



## PCP 625 Research Methods for Helping Professionals

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Spring 2007  
Monday Evenings 6:00 – 8:45 PM

### **COURSE SYLLABUS**

#### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course is a review of behavioral science research designs and methods appropriate for counselors and marriage/family therapists. Course topics include: philosophy of science, ethical issues in social research, hypothesis formulation, experimental and quasi-experimental research designs, data capture, measurement, analysis of data, interpretation and presentation of data. The application of these research concepts to professional counseling praxis will be emphasized.

#### **COURSE OBJECTIVES**

Upon successful completion of this course, the student should be able to:

1. Become an informed consumer of social science research by being able to evaluate published research on issues of validity, reliability, sampling, data collection and analysis.
2. Conduct social science literature reviews.
3. Use Citation Software to keep a record of research conducted and be able to produce a report and bibliography using this software package
4. Construct abstracts of literature that conform to the APA Publication Manual.
5. Conceptualize and operationalize a research question by developing research hypotheses, identifying appropriate research designs, choosing appropriate measurement instruments, planning the sampling and data collection strategy, and statistically processing the data.
6. Create a research report that meets the requirements of the consumers of the research.
7. Integrate the philosophical and ethical issues in social science research into counseling and marriage and family consulting praxis.
8. Identify potential research problems related to counseling practice in research.
9. Explain the rationale and methods of conducting a program evaluation in professional practice settings.
10. Successfully complete the research and program evaluation sections of the National Counselor Examination and the State Counseling Exams.

**TEXTBOOKS**

Neuman, W. L. (2006). Social Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches 6<sup>th</sup> Edition. Boston: Allyn & Bacon

**RECOMMENDED TEXTBOOKS**

Gravetter, F. J. & Wallnau, L. B. (2002). Essentials of Statistics for the Behavior Sciences, 4<sup>th</sup>, ed. St. Paul, MN: West Publishing Company.  
American Psychological Association. (2001). Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 5th Edition. Washington, DC: Author.

**METHODOLOGY**

The format of the course will consist of lectures, guest speakers, class discussions, case studies, multi-media presentations, assignments, a midterm examination and a final comprehensive examination.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

Professionalism and courtesy in regard to class attendance is expected.

Active participation in class discussions is expected and will account for 10% of the overall grade for the class.

Periodic class tests and assignments on prescribed subject matters will account for 20% of the overall grade.

Summaries of prescribed articles in accordance with a format that will be discussed in class, will account for a further 10% of the overall grade.

A research design on a subject of the student's choice (and as approved by the professor) will be prepared in accordance with a format that will be discussed in class. It will account for a further 20% of the overall grade.

A midterm examination covering all text, lecture, class discussions, speakers, and multimedia presentations will account for a further 20% of the overall grade.

A final comprehensive examination covering all text, lecture, class discussions, speakers, and multi-media presentations will account for a further 20% of the overall grade for the class, and is scheduled for

## **GRADING PROCEDURES**

Here is a summary of the weighted distribution of each element that will contribute to the overall class grade:

Spontaneous classroom participation	10%
Classroom tests and assignments	20%
Article summaries	10%
Research Design	20%
Midterm	20%
Final examination	20%

## **GRADE BREAKDOWN**

The following grade breakdown will be used in the course:

A+= Work is publishable
A = 94-100% (Excellent Work)
A- = 90-93% (Excellent, but...)
B+ = 87-89% (Very good work)
B = 84-86% (Good work)
B- = 80-83% (Good work, but...)
C+ = 77-79% (Fair, but almost good enough)
C = 74-76% (Fair work)
C- = 70-73% (Just passable)
D+ = 67-69% (Poor but almost made it)
D = 64% -66% (Poor)
D- = 60%-63% (Highly questionable)

## **SPECIFIC DATA**

Syllabus prepared by Johan Mostert D.Phil., November 2006.

This document is intended to provide a general orientation to the course. The instructor reserves the right to make modifications to the schedule and specific assignments during the semester.

**SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY**

- American Psychological Association. (2001). *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, 5th Edition. Washington, DC: Author.
- Babbie, E. (1995). *The practice of social research*, 7<sup>th</sup> ed. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Company.
- Christensen, Larry B and Charles M. Stoup. (1996). *Introduction to statistics for the social and behavioral sciences*. Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole Publishing Company.
- Corcoran, K., & Fischer, J. (1994). *Measures for Clinical Practice*, 2nd Edition. New York: Free Press.
- Davitz, J.R., & Davitz, L.L. (1996). *Evaluating Research Proposals*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Drew, Clifford J. (1996). *Introduction to designing and conducting research (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition)*. St. Louis, MO: The C.V. Mosby Company.
- Elmes, D.G., Kantowitz, B.H. & Roediger, H.L. *Research Methods in Psychology (6<sup>th</sup> Edition)*. Pacific Grove: Brooks/Cole Publishing Company.
- Fraenkel, J.R., & Wallen, N.E. (2003). *How to Design and Evaluate Research in Education*, 5<sup>th</sup> edition. Boston: McGraw-Hill.
- Gentry, M.E., Connaway, R.S., and Morelock, M. (1984). Research activities of social workers in agencies. *Social Work*, 20(4), 3-5.
- Gravetter, F. J. & Wallnau, L. B. (2000). *Essentials of Statistics for the Behavior Sciences*, 5<sup>th</sup>, ed. St. Paul, MN: West Publishing Company. (Highly recommended for help with understanding statistics.)
- See web site [www.gravetter](http://www.gravetter.com) for sample quizzes to take that accompany this text.
- Isaac, S., & Michael, W. B. (1997) *Handbook in Research and Evaluation*. San Diego, CA: Educational and Industrial Testing Services.
- Kerlinger, F.N. & Lee, B.L. (2000). *Foundations of Behavioral Research (4<sup>th</sup> Edition)*. Fort Worth: Harcourt College Publishers.
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- Nelson, J.C. (1996). Teaching students to evaluate practice outcomes by monitoring clients' responses to opportunities. *Journal of Social Work Education, 32*, 181-189.
- McTavish, D. G. & Loether, H. J. (2002). *Social Research: An Evolving Process*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon
- Stevens, J. (1999) *Intermediate statistics: A modern approach*, (2nd ed.). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Thomlinson, R.J. (1984). Something works: Evidence from practice effectiveness studies. *Social Work, 29*(1), 51-56.
- Tracey, T.J.G., & Glidden-Tracey, C.E. (1999). Integration of theory, research design, measurement, and analysis: Toward a reasoned argument. *The Counseling Psychologist, 27*, 299-324.