

FCHD 6380: Survey of Marriage and Family Therapy Research

Fall 2016 - Syllabus

Tuesday 9:00 – 11:30 AM

Family Life Center – Conference Room

INSTRUCTOR:

Ryan B. Seedall, Ph.D.

Room 201 – Family Life Center

Office Hours: By Appointment

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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course addresses research in the field of marriage and family therapy. Whether you intend to be a clinician or academic, understanding and generating clinically-relevant research is extremely important. This class is designed to help you gain the foundation for research competency. Specifically, you will gain a conceptual understanding of the research process as well as the ability to conceptualize and write about your ideas.

REQUIRED TEXT AND MATERIALS:

Meltzoff, J. (1998). *Critical thinking about research: Psychology and related fields*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Sprenkle, D. H., & Piercy, F. P. (2005). *Research methods in family therapy* (2nd ed.). New York: Guilford. (Available electronically through the library)

Strongly Recommended: APA Publication Manual, 6th Edition

Assigned Readings

CORE OUTCOMES:

- **Knowledge:** Understand and remember key concepts, terms, and relationships related to research process.
- **Application:** Know how to use and apply principles related to research.
- **Integration:** Be able to integrate core concepts and principles related to research with other concepts related to your clinical work with families.
- **Human Dimension:** Be able to identify ways that being a good consumer of research can benefit your clinical work and ultimately your clients.

- **Caring:** Care about the potential implications of clinically relevant research for your work with individuals, couples, and families.
- **Learning How to Learn:** Be able to identify ways to continue learning about research and how to integrate it into your practice.

CORE IDEA OBJECTIVES:

- Developing specific skills, competencies, and points of view needed by professionals in the field most closely related to this course
- Developing creative capacities (writing, inventing, designing, performing in art, music, drama, etc.)
- Developing skill in expressing oneself orally or in writing
- Learning to *analyze* and *critically evaluate* ideas, arguments, and points of view

CORE COMPETENCIES:

- **Know the extant MFT literature, research, and evidence-based practice** (Conceptual – 6.1.1)
- **Understand research methodologies, both quantitative and qualitative, relevant to MFT** (Conceptual – 6.1.2)
- **Understand the legal, ethical, and contextual issues involved in the conduct of clinical research** (Conceptual – 6.1.3)
- **Recognize opportunities for therapists and clients to participate in clinical research** (Perceptual – 6.2.1)
- **Read current MFT and other professional literature** (Executive – 6.3.1)
- **Use current MFT and other research to inform clinical practice** (Executive – 6.3.2)
- **Critique professional research and assess the quality of research studies in the literature** (Executive – 6.3.3)
- **Determine the effectiveness of clinical practice and techniques** (Executive – 6.3.4)
- **Evaluate the knowledge of current clinical literature and its application** (Evaluative – 6.4.1)
- **Contribute to the development of new knowledge** (Professional – 6.5.1)

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

1. **Design-a-Study Assignment (20 points; CC 6.1.2):** Throughout the semester, I will present a variety of research methodologies to you. I will explain the methodology and then provide you with some examples. The week after I discuss a methodology, a student in the class will have the opportunity to propose an idea for a *clinically relevant project* using that methodology. I anticipate this to take about 15-20 minutes total, which will consist of you talking about your research question, the key elements of your methodology, and then brainstorming with the class about how to execute the study. You will need to address the key elements of the design, the sample, procedure, and measures.

