



“We are a community that commits itself to
diversity and sustainability as dimensions of a just
society” --*Lewis and Clark Mission Statement*

MCFT 530 Research Methods and Systemic Practice (2 units)

SPRING 2020

Instructor: **Joslyn Armstrong, Ph.D.**

Time & Day: Section 1-Mondays 9:30am-12:30pm
Section 2- Mondays 2:00 pm-5:00pm

Location: York Graduate Center, room 115

Office Hours: Wednesdays 10 am – 12pm, or by appointment via email.

Office Location: Rogers Hall room 325

CATALOG DESCRIPTION

This course addresses the essential concepts related to research design and methodology that systems/relational practitioners need to become critical evaluators of research and prepare for conducting research in their own practices, with an emphasis is on becoming an informed consumer of research and evidence-based practice. Students learn to apply research with critical awareness of the links between the process of inquiry, construction of knowledge, and cultural equity. Focus is on understanding each component of the research process, qualitative and quantitative designs, program evaluations, measurement issues and data analysis as well as the legal, ethical, and contextual issues involved in the conduct of clinical research and program evaluation.

Prerequisites: None

Credits: 2 semester units (30 hours contact)

MCFT STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

This course promotes the following student learning outcomes:

SLO 3.1 Students are able to discern the implications of the sociopolitical context within which research is produced and applied.

SLO 3.2 Students draw on the research literature relevant to family therapy in case planning.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

As a result of this course students will:

1. Understand research and program evaluation methodologies, both quantitative and qualitative, relevant to MFT and mental health services.
2. Understand the legal, ethical, and contextual issues involved in the conduct of clinical research and program evaluation.
3. Recognize informal research processes involved in therapy, own biases relative to research.
4. Know the extant MFT literature, research, and evidence-based practice.
5. Read current MFT and other professional literature and use the literature to inform clinical practice.
6. Critique professional research and assess the quality of research studies and program evaluation in the literature.
7. Evaluate knowledge of current clinical literature and its application.
8. Recognize how epistemological assumptions and sociopolitical context of research affects research questions, design, implications, and application of research.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

Creswell, J. & Poth, C. (2017). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five traditions* (4th Ed). Thousand Oaks: Sage. ISBN: 9781506330204

Williams, L., Patterson, J., & Edwards, T. M. (2014). *Clinician's guide to research methods in family therapy: Foundations of evidence-based practice*. Guilford Publications. ISBN: 9781462515974

SUPPLEMENTARY TEXTS:

American Psychological Association (2019). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association*. (7th Ed.). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Lebow, J. (2018). *Research for the psychotherapist: From science to practice*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Merriam, S. B., & Tisdell, E. J. (2016). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation*. (4th Ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Mertens (2019). *Research and evaluation in education and psychology. Integrating diversity with quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods*. (5th Ed). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Communication: If you would like to schedule a face-to-face meeting, then please feel free to email me for an appointment or attend my weekly scheduled office hours. If you send an email to me, you can expect an answer in about 24 hours during the week. Generally, if you email me during the weekend, it is best to assume that I will not respond until Monday morning.

OVERVIEW AND EXPECTATIONS

My Commitment to You:

I am committed to assisting you by creating a safe, respectful and professional learning environment to be able to learn critical course material over the semester. I encourage you to discuss the course content with me any time during the semester. I also encourage you to offer your feedback throughout the course. I highly value your input.

Responsibilities of the Student:

This course will require due diligence on the student's behalf. Student must read assigned chapters and review all supplemental material provided on Moodle, or via email. You will be held responsible for knowing any changes made to the class schedule, weekly reading materials, or class assignments that will be in the announcements on Moodle or via email. In order to earn a satisfactory score in this course, the student must complete all assignments and readings, and remain engaged in the in-class format. Remember you are the sole owner of your academic experience; you must take responsibility for everything you do or not do in this course.

Course Objective	MCFT Student Learning Outcomes	AAMFT Core Competencies & AMFTRB task statements	Evaluated by
1. Understand research and program evaluation methodologies, both quantitative and qualitative, relevant to MFT and mental health services.	SLO 3.1 SLO 3.2	CC 6.1.2	Research article critiques SRS paper Peer review
2. Understand the legal, ethical, and contextual issues involved in the conduct of clinical research and program evaluation.	SLO 3.1 SLO 3.2	CC 6.1.3	Research article critiques
3. Recognize informal research processes involved in therapy, own biases relative to research.	SLO 3.1 SLO 3.2	CC 6.2.1	Research article critiques SRS paper
4. Know the extant MFT literature, research, and evidence-based practice.	SLO 3.1 SLO 3.2	CC 6.1.1 CC 6.3.1	Research article critiques SRS paper

