



UNIVERSITY OF LETHBRIDGE
FACULTY OF HEALTH SCIENCES

HLSC 5110: Health Research: Critique, Synthesis and Application

Course Outline: Fall, 2015

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

In this course, students will examine the research process, and develop an understanding of qualitative and quantitative methodology from the point of view of evidence-informed practice. Students will develop knowledge/skills in the critical use and synthesis of research evidence to answer clinical questions, and to use the principles of knowledge translation to move this new knowledge into practice.

COURSE FORMAT

Online with two face-to-face seminars.

COURSE OUTCOMES

Upon successful completion of this course, you will be able to:

1. Discuss and critically reflect on the influence of one's worldview on the development of knowledge and evidence-informed nursing.
2. Describe the research process and how it differs in qualitative and quantitative methodologies.
3. Critique and appraise qualitative and quantitative research evidence.
4. Describe and discuss how different research approaches help evidence-informed clinicians answer particular questions.
5. Develop a relevant clinical question, critically appraise the evidence and theory base for the question, and develop and build a case for a plan to answer the question.
6. Demonstrate and apply the principles of knowledge translation in discussions of evidence-informed practice, culture and policy.

TEXTS

There are two (2) required textbooks for this course, selected specifically for their use as part of your growing library on evidence-informed nursing. The first textbook is relevant to the use of evidence in nursing practice, and the second textbook provides a sound overview of different research approaches to knowledge development. The first text is available in the University bookstore, or through Amazon.

*Please do not purchase the second textbook until you speak with your instructor.

Required:

1. Craig, Jean V. & Smyth, Rosalind L. (2012). *The Evidence-based Practice Manual for Nurses* (3rd Ed.). Elsevier.
2. Creswell, John W. (2014). *Research Design* (4th Ed.). Sage.

All other required resources will be online and available through the University of Lethbridge library databases or via Moodle.

COURSE PROCESS

This course is mainly online with two face-to-face seminars. You will require regular and reliable access to the internet. To engage with this online course, you will login to Moodle, the University of Lethbridge's online courseware. Moodle is like a digital, online classroom; students can only access the courses in which they are enrolled, so each online class is a private space restricted to students in each course. This course is asynchronous, which means that you can login to Moodle when it is convenient for you, and engage with the course materials and processes as you wish. However, due to the use of online discussions as a primary vehicle for engaging with the course material, time limits will be set as to when you should engage with asynchronous discussions each week, to ensure everyone in the class moves through the content more or less together.

Within Moodle you will find the course content presented in weekly modules. Each module consists of a number of learning resources--articles, videos, online readings, and asynchronous online discussions to help you develop a knowledge base of theories, concepts and research related to the process of informing nursing practice with evidence. You are encouraged to engage in Moodle activities *at least twice per week*. You will also submit assignments, view your grades, and ask questions about assignments within Moodle. Please do not email your assignments to your instructor.

The two face-to-face seminars are required and every effort should be made to attend. The purpose of the seminars is to engage in critical discussions about research and evidence-informed nursing, and to provide opportunity for you to put your learning into practice.

To succeed in this course:

- Read the entire course outline carefully, particularly the sections on assignments.
- If there is anything you do not understand about the course, please ask the instructor for clarification in the designated Moodle discussion forum.
- Stay up-to-date in the readings and discussion postings.
- While there are no examinations in this course, your degree of engagement with the topics and discussions will reveal how much you have read and understood from the posted resources.
- Fully participate both as an individual learner and as a discussion forum member.
- Set aside 3 hours each week to work on the content and discussions in this course. Please plan ahead for when assignments are due, and budget in extra time to work on the assignments.
- Attend the two face-to-face seminars. They are designed to help you with your learning.

