

THE UNIVERSITY OF LETHBRIDGE  
FACULTY OF EDUCATION

**ED 5712 COUNSELLING PSYCHOLOGY: RESEARCH  
METHODS**  
**Fall, 2019**

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**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**

Gall, M. D., Gall, J. P., & Borg, W.R. (2007). *Educational research: An introduction* (8<sup>th</sup> Ed.). Toronto, ONT: Allyn and Bacon.

**Topic Outline**

1. Introduction
  - A. The nature of counseling research
2. Planning a Research Study
  - B. Developing a Research Proposal
  - C. Ethical, Legal, and Human Relations Issues in Research
  - D. Reviewing the Literature
3. Research Methods
  - E. Statistical Techniques
  - F. Selecting a Sample
  - 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 Design
  - J. Non-Experimental Research
    - i. Descriptive and Causal-Comparative Designs
    - ii. Correlational Designs
  - K. Experimental Research
5. Qualitative Research Design
  - L. Case Study Research
  - M. Qualitative Research Traditions

## **COURSE ASSIGNMENTS:**

**Critique of Contrasting Papers:                      20%**  
**Due: October 1, 2019**

Search the journals in your area of interest. Locate and copy one paper from each end of the research continuum. Critique your selected papers as suggested below. Write a concise summary of your critiques (i.e., no more than 2 pages per paper; point form; refer to highlighted portions of the paper rather than copy out extracts, etc).

Select a partner. During class time, discuss your selected papers/critiques. Provide feedback to one another regarding the appropriateness, accuracy of your observations. Give a copy of the articles to your partner before class so that he/she has time to understand your critiques and provide feedback.

The following week, hand in your critiques. Attach the papers. Make your references to the points in the paper very explicit (i.e., highlight).

## **Critically Reviewing Journal Articles**

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 Reflection Paper: 20%**  
**Length: 2 - 5 pages**  
**On or before Due: November 19, 2019**

General Objectives:

1. To have a clear understanding of how research is created and deployed.
2. To understand the rigour and the intricacies of a research agenda and how it is presented/disseminated.

The general purpose of this assignment is to require you to investigate and understand how research is conceptualized, deployed, reported, and disseminated.

Description:

You are to select **ONE** of the following options:

**1. Thesis Colloquium / Thesis Defense:**

You are to attend either a thesis colloquium or a thesis defense. Note the following conditions:

- a. Describe the setting.
- b. What occurred?
- c. What were the types of questions asked of the student?
- d. What were some of the comments directed toward the student?
- e. What did you find useful?
- f. What surprised you?
- g. What did not surprise you?

In your written assignment, please address the above-cited questions. This is not an inclusive list. You may discuss/include more, if you so wish.

## **OR**

### **2. Interview a Professor/Researcher:**

You are to interview a professor or researcher of your choice. Be sure to address the following points:

- a. What sort of research agenda does he/she pursue?
- b. How they go about their research agenda (i.e., funding sources, external resources, graduate students, collaboration with other academics, background to research, etc)?
- c. What sort of timelines do they set for themselves?
- d. How do they disseminate their findings (i.e., publications, conferences, institutional reports, etc)?
- e. How do they “feel” about research?
- f. Through your discussion, what did you find useful?
- g. What surprised you?
- h. What did not surprise you?

In your written assignment, please address the above-cited questions. Again, this list is not inclusive. Feel free to discuss/include more, if you so wish.

**In class participation: 10%**

You must come to class each week prepared to discuss the assigned reading(s). You also must have something to say and contribute to the class about what you have read. Every week, you will be evaluated on your in-class contributions. These evaluations will be based on the quality, as opposed to quantity of your comments.

**Research Design: 50%**  
**Due: TBD**

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. Originality is always welcomed, but is not a primary expectation until the Doctoral level. Therefore, look at 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:

1. *Introduction*: 10 marks
  - a. Overview of the research
  - b. Research question
  - c. Hypothesis/hypotheses
2. *Literature Review*: 10 marks
  - a. General to specific
  - b. Leading research in the area
  - c. Recent publications/contributions
3. *Method*: 20 marks
  - a. Participants
  - b. Instruments/materials
  - c. Procedures
  - d. Method(s) of analysis
4. *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 Faculty of Education master's level 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

### **Student Conduct**

Students are subject to the student discipline policy for academic and non-academic offences in accordance with the University Calendar ([www.uleth.ca/ross/academic-calendar/sgs](http://www.uleth.ca/ross/academic-calendar/sgs)).

There is a 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 must be provided by a relevant professional (e.g., doctor).

Additionally, in the Faculty of Education graduate programs, students are required to adhere to the conduct expectations as stipulated in Faculty of Education policies, and the Standards of Practice/Conduct, Code of Ethics, and/or the Code of Professional Conduct for the field, as noted below.

#### *ATA Code of Professional Conduct*

[http://www.teachers.ab.ca/About the ATA/UpholdingProfessionalStandards/ProfessionalConduct/Pages/CodeofProfessionalConduct.aspx](http://www.teachers.ab.ca/About%20the%20ATA/UpholdingProfessionalStandards/ProfessionalConduct/Pages/CodeofProfessionalConduct.aspx)

#### *Standards of Professional Conduct for Master of Education Students:*

<http://www.uleth.ca/graduate-studies/master-education/resources/beginning-your-program/professional-conduct>

#### *College of Alberta Psychologists Standards of Practice:*

<http://www.cap.ab.ca/Portals/0/pdfs/StandardsOfPractice.pdf>

*Canadian Code of Ethics for Psychologists:*

<http://www.cpa.ca/aboutcpa/committees/ethics/codeofethics/>

*Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association Code of Ethics:*

<http://www.ccpa-accp.ca>

### **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.

### **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.
- 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.