			Peer review
5. Read current MFT and other professional literature and use the literature to inform clinical practice.	SLO 3.1 SLO 3.2	CC 6.3.1 CC 6.3.2	Research article critiques SRS paper
6. Critique professional research and assess the quality of research studies and program evaluation in the literature.	SLO 3.1 SLO 3.2	CC 6.3.3	Research article critiques SRS paper Peer review
7. Evaluate knowledge of current clinical literature and its application.	SLO 3.1 SLO 3.2	CC 6.4.1	Research article critiques SRS paper Peer review
8. Recognize how epistemological assumptions and sociopolitical context of research affects research questions, design, implications, and application of research.	SLO 3.1	CC 6.1.2 CC 6.1.3 CC 6.3.1 CC 6.3.3 CC 6.4.1	Research article critiques

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS AND EVALUATION

This class will emphasize learning by doing. Students will actively engage in reading family therapy-related research, reflect on the research design process and the context in which findings were created, and consider implications for practice. Your course grade will be based the following assessments.

CLASS ATTENDANCE

Because class participation and discussion are essential for your learning, regular attendance is expected for this course. Students are expected to attend class regularly and be on time. Participation is counted as involvement in class and in class assignments. Therefore, it is imperative that you attend class unless otherwise informed by Dr. Armstrong. In the event you are absent, it is your responsibility to bring in documented information that is considered University worthy. Only the days indicated on the excuse will be accepted as verification of an excused absence. There will be no makeup assignments given for missed class sessions. Skype or zoom call-ins as makeup attendance will not be allowed for any reason. Distracting behavior in class is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Other unacceptable behaviors include arriving late or leaving early, except in cases when there is a valid reason for doing so. Being unable to find parking is NOT a valid excuse for being late, so please plan accordingly.

1. **CLASS PARTICIPATION (10 points)**

All assigned readings must be completed in advance of the class in which they are to be discussed. Every student is responsible for coming to class prepared to participate in a meaningful discussion. Classroom group discussions are opportunities to bring up questions about the assigned readings, further your understanding of the concepts in lectures, integrate course material into your understanding of research, and integrate material into your clinical practice. Thus, students are expected to read all required readings and supplemental readings and actively participate in class discussions and small group activities.

2. **RESEARCH ARTICLE CRITIQUES (10 points)**

Students will work in groups to critique research studies relevant to the therapy practice, family studies, and marriage and family therapy fields. Students will share their critiques with their peers in a larger class discussion format. Students will be expected to “chart” their critiques of empirical articles as they evaluate the merits of an article’s components related to purpose, sampling, methodology, statistical analysis, findings, conclusions, sociocultural/political context, and clinical application. Students will be evaluated on their critical evaluation, knowledge of methodological issues for quantitative and qualitative studies, and their suggestions for improvement in the outlined areas. Submit on Moodle.

3. **SYSTEMATIC RESEARCH SYNTHESIS PAPER (SRS) (60 points)-** Students will work in groups of 3 to complete an SRS paper on their topic of choice. They will be expected to compose a list of relevant peer-reviewed articles on their research topic, chart those articles, synthesize and critique the body of literature on their topic area, and provide clinical/systemic implications for their topic area. The SRS will be no more than 10 pages, with 5-7 peer-reviewed journal articles, and APA format and references. Any suspicions of violations to the Academic Integrity policy will be reported (please review the policy below). A rubric for the assignment is attached below. There is a 10% deduction for every day that the paper is late for late assignments.

4. **PEER REVIEW (20 points)-** Students will work in their SRS groups to evaluate and critique fellow class member’s group SRS paper prior to submission. They will be expected to thoroughly review the SRS paper through edits, critiques, and feedback on structure, organization, the group’s critiques and synthesis of the literature and their clinical implications. Each group will provide a brief 2-3-page paper to Dr. Armstrong summarizing their feedback to their assigned group and the edited document for review by Dr. Armstrong. Any suspicions of violations to the Academic Integrity policy will be reported (please review the policy below). Guidelines for the assignment are detailed below. There is a 10% deduction for every day that the paper is late for late assignments.

5. **EXTRA CREDIT (2 points)-** Students can volunteer to participate in a class research study. Students will receive hands-on experience as participants and evaluators of an example research study designed for the course to showcase various concepts and methodologies. For their participation, students will receive extra credit points on top of their total class points. This is designed not to penalize any students who do not want to participate but still remain engaged in class material.

