



"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 2023**

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Instructor: **Joslyn Armstrong, Ph.D.**  
Time & Day: Section 2-Thursdays 1:00pm-4:00pm  
Section 3- Thursdays 5:30pm-8:30pm  
Location: Section 2- York 121  
Section 3- York 121  
Office Hours: by appointment via email.

### **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.

### **COVID POLICY**

Please read and carefully review LC's guidelines for reopening at

<https://www.lclark.edu/news/2020-plans/health-and-safety/>

### **REQUIRED TEXTS:**

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

This textbook is available for loan checkout at the Watzek library. You can also buy the textbook through the LC bookstore. Also, you can rent/purchase this text as an ebook through VitalSource (<https://www.vitalsource.com/>) as well. I would suggest this option if you want a textbook electronically. Also, the site can offer resources such as highlighting, text-to-speech and screen reader function, etc.

### **SUPPLEMENTARY TEXTS:**

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

**Communication:** If you would like to schedule a face-to-face meeting, then please feel free to email me for an appointment. If you send an email to me, you can expect an answer in about 48 hours during the week. Generally, if you email me during the weekend, it is best to assume that I

will not respond until Tuesday morning.

## OVERVIEW AND EXPECTATIONS

### My Commitment to You:

I am committed to assisting you by creating a 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 am available by appointments only via email.** 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 classroom 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.

<b>Course Objective</b>	<b>MCFT Student Learning Outcomes</b>	<b>AAMFT Core Competencies &amp; AMFTRB task statements</b>	<b>Evaluated by</b>
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	Qualitative Research Study  IRB Application
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	Qualitative Research Study  IRB Application
3. Recognize informal research processes involved in therapy, own biases relative to research.	SLO 3.1 SLO 3.2	CC 6.2.1	IRB Application
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	Qualitative Research Study  IRB Application
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	Qualitative Research Study  IRB Application
6. Critique professional research and assess the quality of research studies	SLO 3.1 SLO 3.2	CC 6.3.3	Qualitative Research Study

and program evaluation in the literature.			IRB Application
7. Evaluate knowledge of current clinical literature and its application.	SLO 3.1 SLO 3.2	CC 6.4.1	Qualitative Research Study  IRB Application
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	Qualitative Research Study

## 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. 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. Zoom call-ins as makeup attendance will not be allowed for any reason. If you must miss class due to COVID-related symptoms, this will be counted as a missed class. Please review the CTSP department attendance policy as well. 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.

#### 1. CLASS PARTICIPATION (20 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.

##### a. BLACK JEOPARDY QUESTION SUBMISSION (up to 2 points)

Students will be required to submit a qualitative and quantitative research question from the course material to Dr. Armstrong for the two Jeopardy games. The purpose of the Jeopardy games is to test students on their knowledge and consumption of the course material on qualitative and quantitative research methodologies. The students will be separated into

groups to compete for 1-point extra credit added to their total points. Their sample Jeopardy questions will be submitted on Moodle.

**b. TERMINATION OF DATA AGREEMENT FORM (1 point)**

At the end of the course, students will be required to submit the Termination of data agreement form on Moodle. The agreement form certifies that at the conclusion of the course, all groups and their members will permanently delete all raw and deidentified data from their records. Students will not have Lewis & Clark College IRB approval for human subjects research, thus for the protection of all involved, they will need to permanently delete all files associated with the research study for the course. Students will sign the agreement stating they have permanently deleted all files at the end of the course. Dr. Armstrong will determine the impact on any student's grade for the course, if students who do not sign the agreement by the end of the course.

2. **IRB APPLICATION (30 points)**- Students will work with their research study groups to complete an IRB application and informed consent form for their research study topic area. Groups will be expected to compose an application that addresses the areas of: research purpose, research background, methodology, research design, data analysis, and include an informed consent form. The IRB application must be no more than 5 pages, 12-point font, Times New Roman, a Word document format, and 7<sup>th</sup> edition 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. One group member will submit the application on Moodle by 11:30pm.
  
