

466: Methods and Findings in Counseling Process and Outcome Research

Instructor:

Mary J. Heppner, Ph.D.

Office Hours: By Appointment

This course is intended for graduate students who have had counseling experience, research methods and statistics. The overall aim of the course is to facilitate the development of an overview, comprehensive review paper and methods section. It is designed to help students gain greater self-efficacy in the tasks related to the development and proposal of their dissertation research.

Specific Objectives:

- You will be able to analyze the strengths and potential barriers that may impact your progress on your dissertation and develop an action plan for maximizing the strengths and minimizing the barriers.
- You will be able to conceptualize a relevant topic for your scholarly inquiry and communicate a compelling argument of the need for the investigation to be done.
- You will be able to search the relevant research in a methodical and rigorous manner.
- You will be able to write a comprehensive review of the literature that integratively reflects the literature that is relevant to your topic.
- You will be able to develop a methods section that provides a detailed and comprehensive action plan for your study.
- You will be able to develop hypotheses that provide a clear and complete statement of the questions and predictions that are to be tested.
- You will be able to demonstrate knowledge of ethical principles in the design of your research project.

- You will demonstrate knowledge and skill in APA writing style.
- You will demonstrate skill in presenting your research project to the instructor and your peers in a simulated proposal meeting.
- You will demonstrate skill in providing challenging and supportive feedback to your peers both in oral and written form.
- You will learn more about choosing and working effectively with a dissertation committee.

Course Activities:

The following activities will be employed to achieve the specific learning objectives listed above:

1. You will complete a detailed assessment of your knowledge, confidence levels, strengths and barriers in the area of dissertation writing and will develop an action plan to help build on your strengths and overcome your obstacles.
2. You will prepare a 1-2 page concept paper on your topic.
3. You will prepare a draft of your hypotheses and research questions
4. You will prepare two drafts of an overview chapter to your research focus using APA style
4. You will prepare two drafts of a literature review chapter using APA style.
5. You will prepare two drafts of a comprehensive method chapter, using APA style.
6. You will provide written and verbal critique to your peers' presentations on their proposals. You will provide a detailed written critique of one of your peers' proposals.
7. You will present your proposal in a simulated proposal meeting to the class.

Evaluation:

This course is intended to be a discussion-oriented seminar where we talk about methods of developing the first three chapters of a major research project. It is also meant to provide a safe and supportive atmosphere for you to develop and improve your

dissertation ideas with the technical support and expertise of the instructor and your peers. Thus, regular, prompt attendance and verbal participation is essential.

There will be a total of 500 points assigned to various aspects of this course. They are divided in the following manner:

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| 1. | Analysis of Strengths and Barriers/Self Care Plan | 25 points |
| 2. | Class attendance & participation | 50 points |
| 3. | 1-2 page concept paper | 15 points |
| 4. | Hypotheses/Research Questions | 10 points |
| 5. | Overview: Chapter 1 | |
| | a. First Draft | 25 points |
| | b. Second Draft | 50 points |
| 6. | Major literature paper: Chapter 2 | |
| | a. First Draft | 50 points |
| | b. Second Draft | 75 points |
| 7. | Methodology Section: Chapter 3 | |
| | a. First Draft | 50 points |
| | b. Second Draft | 75 points |
| 8. | Presentation at Simulated Proposal Meeting | 50 points |
| 9. | Written critique of one of your peer's proposals | 25 points |

Assigned dates for all assignments are provided. Assignments are due at the beginning of class on the day indicated. 4 points will be deducted for each 24-hour period that any assignment is late.

At the end of the semester, I will add up the points received and grades will be determined as follows:

- A=450-500 points (90-100% of total points)
- B=400-449 points (80-89% of total points)
- C=350-399 points (70-79% of total points)
- D=300-349 points (60-69% of total points)
- F=below 299 points

Because I feel they are not helpful to your progress in completing this task, no incompletes will be given in this course.

Texts:

Heppner P. P. & Heppner, M. J. (2004). *Writing and Publishing your Thesis, Dissertation and Research: A Guide for Students in the helping Professions*. Belmont, CA: Brooks Cole.

If you don't have ready access to a copy of the *American Psychological Associations Publication Manual* (5th Edition), I would strongly encourage you to purchase one. You will be referring to it frequently and your drafts will be evaluated in terms of your use of appropriate APA style.

Academic Honesty:

Academic honesty is fundamental to the activities and principles of a university. All members of the academic community must be confident that each person's work has been responsibly and honorably acquired, developed and presented. Any effort to gain an advantage not given to all students is dishonest whether or not the effort is successful. The academic community regards academic dishonesty as an extremely serious matter, with serious consequences that range from probation to expulsion. When in doubt about plagiarism, paraphrasing, quoting, or collaboration, consult the instructor of the course.

Need for Accommodations:

If you have special needs as addressed by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and need more assistance, please notify the Office of Disability Services, A 408 Brady Commons, 882-4696 or the course instructor immediately. Reasonable efforts will be made to accommodate your special needs.