TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY-CORPUS CHRISTI

EDFN 5301 - Introduction to Research
Summer 2012
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Course Description
This course is designed to be an introduction to the process of planning and implementing educational research using qualitative and quantitative methods. Our primary focus will be on designing quality research projects that demonstrate rigorous conceptual thinking. If the design is weak, your findings, and therefore your conclusions would also be weak, no matter how sophisticated your data collection or analysis might be. In this class, we will be discussing limits and possibilities of qualitative and quantitative methods in the research literature and how that can be applied to your individual research projects. It is more important to me that you understand the concept than memorize and regurgitate for me in midterm and final exams. Therefore, this class would be focused on testing your understanding, critical thinking, and application of concepts. To respond to different learning styles, this class will often depart from traditional lecture format and integrate discussion, active student participation, and games to make abstract concepts more relevant and meaningful.

Rationale
All educators are either practitioners or consumers of research. It is important that students of education know and understand the elements of research in order to be able to evaluate critically and/or conduct research to enhance one's skills and advance the knowledge of the field. This course will provide the student with a basic framework for understanding and evaluating educational research studies. It will also provide knowledge of the various types of research designs used in educational research and the procedures for conducting research studies. The course is applicable for all students who will make professional use of educational research or conduct research studies.

Textbook

Bhattacharya, K. (2008). *Introduction to research methods in education: A student handbook*. Corpus Christi, TX: Bhattacharya. (Will be handed out in face-to-face meeting at the beginning of semester, on Tuesday July 14, 2011 at 5 pm at Bay Hall 112. Please bring $25.00 for this text. If you cannot make it to this meeting, then pick up the text directly from Dr. Bhattacharya or Anita Garcia in Faculty Center. Cash or check will be accepted.)
Supplemental reading distributed electronically or in class when deemed necessary

**Course Objectives**
- Identify various forms of educational research approaches and designs
- Summarize and critique research articles
- Generate research purpose and questions
- Identify and implement appropriate sampling strategies for diverse research purposes
- Broaden the scope and understanding of scientific inquiry
- Identify and resolve of issues related to earliest stages of designing research
- Execute quantitative and qualitative approaches to research design, data collection, and analysis

The course is also designed to meet the following CACREP Standards II-G-8-a-f:

RESEARCH AND PROGRAM EVALUATION—studies that provide an understanding of research methods, statistical analysis, needs assessment, and program evaluation, including all of the following:

a. The importance of research in advancing the counseling profession;

b. research methods such as qualitative, quantitative, single-case designs, action research, and outcome-based research;

c. statistical methods used in conducting research and program evaluation;

d. principles, models, and applications of needs assessment, program evaluation, and the use of findings to effect program modifications;

e. the use of research to inform evidence-based practice; and

f. ethical and culturally relevant strategies for interpreting and reporting the results of research and/or program evaluation studies.

The course meets CACREP standards for the following Specialty areas in Counseling:

**Clinical Mental Health Counseling**
- I-1: The learner understands how to critically evaluate research relevant to the practice of clinical mental health counseling.

**School Counseling**
- I-1: The learner understands how to critically evaluate research relevant to the practice of school counseling.
- I-5: The learner understands the outcome research data and best practices identified in the school counseling research literature.
- J-3: The learner analyzes and uses data to enhance school counseling programs.

**Addictions Counseling**

- I-1: The learner understands how to critically evaluate research relevant to the practice of addiction counseling.
- I-2: The learner knows models of program evaluation for addiction counseling treatment and prevention programs

**Major Learning Outcomes:**

Students will have the knowledge and understanding of research methods such as qualitative, quantitative, single-case designs, action research, and outcome-based research.

