

Marriage and Family Research
PCs 381-3
Spring 2009

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To contact outside of class, please use e-mail or home telephone number.

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.

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

Benjamin Disraeli

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

Unknown

“87.6% of all statistics are made up on the spot.”

Unknown

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 MFT research methods, how research methods are applied, and how to critique research in the field of marriage and family therapy and 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.

Objectives

By the end of the term, students will:

- Understand the importance of research in marriage and family therapy.
- Be able to describe dominant research methods in 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 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.

Core Competencies Addressed

6.1.1	Know the extant MFT/PCC literature, research, and evidence-based practice.
6.1.2	Understand research and program evaluation methodologies, both quantitative and qualitative, relevant to MFT/PCC and mental health services.
6.1.3	Understand the legal, ethical, and contextual issues involved in the conduct of clinical research and program evaluation.
6.2.1	Recognize opportunities for therapists and clients to participate in clinical research.
6.3.1	Read current MFT and PCC professional literature.
6.3.2	Use current MFT and PCC research to inform clinical practice.
6.3.3	Critique professional research and assess the quality of research studies and program evaluation in the literature.
6.3.4	Determine the effectiveness of clinical practice and techniques.
6.4.1	Evaluate knowledge of current clinical literature and its application.
6.5.1	Contribute to the development of new knowledge.

Texts

Locke, L. F., Silverman, S. J., & Spiruso, W. W. *Reading and Understanding Research (2nd ed.)*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

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

Required Reading From (also on library reserve)

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

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 library reference or reserved at the circulation desk.

Two study CDs are available for this class:

1. *Lecture CD or Blackboard site* includes all lecture notes for the course.
2. *Practice Test CD* includes practice questions for the final examination.

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: Pyczak Publishing.

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

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

Requirements

- **Two Journal Article Critiques (15% each, total 30 points)**

Article critique is due . 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 Pyczak, *Evaluating research in academic journals*. **Maximum: 5 pages. Article to be reviewed:**

Article 1, Due March 5.

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, Due April 23.

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.

- **200 word summaries of Sprenkle (2003) (15%, 15 points)**

Each week participant will summarize in no more than 200 words the assigned chapter in Sprenkle (2003). This may be presented as a brief essay or a “bullet-point” document that demonstrates a workable summary of the state of outcome research in the assigned area.

- **Research Project Proposal (Due: Last day of class) (30% or 30 points)**

Each participant will define a research problem or hypothesis and construct a formal research proposal to investigate the problem or hypothesis. **You may work with a group to develop a**

research proposal. If you work with a group, the proposal will be the group's proposal and each member will receive the same grade. Proposals MUST not exceed 2000 words, or about 6 double-spaced pages. You must be very focused, stick to the point, and shape your literature review to support the point as clearly and directly as possible. See appendix for more guidance.

Choose one of the following projects:

1. You are the director of a pastoral counseling or MFT agency. You see a particular need in the community that you believe would benefit from a new program of some kind. In order to fund this new program, you must obtain a grant. Your job in this assignment is to convince the reader they should give you the money you need for your agency's project and that you will be responsible in evaluating program outcome. Design your project is a grant application this should include:

- A statement of the problem or need
- A statement of what procedures you have used (or will use) to establish that need actually exists
- A literature review of what kinds of programs, therapies, or procedures have worked with this problem for others (or demonstrate through a literature review that no work has been done with this problem)
- Design and describe basic program that you believe will impact the problem, using the information developed in your literature review (be sure and include a preliminary budget)
- Outline how the program will be evaluated. This section is the primary body of your work that shows you learned something about research. Be clear and specific and describe:
 - *the methods you will use to evaluate the program,*
 - *how you will operationalize and measure the impact of the program,*
 - *what statistical analysis you will use to demonstrate effectiveness,*
 - *what outcomes you expect, and how evaluation outcomes will be used to justify the program, gain new funding, or used to improve the program.*
- Your grant proposal must be in APA style.

2. Pick a topic about which you have a question in MFT. Some examples: Does a new form of therapy work? Is X therapy better than Y for a particular problem or population? Do clients who are helped with specifically religiously based therapy fare better than those who receive no spiritual help? How do gay and lesbian clients experience straight therapists? Etc.

Consider what kind of research would be necessary to answer your question. Develop a proposal to do that research. Your proposal must be in APA style and subdivided into

- Abstract

A brief summary of your project and what you hope to accomplish. It should also include a very brief, very clear statement of your research question and hypothesis.