ASSIGNMENTS

Assignment	Weighting	Due
Discussion Forum	30%	Ongoing
Critical Overview Assignment: Choose 1 of:		
1. Critical overview of the theory base in the scholarly literature directly related to your clinical question.	20%	Week 7
2. Critical overview of the methodological approaches that have been taken in the research literature directly related to your clinical question.		
Major Paper:		
Discuss your clinical question and critically evaluate its evidence-base. Based on your critical analysis, propose a knowledge development plan to answer your question via a planned project, or a piece of original research. (Please discuss your ideas with the instructor.)	30%	Week 13
Presentation of Paper:		
You will present your plan (major concepts from your paper) in a 20 minute presentation to your colleagues at the Week 10 face to face session. This presentation will provide you with valuable feedback for your final paper.	20%	Week 10
	100%	

Discussion Forum (30%)

Participating in asynchronous discussions is a required and a substantial part of this online course. Regular and in-depth participation is required to pass this course and to maximize the benefit of the online learning environment. Each week you will:

1. First, study all materials for that week and complete assigned activities.
2. Reflect on these readings/activities, and then post your own answers to the discussion questions—do this *prior* to reading and responding to the posts of others. I ask you to post your original thoughts first, in order to ensure that the discussion forum presents a rich variety of ideas and experiences, and not “what she/he said”. These original posts should be 250-300 words* in length (excluding references at the end of the post). Please post *in the designated subject thread* (which will be clearly indicated) and *in text format* (not as an attachment) to make sure online discussions are easy to follow. (Responses in the wrong place must be moved to the correct one). You will be evaluated on the depth of your discussion, engagement and reflection on the required readings and activities. You must engage in the discussion forums within the designated time period. **Forum each week opens Wednesday mornings at 0900, and closes the next Tuesday evening at 2100**.**
3. Respond to the original posts of two peers, on two different topics. These second responses (the ones you post in response to the work of other students) should be less than 75 words long, and should professionally *affirm*, *challenge* and *extend* the initial respondent’s thinking. Make sure you end these responses with a challenging question intended to further everyone’s thinking. These are the online equivalents of small group discussions, since you will be responding to different topics and asking questions to extend the group’s thinking. If two different people have already responded to one post, please choose another to which to respond. Please abide by netiquette rules of respect and confidentiality.
4. Respond thoughtfully and succinctly to those who have responded to your original post.

***If you are wondering how long 300 words is in a post, bullets 1-4 above contain exactly 300 words.**

****Discussions will be locked at the end of the posting week at 2100 hours.**

Assessment criteria for discussion forum participation:

1. Evidence of deep reflection upon course readings/materials. Student also draws in additional relevant evidence (theory, research) to deepen the discussion. Actively and consistently discusses the strengths and limitations of any materials and resources brought into the discussion. All materials and academic literature are cited/referenced appropriately (APA). (maximum 4 marks)
2. Clear evidence of critically examining issues raised by the discussion questions from the instructor. (maximum 2 marks)
3. Expression of ideas is clear and succinct. Logical development of ideas, arguments and conclusions. Postings have substance yet are concise. No grammatical or spelling errors. (maximum 2 marks)
4. Relates course content to issues in personal/professional context to make theory-practice links (i.e., clarifies concepts with examples). Consistent use of personal insights, experiences, and/or examples as evidence of personal engagement with the question. (maximum 2 marks)
5. Responds to **two** peers on **two** different topics. Responds reflectively to peers’ and instructor’s questions. Considerable and consistent engagement with other students’ ideas, opinions, and viewpoints. Responses to peers are professional, affirming, and challenging and aim to extend the thinking of peers. Overall comments highly respectful of others and offers constructive feedback to

others. Responses to peers end with a question that seeks to clarify and extend their thinking. Promotes learning of the class as a whole. (maximum 2 marks each response)

- To track grading for this activity, be advised that there is a maximum of 14 marks that can be assigned each week for the posting activity, and that I will be looking for posts over at least 10 weeks of the course (for a total of 140 marks).

Minor Assignment Options: Choose one of the following options (20%)

- Option 1:** Critical overview of the theory base for your clinical question.

This assignment is designed to provide opportunity for you to explore the published scholarly literature on your selected clinical question, with a particular focus on how theory has informed the related evidence base. The kinds of questions you will ask yourself as you read the literature related to your clinical question include:

- What theoretical perspectives/frameworks have been used in empirical inquiry related to this question? These are not always explicit—you might have to read between the lines!
- Do the theoretical perspectives emerge mainly from a particular worldview?
- What assumptions have been made in the scholarly literature about the topic area where you have a question?
- Overall, is there a solid theory base in the area of inquiry that relates to your question, or can you see obvious gaps, weaknesses or blind spots in the theory base?