EVALUATION AND GRADING

Class Participation	10
Research Article Critiques	10
Systematic Research Synthesis	60
Peer Review	20
Extra Credit	2
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Total	100

Final Grading

A = 93-100%	A- = 90-92%
B + = 88-89%	B = 83-87%
B- = 80-82%	C+ = 78-79%
C = 73-77%	C- = 70-72%

According to Graduate School policy, grades lower than B- may not apply to graduation. Students earning a C+ or lower will need to repeat the course.

CPSY DEPARTMENTAL ATTENDANCE POLICY

Class attendance is expected and required. Any missed class time will be made up by completing extra assignments designed by the instructor. Missing more than ten percent of class time may result in failure to complete the class. This would be 4.5 hours of a 45 hour class (3 credits), 3.0 hours for a 30 hour class (2 credits) or 1.5 hours for a 15 hour class (1 credit.) In case of extreme hardship and also at the discretion of the instructor, a grade of incomplete may be given for an assignment or the entire course. In such cases, the work to be submitted in order to remove the incomplete must be documented appropriately and stated deadlines met. Students are expected to be on time to class and tardiness maybe seen as an absence that requires make-up work.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY

Each member of the Lewis & Clark community is responsible for the integrity of their individual academic performance. As each act of dishonesty harms the entire community, each student, faculty, or staff member is expected to encourage academic integrity by reporting potential violations of this policy to the Office of the Dean of the College. Through these actions, we are committed to maintain standards of academic integrity.

DISABILITY SERVICES STATEMENT

If you have a disability that may impact your academic performance, you may request accommodations by submitting documentation to the Student Support Services Office in the Albany Quadrangle (503-768-7192). After you have submitted documentation and filled out paperwork there for the current semester requesting accommodations, staff in that office will notify me of the accommodations for which you are eligible.

DISCLOSURE OF PERSONAL INFORMATION

Each student should decide for him/herself what information to disclose. Students are advised to be prudent when making self-disclosures. The program cannot guarantee confidentiality of student disclosures given the group environment, although personal comments should be considered private and confidential – and remain only in the classroom – unless an exception to confidentiality applies.

CELL PHONES

Cell phones must be silenced/remain off, and text messaging is not allowed during class time. If there is an emergency that requires your immediate attention, please exit the class to use your cell.

SYLLABUS CHANGE POLICY

Except for changes that substantially affect implementation of the evaluation (grading), this syllabus is a guide for the course and is subject to change with advance notice throughout the semester.

COURSE STRUCTURE AND SCHEDULE

Any changes to the reading schedule will be announced at least 24 hours prior

Reading Abbreviations: **W** – Williams et al., 2014; **C** – Creswell & Poth, 2018; **A**: Online Article

Session	Day	Date	Lecture Review	Readings
1	M	Jan. 6th	Introductions & Syllabus Review Lecture: Choosing a Research Topic & Group Assignment Guest Lecture: Searching for Literature & Zotero	C: Ch. 2
2	M	Jan. 13th	Lecture: Writing a Systematic Research Synthesis paper	C: Ch. 6 W: Ch. 13-14
3	M	Jan. 20th	No Class: MLK Day Holiday	
4	M	Jan. 27th	Lecture: Qualitative Research- Introducing the 5 Approaches Check-in: Meet with Dr. Armstrong	C: Ch. 1, 4, 7-8 W: Ch. 6
5	M	Feb. 3rd	Lecture: Qualitative Research- Reliability & Validity <i>Family Freud Game</i>	C: Ch. 10

6	M	Feb. 10th	Lecture: Evaluating Qualitative Research Guest Lecture: Dr. Cho qualitative research	A
7	M	Feb. 17th	Lecture: Quantitative Research- the Basics Check-in: Meet with Dr. Armstrong	W: Ch. 2, 5, 9-11
8	M	Feb. 24th	Lecture: Quantitative Research- Reliability & Validity <i>Family Freud Game</i>	W: Ch. 3-4, 8
9	M	March 2nd	Lecture: Evaluating Quantitative Research Assignment: Peer review due at 11:30pm	A
10	M	March 9th	Lecture: Critiquing Research Check-in: Meet with Dr. Armstrong	A
11	M	March 16th	No class: Writing day Assignment: SRS paper due by 11:30pm on Moodle	

Grading Rubric for Systematic Research Synthesis (SRS) Paper—Total possible points: 60

