

Research in Counseling
COU 675
Winter II, 2008,
January 14 – March 15, 2008
3 Credits

Course Syllabus

Time / Location: Thursday evening
(each student will attend just one evening per week)
6:00-10:30 p.m. Doane-Grand Island

Instructor: Donald P. Belau, Ph.D. LIMHP

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Required Texts:

Stanovich, *How to think straight about psychology*(8th Ed.)

Zeisset, *Statistics & measurement: An introduction for MBTI users* (3rd Ed.)

Zeisset, *A Quick Guide to Critiquing Research* (3rd Ed.) (available in class)

Zeisset, *A Quick Guide to APA Style* (in your Student Handbook or online)

Course Description:

This course provides students with the skills necessary to critically evaluate counseling and clinical research literature. Students are introduced to consensual models of science, the process of research inquiry, and the role of the mental health counselor as a knowledgeable research consumer. Students are also introduced to sampling theory, hypothesis testing, and the application of descriptive and inferential statistics. At the completion of this course, students will be able to read and understand research reports in the literature as well as critically examine literature that is non-empirically based. Students will also understand the process for designing their own research and program evaluation.

Course Outcomes and Objectives:

At the end of the course students will be able to interactively read and critically evaluate psychological research literature as well as non-psychological literature. Students will be familiar with various models of research. Students will have a conceptual grasp of the value of research and the importance of basing counseling practice on a solid foundation supported by research. Students will understand basic statistical techniques used in research.

Methods of Instruction:

Readings, discussion, lectures, demonstrations and exercises. Summaries, with reflections and reactions, will be prepared by the student for assigned readings.

Assessment of Student Learning and Performance, Grades:

Evaluation will be based on class participation, class assignments, weekly summaries of readings, a quiz on statistics and measurement concepts, and a final project.

Points for the course will be assigned as follows:

25% Class participation

10% Weekly summaries of assigned chapters in Stanovich (to be turned in at class each week, beginning second week of class)

15% An open-book exam on statistics and measurement concepts

10% Research critique assignments (5, one a week beginning Week 3)

5% APA Style test, week 9

25% Final Projects: (a) a critique of a full article and (b) a listing of key concepts from the course

10% Student self-evaluation of performance in course

Attendance at all class sessions is expected. If you must miss a class, please let instructor know in advance, if possible. You will be expected to demonstrate your grasp of the material from that session in a paper (3-5 pages) or another format agreed to by the instructor if you want to partially offset the loss of class participation points for the session you miss. *A student missing more than two sessions should not expect to pass the course.* For make-up papers, length is based on double-spaced typed pages using one inch margins and using a proportional 12 point font (such as this). Other formats are acceptable, but length should be adjusted accordingly.

Descriptions of Graded Performance Learning Activities:

Early weeks of the class will focus on basic statistics and measurement concepts, mastery of which will be assessed by an *objective exam*. As knowledge is gained about key components of research, application of that knowledge in actual critiquing of research will be the focus. Both contrived and real articles will be used in class exercises. A list of questions about different aspects of a research study will be the basis for five *critiquing assignments*.

Weekly summaries. An example of a Stanovich chapter summary, for the reading for the first class session, will be provided during the first session. All other summaries will be due at the beginning of class on the date for which assigned.

Final project. The final project, due at the last class session, has two parts: A critique of a full article distributed at the next-to-last session, using the same questions as the five individual critique assignments, will be completed. The second part is a listing and brief description of the 20 most important concepts covered in the course, in the student's judgment. It is preferred that all assignments submitted for this course are typed. To facilitate this process, formats for critiques and self-evaluations will be available electronically.

General Information:

Academic Integrity. The Doane College Academic Integrity Policy will be enforced in this course. All assignments, projects and tests in this course will represent your own work. Any use of others' ideas and words without proper citation of sources is plagiarism. Instances of academic dishonesty as defined in the policy, if a first offense, will result in loss of all points for the assignment or exercise. If warranted by the seriousness of the infraction, a greater penalty may be imposed on recommendation to the

Vice President for Academic Affairs. Sanctions for second and subsequent offenses are handled by the Vice President for Academic Affairs.

Professional Performance Evaluation Ratings. In addition to a letter grade for the course, each student will receive a Professional Performance Evaluation rating. The following scale is used:

- 5 = Exceptional: At level of practicing professional counselor
- 4 = High: Higher than expected for educational and experience level
- 3 = Good: Performance meets expectations for level
- 2 = Low: Indicates substandard performance. Requires remediation
- 1 = Poor: Far below expected level of performance. Monitoring and significant remediation is required

In awarding the Professional Performance rating, the instructor will consider the following aspects of a student's performance:

- a) Listens to others, cooperates with others, and accepts other points of view
- b) Responds in a self-reflective and self-critical manner to comments about professional and academic performance
- c) Abides by established ethical standards
- d) Shows motivation to master new material
- e) Demonstrates sensitivity, awareness, and acceptance of cultural and individual differences
- f) Demonstrates critical thinking and healthy skepticism
- g) Tolerates ambiguity that is inherent in the field of mental health
- h) Recognizes the rights and responsibilities of counselors as well as other professionals.

Classes, Activities, and Lesson Outline: Note: All readings are to be completed prior to the class meeting.

Tentative Course Schedule—*Research in Counseling* Winter II, 2008

Week/Topic/Readings

WEEK 1 Scientific Method; Reading, Thinking Critically

APA Style and Communicating Research

Stanovich Ch. 1

WEEK 2 Theories and Falsifiability

Frequency Distributions & Levels of Measurement

Measures of Central Tendency and Variability

Learning APA Style; Parts of a Research Report

Stanovich Ch. 2

S&M Ch. 1 (p. 1-12)

WEEK 3 Research Questions & Hypotheses

Operational Definitions

Correlation

Critiquing the Introduction

Stanovich Ch. 3, 5

S&M pp. 12-17 & pp. 60-61

QGCR: Critiquing the Introduction

WEEK 4 Samples, Sampling, and Tests of Significance

Hypothesis Testing and Errors

Artificiality is a Strength

Critiquing the Sample

Stanovich Ch. 7

S&M Ch. 2 (p. 18-21), 4 (p. 42-59)

QGCR: Critiquing the Sample

WEEK 5 Converging Evidence

Reliability and Validity

Research Strategies and Variables

Critiquing Criteria, Variables, and Measures

Stanovich Ch. 8

S&M: Ch 3 (p. 26-29, 35-41)

QGCR: Critiquing Variables &

Measures

WEEK 6 Testimonials and Case Study Evidence

Controlling Confounding Variables

Critiquing the Research Design

Applying statistics & measurement knowledge

Stanovich Ch. 4, 6

QGCR: Critiquing the

Research Design

WEEK 7 *Statistics & Measurement Exam*

Data Analysis and Presentation

Critiquing Results, Discussion and Abstract

Designing research, program evaluation

QGCR: Critiquing Results,

Discussion and Abstract

WEEK 8 Multiple Causation

Probabilistic Reasoning

Actuarial vs. clinical prediction

More practice with APA Style

Discuss Final Projects

Stanovich Ch. 9, 10,11

WEEK 9 APA Style Quiz
Final Projects due
Course wrap-up
Stanovich Ch. 12 (no summary
required)