3. **QUALITATIVE GROUP RESEARCH STUDY (50 points)**- Students will work in groups of 3 to conduct a qualitative research study for the course. Groups will choose a research topic, research questions, and create a semi-structured interview guide with 3 questions, and 3 probing questions. Groups will conduct interviews with 3 participants, transcribe those interviews, and code the transcripts. Groups will submit a finalized write-up of their research study. The chosen research area must have implications to the MFT field and have a discussion on what MFT therapists can learn from the study. The qualitative group research study paper will be no more than 15 pages (without title page, TOC, and references pages), double-spaced, 12-point font, Times New Roman, a Word document format, with 5-7 peer-reviewed journal articles, and 7<sup>th</sup> edition APA format and references. Any suspicions of violations to the Academic Integrity policy will be reported (please review the policy below). Guidelines for the assignment rubric are detailed below. There is a 10% deduction for every day that the paper is late for late assignments. The assignment must be submitted by one group member on Moodle and *all* group members on Taskstream by 11:30pm.

**EVALUATION AND GRADING**

Class Participation	20
IRB Application	30
Qualitative Research Study	50
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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.

**Late papers and assignments:** Any assignments turned in late (without previous permission) will automatically receive a 10% reduction in grade for every day late.

## **CTSP 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 may be seen as an absence that requires make-up work.

## **DISABILITY SERVICES STATEMENT**

- Option 1: 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 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.
- Option 2: If you require academic accommodations please contact the Student Support Services Office in Albany Quadrangle (503-76-7192 or [access@lclark.edu](mailto:access@lclark.edu)). Once you complete the intake process and the Accommodations Agreement, you may Request to Send your Accommodations Letter. Student Support Services staff will then notify faculty 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.

## LINKS TO LEWIS & CLARK GRADUATE SCHOOL ESSENTIAL POLICIES

This course adheres to the general policies outlined in the catalog and student handbook of the Lewis & Clark Graduate School of Education and Counseling. This includes full adherence to the following policies:

- Nondiscrimination: [go.lclark.edu/gsec-nondiscrimination](http://go.lclark.edu/gsec-nondiscrimination);
- Standards for professional student conduct and academic integrity: [go.lclark.edu/gsec-conduct](http://go.lclark.edu/gsec-conduct);
- Sexual misconduct: [go.lclark.edu/titleIX](http://go.lclark.edu/titleIX).

## 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 mute your video to take the call.

## 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: C – Creswell & Poth, 2018; A: Online Article(s)

<b>Session</b>	<b>Day</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Lecture Review</b>	<b>Readings</b>
1	Thurs	Jan. 12th	Introductions & Syllabus Review <b>Lecture:</b> Choosing a Research Topic & Group Assignment, Forming a Research Question <b>Guest Speaker:</b> Elaine Hirsch, Watzek Librarian	
2	Thurs	Jan. 19th	<b>Lecture:</b> IRB application, & Informed Consent, & Interviewing participants	
3	Thurs	Jan. 26th	<b>Lecture:</b> Qualitative Research- Introducing the 5 Approaches <b>Assignment:</b> IRB Application due on Moodle by 11:30pm	C: Ch. 1, 4, 7-8
4	Thurs	Feb. 2nd	<b>Lecture:</b> Qualitative Research- Introducing the 5 Approaches & Ethics	C: Ch. 1, 4, 7-8, 10

5	Thurs	Feb. 9th	<i>Black Jeopardy Game</i> Check-in: Meet with Dr. Armstrong	
6	Thurs	Feb. 16th	<b>Lecture:</b> Transcribing and Coding Qualitative research	<b>A</b>
7	Thurs	Feb. 23rd	<b>Out of class Work Day</b>	
8	Thurs	March 2nd	<b>Lecture:</b> Quantitative Research- the Basics; & Ethics	
9	Thurs	March 9th	<b>Lecture:</b> Using Research for Clinical Practice & Utility	
10	Thurs	March 16th	<i>Black Jeopardy Game</i> Check-in: Meet with Dr. Armstrong	
	Thurs	March 23rd	<b>Assignment:</b> Qualitative Group Research Study due on Moodle & Taskstream by 11:30pm; Termination of Data Agreement form due April 1 <sup>st</sup> on Moodle by 11:30pm	