- Introduction and Literature Review

This should begin with your research question. It should also be as complete as possible and reflect good library research. It should focus on what work has already been completed in your proposed area of investigation and point out the need for your study. Refer to Galvan, *Writing Literature Reviews*, on reserve in library.) ***Use databases available in the library. Do not forget about Psychological Abstracts and PsychInfo. Confer with reference librarian as necessary.***

- Method

This should include a clear statement of your research hypothesis and the procedures you will use to accept or reject your hypotheses. Be sure that your method fits your research question and that procedures you expect to use fit your method. Show me in this section that you know what the method *is*, why it fits your question, and how you expect the method to resolve your research question). Be very specific about the steps of your research project—who will do what, when. Include a basic time-line outline that shows how your project will be completed, and an anticipated budget.

- Analysis

Outline procedures specifically: What coding, statistical and other procedures will you use to analyze and evaluate your data?

- Discussion

In a preliminary way, describe what you hope the outcome of the study will demonstrate and how it relates to larger issues in the field.

- Ethics and special concerns

Include a statement of how you will protect human rights and attend to implicit and explicit ethical issues related to your study.

Use Patten, *Proposing Empirical Research* to guide your work. Pay careful attention to examples in Appendices.

D.Min. students complete a preliminary draft of prospectus for project. Format is to be consistent with project proposed.

- **Final Examination on Research Methods and Statistical Concepts (25% or 25 points)**

The final examination is computerized and will be available in the library the week of finals. It a comprehensive examination of 100 multiple choice, fill in the blank, and short-answer questions. Be sure to sign up for a two-hour block on a test computer prior to the week of finals.

2009 Research Schedule

Feb. 5 **Introduction I (Lecture A)**

Reading:

Sprenkle & Piercy, Ch. 1

Patten, pp. 3-4

A. Introduction to Research Methods

B. Qualitative research and postmodern critique

Feb. 10 **Introduction II (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. **Library Reserve.**

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

A. Research in a Theological Context

B. Science and Practice

Feb. 12 **Fundamentals (Lecture C & C1)**

Reading:

Locke, Silverman, Spirduso, Ch. 1-4

A. The Nature of Research Reports/Research Articles

B. Research Ethics

Feb. 17 **Qualitative Analysis I (Lecture D)**

Reading

Locke, Silverman, Spirduso, 147-166.

(D.Min read Piercy & Sprenkle, Chs. 3, 4)

Due: 200 word summary, Sprenkle Chapter 2

Feb 19 **Statistical Concepts: Organizing Data (Lecture E)**

Due: 200 word summary, Sprenkle Chapter 3

Feb. 24 **Qualitative Analysis II**

Lecture/Demonstration of Qualitative Research

Reading:

Locke, Silverman, Spirduso, Ch. 8

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.

(D.Min. read Sprenckle & Piercy, Chs. 8 & 9)

Feb.26 (KMFT)

Mar 3 **Statistical Concepts: Sampling & Comparing Data (Lecture F & F1)**

Lecture

- **Practice Test: 2006 Practice 1**

Due: 200 word summary, Sprenkle Chapter 4

Mar 5 **Mixed Methods I (Lecture G & H)**

Reading:

Locke, Silverman, & Spiriduso, 166-170.

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.

(D.Min. read Sprenckle & Piercy Chs. 12 & 13)

Due: Journal Article Review I

Mar 10 **Statistical Concepts: Measurement; Variability (Lecture I & J)**

Lecture

Due: 200 word summary, Sprenkle Chapter 5

Mar 12 **Mixed Methods II (Lecture K)**

Reading:

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.

(D.Min. read Sprenkle & Piercy Ch. 5)

Mar 17 Statistical Concepts: Variability II: Normal Curve (Lecture L)

Lecture

- **Practice Test: 2006 Practice 2 Measurement and Variability**

Due: 200 word summary, Sprenkle Chapter 6

Mar 19 Outcomes: Religion and Mental Health (CD Lecture M & M1)

Reading:

Koenig, H. G. (ed.) (1998). *Handbook of religion and mental health*. New York: Academic Press. Ch. 3 and 22. **Library Reserve.**

- **Practice Test: 2006 Practice 3A Religion and Outcome Studies**

March 24 & 26 Spring Reading Days

Mar 31 Statistical Concepts: Forming Hypotheses (Lecture N)

Lecture

Due: 200 word summary, Sprenkle Chapter 7

Ap 2 Quantitative Methods: Clinical Trials (Lecture O)

Reading:

Locke, Silverman, & Spiriduso, 123-147

Denton, W. H., Burlison, 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.