This assignment requires you to have engaged vigorously in finding and reading the scholarly literature related to your clinical question, and actively reflecting on the theoretical perspectives taken. I would strongly advise you to keep good notes as you read relevant articles; this will help you immensely as you approach this assignment, as well as the major paper. As you work on this assignment, dialogue with your peers will also help you refine your thinking. Post your questions, thoughts, drafts of your work, and requests for input from your peers in the open discussion forum. Although this interaction will be monitored, it will not be evaluated for grades. The same expectations for respectful, reflective and professional communication are in effect in this open forum.

Assessment criteria for this assignment:

- Writing is clear, understandable and accurate, and demonstrates understanding of and reflection upon course materials and other scholarly literature as needed. (25%)
- It is evident that you have been thorough in your search for relevant and high quality scholarly literature. (25%)
- There is ample evidence of deep reflection upon the theory base for the topical area of inquiry, and a well-founded and critical analysis of the soundness of that theory base. (50%)

This assignment must be in APA format, and must not exceed 3 pages (excluding references and title page).

- Option 2:** Critical overview of the methodological approaches that have been taken in the research literature directly related to your clinical question.

This assignment is designed to provide opportunity for you to explore the published empirical literature on your selected clinical question, with a particular focus on what methodological approaches that have been taken in the development of the evidence base. This assignment will require you to discover the difference between “methodology”, and “method”. The kinds of questions you will ask yourself as you read research articles related to your clinical question include:

- What methodological approaches have been used in empirical inquiry related to this question? What assumptions come along with these methodologies?
- Do the methodologies in the evidence base emerge mainly from a particular worldview?
- What research methods have been employed to investigate your question?

- Overall, do you see that there are there obvious gaps, weaknesses or blind spots in the evidence base emerging from the methodological approaches taken and the methods used?

This assignment requires you to have engaged vigorously in finding and reading the empirical literature related to your clinical question, and actively reflecting on the methodological perspectives taken and the research methods used. I would strongly advise you to keep good notes as you read relevant articles; this will help you immensely as you approach this assignment, as well as the major paper. As you work on this assignment, dialogue with your peers will also help you refine your thinking. Post your questions, thoughts, drafts of your work, and requests for input from your peers in the open discussion forum. Although this interaction will be monitored, it will not be evaluated for grades. The same expectations for respectful, reflective and professional communication are in effect in this open forum.

Assessment criteria for this assignment:

- d) Writing is clear, understandable and accurate, and demonstrates understanding of and reflection upon course materials and other scholarly literature as needed. (25%)
- e) It is evident that you have been thorough in your search for relevant, recent and high quality research evidence. (25%)
- f) There is ample evidence of deep reflection upon the methodological perspectives taken in the topical area of inquiry, and a well-founded and critical analysis of the methodological perspectives taken, and methods used. (50%)

This assignment must be in APA format, and must not exceed 3 pages (excluding references and title page).

Major Paper (30%)

The purpose of this paper is to enable you to begin to formulate a sound plan to answer a question that you are curious about—a question that is directly related to your practice. This assignment will be foundational to the other work you do as a graduate student on either a thesis or a project. To do well on this assignment, you will have to thoroughly engage with and explore the literature in relation to your question, analyze and critically appraise the evidence base for strengths, weaknesses, gaps and blind spots, and then propose a way to begin to answer or address your question. You are strongly advised to take notes on articles as you review them, and to construct an outline for your paper before you start writing it. Please discuss your ideas with the instructor as you contemplate this assignment.

This scholarly paper will be written in APA format, be a maximum of 15 pages in length (excluding references and title page), incorporate at least 15 scholarly references, and include four main components:

- a) A clearly stated question, and purpose statement for the work. Include a brief discussion of what drew you to this question, why it's relevant and important to answer. (2-3 pages)
- b) A critical review of the literature related to the topic—seek to be comprehensive of the major lines of work in the topic area as directly related to your question. Remember, you are not simply summarizing the work, but critically appraising it. (Tip: your earlier assignment should have given you a good start in critical assessment of the literature). (This component: 8-10 pages) For help in writing a literature review, consult course resources and U of L library resources (including librarians!) (see video at <http://researchguides.wcu.edu/litreviews>)
- c) A proposed plan for moving forward is needed. How will you need to proceed in order to answer or address your question? Do you need to take a well-established evidence base and get it into practice somehow? Do you need to design a piece of original research in order to address a gap in the evidence base? In general terms, what would be the components of your project or your original research? What will you need to pay attention to—what questions arise for you as you design this next step? (2-3 pages)

