Syllabus

IPA 5131 METHODOLOGY OF EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

Professors: 
Terry Lynn Gall, Ph. D.
Laura Lynne Armstrong, Ph. D.

Contact Information:  
tgall@ustpaul.ca; larmstrong@ustpaul.ca

Required Reading:
5. [http://www.guidance-research.org/EG/RIP/52NP/secn524/](http://www.guidance-research.org/EG/RIP/52NP/secn524/) This website discusses both qualitative and quantitative research.

Objectives:
1. Learn the research designs and methods appropriate to the description and investigation of the areas of counselling and spirituality.
2. Learn how to construct a graduate level research paper that will lay the groundwork for your Research Seminar in the second year of the program.

Teaching Methods:
1. Students are expected to read the above materials.
2. Material will be presented in lecture format.
3. Part of the class will be devoted to the practical integration of the theoretical material through exercises, discussion and questions. The students are encouraged to use this time to work on the development of their own research idea.
4. Working groups of 3-4 students will be formed at the beginning of the course. It is in these groups that students will work on class exercises. Students will be encouraged to actively support their peers in the development of their research.

Lecture Topics (dates to be announced):

Part I (weeks 1 to 4):
1. Overview: Types of Research and Research Terminology
2. Conducting Literature Searches, Reading the Literature, and Plagiarism
3. Developing a Research Question & Formulating Hypotheses
4. Formulating One’s Thoughts and Organizing a paper
Part II (weeks 5-8):
5. Introduction to Qualitative Research
6. Conducting Interviews
7. Analyzing Data and Phenomenological Theory
8. Research Ethics

Part III (weeks 9-12):
9. Introduction to Quantitative Research & Writing a Stellar Research Paper
10. Conducting Survey & Program Evaluation Research
11. Analyzing Data & Interpreting Correlational Findings
12. Critique the methods of research design, methodology, and statistical analyses found in journals

Projects and Evaluation:

Note: There will be a penalty of 5 marks a day for late reports.

1. Find an example of each of the following academic journal articles on your research topic: a) theoretical/review, b) quantitative empirical research, and c) qualitative empirical study. Students are to bring these articles to class for discussion. Students should be prepared to discuss the main points (e.g., findings, implications, theoretical models used) of each article and present ideas about your research topic in relation to each article. If no qualitative research exists on your topic of interest, supplement with a second quantitative article.
Due: 1 article each of the second, third, and fourth week.
Worth: 15%

2. First paper (maximum 5 pages double-spaced): For this brief paper, you will provide a review of the literature on your topic of interest. In this review, you will discuss a minimum of 10 empirical and/or theoretical academic journal publications that relate directly to your topic of interest. You should be sensitive to the limitations of the research selected and the strength of support it provides for the topic of interest. Organize your material around a theme for your paper. What is your objective? What is it that you want to say with this review? What is known in the literature? What questions are left unanswered? What are the implications of your review for future research? Where does the research need to go from here? Note: Present references in American Psychological Association (APA) style, 6th edition.
Due: 5th week of class
Worth: 25%

3. Second paper (maximum 5 pages double spaced): You are to write up a proposal for a specific qualitative research study that is linked to the same topic of interest as the first paper.
a. Identify a specific research question and describe how you were guided in the development and refinement of your question by the theoretical and empirical
research of others. You need to justify the importance of your project – its relationship to existing research and theory; its theoretical importance and practical implications; its specific objectives and limitations. Keep in mind that your research question should add to or extend the literature in some way (i.e., what is missing in the current literature? How will your study be unique in what it brings to the literature?).

b. Describe the sample you will study and the types of data you will collect (e.g., interviews, participant journals, agency records). If you are interviewing people, provide a few examples of actual questions you might ask in an interview; describe how you might structure the interview, where it will take place etc.

c. Describe how you will analyze the data.

d. Identify any ethical considerations for this project (e.g., vulnerable population) and how you might address them.

**Due: 10th week of class**

**Worth: 25%**

4. **Third paper (maximum 5 pages double spaced):** You are to write up a proposal for a specific quantitative research study that is linked to the same topic of interest as the first paper.

a. Identify a specific research question and describe how you were guided in the development and refinement of your question by the theoretical and empirical research of others. You need to justify the importance of your project – its relationship to existing research and theory; its theoretical importance and practical implications; its specific objectives and limitations. Keep in mind that your research question should add to or extend the literature in some way (i.e., what is missing in the current literature? How will your study be unique in what it brings to the literature?).

b. Describe the sample you will study and the types of data you will collect (e.g., survey, structured interviews, testing, standardized procedures) and the structure of your research (e.g., one-time survey, pre-post design). Describe the procedure in detail (e.g., design of the task used or the survey measures you choose).

c. Describe how you will analyze the data.

d. Identify any ethical considerations for this project (e.g., vulnerable population) and how you might address them.

**Due: Last day of class.**

**Worth: 25%**

5. **Class Participation:** Students are expected to actively present their ideas in class exercises.

**Worth: 10%**

**Note:**
The regulations of Saint Paul University specify that: a student must attend the lectures in all the courses of their program and must also participate in all class activities. A student
who is shown to have been absent from more than 20% (9 h or 3 classes) of the academic activities in a course will not be allowed to take the final examination and will be given a failing mark (F).

Plagiarism is taken seriously and can lead to failure of a graduate course. Carefully read the description of plagiarism: http://www.uottawa.ca/plagiarism.pdf

References:


Others:


http://www.amazon.ca/Statistics-Without-Tears-Derek-Rowntree/dp/0140136320
Statistics resource.