(D.Min. read Sprenkle & Piercy Ch. 16)

- **Practice Test: 2006 Practice 3 Normal Distribution and Hypothesis Testing**

Due: 200 word summary, Sprenkle Chapter 8

Ap 7 Statistical Concepts: *t*-Test and Comparing Means (Lecture P)

Lecture

Ap 9 Maunday Thursday

Ap 14 **Quantitative Methods: Meta-Analysis (Lecture Q)**

Reading:

Locke, Silverman, Spirduso, Chapter 7

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.

(D.Min. read Sprenkle & Piercy Ch. 17)

Due: 200 word summary, Sprenkle Chapter 9

Ap 16 **Statistical Concepts: ANOVA (Lecture R)**

Lecture

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

Ap 21 Catch up day

Ap. 23 **Statistical Concepts: Correlation and Regression (Lecture S)**

Lecture

Due: 200 word summary, Sprenkle Chapter 10

Due: Journal Article 2

Ap 28 **Quantitative Methods: Correlation & Regression**

Reading:

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

(D.Min. read Sprenkle & Piercy Ch. 19)

Ap 30 **Statistical Concepts: Non-Parametric Tests (Lecture T)**

Lecture

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

May 5 **Outcome Studies**

Reading:

Sprenkle (2002), Ch. 12
Roth & Fonagy (2005) Ch. 16-17. **Library Reserve.**

Discussion

May 7 **Conclusion and sharing proposals**

Due: Research proposal

Your best resources for this assignment are:

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

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

D.Min. Students attend also to the seminary's policy for Prospectus and Project form, which requires sections on theological foundations and evaluation of the project.

*The guide below is a tool to help you assess whether your proposal covers necessary content. Your proposal should not be a "filled out" copy of this outline. Your proposal must be written in complete APA manuscript form. Entire proposal **MUST** not exceed 2000 words, or about 6 pages.*

1. The research problem (one paragraph—the research statement/goal/hypothesis should be one concise sentence
 - What observations, interests, problems or concerns have led you to your research question?
 - What is your question, hypothesis, or objective?
 - What outcome do you expect?
 - What theological and faith are at stake?

2. Literature Review (Concise—choose what is best to make your point in a maximum of 1000 word appropriately cited)
 - Findings of other critical studies in the line or research
 - Findings of studies that have some degree of relevance
 - A critique of methods of previous research
 - Conclusions drawn by other researchers
 - Applications of previous research to clinical practice
 - Relevant theological issues, pastoral practice issues, etc. that relate to study

Research Design (Design and Method, 3 & 4, should be no more than 500 words)

 - Propose a design appropriate for your study
 - Describe how it fits your particular study and context
 - Describe how you will implement the design

4. Research Method
 - Describe your sampling procedures and sampling logic
 - Describe your data collection procedures
 - Identify each instrument and variables it will measure

- Identify validity and reliability issues for instruments
 - Describe any special procedures you will use
 - Include a section on theological method and how you intend to integrate theology and religious issues with your research work
5. Data Analysis (plan for data analysis, 500 words maximum)
- Develop a plan for data analysis appropriate to our method
 - List hypotheses, questions, objectives and purposes
 - Indicate data needed to address each one and measures that will yield the data
 - Describe statistical methods you will use to analyze the data
 - Check that you actually will be able to test your hypotheses, answer your questions, or accomplish your objectives and purposes
6. Protection of Human Subjects Section: State how you will do this within ethical guidelines
7. Time Line Section: Provide a realistic and preliminary time line for each step of your research project.

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.

Set in Stone Expectations: A revised ethos.

- Assignments are due on the day they are assigned.
- Given the intensive nature of this class, late assignments will be graded down one letter grade per day, beginning the day after the assignment is due.
- Late assignments will not be accepted past two days overdue.
- Reading and discussion are expected of all participants.
- As per seminary policy, an incomplete will be granted only because of serious personal or family problems or a major illness. Procrastination and poor planning are not generally acceptable as illness. While these may be personal problems, they do not qualify as the kind of circumstantial disruption of life that will qualify for an incomplete.

Attendance

Learning is a complex activity that requires conceptual and experiential participation by those who wish to learn. Student attendance and participation is fundamental to the way the learning environment is structured for this course. Attendance and participation is required to earn a passing grade. While circumstances may require an adult learner to miss class occasionally, absence from more than 10% of the

classroom experience will affect student learning and (consequently) the student's grade. Extreme circumstances, such as health problems, family concerns, etc. must be discussed with the professor *prior* to multiple missed classes. Students unable to attend at least 75% of classes are advised to drop the class prior to the registrar's WP deadline, or receive a failing grade.

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.
- Weekly assignments should include at the top of the first page your *name, title of the assignment, and the date the assignment is due*. These papers are to be folded in half (vertically) with your name and mailbox number on the outside. This allows returning them to you through campus mail.
- 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.