- d) A compelling conclusion that convinces the reader of the integrity of the plan and the importance of carrying it out. (1 page)

Assessment criteria for this assignment:

1. Thoughts are organized and clearly communicated, writing is understandable and accurate; there is attention to APA, spelling and grammar (25%).
2. There is ample evidence of critical reflection upon all of the components outlined (a-d), and the components link together logically. The proposed plan flows clearly from a critical review of appropriate and adequate literature, and is well justified as an approach to answer/address the clinical question. (50%)
3. There is evidence that you have thought about what you will need to consider, and what questions have arisen that will need to be answered as you move forward with the plan. Conclusion is compelling, logical and reflective. (25%)

Presentation (20%)

As a master's prepared nursing leader, colleagues will look to you, and seek your knowledge and skill in creating and nurturing an evidence-informed practice culture. The purpose of this assignment is for you to gain experience in:

- leading discussions around evidence-informed practice
- succinctly describing a practice issue, an associated knowledge gap, and a clear question to guide inquiry
- proposing a credible plan to address an identified knowledge gap
- seeking the feedback of colleagues in relation to your work

Assessment criteria for this assignment:

1. The practice issue and the importance of addressing the issue are clearly articulated. Consideration is given to the implications if the issue is not addressed. (15%)
2. A critical overview of the evidence base is clearly communicated. This includes a summary of the strength of the evidence, and the gaps in evidence guiding practice around the issue. (20%)
3. Clear articulation of a focused clinical question, and your assessment/justification of what kind of research-based activity is needed to answer it. (15%)
4. Outline of a plan to address the clinical question, and a clear purpose statement for the work you are proposing. (30%)
5. There are strategies used to engage your colleagues in providing feedback to the plan. (10%)
6. Thoughts are organized and professionally communicated in a creative and interesting way, and within maximum time limit of 20 minutes. (10%)

GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR ASSIGNMENTS

All assignments submitted for evaluation are to be your original work created *specifically* for this class. Using the work of others without appropriate recognition (citation), or using your own work originally developed for another class, constitutes the academic offence of plagiarism. (Please refer to the current University of Lethbridge Calendar for current academic regulations and student discipline policies.) Please use an appropriate referencing format specific to your discipline or of your choosing and use it consistently.

Please familiarize yourself with the marking criteria for each assignment.

It is expected that university students are familiar with correct spelling and grammar rules. If you feel that you need help in these areas, you are strongly advised to obtain and use dictionaries, and/or to take advantage of university resources set up to assist students with writing papers.

Marks will be reduced by 5% per day late (weekends and holidays included). An extension will be considered for legitimate reasons at the discretion of the instructor. You are responsible for approaching the instructor at least 48 hours prior to the due date in order for your request to be considered. Documentation from a third party may be required.

Because the online discussion forums are the primary vehicle for learning in this course, late submissions will not be possible for the discussion forums. To keep the class moving along at the same pace, discussion forums will be locked at the end of each posting period. Similarly, the face-to-face seminars cannot be rescheduled.

ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH A DISABILITY

Reasonable accommodations are available for students who have a documented disability. If you have been diagnosed with a disability, there is no need to face the challenge of University without support. Please contact the Counselling Services/Students with Disabilities Resource Centre at 403-329-2766 <http://www.uleth.ca/ross/counselling/index.html> to set up an appointment. After registering with the Disabilities Resource Centre, your instructor will be notified by a formal letter of any accommodations you require. In addition, students are responsible for requesting accommodations from the instructor at least ***two weeks*** in advance of the evaluation date. The instructor and student are jointly responsible for arranging the resources needed for the evaluation process.

PLAGIARISM STATEMENT

Please be clear on what plagiarism is, and how to avoid it. Essentially, plagiarism is where a person/student represents the words or ideas of another person as his or her own. For example, cutting and pasting a section from an article on the internet and putting it into an academic paper without properly citing it is plagiarism. When in doubt, cite other people's work as theirs, and/or check with your instructor.

