EDFN 5301 – Introduction to Research

Instructor Dr. Nancy J Smith

Office Faculty Center 221

Office Hours Tuesday & Wednesday 1:00 – 4:00 or by appointment

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I. COURSE DESCRIPTION:
The graduate level course is offered in support of graduate degree programs in the College of Education. It is designed to introduce the student to the fundamentals of research in education and applied behavioral sciences. That is, students will explore what research involves, the various types of research, the techniques for conducting research studies, ethical behavior in the conduct of research, and research in educational settings. Descriptive and inferential statistics will be presented in the context of the research study. Social issues related to educational research will also be presented and discussed.

II. RATIONAL:
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.

III. STATE ADOPTED PROFICIENCY DOMAINS:
The following state adopted proficiencies for mid-management administrators are covered in this course.

- Learner-Centered Leadership
- Learner-Centered Professional Development

IV. TEXES COMPETENCIES: N/A

V. COURSE OBJECTIVES AND LEARNING OUTCOMES:
Upon successful completion of the course, the student should be able to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:

1. The historical and social antecedents of research studies.
2. The basic skills required to comprehend and apply research studies in a variety of educational and clinical settings.
3. The professional skills and competencies that researchers and users of research studies must master.
4. The basic measurement, statistical, and research skills needed to understand and conduct research studies.
5. The different types of research designs and their appropriate usage.
6. Ethical standards and considerations in conducting research in an educational setting.
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.

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.
• Students will have the knowledge and understanding of the importance of research in advancing the counseling profession.
• Students will have the knowledge and understanding of statistical methods used in conducting research and program evaluation.
• Students will have the knowledge and understanding of the use of research to inform evidence-based practice.
• 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.
• 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.

VI. Course Topics:
• Process and approaches of research
• Identifying a research problem
• Literature reviews
• Research purpose and questions or hypothesis
• Collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data
• Research designs
• Reading research reports

VII. Required Texts:
EndNote Software. [This is OPTIONAL] Available FREE for download from http://it.tamucc.edu/downloads. You will need your Island ID and Password. The product key is on the page with the download link.
Resources:
Bell Library – http://rattler.tamucc.edu/
EndNote – http://endnote.com/
OWL at Purdue – http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/

VIII. Instructional Methods and Activities:
• Lecture & discussion
• Group assignments
• Individual assignments
• Project-based learning

IX. Evaluation, Grade Assignment, and Deliverables:
Grades will be calculated based on A = 90-100%; B = 80-89.9%; C = 70-79.9%; D = 60-69.9%; F < 60%

Discussion and Participation 35%
Weekly Quizzes / Steps in Research Process 30%
Final Research Design 35%

Deliverables:
• Weekly Research log
  o Reactions to readings and in class discussions
• Weekly Quizzes
  o 5-10 questions from textbook & lecture material and one open ended question
  o Step 1: Identifying a research problem
     ▪ Research topics list – 10 topic choices – ranked in order of most interested
  o Step 2: Reviewing the literature
     ▪ Annotated bibliography – 2 qualitative and 2 quantitative research articles
  o Step 3: Specifying a purpose for the research
     ▪ Part I – Research purpose
     ▪ Part II – Research questions and hypothesis
  o Step 4: Collecting data
  o Step 5: Analyzing and interpreting data
• Final research proposal design
  Will be a culmination of your weekly discussion and open ended quiz questions
  o Step 6: Final research design
  o Group research design presentation

Requirements for Deliverables:
Instructions for each assignment will be provided in that week’s module folder
X. Course Expectations and Policies:

1. Attendance and Participation: This class requires you to invest time for preparation, assignments, and application of critical concepts in research. You will need to stay on top of things in order to perform well. While you might be an independent learner, and perhaps a strong performer, the research is consistent on the value of social learning. Your respectful and meaningful participation in discussions will be required for your final grade.

2. Competencies: 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 work before submitting
   b. Ability to use APA style to write and 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 transmit required materials as needed. I will not entertain excuses emerging from last minute computer troubles. Therefore, plan ahead and have back up plans in place should something go wrong.

3. Disabilities Accommodations: The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please call or visit Disability Services at (361) 825-5816 in Corpus Christi Hall 116. If you are a returning veteran and are experiencing cognitive and/or physical access issues in the classroom or on campus, please contact the Disability Services office for assistance at (361) 825-5816.

4. 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 dishonesty 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 and the University.

5. Diversity Statement: The department 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.

6. End of Semester Negotiations: 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. However, I will not entertain any end of semester negotiations about grades, and your grade in the course is a direct reflection of your engagement in your own learning process.

Please understand that, despite the strict expectations and policies outlined above, I do care about you as an individual 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. I encourage you to get in touch with me if you want a conference to explain your circumstances. 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.