2. **Journal Reviews (4 @ 10 points each; CC 6.1.1, 6.3.1):** One of the most important steps to being a good consumer of research and also to generating useful research is to be familiar with existing research. In addition, there is a steep learning curve for doing your own research. The only way you can do it is to know what has already been done. As a result, you will write three one-page reviews of your literature searches from 2005-2016 in four MFT journals (JMFT, AJFT, and FP). I want a brief (~one page) reaction to the articles that you found, especially any articles of particular interest and how they might influence your research topic.
3. **IRB Training (10 points; CC 6.1.3):** It is really important to understand the ethical obligations associated with doing research. Before doing research, you are required to submit a proposal to an institutional review board (IRB) designed to prevent the exploitation or harm of research subjects. Training is also required. This assignment consists of completing the training found at <http://irb.usu.edu/htm/training/certification-procedures>. You will need to register and then complete the appropriate module(s) and bring in the certificate of completion.
4. **Article Critique (50 points; CC 6.3.3):** Another way that you demonstrate your understanding and competence with respect to research is to be able to appropriately and accurately critique research articles. It is also an excellent way for you to be a good consumer of research. As a result, you will choose a research article of interest to you and then write a four page critique of the article.
5. **Clinical Research Portfolio (75 points; CC 6.2.1, 6.3.2, 6.3.4, 6.4.1):** This is a clinically-focused assignment designed to help you integrate research with your clinical work. I want you to compile a portfolio consisting of 20 research articles that contain specific information that will help you become a better therapist. Of these, only seven can be theoretical (non-empirical). Although it is fine to have articles that address the treatment of specific presenting problems and populations, I want to make sure you also have articles that address the processes and interventions of therapy. You will need to provide an annotated bibliography, where you provide the APA reference, summarize the article, and then explain specific implications that will help you in your therapy. You will also write a two page conclusion that evaluates the state of clinical research in MFT and particular areas that need to be further addressed.
6. **Rough Draft Chapters (2 @ 15 points each):** Because the research proposal is such a large (and often overwhelming) project, you will complete and turn in rough drafts of your literature review and your methods section prior to the overall proposal being due. This will help you get feedback from me whether you are on the right track and what else is needed for you to achieve an appropriate score on the final research proposal.
7. **Research Proposal (100 points; 6.5.1):** As this core competency states, you need to be able to contribute to the “development of new knowledge” in our field. You can prove your ability to do this by conceptualizing and writing about research that can improve the field and/or your clinical work. As a result, you will be writing a 13-17 page research

proposal, consisting of a title page, a 5-7 page detailed outline of your literature review, a 5-7 page methods section, and a reference section (2-3 pages).

GRADING:

Design-a-Study	20	A = 299-325
Journal Reviews	40	A- = 292-298.9
IRB Training	10	B+ = 282-291.9
Article Critique	50	B = 260-281.9
Clinical Research Portfolio	75	C+ = 250-259.9
RP Lit Review	15	C = 227-249.9
RP Methods	15	FAIL = < 227
Research Proposal	100	
TOTAL:	325	

IMPORTANT CLASS POLICIES:

1. **Attendance:** You get one absence based on sickness, family emergency, or other extenuating circumstance. Missing class because of scheduling conflicts or other non-extenuating circumstances is typically not acceptable. If you know of something that may conflict, it is your responsibility to talk to me at least one month prior to the conflict. Each additional absence will mean a one-step reduction in grade (e.g. A to A-). In addition, being late more than three times to class also means a one-step grade reduction.
2. **Late work:** For all assignments, 10% will be deducted for every day late. After five days late, the maximum you can receive is 50%, and you will need to turn in all late assignments by the *last day of class* for credit.
3. **APA Format:** All papers must be written in APA format, including references. Failure to use APA formatting will result in a reduction in your grade for that assignment. You will also be graded on spelling, grammar, sentence structure, and other aspects of writing.
4. **Diversity Statement:** Diversity and issues of social inequality are core values of the Utah State University marriage and family therapy program. We are committed to helping provide a pluralistic campus community through Affirmative Action, Equal Opportunity, and non-discrimination on the basis of “race, age, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, disability, gender, health status, religion, national origin, sexual origin, gender identity or relationship status” (AAMFT Code of Ethics, 2012). We strive not only to embody these values of mutual respect and non-discrimination in the administration of the MFT program, but we also believe that it is a crucial part of our training to increase awareness and sensitivity in our students. This will require self-reflection regarding any potential “blind spots” that may be indicative of unexplored bias or prejudice. Increased sensitivity to issues of diversity will also likely involve some experiences that will stretch and challenge you. Our goal is to work with you to help you identify areas of growth related to diversity and to help you along in that process. For additional information regarding

diversity, you are encouraged to contact the USU Access and Diversity Center (435-797-1728) and the Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity office (435-797-1266).