**Secondary Learning Outcomes:**

- Students will have the knowledge and understanding of statistical concepts, including scales of measurement, measures of central tendency, indices of variability, shapes and types of distributions, and correlations, as evidenced by participating in discussions, taking midterms, quizzes, final exam, and the related learning exercises in the required textbook. (II-G-8-C, SC J-3)
- Students will have the knowledge and understanding of the importance of research in advancing the counseling profession, as evidenced by participating in discussions, taking midterms, quizzes, final exam, and the related learning exercises in the required textbook. (II-G-8-a)
- Students will have the knowledge and understanding of statistical methods used in conducting research and program evaluation, as evidenced by participating in discussions, taking midterms, quizzes, final exam, and the related learning exercises in the required textbook. (II-G-8-b)
- Students will have the knowledge and understanding of the use of research to inform evidence-based practice, as evidenced by participating in discussions, taking midterms, quizzes, final exam, and the related learning exercises in the required textbook. (II-G-8-e, CMHC I-1, SC I-1, SC I-5, A I-1)
- Students will have the knowledge and understanding of the principles, models, and applications of needs assessment, program evaluation, and the use of findings to effect program modifications, as evidenced by participating in discussions, taking midterms, quizzes, final exam, and the related learning exercises in the required textbook. (II-G-8-d)
- Students will have the knowledge and understanding of ethical and culturally relevant strategies for interpreting and reporting the results of research and/or program evaluation studies, as evidenced by participating in discussions, taking midterms, quizzes, final exam, and the related learning exercises in the required textbook. (II-G-8-f)
General Expectations
1. This is a graduate level class and as such your conduct in class should reflect accordingly. This means that you will come to class prepared, complete all the assignments, and not request extra-credit assignments at the end of the semester should your grade be below your expectations. There will be NO extra credit assignments under any circumstances. We are in a multicultural learning environment. I expect that you remain aware of and sensitive to educational research issues emerging from multiple perspectives and integrate into your own as you construct your arguments in class and in your assignments.
2. This class requires you to invest time for preparation, assignments, and application of critical concepts in educational research. You will need to stay on top of things in order to perform well. If you are offering me multiple excuses for your inability to hand in assignments on time, attend all classes, and prepare adequately, then you should reconsider whether this is an appropriate time for you to take this class.
3. There are some basic competencies that I expect you will have in order to perform well in this class. These are:
   a. Ability to proof read your assignments before submitting
   b. Ability to cite references when making general and/or specific statements that are not entirely your own
   c. Ability to communicate effectively when you do not understand the instruction or expectations about assignments
   d. Ability to connect to the Internet, download required materials, and post required materials as needed. I will not entertain excuses emerging from last minute computer troubles. So plan ahead and have back up plans in place should something go wrong.
   e. Should you miss a class or come in late, it is your responsibility to catch up on what has been covered during your absence. I will not repeat my instruction individually to people who are late, tardy, or absent during instruction.
4. This class is web-based online class. This means all communication to the class will be done via online communication. Please make sure that you check your blackboard email regularly for class updates.

Specific Class Policies
The following outlines specific class policies in order to ensure a positive and professional learning environment.

1. Attendance and Participation
There will be one mandatory meeting face-to-face on Tuesday, July 12th in Bay Hall room 112. After that, the class will be entirely online. While you might be an independent learner, and perhaps a strong performer, the research is consistent on the value of social learning and reviewing difficult concepts face-to-face. Your respectful and meaningful participation in online discussions will be required for your final grade.
2. Tardiness and Courtesy to Peers
I see us as professional scholars and therefore we should treat our learning environment with professional respect. All face-to-face class meetings will start on time which will be announced in advance. All online class discussions and chats should be attended on time. There will be no exceptions. I will NOT negotiate participation at the end of the semester. Make sure you communicate with me if you have any extenuating circumstances.

3. Pagers and cell phones must be turned off during face-to-face class meetings.

4. Special Accommodations
It is the policy of the Texas A & M Corpus Christi’s to accommodate students with disabilities pursuant to federal law, state law, and the University's commitment to equal educational opportunities. Any student with a disability who needs accommodation, for example in seating placement or in arrangements for examinations, should inform the instructor at the beginning of the course with a letter from Disability Services in Driftwood 101 (361-825-5816). I will not be able to make accommodations without a letter from disability services.

Texas A & M Corpus Christi does not discriminate on the basis of disability in the recruitment and admission of students, the recruitment and employment of faculty and staff, and the operation of any of its programs and activities, as specified by federal laws and regulations. The student has the responsibility of informing the course instructor (at the beginning of the course) of any disabling condition, which will require modification to avoid discrimination. Faculty is required by law to provide "reasonable accommodation" to students with disabilities, so as not to discriminate on the basis of that disability. Student responsibility primarily rests with informing faculty at the beginning of the semester and in providing authorized documentation through designated administrative channels.

