

THE UNIVERSITY OF LETHBRIDGE
FACULTY OF EDUCATION

EDUC 5712: RESEARCH METHODS IN COUNSELLING PSYCHOLOGY Fall, 2014

Instructor: Rebecca Hudson Breen, PhD
Office: M3039
Phone: (403) 394-3946
Email: rebecca.hudsonbreen@uleth.ca

Course Description

This core course will introduce students to the basic principles of research methods and design as applied to counselling psychology research. The course will address research both for critical consumption and for practice.

Course Objectives

Specifically, by the end of this course, students will:

- Develop an appreciation for the nature of research inquiry as expressed through quantitative and qualitative methods
- Understand the basic elements of the research process
- Learn how to recognize a research problem in literature
- Develop critical skills to assess the value of research methods and literature
- Learn about various types of research and methods for data collection
- Recognize that undertaking any research project raises ethical issues

Text

Cresswell, J. (2011) Educational Research: Planning, Conducting, and Evaluating Quantitative and Qualitative Research (4th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson-Merrill Prentice Hall.

Topic Outline

1. Introduction to research and research traditions
2. Planning a Research Study
 - B. Identifying a Research Problem
 - C. Reviewing the Literature
 - D. Specifying a Purpose and Research Question(s)
 - E. Ethical, Legal, and Human Relations Issues in Research
3. Research Methods
 - E. Collecting and Analyzing Quantitative Data (sampling and instrumentation)
 - F. Collecting and Analyzing Qualitative Data (sampling and instrumentation)
 - G. Validity, reliability, rigor & credibility
 - G. Collecting Research Data with Tests and Self-Report Measures
 - H. Collecting Research Data with Questionnaires and Interviews
 - I. Collecting Research Data through Observation and Content Analysis
4. Quantitative Research Designs (chosen by class)
5. Qualitative Research Designs (chosen by class)
6. Mixed Methods Designs

GENERAL EXPECTATIONS:

- *Mandatory attendance for all classes is required. In exceptional circumstances where you will be absent, notify the instructor in advance.*
- *There is a strict late policy. Late assignments will lose 3% per calendar day, unless an extension was granted in advance of the due date. Extensions will only be granted in exceptional circumstances that are unpredictable and out of your control. Documentation by a relevant professional (e.g., doctor) may be required.*
- *It is expected that your writing meets the expectations of a graduate level program, including abiding by the APA Publication Manual 6th edition. Writing must demonstrate appropriate standards of written communication; grammatical errors, lack of clarity, poor structure or organization are not acceptable.*

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS:

Written assignments must be submitted using the Moodle Assignment Dropbox before midnight (MST) on the due date. Documents should be saved using the following format: LastName.Firstname.Assignment.doc.

Critique of Research Paper: 20% **Due: September 29, 2014, maximum 5 pp (double spaced)**

You must choose either a qualitative or quantitative empirical article. The critique must include:

- (a) A succinct but thorough description of the study,
- (b) A systematic critique of the strengths and weaknesses of the study, and
- (c) Evidence that you are incorporating course concepts in your evaluation and justification.

Grading Rubric:

Criteria	Exemplary (A+, A)	Competent (A-, B+)	Developing (B, B-)
Description	Uses concise, scholarly writing. Reads like a published abstract	Clearly presented and easy to read Discriminates and interprets relevant issues Clearly states the type of research design that was employed. Follows APA structure for an abstract but with a little more detail.	Description missing about some key features of the study. Overly wordy
Critique	Makes connections across parts of the study Moves beyond a simple checklist of features of the article Seriously grapples with issues of validity, reliability or rigor in a sophisticated way Makes explicit connections with other research. Demonstrates a thorough grasp of course concepts The reviewer's overall judgment of the quality of the work is clearly stated and supported.	Integrates course terms and concepts Thoroughly covers a breadth of issues identified on pages 276 and 277 Critique/evaluation is substantiated with specific examples Attempts to evaluate article regarding validity, reliability, or rigor Neglects to take a position about the quality of the work	Critique not substantiated with examples Does not consider issues of validity, reliability or rigor Treats each section of the research as a separate entity Demonstrates some inaccuracies or misrepresentation of course concepts
Other		Follows APA	Does not use APA format Grammatical and spelling errors Failed to choose an empirical article

Further guidelines for critique: When a researcher reports a study in the literature, he/she is engaged in building an argument that is intended to convince the reader of its worth and/or to report specific findings. To do this, the argument or purpose must be warranted (i.e., it must be supported by evidence demonstrating validity).

It is your task, as the reader to review these warrants critically. Only when you are convinced of their worth (in terms of their power, appropriateness, resonance, validity, etc.) should you accept the findings.

1. Read through the papers from start to finish, with no particular purpose in mind. Note the impression they make on you.
2. Establish the purpose/research questions of the study. Somewhere, there should be a concise statement/question(s). On occasion, there will be a secondary purpose(s); note that/those as well.
3. Follow the steps outlined in the procedure or methods section. Are these steps described in sufficient detail to allow you to reconstruct what the researcher did? If not, what else would you like to/need to know?
4. Estimate how well the paper achieves its purpose:
 - a. Do the findings actually answer the research question(s) posed?
 - b. Are the procedures between the question(s) and the discussion/ conclusion strong and/or warranted?
5. Form an estimate of the importance of the research study you have read.

