Research Methods & Design II

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Day and Time: Thursdays 2:00-4:00PM  
Office Hours: By Appointment

Course description
This course is designed to support advanced graduate students in clinical psychology in the development of their dissertations. The course will introduce students to the research process, from defining a research population to disseminating findings. Additionally, the course will review the key components of a research question, the fundamentals of research methodology, and research ethics. These skills are critical to becoming independent researchers.

Working on a dissertation can often feel like an isolating experience. I hope that this class can minimize the isolation by providing a weekly time for us to brainstorm, problem-solve, and share progress and resources. Your participation is a key ingredient to our being able to achieve this goal. I hope you will join me in what can be an exciting semester of creative thinking and noteworthy progress.

Course structure
The course format as well as course assignments are designed to enable you to work both independently and collaboratively on your dissertation. Each class session will allow time to discuss current challenges, discoveries, and questions pertaining to your dissertation as well as to the dissertation process more generally. Ongoing small group work will (i) provide an opportunity to learn from each other and share resources, and (ii) create a community for what is otherwise a highly independent process.

The course will have four distinct yet interconnected components. First, class sessions and readings will provide a review of research methodologies. Second, you will collaborate throughout the semester in small groups on the development of your dissertations. Third, guest speakers will present their research with a particular emphasis on process and methodology. Fourth, you will be expected to complete several assignments that advance your dissertation process. Readings and class assignments are defined below.

Small group work. At the beginning of the course we will divide into small groups in which we will work for the semester. Consider these groups your working group; collaborators that get to know your work in depth and can serve as a sounding board for brainstorming. Additionally, these groups will provide us the opportunity to formally and informally present our work on a weekly basis and to receive regular feedback.

Course objectives
By the end of the semester you should be able to:

- Generate a well-defined research question and hypothesis
- Identify a research design to test the research question
- Evaluate and critique research questions, research designs, and the implications of such findings presented in written and oral presentations
- Articulate in oral and written form your dissertation research question, hypotheses, and proposed research method

**Requirements and grading**

The goal of this class is to help you develop a dissertation research question/hypothesis and identify an appropriate methodology to test your hypothesis. The written assignments are designed to fulfill elements of the dissertation process. As such, if you are not prepared to focus on your dissertation throughout this semester please discuss your planned participation in this course with me during the first week of classes. Detailed information for each assignment will be distributed in separate handouts.

**Citi Ethics Training**

This will entail completing an online ethics training available through CCNY.

**Written assignments**

- **Topic proposal** = 25%
  - This is a 1-page description the proposed research. The proposal will include a brief summary of the literature that highlights the rationale and significance of the proposed research objective and a clearly defined research question.
- **Method section** = 25%
  - This section will include a description of the study participants, measures, analytic strategy, and anticipated limitations. Further information about this assignment will be distributed in class.
- **Presentation** = 40%
  - This is a 20-minute power-point presentation (+ and additional 10 minute discussion). The presentation should include a brief review of the literature on your topic, your specific aims and hypotheses, research design and methods, analytic strategy, study limitations, the study’s generalizability (external validity), how the study informs the field, current challenges, and next steps.

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**Attendance and class participation** are a major part of this class. Only two excused absences and one unexcused absence is permitted. Missing more than 3 classes will result in an automatic reduction of your grade by one level (e.g. from an A to B). Each of you will be responsible for sharing with the class updates regarding your research process throughout the semester.

**Academic honesty**

The Graduate Center of The City University of New York is committed to the highest standards of academic honesty. Acts of academic dishonesty include—but are not limited to—plagiarism, (in drafts, outlines, and examinations, as well as final papers), cheating, bribery, academic fraud, sabotage of research materials, the sale of academic papers, and the falsification of records. An individual who engages in these or related activities or who knowingly aids another who engages in them is acting in an academically dishonest manner.

September 5, 2014
manner and will be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the bylaws and procedures of The Graduate Center and the Board of Trustees of The City University of New York.

Each member of the academic community is expected to give full, fair, and formal credit to any and all sources that have contributed to the formulation of ideas, methods, interpretations, and findings. The absence of such formal credit is an affirmation representing that the work is fully the writer’s. The term “sources” includes, but is not limited to, published or unpublished materials, lectures and lecture notes, computer programs, mathematical and other symbolic formulations, course papers, examinations, theses, dissertations, and comments offered in class or informal discussions, and include electronic media. The representation that such work of another person is the writer’s own is plagiarism.

Care must be taken to document the source of any ideas or arguments. If the actual words of a source are used, they must appear within quotation marks. In cases that are unclear, the writer must take due care to avoid plagiarism.

The source should be cited whenever:
(a) a text is quoted verbatim
(b) data gathered by another are presented in diagrams or tables
(c) the results of a study done by another are used
(d) the work or intellectual effort of another is paraphrased by the writer

Because the intent to deceive is not a necessary element in plagiarism, careful note taking and record keeping are essential in order to avoid unintentional plagiarism.