5. Professional Conduct and Academic Honesty
Professional conduct is expected in this course. Professional conduct includes, among others, interactions with peer colleagues, faculty, timely completion of assigned tasks and responsibilities; adherence to professional ethical standards; and adherence to University policies regarding plagiarism. Cheating, plagiarism and other forms of academic honesty will result in disciplinary actions.

All written work submitted must be the student’s original work and conform to the guidelines of the American Psychological Association (APA) available online and via their publications. This means that any substantive ideas, phrases, sentences, and/or any published ideas must be properly referenced to avoid even the appearance of plagiarism. Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to, the use, by paraphrase or direct quotation, of the published or unpublished work of another person without full or clear acknowledgment. It also includes the unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or agency in the selling of term papers of other academic materials. It is the student’s responsibility to know all relevant university policies.
concerning plagiarism. Any documented cases of plagiarism can and will result in dismissal from the course with a failing grade, and may result in other more serious sanctions by the College of Education.

6. Diversity Statement
The department of Educational Administration and Research aspires to create a safe and diversity-sensitive learning environment that respects the rights, dignity, and welfare of students, faculty, and staff. Diversity means the fair representation of all groups of individuals, the inclusion of minority perspectives and voices, and appreciation of different cultural and socioeconomic group perspectives. We aspire to foster and maintain an atmosphere that is free from discrimination, harassment, exploitation, or intimidation. Departmental courses will strive to provide opportunity for all students to discuss issues of diversity including, but not limited to, ethnicity, gender, disability, and sexual orientation.

7. Assignment Expectations
All assignments are mandatory and must be typed, double spaced, written in Times New Roman 12 point font with 1 inch margins, and adhere to the guidelines as stated by the American Psychological Association (APA).

Assignments should be submitted on time. If you must miss a deadline, you must let me know before the due date of the assignment. Late work will not be accepted. There will be NO exceptions.

If you fail to notify me of any problems associated with your work (grading error, missing graded assignment) within one class meeting after I have returned graded materials, then I will not be able to negotiate an alternate arrangement with you. Therefore, stay on top of things, monitor your work, and make sure that you talk to me immediately if there are problems.

8. Exams
If you have to miss the midterm or the final exam due to extenuating circumstances, you must let me know before the exam date to make alternate arrangements.

9. End of Semester Negotiations
I will not entertain any end of semester negotiations about grades. However, I will support you in every way possible during the semester to ensure that you perform well in the class if you communicate any difficulties or concerns with the material with me. Therefore, I recommend that you take full advantage of a supportive learning environment designed to ensure your success. Your grade in the course is a direct reflection of your engagement in your own learning process.

Please understand that, despite the strict expectations outlined above, I do care about you as individuals and am always willing to listen and be flexible in order to help you have a successful semester if you are faced with unusually difficult circumstances. Please be in touch with me if you want a conference to explain your circumstances. I believe that most professors share this
attitude, but often, we do not know enough about our students to be of help to them. Although it may seem difficult to reach out, it is up to you to seek support when you need it. **Do not wait** until you have accumulated absences, fallen behind, and failed to do the required work to discuss any personal difficulties that are affecting your performance.

**Grading Policy**

- 90-100 = A
- 80-89.9 = B
- 70-79.9 = C
- 60-69.9 = D
- 59.9 and below = F (fail)

**Course Requirements**

- Chapter reflections (2 x 5) 20 points
- Quizzes (5 x 3) 15 points
- Discussion and Participation 20 points
- Midterm 20 points
- Final exam 25 points
- **Total** 100 points
**Chapter reflections**
Every week before the assigned deadline, you are expected to post in Blackboard

- three main ideas that you are taking away from the chapter(s)
- one thing that surprised you, or you didn’t understand, or a question that you might have of that reading(s)

Then you are to react to all your classmates post thoughtfully and engage critically with what they are posting.

These postings will be done on Blackboard in our class discussion space. I will **not** entertain any excuses about last minute computer troubles, crashes, etc. You will need to plan ahead of time and have an alternate plan should your computer crash or lose your assignment or fail to post your reflections. Failure to submit a reflection will be **marked late** and late penalties will be assigned to the reflection.