Research Method Presentation: 20%
Length: 30-40 minute presentation plus class hand-out
Due: Varies – see schedule on Moodle

This assignment will be completed in pairs. You will have 30 to 40 minutes to present one research design to your classmates. Your presentation should include a power point slide show introducing the research design features, key readings, etc. Both the presentation and handout should instruct your peers about:

- (a) Name of Design
- (b) Rationale: Why you would use this design
- (c) Critical features in design
- (d) Critical features in analysis
- (e) Examples of research questions and purpose statements
- (f) Key readings and resources to learn more about this design
- (g) Example of an empirical article using this design (provide Rebecca with a copy 2 weeks before presentation – this will be the assigned reading for the class).

Handouts, powerpoint presentations, and the selected readings must be circulated as email attachments 1 week prior to the class presentation. You must choose a research design and a presentation date in week two of the course.

Experimental designs Quasi-experimental Correlational and regression designs Survey designs Factor analytic designs	Single subject and Case Study designs Program evaluation Archival Research <i>Other: Discuss with instructor</i>	Grounded Theory Action Research Narrative research Ethnography Phenomenology
---	---	--

Research Proposal: 60%
Due: December 1, 2013

You are being asked to design a research study based upon your interests, and perhaps future thesis work. At the Master's level, the expectation is that you can conduct research that contributes to the literature. Review the literature and see how you may extend your discipline's understanding/knowledge of a particular issue.

The week before the assignment is due, you will spend the class in groups of 4 presenting your final design to your group. Each person will take turns for approximately 30 minutes each. At this time, you will receive feedback and suggestions regarding necessary changes that need to be made or addressed. The final copy is to be handed in the following week.

The document must contain the following components:

A) *Introduction:* 10 marks

- a. Overview of the research
- b. Statement of problem
- c. Literature based rationale
- d. Purpose and Research question

B) *Literature Review:* 20 marks

We will discuss and develop the criteria for a good literature review during our discussions in class. This literature review should lay the foundations for a research problem or purpose. The problem statement and purpose statement should be clearly stated somewhere in the literature review. The literature review should demonstrate that you are able to integrate what you have learned in research methods to describe and critique empirical articles in order to uncover a gap or direction for research. That is, a purely theoretical literature review would not be appropriate for this course, although the integration of theory and research in the review would be very appropriate.

C) *Method:* 20 marks

- a. Description of research design
- b. Description of proposed participants and sampling strategy that will be used
- c. Proposed (preliminary) data collection, observation and interview instruments
- d. Description of the proposed research site
- e. Researcher's role, biases, and potential ethical issues
- f. Discussion about specific ways you have addressed validation, rigor, and credibility
- g. Proposed data analysis

D) *Ethics Proposal:* 10 marks

- a. Application
- b. Letters of Consent
- c. Advertisement/Letter of Request

GRADING SCHEDULE FOR GRADUATE CLASSES

Numeric Value	Letter Grade	Grade Point
97 – 100	A+	4.00
93 – 96	A	4.00
90 – 92	A-	3.70
87 – 89	B+	3.30
83 – 86	B	3.00
80 – 82	B-	2.70
Note: Any course with a grade of less than B- cannot be considered for credit in a Graduate Studies & Research in Education graduate program.		
77 – 79	C+	2.30
73 – 76	C	2.00
70 – 72	C-	1.70
67 – 69	D+	1.30
63 – 66	D	1.00
<63	F	0.00

1. Academic Honesty: *The University of Lethbridge subscribes to Turnitin.com, a plagiarism detection service. Please be advised that assignments submitted in this course may have their originality verified using this system.*

2. Privacy and Confidentiality
 - *The personal information your classmates and course instructors disclose to you should not be discussed with anyone outside the course, now or in the future, unless the author of the personal narrative has stated otherwise. Unless you have the person's specific permission, please do not mention identifying information about the person's story (e.g., no names, no agency) and keep the disclosure broad rather than specific.*
 - *Recording lectures or class discussions is not permitted unless the instructor and all audience members have granted permission in advance.*
 - *To support counselling psychology students in their studies, relevant faculty/staff discuss student performance with each other, which will be done in confidence and in a respectful manner.*
 - *Your course instructor/staff person may need to consult with university faculty/staff and/or access relevant professional or emergency services if a course instructor/staff member becomes aware that an identifiable person is in need of protective services (e.g., threat or intention of harm to self or others including suicide).*
 - *If you are aware of any situations where individuals are not honoring the expectation of privacy/confidentiality, you are encouraged to intervene by discussing the matter*

with that individual. If you are not comfortable doing so, or if a resolution is not forthcoming, please contact your instructor as soon as possible.

- *While faculty/staff and students are expected to take all possible precautions to safeguard the personal information that is exchanged in each course, whether it be in discussion forms, web conferencing, recordings, assignments, etc., there is no guarantee of confidentiality.*