**IRB Application Assignment (30 points)**

IRB Application Rubric	Possible points	Points demonstrated
<b><u>IRB Application Evaluation Criteria:</u></b>		
Presented a brief but concise relevant literature review for the research background	5	
Included a list of relevant databases and keywords in the application	5	
Presented a plan to maintain confidentiality and/or anonymity, and risk level	5	
Presented a reasonable research design and data analysis plan	5	
The informed consent form included all relevant sections and was concise	5	
Writing style is clear and concise. No grammar or APA citation errors. No formatting errors. Assignment meets 5 maximum page length requirements.	5	
TOTAL	30	

### Qualitative Group Research Study Rubric

Student Research study groups are expected to conduct a qualitative research study on a topic of interest with a population of interest. The research study must have 3 interview questions, 3 probing questions for 3 participants. The sample must be 18 years and older, and cannot be vulnerable populations such as children, pregnant persons, or incarcerated people. Students will be conducting recorded interviews with participants and producing a transcript for coding for major themes. Each group will submit a final draft of their research study at completion of the course. The peer-review journal articles must be within 5 years from 2022 to be included in the final paper, according to Dr. Armstrong’s discretion. The final paper will be no more than 15 pages (without title page, TOC, and references pages), double-spaced, 12-point font, Times New Roman, a Word document format, with 5-7 peer-reviewed journal articles, and 7<sup>th</sup> edition APA format and references. Any suspicions of violations to the Academic Integrity policy will be reported (please review the policy). One group member will submit the paper on Moodle and all group members will submit the paper on Taskstream.

	<b>0 = Did not meet Expectations</b>	<b>5 = Somewhat meet Expectations</b>	<b>10 = Meets Expectations</b>
Introduction/Problem Statement	Section is mostly missing or incomplete, and unclear, or unconvincing.	Identifies a gap in the literature but not why the gap should be filled. Purpose of study was clearly written and identifiable. Included all the terms we need to know to understand the research study. Paradigm is given but not applied to project. Importance to field is vague with little to no connection to MFT field, little mention of broader systemic factors.	Provides a convincing argument as to why the research should be conducted. Provide a clear rationale for the paradigm used and how it applies to the group project. Clearly explains the importance to the field and clearly connects how clinicians can use the information gained in the clinical room and in their practice. Also has systemic implications.
Literature Review	Does not address every aspect of the section. Does not provide a clear or relevant review of other studies. Inadequate synthesis and summary of literature. No or weak case is made for the importance of the study.	Review includes irrelevant details or is not clearly related to presented research study. Somewhat clear and concise synthesis and summary of literature. The arguments in the literature review are poorly empirically supported.	Gives a short but meaningful review of three other relevant studies. Makes a clear argument for why the project is important. Adequate and empirically supported synthesis and summary of literature. Makes a detailed argument in literature review.

Methodology	Does not include qualitative aspects of design. Is incomplete or unclear in research design, sampling, and procedure. Incorrect application of concepts.	Provides general qualitative aspects of design. Mostly clear presentation of research questions. Addresses most of the aspects of the section. Somewhat clear and adequate in detailed description in research design, sampling, and procedure.	Provides detailed qualitative aspects of design and has them integrated in a meaningful way. Clearly presented research questions. Clear and complete detailed description in research design, sampling, and procedure.
Results & Findings	Section does not clearly and concisely or minimally address how findings/conclusions are informed by previous literature. Does not include a results section with information from the data. Does not clearly summarize and synthesize previous literature, address gaps, or provide a conclusion.	Section generally connected how findings/conclusions are informed by previous literature. Results section minimally discusses the data, does not provide clear and concise examples from data in section. Somewhat clear summarization and synthesis of previous literature, does address gaps, and provide a conclusion.	Section clearly and adequately connected how findings/conclusions are informed by previous literature. Results section clearly and concisely uses the data in section. Clear and empirically supported summarization and provides a thorough synthesis of previous literature, clearly addresses gaps, and provide a conclusion.
APA format, citation, References page	The writing style is not clear, has many grammar errors and APA citation errors. The assignment was over the page limit requirement.	The writing style is somewhat clear, has several grammar errors and APA citation errors. The assignment was over the page limit requirement.	The writing style is clear and concise, has few grammar errors and APA citation errors. The assignment meets the page limit requirement.
<b>Total: 50</b>			