

CUA



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SSS 950
Research Foundations: Introduction
Spring 2008

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I. COURSE PURPOSE

The purpose of this course is to introduce student to the language of science and social work research. Emphasis is placed on the relationship between theory and research, conceptualization and problem formulation, operationalization and measurement, sampling strategies and types of research design.

II. EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES

1. To develop a working command of the language of science.
2. To know and understand the central concepts of science, knowledge and theory building, and the scientific process.
3. To know and understand the foundations of measurement and the concepts of reliability and validity.
4. To know and understand the logic of research design and the several types of research approaches.
5. To develop coherent research questions developed from the context of a thorough review of a body of research literature.
6. To be able to write bivariate hypotheses and multivariate hypotheses developed out of research questions.
7. Be capable of critically evaluating an existing standardized research instrument.
8. Be able to critically evaluate a published research article utilizing threats to internal and external validity as criteria.

III. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A. Required Texts

Campbell, D.T. & Stanley, J.C. (1973). *Experimental and quasi-experimental designs for research*. Chicago, IL: Rand McNally.

Pan, M.L. (2008). *Preparing literature reviews: Qualitative and quantitative approaches* (3rd Ed.). Glendale, CA: Pyrczak Publishing.

Sington, R.A. & Straits, B.C. (2004). *Approaches to social research* (4th Ed.). New York: Oxford University Press.

B. Recommended Texts

Patten, ML (2002). *Understanding research methods* (3rd ed.). Los Angeles: Pyrczak.

C. Other Recommended Resources and Media

Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) <http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/>

The Qualitative Report – An online journal dedicated to qualitative research since 1990 <http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/qualres.html>

NIH IRB Training online course

<http://cme.cancer.gov/clinicaltrials/learning/humanparticipant-protections.asp>

D. Course Assignments

1. Hypothesis Writing Assignment
 - a. Complete the hypothesis writing assignment, which will be handed out in class;
 - b. E-mail completed assignment to Instructor by 4 PM February 5, 2008;
 - c. Be prepared to discuss in during Class 4.
2. Measurement Assignment
 - a. Students are to select a standardized measure which has been used in social work research;
 - b. Critique the measure in terms of reliability and validity;
 - c. Review at least two articles which have used the measure in empirical research;
 - d. Write a short 2 – 3 page paper on critique and review in APA Style, and
 - e. Present a 15-minute summary of the analysis during Class 6.
3. Research Design Assignment
 - a. Students will be given a published article, which utilizes a quasi-experimental design or experimental design to critique in terms of internal and external validity issues. The critique should be 4 – 6 page paper written in APA style.

- b. Be prepared to participate in an in-depth discussion during Class 11.
- 4. Problem Formulation with Literature Review
 - a. Students are to select an issue of relevance to social work and conduct a thorough review of the empirical and theoretical literature in order to develop a literature based problem formulation paper.
 - b. Hand in topic and outline Class 7.
 - c. The paper will be 8 to 10 pages in APA style.
 - d. Present a short summary of your topic in Class 15.
- 5. Mid-Term Examination
- 6. Final Examination

E. Grading Policy

Students are expected to attend all classes, be prepared for class, and to participate meaningfully in class discussion.

Assignments	15%
Mid-Term	20%
Problem Formulation Paper	30%
Final	20%
Participation	15%

Grades for the course will be based on the University grading system as defined in the catalog.

F. Course and Instructor Evaluation

NCSSS requires electronic evaluation of this course and the instructor. At the end of the semester, the evaluation form may be accessed at <http://evaluations.cua.edu/> evaluations using your CUA username and password. Additional, informal written or verbal feedback to the instructor during the semester is encouraged and attempts will be made to respond to requests.

IV. CLASS EXPECTATIONS

A. Scholastic Expectations

Please refer to NCSSS Announcements, or appropriate Program Handbook for Academic Requirements, including scholastic and behavioral requirements. All written work should reflect the original thinking of the writer, cite references where material is quoted or adapted from existing sources, adhere to APA format, and should be carefully proof read by the student before submission to the instructor for grading.

B. Academic Honesty

Joining the community of scholars at CUA entails accepting the standards, living by those standards, and upholding them. Please refer to University Policy and appropriate Program Handbooks.

C. Accommodations

Students with physical, learning, psychological or other disabilities wishing to request accommodations must identify with the Disability Support Services (DSS) and submit documentation of a disability. If you have documented such a disability to DSS that requires accommodations or an academic adjustment, please arrange a meeting with the instructor as soon as possible to discuss these accommodations.

CLASS SCHEDULE

Class 1	Introduction to Social Work Research Why Become a Researcher Ethics and Research Singleton & Straits: Chapters 1 & 16
Assignment	At home completion of IRB Ethics Requirement
Class 2	Theory and Research Philosophical Issues in Research Links between Theory and Research Singleton & Straits: Chapters 2
Class 3	Problem Formulation Overview of the Research Process Purposes of Research Research Question Hypothesis Writing Singleton & Straits: Chapter 3
Class 4	Variables Conceptualization Operationalization Singleton & Straits: Chapter 4, pages 76 - 86
Assignment	Hypothesis Writing
Class 5	Measurement Levels of Measurement Measurement Error Constructing Measurement Instruments Reliability Validity Singleton & Straits: Chapter 4, pages 86 – 105; Chapter 9
Class 6	Measurement Assignment Presentations
Class 7	Sampling Sampling Terminology Sampling Randomness vs. Randomization Factors affecting choice of sampling design Factors determining sampling size Singleton & Straits: Chapter 5 Hand in Problem Formulation Topic and Outline

- Class 8** **Midterm Examination**
- Class 9** Research Design Overview
 Casual Inference and Research Design
 Types of Research Designs
 Unobtrusive Research Methods
 Threats to Internal and External Validity
Singleton & Straits: Chapter 6; Campbell & Stanley, pp. 1 -22
- Class 10** Research Design II
 Pre-Experimental Designs for Research
 Quasi-Experimental Designs for Research
 Experimental Designs for Research
Singleton & Straits: Chapter 7; Campbell & Stanley, pp. 22 - 64
- Class 11** Research Design III
 Survey Designs
Singleton & Straits: Chapter 8, Campbell & Stanley, pp. 64 - 71
- Class 12** **Research Design Discussion**
Research Design IV
 Qualitative Research Methods
Singleton & Straits: Chapter 10
- Class 13** Qualitative Research Methods
Journal article will be assigned prior to this class
- Class 14** **Review**
Problem Formulation Paper and Presentation Due