Paper Sections	Marginal (2 pts)	Emerging (5 pts)	Proficient (8 pts)	Accomplished (10 pts)
Introduce the significance of the topic area in stating the research problem and statement and research questions	Minimally aware of the significance of the topic area: identifies variables but makes no connection to the research problem.	Somewhat aware of the significance of the topic area: names relevant factors with limited connection to the research problem.	Generally aware of the significance of the topic area: names relevant factors with general connection to the research problem.	Consistently aware of the significance of the topic area: identifies relevant literature and connects with research problem.
Search terms, databases, and overview of empirical articles used are stated in methods	Minimally address only a few search terms, provides no justification or description of search process used and does not state results of search.	Somewhat address search terms used, provides little justification or description of search process used and only states a few results of search.	Generally address search terms used, provides general justification or description of search process used and does state results of search.	Consistently address search terms used, provides adequate justification or description of search process used and states results of search.
Literature is synthesized where relevant findings and literature are included	No synthesis of literature of there is disjointed and unclear sentences, no flow between ideas and points related to the topic area, and not concisely stated.	Limited synthesis of literature of there is unclear sentences, limited flow between ideas and points related to the topic area, and not concisely stated.	Emerging synthesis of literature of there is general sentences, general flow between ideas and points related to the topic area and is generally concise.	Adequate synthesis of literature of there is clear and concise sentences, adequate flow between ideas and points related to the topic area.
Body of literature is critiqued, and critique includes implications of sociopolitical context	Minimal identification of critiques for the body of literature and no mention of sociopolitical context.	Identification of few critiques for body of literature is limited and vague in assessment of methodology and brief mention of sociopolitical context.	Identification of several critiques for body of literature is general and superficial in assessment of methodology and mention of sociopolitical context is limited in range and depth of assessment.	Identification of several critiques for body of literature is adequate in assessment of methodology and mention of sociopolitical context has depth.
Offer clinical or systemic application of topic area	Minimal mention of clinical or systemic application and assessment is not relational or systemic.	Some mention of clinical application and assessment has suggestions for clinical application that aligns with some aspects of systemic assessment.	Generally suggestions of clinical application and assessment has some clinical application that aligns with a few aspects of systemic assessment.	Consistent suggestions of clinical application and assessment has adequate clinical application that aligns with a systemic perspective.
Paper is clearly written and organized, well-referenced, charts are included, and conforms to APA style.	Style of writing is hard to follow and poorly organized without focused introduction and conclusion. References are limited and there are significant errors in APA style. No charts are attached.	Writing is sometimes hard to follow with some organization problems. References are limited and there are some errors in APA style. Charts are not completely filled-in and lack depth for each section.	Writing is generally clear and easy to follow. Paper is organized and most points are well articulated. Paper is appropriately referenced with very minimal APA errors. Charts are mostly completed and sections show superficial level of critique.	Writing is exceptionally clear and easy to follows. Major points are well articulated and organization provides an excellent overview of the issues and conclusions. Paper is appropriately referenced with no APA errors. Charts are completed and sections show depth in critique.

SRS Paper Outline & Guidelines

- **Introduce the Research Problem-** include a brief description of the research problem of the topic area of the SRS paper and provide description of variables and research question(s)
- **Methods section-** includes a description of the databases used, how many articles were generated for each database, the search terms used, the time frame of search and justification of time frame, and the final number of articles included in the SRS and demographics of those articles
- **Synthesis of literature-** synthesize the literature findings and conclusions for the collection of articles used in SRS
- **Critique of literature-** based on the overall critique section in the chart, discuss the primary overall critiques of the body of literature from the collection of articles in the SRS
- **Sociopolitical and sociocultural context-** discuss what could be the implications of the topic area on sociopolitical or sociocultural context
- **Clinical/Systemic application-** offer suggestions on how the topic area could be applied clinically or systemically and what are the implications of the application
- **References**
- **Charts-** include at the end of the document, all of the charts for the articles mentioned in the SRS
- **Format-** title page, abstract, APA 7th Edition citations, 10 pages, double-spaced, 12 point font, Times New Roman font

Peer Review Rubric

Peer Review Evaluation	Possible points	Points demonstrated
<u>Peer Review Evaluation Criteria:</u>		
Evaluated the organization and structure of the SRS paper	2	
Offered valuable feedback/edits on the synthesis of the literature for the topic area	5	
Offered valuable feedback/edits on the overall critiques of the body of literature on the topic area	5	
Offered valuable feedback/edits on the section of clinical/systemic implications for the topic area	5	
Writing style is clear and concise. No grammar or APA citation errors. No formatting errors. Assignment meets 3 maximum page length requirements.	3	
TOTAL	20	