5. **Physical Impairments:** It is the policy of the Utah State University to provide flexible and individualized accommodation to students with documented disabilities that may affect their ability to fully participate in course activities or to meet course requirements. Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact me as soon as possible for a confidential discussion of their individual needs for academic accommodation. Students with ADA-documented physical, sensory, emotional, or medical impairments may be eligible for accommodations to aid the learning process. Veterans may also be eligible for services. Alternate format materials (Braille, large print, or digital) are available with advance notice. All accommodations are coordinated through the Disability Resource Center (DRC; www.usu.edu/drc) in Room 101 of the University Inn (voice: 435-797-2444; TTY: 435-797-0740). There is also a toll free number (1-800-259-2966).
6. **Honor Code Policy:** As stated in the student code, “Each student has the right and duty to pursue his or her academic experience free of dishonesty. The Honor System is designed to re-enforce the higher level of conduct expected and required of all Utah State University students.” You have also all signed the Honor Pledge, which states, “I pledge, on my honor, to conduct myself with the foremost level of academic integrity.”
7. **Academic Dishonesty:** Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated in this course. Any form of academic dishonesty will result in a failing grade for the assignment and a report to the University. It may also result in additional consequences that will occur on a case-by-case basis. Academic Dishonesty is defined in the University’s Student Code include, but are not limited to the following:

Cheating:

- (1) using or attempting to use or providing others with any unauthorized assistance in taking quizzes, tests, examinations, or in any other academic exercise or activity, including working in a group when the instructor has designated that the quiz, test, examination, or any other academic exercise or activity be done “individually”;
- (2) depending on the aid of sources beyond those authorized by the instructor in writing papers, preparing reports, solving problems, or carrying out other assignments;
- (3) substituting for another student, or permitting another student to substitute for oneself, in taking an examination or preparing academic work;
- (4) acquiring tests or other academic material belonging to a faculty member, staff member, or another student without express permission;
- (5) continuing to write after time has been called on a quiz, test, examination, or any other academic exercise or activity;
- (6) submitting substantially the same work for credit in more than one class, except with prior approval of the instructor; or
- (7) engaging in any form of research fraud.

Falsification:

- (1) altering or fabricating any information or citation in an academic exercise or activity.

Plagiarism:

- (1) representing, by paraphrase or direct quotation, the published or unpublished work of another person as one's own in any academic exercise or activity without full and clear acknowledgment. It also includes using materials prepared by another person or by an agency engaged in the sale of term papers or other academic materials.

Full text of the Student Code available at available at available at
<http://www.usu.edu/student-services/pdf/StudentCode.pdf>:

1. **Communications via Email:** Email is an official form of communication at USU. Any communication to you about this course will be to the email address you have listed in ACCESS as your preferred address. You are responsible for any information conveyed to you at that email address. **It is your responsibility to check your email account regularly.** To make sure that the university is using the email account you prefer, do the following:
 - a. Log in using you're A number and password
 - b. At the USU website, click on the link "MyUSU" at the top right of the page
 - c. Click on "Launchpad" (on the left navigation)
 - d. Click on "Banner"
 - e. Under "Banner" click on the link "View/Edit Personal Information"
 - f. Click on "Personal Information"
 - g. Click on "View/Update Preferred E-mail Address"
 - h. Follow the short instructions to update your preferred email address.
2. **Physical Impairments:** Students with ADA-documented physical, sensory, emotional, or medical impairments may be eligible for accommodations to aid the learning process. Veterans may also be eligible for services. All accommodations are coordinated through the Disability Resource Center (DRC; www.usu.edu/drc) in Room 101 of the University Inn (voice: 435-797-2444; TTY: 435-797-0740). There is also a toll free number (1-800-259-2966). Please contact the DRC as early in the semester as possible. In cooperation with the DRC, reasonable accommodation will be provided for qualified students with disabilities. **Please meet with me during the first week of class to make arrangements.** Alternative format print materials (large print, audio, CD, or braille) will be available through the DRC.
3. **Grievance Process:** Students who feel they have been unfairly treated may file a grievance through the channels and procedures described in the Student Code: See the USU Catalog at the following link: <https://studentconduct.usu.edu/studentcode/article7>. Please note that I am usually the first step for handling the grievance. I would hope you would discuss any issues of fairness with me directly.

