day of a 4- or 5-week summer term consisting of 20 days. After these periods the grade will be an F. The date the instructor drop

form is received in the Office of the Registrar as the official drop date. A student dropped from a class by a faculty member for disruptive behavior has the right of appeal to the Student Conduct Committee through the Student Conduct office.

I will closely follow this policy in terms of your conduct in class. Anything that is disruptive to the class will result in you being Instructor Dropped from the class with a grade of F. I will enforce this policy in that my obligation is to provide the best and most informative course that I can. I cannot do that when there is behavior that disrupts the class. This also includes attempting to dominate or "teach" the class, interrupting the course frequently with stories that are not facilitative or relevant to the flow of the class, using electronics during class that are not directly related to the class material, and talking frequently to one's peers while course is being held. Any other behaviors that are deemed disruptive will also be enforced as deemed by our Code of Conduct policy. Remember that there are stories and questions that are facilitative to our class discussions, and some that are obstructive.

Other Comments:

Taping, laptop microphones, Googleglasses, cell phones – NOT ALLOWED! All students deserve the same respect and confidentiality in the classroom.

I will NOT accept emailed work.

Given the nature, scope, and intensity of this course, it is essential that each student keep up. It is the responsibility of each student to seek assistance when needed.

Academic Dishonesty: Please do not cheat or plagiarize. The MSU policy on cheating and plagiarism is in the MSU Student Handbook and Activities Calendar (Code of Student Conduct, Item 11) and I encourage you to review it. Additional information regarding the Academic Dishonesty policy is available from the Dean of Students office, in Clark Student Center. Cheating or engaging in plagiarism will result in a grade of zero (0) and/or a letter grade of "F" for the course!!!!!! If you find yourself even *thinking about* cheating on an exam or copying someone else's work, please *talk to me* instead of doing it!!!

Late work – I will not accept late work. I will not accept work sent via email. I will not accept work turned in to the office or under my office door. I will only accept work submitted via D2L. ALL WORK MUST BE SAVED IN Microsoft convention (*.doc or *.docx). I cannot and will not open gdocs or pages. Work turned in any format other than the two I state will be graded as a zero. I will not accept work saved as a pdf. There will be no exceptions for late work and this includes absences for any MSU events – get things done in advance. Dates are posted and D2L is available.