For additional information, please consult “Avoiding and Detecting Plagiarism,” available in the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs, the Provost’s Office, or at http://web.gc.cuny.edu/provost/pdf/AvoidingPlagiarism.pdf.

(From The Graduate Center Student Handbook 05-06, pp. 36-37)

Reasonable accommodation
If you have a diagnosed disability or believe that you have a disability that might require accommodations on the part of the instructor, please contact the Disabilities Office at City College.

Readings
All required readings will be available through Dropbox (citations below). An invitation to the class Dropbox folder will be sent out after the first class. Please note that reading assignments may be modified to match the needs of the class throughout the semester.

**Week-by-Week Overview**

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<th>Topic</th>
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<td>August 28th</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
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<td>September 4th</td>
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<td>September 11th</td>
<td>Research design review II</td>
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| September 18th | Speaker series: Tackling dissertations I     
          Rebecca R. Campón, PhD – Scale development
          *The appropriated racial oppression scale development and initial validation* |
| September 25th | No classes @ CCNY                                                    |
| October 2nd  | Speaker series: Tackling dissertations II                              
          Erica Rogers, PhD – Mixed method approach
          *Children and Elephants: A study of empathy, mentalization, and attitudes towards conservation in participants of an elephant-based environmental intervention in West Africa* |
| October 9th  | Ethics in research & IRB process                                      |
| October 16th | Writing a method section                                             |
| October 23rd | Translating research findings                                         |
| October 30th | Statistics, Oh My! How to work with a statistician
          Guest: Sarai Betchelder, PhD                                     |
| November 6th | Preparing presentations                                              |
| November 13th | Grant writing, funding opportunities, poster presentations           |
| November 20th | Presentations                                                        |
| November 27th | No class – Thanksgiving                                              |
| December 4th  | Presentations                                                         |
| December 11th | Presentations                                                         |

**Weekly reading assignments and class topics**

**Reading assignments subject to change**
August 28 – Introduction

September 4 – Research design review I

Readings
Crosby et al., Chapter 4, Choosing a research design
Kazdin, Chapter 3, Getting out of our conceptual ruts: Strategies for expanding conceptual frameworks
Keyes & Galea, Chapter 2, What is a population…?
Maxwell, Chapter 3, Conceptual Framework (focus on pgs. 46-56.)
Nestor & Schutt, Chapter 2, The foundations of psychological research

September 11 – Research design review II

Readings
Crosby et al., Chapter 11, Principles of sampling
Keyes & Galea, Chapters 3, What is an exposure…? and 4, What is a sample?

September 18 – Speaker series: Tackling dissertations I. Rebecca R. Campón, PhD
Scale development

The appropriated racial oppression scale development and initial validation

Readings
Nestor & Schutt, Chapter 4, Conceptualization and measurement

Assignment due:
Research topic (generally) plus 2-3 possible research questions, include the start of an annotated bibliography on topic or research question

September 25 – No classes @ CCNY

October 2 – Speaker series: Tackling dissertations II. Erica Rogers, PhD
A mixed method approach
Children and elephants: A study of empathy, mentalization, and attitudes towards conservation in participants of an elephant-based environmental intervention in West Africa

Addressing Validity (2nd half of class)

Readings
Crosby et al., Chapter 10, Improving reports of self reports for sensitive behaviors
Maxwell, Chapter 6, How might you be wrong?
Keyes & Galea, Chapter 12, Do the results matter beyond the study
sample?

October 9 – Ethics in research & IRB process

Readings
Nestor & Schutt, Chapter 3, Ethics in behavioral research

October 16 – Writing a method section

Readings
Maxwell, Chapter 7, Research proposals

Assignment due
CITI Online Training Certificate

Assignment due
Progress report
Individualized next assignment (as determined by researcher/professor)
  Topic proposal draft
  OR
  Second draft of research question

October 23 – Translating research findings

Readings
Nestor & Schutt, Chapter 12, Essentials of APA report writing
Crosby et al, Chap 14, Introduction to scientific writing
APA manuscript sample (for your reference)

Assignment due
Chair identified + spoken to

October 30 – Statistics, Oh My! Collaborating with a statistician
Guest: Sarai Betchelder, PhD

Readings
Cone & Foster, Chapter 9, Selecting the appropriate statistics

Assignment due
Progress report
Individualized next assignment (as determined by researcher/professor)
  Topic proposal draft
  OR
  Research plan (**adapted for theoretical dissertations)

November 6 – Preparing presentations
Reading
Cone & Foster, Chapter 11, Presenting your results
Cone & Foster, Chapter 12, Discussing your results

November 13 – Grant writing, funding opportunities, poster presentations

Reading
Cone & Foster, Chapter 14, Presenting your findings to the world

November 20 – Presentations

November 27 – No class. Happy Thanksgiving

December 4 – Presentations

December 11 – Presentations

Assignment due
Final topic proposal and final method section (**method section adapted for theoretical dissertations)**

Submit final documents by 5PM on December 11, 2014. You may send them to me electronically. Late papers will not be accepted except in cases of medical emergencies. You must inform me immediately of such circumstance.

HAPPY HOLIDAYS!