COURSE SCHEDULE

DATE	Lecture / Discussion Topic	READINGS	DUE
Tuesday August 30	Course Overview Research Ethics		
Tuesday September 6	Research Stories MFT Topics 1	S&P Ch. 2 Lebow et al. (2012)	- IRB Training - JR 2005-2007
Tuesday September 20	Research Questions MFT Topics 2	Meltzoff Ch. 2 Sexton et al. (2013)	- JR 2008-2010
Tuesday September 27	Research Strategies MFT Topics 3	Meltzoff Ch. 3 Benson et al. (2012)	- JR 2011-2013
Tuesday October 4	Scholarly Writing Grounded Theory	Porter (2011) S&P Ch. 3	- JR 2014-2016
Tuesday October 11	Sample Issues Phenomenology	Meltzoff Ch. 4 S&P Ch. 4	DS: _____
Tuesday October 18	Confounding Variables Focus Groups	Meltzoff Ch. 5 S&P Ch. 5	DS: _____
Tuesday October 25	Research Design Action Research	Meltzoff Ch. 6 S&P Ch. 6	- Lit Review
Tuesday November 1	Criteria Measures Survey Research	Meltzoff Ch. 7 S&P Ch. 12	DS: _____
Tuesday November 8	Critiquing Articles Delphi Method	Reviewing (JMFT & JFP) S&P Ch. 13	- Methods DS: _____
Tuesday November 15	Data Analysis Approaches to Prediction	Meltzoff Ch. 8 S&P Ch. 19	DS: _____
Tuesday November 22	Results & Discussion Clinical Trials	S&P Ch. 16	- Article Critique
Tuesday November 29	Process Research Task Analysis	Oka & Whiting (2013) S&P Ch. 14	- Clinical Portfolio DS: _____
Tuesday December 6	Analyzing Couple Data Meta-Analysis	Wittenborn et al. (2013) S&P Ch. 17	- Research Proposal

Design-a-Study Grading Rubric

Throughout the semester, I will present a variety of research methodologies to you. I will explain the methodology and then provide you with some examples. The week after I discuss a methodology, a student in the class will have the opportunity to propose an idea for a *clinically relevant project* using that methodology. I anticipate this to take about 15-20 minutes total, which will consist of you talking about your research question, the key elements of your methodology, and then brainstorming with the class about how to execute the study. You will need to address the key elements of the design, the sample, procedure, and measures.

Preparedness: It was clear based that you were prepared and had a substantive understanding of the readings and your presentation was not just a regurgitation of the class readings.

Wow! Extremely Prepared...Extremely well presented. Integrates and applies information.	Demonstrates great preparedness understanding of readings/ presented and application.	Demonstrates adequate preparedness. More than just discussing what was read...but lacks application	Mostly just a report of what was read with some insight, but without application.	Obviously very little thought, lack of preparation
9-10 points	7-8 points	5-6 points	3-4 points	0-2 points

Article Critique Grading Rubric

Very balanced critique. You identified the strengths of the article but also identified several important areas for improvement.	You demonstrate the ability to identify article strengths and critique but are slightly lacking in your analysis.	You correctly identify many of the strengths and areas for improvement but do not go into sufficient detail or depth in your analysis.	Although you make some credible points, your analysis does not prove an in-depth understanding of the research or how to improve it.	Very superficial analysis. You did not convey an understanding of the article or suggest valuable modifications.
46-50 points	40-45 points	35-39 points	30-34 points	0-29 points

Comments:

Clinical Portfolio Grading Rubric

Articles: Demonstrating the ability to find articles that will benefit your clinical work.