Plagiarism is also an academic offense at most Universities, including The University of Lethbridge. Therefore, the prohibition of plagiarism affects all of your assignments in this course, whether the plagiarized material constitutes a part or the entirety of the work submitted. Plagiarism is taken seriously, and if an instructor finds evidence that the student has represented another person's words or ideas as his or her own, the student shall bear the burden of proving that there was no intent to deceive. Please refer to the University of Lethbridge calendar for the procedures pertaining to academic offenses, and please be aware of the potential consequences (anywhere from a written reprimand, to a grade of "F" in the course).

Please also note that the U of L subscribes to Turnitin.com, a plagiarism detection service. Please be advised that student work submitted for credit in this course may be submitted to this system to verify its originality. Students must be able to submit both electronic and hard copy versions of their work upon request. Best advice: avoid plagiarism to begin with, do your own work, and cite extensively!

GRADING BREAKDOWN

The determination of final grades for courses in the School of Graduate Studies is as follows:

Letter Grade	Comments	GPA	Percent
A+	Outstanding	4.0	97 - 100
A	Excellent	4.0	93 - 96
A-	Commendable	3.7	90 - 92
B+	Very good	3.3	87 - 89
B	Good	3.0	83 - 86
B-	Satisfactory	2.7	80 - 82
<i>NB: Any course with a grade of less than B- cannot be considered for credit in the School of Graduate Studies.</i>			
C+		2.3	77 - 79
C		2.00	73 - 76
C-		1.70	70 - 72
D+		1.30	67 - 69
D		1.00	63 - 66
F		0.00	Less than 63

COPYRIGHT STATEMENT

All University of Lethbridge students, faculty and staff must comply with Canadian law and institutional license agreements pertaining to copyright. At the same time, keeping abreast of our copyright obligations and options is a complex task as copyright matters locally and globally are in flux and are likely to remain so for at least the near future.

The University's Copyright website (www.uleth.ca/copyright) is a source of current copyright information that includes:

- answers to common copyright questions (see the [FAQs](#)),
- guidance on whether you need permission or a license to copy a particular work (see the [Copyright Permissions Flow Chart](#)),
- guidance on assessing whether fair dealing may apply to specific instances of copying you wish to undertake (see the [Guidelines for Copying under Fair Dealing](#)), and
- a [permissions look-up tool](#) to help you determine the kinds of copying and other uses permitted by the Library's license agreements covering specific online journals and other online resources.

You are encouraged to contact the University Copyright Advisor (copyright@uleth.ca) for assistance with any copyright questions or issues.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week	Dates	Topics	Assignments/ Activities
1	Sept 9-15	Introductions: Setting up profile Navigating Moodle Getting to know each other!	Face to face Seminar Sept. 11 Required readings on Moodle for each week, including this one! Moodle discussion forum
2	Sept 16-22	Getting curious and asking questions.	MOODLE: Readings discussion forum
3	Sept 23-29	The use of theory in research and practice	MOODLE: Readings Discussion forum
4	Sept 30-Oct 6	Quantitative research methods	MOODLE: Readings Discussion forum
5	Oct 7-13	Appraising quantitative research HAPPY THANKSGIVING!	MOODLE: Readings Critique activity Discussion forum
6	Oct 14-20	Using quantitative evidence Systematic Reviews EB guidelines	MOODLE: Readings Discussion forum
7	Oct 21-27	Qualitative research methods	MOODLE: Readings Discussion forum Assignment 1 due by end of day, October 27 th .
8	Oct 28-Nov 3	Appraising qualitative evidence	MOODLE: Readings Critique activity Discussion forum
9	Nov 4-Nov 10	Using qualitative evidence Metasynthesis	MOODLE: Readings discussion forum
10	Nov 11-17	Presenting your plan to address your clinical question	Face to face Seminar: Nov. 13 th Assignment: presentations
11	Nov 18-24	Mixed methods: why and how? Integrative Reviews	MOODLE: Readings Discussion forum
12	Nov 25-Dec 1	Creating an evidence based culture in nursing	MOODLE: Readings Discussion forum
13	Dec 2-8	Wrap up MERRY CHRISTMAS!	Final paper due

References

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