These postings can be a couple of paragraphs in length but need to be stated in your words instead of cutting and pasting from the text, notes, or from others’ post in order to avoid plagiarism. I am looking for your understanding and areas of difficulty in these reflections.

I will provide you with general feedback on your reflections and will provide a grade twice in the semester. This will give you an opportunity to align your reflections according to the expectations outlined in the Chapter Reflections Rubric.

**Quizzes**
There will be 3 quizzes worth 5 percent points each during the course of the semester. These quizzes will have a date assigned to them when they will be available to you and a closing date when you will cease to have access. Make sure you take the quiz within the time you are granted access. Quizzes are open books, open notes. I expect you to understand the material and not regurgitate information. Also, I would be happy to discuss any questions you might have with any upcoming reading before any quizzes, midterm, and the final exam.

**Discussion and Participation**
You will be expected to participate in class discussions online. Class discussions will be based on your performance in responding to your peers weekly in their chapter reflections and also based on your responses to questions that I prompt for discussion.

**Midterm**
There will be an online midterm that you will be expected to take during the middle of the semester. The midterm will be open book and open notes similar to the quizzes.
Final Exam
This will be a comprehensive final exam covering all topics from the beginning of the semester to the end. However, the exam will not test you on your ability to recall information based on memorization, but rather assess your understanding of the content covered.

Course Calendar
The dates on the left hand side indicate the latest date when you should post your chapter reading reflections.

July 9          Introduction Online
Introduce who you are, what stage of your program you are in, research interest if you have any. Attach a picture of yourself or a link to a picture that you might like so people can associate you with a visual. Respond to each others’ posts.

By July 12th, use the library’s online search or in-person search to find out primary peer reviewed research articles that are in the area of your interest. Post your reflections reading at least three articles what the key findings are and the implications of those findings. What does it make you think of this topic as a potential topic for research? How does it create interest for you?

By July 13th, respond to your peers’ reflections and research.

July 13          Face-to-face meeting Bay Hall 112, 5 pm – 8 pm
Bhattacharya handbook Unit 1 and 2.
Search through the Internet to get an understanding of qualitative and quantitative research. Think of research questions that can sound qualitative. Think of research questions that can sound quantitative. Reflect on your understanding of qualitative and quantitative research. Post an example of a qualitative research question. Post an example of a quantitative research question. Complete postings by July 14th.

By July 15th, respond to your peers’ posts.

July 16          Quiz 1
Creswell - Chapter 1: The Process of Conducting Research
Chapter 2: Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches
Bhattacharya Handbook, Unit 3
In the discussion space, reflect on 3 main ideas that you are taking away from the EACH reading. In addition, list something that surprised you, or you didn’t understand, or a question that you might have of that reading(s).

Keep checking announcements to see if I am posting new information, handout, and sample exercises in order to enhance your understanding.

By July 18th, respond to your peers’ posts.

July 21

Quiz 2

July 23

Creswell, Chapter 3. Identifying a Research Problem
Chapter 5: Specifying a Purpose and Research Question or Hypotheses
Bhattacharya Handbook Unit 4

In the discussion space, reflect on 3 main ideas that you are taking away from the EACH reading. In addition, list something that surprised you, or you didn’t understand, or a question that you might have of that reading(s).

This week, there is no need to reflect on your peers’ posts. I want you to understand the material and prepare for the midterm.

July 26

Midterm Exam

July 30

Chapter 6: Collecting Quantitative Data
Bhattacharya Handbook Unit 6

In the discussion space, reflect on 3 main ideas that you are taking away from the EACH reading. In addition, list something that surprised you, or you didn’t understand, or a question that you might have of that reading(s).

Keep checking announcements to see if I am posting new information, handout, and sample exercises in order to enhance your understanding.

This week, there is no need to reflect on your peers’ posts. I want you to understand the material and prepare for the final quiz.
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| August 5   | Chapter 7: Analyzing and Interpreting Quantitative Data  
Bhattacharya Handbook, Unit 9  
In the discussion space, reflect on 3 main ideas that you are taking away from the **EACH reading. In addition**, list something that surprised you, or you didn’t understand, or a question that you might have of that reading(s).  
**This week, there is no need to reflect on your peers’ posts. I want you to understand the material and prepare for the final exam.** |
| August 9   | Final Exam                     |