It is clear that your articles were thoughtfully chosen and you have a wide and diverse set of articles that cover a wide range of topics.	Good choice of articles that cover a decent range of therapy topics.	Articles address several important therapy topics but it is clear that some are missing.	A couple of therapy topics are addressed well, but they fail to address a number of important therapy topics.	Obviously very little thought, lack of preparation. Your articles do not address the important therapy topics.
36-40 points	32-35 points	28-31 points	24-27 points	0-23 points

Annotated Bibliography: Demonstrating the ability to understand existing research by summarizing articles and discussing their potential implications for therapy.

Your annotated bibliography is excellent, including the article summaries and implications for therapy.	Your annotated bibliography is very good, including your article summaries and implications for therapy.	Your annotated bibliography is good, but your summaries and implications are lacking somewhat.	Your annotated bibliography, summaries, and implications are lacking substantially.	Obviously very little thought, with poorly done annotated bibliography, summaries, and implications.
19-20 points	17-18 points	15-16 points	13-14 points	0-12 points

Clinical Relevance: Demonstrating the ability identify areas for future research.

It is clear that you understand the current research and identify several core areas for future clinically-relevant research.	You demonstrate a solid understanding of the research and identify several areas for additional clinically-relevant research.	You demonstrate some understanding of the research and one or two areas where clinically-relevant research is needed.	You struggle to demonstrate understanding in more than one area where clinically-relevant research is needed.	Obviously very little thought, lack of preparation. You not convey an understanding of the importance of clinically-relevant research.
14-15 points	12-13 points	10-11 points	8-9 points	0-7 points

Comments:

Research Grading Rubric

Literature Review: Demonstrating the ability to provide an in-depth analysis of research literature and the need to study it further.

The literature review is well-written, and you provide an excellent analysis of the topic and why it needs to be studied further.	The literature review is very good, and you provide very good analysis of the topic and why it needs to be studied further.	You make some good points in the literature review and provide a decent analysis of the topic. However, it is not complete.	Although some of your points might be good, they are not connected and do not adequately analyze the topic or its need to be studied further	Obviously very little thought, lack of preparation. Your thoughts are disjointed and do not analyze the topic or its importance.
36-40 points	32-35 points	28-31 points	24-27 points	0-23 points

Methods: Demonstrating the ability to provide a clear picture of your methodology and how you will accomplish your study.

You provide an excellent and clear picture of your methodology and how you will accomplish your study.	You provide a very good and clear picture of your methodology and how you will accomplish your study.	You provide a good and fairly clear picture of your methodology and how you will accomplish your study.	You have difficulty demonstrating the ability to conceptualize and clearly explain your methodology and how you will accomplish your study.	Obviously very little thought, lack of preparation. Your thoughts are unclear, and you do not demonstrate that you can conceptualize your study's methodology.
36-40 points	32-35 points	28-31 points	24-27 points	0-23 points

Writing and APA Style: Demonstrating the ability to engage your reader while also having correct grammar and APA style.

Your writing style is engaging and grammatically correct, and your usage of APA style is excellent.	Your writing style is very good with very few grammatical or APA style errors.	Your writing style is good, with some grammatical or APA style errors.	Your writing style is somewhat choppy, with multiple grammatical or APA style errors.	Obviously very little thought, lack of preparation. Your writing style makes things unclear, and there are numerous grammatical and APA style errors.
19-20 points	17-18 points	15-16 points	13-14 points	0-12 points

Comments: