

**Research Methods in Pastoral Counseling and
Marriage and Family
DM 6450**

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“There are three kinds of lies: Lies, Damn Lies and Statistics.”

Benjamin Disraeli

“If sufficiently tortured, data will confess to anything.”

Unknown

This online syllabus should be used to gain a better understanding of the content and focus of a course. The syllabus given out in the class may differ from this online version and its content supersedes that of the online syllabus.

Course Description

This course is a study of empirical research methods and their application to pastoral counseling and marriage and family therapy. Students completing the course will develop skills to understand common Pastoral Counseling and MFT research methods, how research methods are applied, and how to critique research in the field of counseling, religion, and mental health. Students will also be introduced to MFT effectiveness research and the place of research in MFT and Pastoral Counseling as disciplines. This course is designed to provide D.Min. in PC a foundation for structuring and managing their project in ministry.

Objectives

By the end of the term, students will:

- Understand the importance of research in pastoral counseling and marriage and family therapy.
- Be able to describe dominant research methods in pastoral counseling and marriage and family therapy.
- Know how to conduct literature searches through appropriate databases.
- Be able to interpret research methodology and statistical information in journal articles and evaluate conclusions drawn from these data.
- Be able to articulate a basic understanding how statistics are used in research methods.
- Be able to discuss the current literature documenting pastoral counseling and MFT effectiveness.

- Be able to discuss current research in religion and mental health.
- Be able to think through a research question and develop a preliminary research design using qualitative, quantitative or mixed research methods.

Texts

Sprenckle, D., Piercy, F. (Eds.). (2005). *Research methods in family therapy (2nd ed)*. New York: The Guilford Press.

Sprenckle, D. (ed.). (2003). *Effectiveness research in marriage and family therapy*. Washington, D.C.: AAMFT.

Required Reading

Patten, M. (2000). *Understanding research methods*. Los Angeles: Pryczak Publishing.

Pryczak, R. *Evaluating Research in Academic Journals: A Practical Guide to Realistic Education*. Los Angeles, CA: Pryczak Publishing Co., 1999.

JMFT articles and other readings as assigned below are on the Blackboard site.

Recommended Texts (Library Reserve)

Girden, E. *Evaluating Research Articles From Start to Finish*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1996.

Patten, M. (2000). *Proposing empirical research: A guide to fundamentals*. Los Angeles: Pryczak Publishing.

Galvan, J. L. (1999) *Writing literature reviews: A guide for students of the social and behavioral sciences*. Los Angeles, Pryczak Publishing.

Koenig, R. (2005). *Faith and Mental Health: Resources for Healing*. West Conshohocken, PA: Templeton Foundation.

Requirements

- **Two Journal Article Critiques (20% each, total 40 points)**

Articles for critique are on the Blackboard site for this course. Critiques should be a substantial review of assigned article and should demonstrate competent understanding of class content for the week. Critiques must be written in APA style. For instructions about evaluating articles, see Pryczak, *Evaluating research in academic journals*. **Maximum: 5 pages. Article to be**

reviewed:

Article 1

Werner-Wilson, R. (1997). Is therapeutic alliance influenced by gender in marriage and family therapy? Journal of Feminist Family Therapy, 9 (1), 3-16.

Article 2

Stith, S., Rosen, K., & McCollum, E. (2004) Treating intimate partner violence within intact couple relationships: Outcomes of multi-couple versus individual couple therapy. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, Vol 30(3), 305-318.

- **Outcome Study Outline (10%, 10 points)**

Each participant will summarize in no more than five double-spaced pages the results of outcome studies in MFT as reported in Sprenckle, 2003 and a summary primary findings in religion and mental health as presented in class. This document is not a formal essay, but a schematic. A reader should be able to quickly read this document and have a workable idea of the state of outcome research in MFT and primary findings in religion and mental health.

- **D.Min. Prospectus First Draft (50% or 50 points)**

Each participant will define a research problem or hypothesis and construct a formal research proposal to investigate the problem or hypothesis. This should take the form of an initial move toward your D.Min. Project. This draft should address the primary points required by the full prospectus, including: 1. A clear, concise statement of the problem or question in ministry, 2) A preliminary literature review related to the problem or question, 3) A preliminary biblical and theological foundation for the project, 4) A clear statement of method you will use to investigate the problem, and 5) A preliminary statement of how you will implement your project in ministry and evaluate its effectiveness. *Note this draft is not a binding commitment for a particular Project in Ministry—you can change your mind after submitting this draft.*

- **Course practice tests**

Practice tests are provided as a form of programmed learning for the class. While there is no grade assigned for these tests, the course requires that each student work through assigned practice tests at least twice (at intervals described in the syllabus). This is required to pass the class and is documented by a statement at the end of the class that the student has completed all practice tests as assigned.

Study Outline

All journal articles cited below can be downloaded from the course Blackboard site.

Introduction I

Listen to Lecture A

Reading:

Sprenkle & Piercy, Ch. 1
Patten, pp. 3-4

Introduction II

Listen to Lecture B & B1

Reading:

Sprenkle (2003) Chapter 1

Roth, A. R. & Fonagy, P. (2005). *What works for whom?: A critical review of psychotherapy research (2nd ed.)*. New York: Guilford Press. Ch 1-2.

Russell & Wegter-McNelly (2003). Science and theology: Mutual interaction. In *Bridging science and religion*, edited by Peters, T. & Bennett, G. Minneapolis: Fortress Press.

A. Research in a Theological Context

B. Science and Practice

Fundamentals

Listen to Lecture C & C1

Qualitative Analysis I

Listen to Lecture D

Reading:

Sprenkle & Piercy (2005) Ch. 3,4, 8 & 9

Davey, M., Stone Fish, L, Askew, J., & Robilla M. (2003). Parenting practices and the transmission of ethnic identity. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, 29, 195-208.

Statistical Concepts: Organizing Data

Listen to Lecture E

Statistical Concepts: Sampling & Comparing Data

Listen to Lecture F & F1

- **Complete Practice Test: Practice 1**

Mixed Methods I (Journal Article Review I Due)

Listen to Lecture G & H

Reading:

Sprenkle & Piercy (2005) Ch. 12 & 13

Chadi, L. A., Rafferty, J., & Pickard, J. (2003) The influence of caregiving stressors, social support, and caregiving appraisal on marital functioning among African American wife caregivers. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, 29, 479- 490.

Statistical Concepts: Measurement & Variability

Listen to Lecture I & J

Mixed Methods II

Listen to Lecture K

Reading:

Sprenkle & Piercy (2005) Ch. 14 & 15

Johnson, S. M., Makinen, J. A., & Milikin, J. W. (2001). Attachment injuries in couple relationships: A new perspective on impasses in couples therapy. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, 27, 145-155.

Statistical Concepts: Variability II: Normal Curve

Listen to Lecture L

- **Complete Practice Test: Practice 2 Measurement and Variability**

Outcomes: Religion and Mental Health

Listen to M & M1

Reading:

Koenig, H. G. (ed.) (1998). *Handbook of religion and mental health*. New York: Academic Press. Ch. 3 and 22. Can be downloaded from Blackboard

- **Complete Practice Test: Practice 3A Religion and Outcome Studies**

Statistical Concepts: Forming Hypotheses

Listen to Lecture N

Quantitative Methods: Clinical Trials

Listen to Lecture O

Reading:

Sprenkle & Piercy (2005), Ch. 16

Denton, W. H., Burleson, B. R., Clark, T.E., Rodrigues, C.P., & Hobbs, B. V. (2000). A randomized trial of emotion-focused therapy for couples in a training clinic. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, 26, 65-78.

- **Complete Practice Test: Practice 3 Normal Distribution and Hypothesis Testing**

Statistical Concepts: *t*-Test and Comparing Means

Listen to Lecture P

Quantitative Methods: Meta-Analysis (

Listen to Lecture Q

Reading:

Sprenkle & Piercy (2005), Ch. 17

Stith, S. M., Rosen, K. H., Middleton, K. A., Busch, A. L., Lundeberg, K., & Carlton, R. P. (2000). The intergenerational transmission of spouse abuse: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 62, 640-654.

Statistical Concepts: ANOVA

Listen to Lecture R

- **Complete Practice Test: 2006 Practice 4 t-Test and ANOVA**

Statistical Concepts: Correlation and Regression

Listen to Lecture S

(Second Journal Article Review due)

Reading:

Sprenkle & Piercy (2005), Ch. 19

Heim, S. C., & Snyder, D. K. (1991). Predicting depression from marital distress and attributional processes. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, 17, 67-72.

- **Complete Practice Test: Practice 5 Correlation and Regression**

Statistical Concepts: Non-Parametric Tests

Listen to Lecture T

- **Complete Practice Test: 2006 Practice 6 Chi Square and Last Things**

Outcome Studies

(Outcome Outline due)

Reading:

Sprenkle (2002), Ch. 12

Roth & Fonagy (2005) Ch. 16-17. **Blackboard site**

Critical Class Policies

Grade Scale and Philosophy

A	96.6-100
A-	93.6-96.5
B+	90.6-93.5
B	87.6-90.5
B-	85.6-87.5
C+	83.6-85.5
C	81.6-83.5
C-	79.6-81.5
D	70.6-79.5
F	Below 70.6

Individuals admitted to graduate study are expected to perform well consistently in academic work. This is translated into grades in the following way. Basic mastery of the body of knowledge required for a course at a level expected for graduate study results in scores in the B to B+ range. Grades of A- are granted for work which demonstrates: 1) basic mastery of the body of knowledge and 2) independent thought about the subject matter. Grades of A are granted for work which demonstrates: 1) mastery of the required body of knowledge, 2) independent thought about the subject matter, and 3) creative/integrative use of the material, exceptional writing and expression which integrates the material into a student's own system of thought, and/or exceptionally well done or articulated research.

Form for Writing Assignments

All papers submitted for grades must be written in APA approved style and be double-spaced.

- Major research papers, book reviews, etc. should include a cover sheet with the assignment title, your name, and the class for which you are writing.
- All sources used in writing assignments must be cited appropriately and according to APA style. ***Failure to cite sources is plagiarism. You must give credit for quotes and ideas used in your writing. Papers submitted for grades that demonstrate plagiarism will receive a failing grade, and students will be subject to the seminary policy regarding plagiarism.***

Inclusive Language is a Seminary Policy

Learning is fundamentally concerned with communication, self-expression, and personal and social transformation. Learning respects individuals, their feelings, their value and worth, and their particular potential for contribution to common knowledge and community virtue. Learning is fundamentally and intentionally inclusive.

Since all learning is inherently ethical and political, and theological discourse has been traditionally patriarchal and gender exclusive, the Seminary has established a policy, in the interest of constructing an inclusive and egalitarian community, that the language (symbols, metaphors) used in our class discussions and written work shall be gender inclusive and respectful of all persons and groups as valued human

creatures of God.

Racism also permeates our society and is detrimental to any learning environment. We need to use language, symbols, and metaphors that honor our commitment to racial inclusiveness.