



“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 2024

Instructor: **Joslyn Armstrong, Ph.D.**
Time & Day: Section 1-Wednesdays 1:00pm-4:00pm
Location: Section 1- York 115
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.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

Creswell, J. & Poth, C. (2017). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five traditions* (4th 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 TEXT:

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

OVERVIEW AND EXPECTATIONS

Communication: If you would like to schedule a meeting, then please feel free to email me for an appointment. For course-related questions or inquiries, please expect a response to your email 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.

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 engagement in class and in class assignments as well. Zoom/video call-ins by Dr. Armstrong as makeup attendance will not be allowed. Additionally

zoom/video call-ins by other class mates in the class as makeup attendance will not be allowed as well. If you must miss class due to COVID-related symptoms or for other reason due to illness or a University-approved excuse, this will be counted as a missed class. There is a make up assignment for any excused, missed class time due to COVID or a University-approved excuse that must be submitted within a week of missed class session. Please contact Dr. Armstrong for the make-up assignment. Missing more than 10% of class time may result in failure to complete the class. More than one absence may lead to a failure to complete requirements for credit. This would be 4.5 hours of a 45-hour class (3 credits), 3 hours for a 30-hour class (2 credits) or **1.5 hours for a 15-hour class** (1 credit.).

Assignments: All assignments are due by 11:30 pm on the due date on either Moodle or Taskstream. Late assignments will generally not be accepted. Assignments will lose 10% of the points for each day late unless an extension is approved in advance by Dr. Armstrong, or a disability accommodation plan is already in place. All assignments must be successfully completed to pass the class. All written work is to be typed, single or double spaced, and adhere to APA style 7th edition guidelines unless otherwise stated.

Readings and Discussion: All assigned readings are to be completed prior to the beginning of class. There are many ways you can work to make this class fun and engaging. This class is often discussion-based and tie back to the reading, I ask that you do all the reading to the best of your ability. I want you to interact with the texts and come with informed opinions, so perhaps highlight, and take some notes, and find connections with your personal experiences and larger societal discourse. I hope to cultivate a climate of openness and intellectual humility.

Disclosure of personal information: Each student should decide for him/herself/themself 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 & Computers: 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 step outside of the classroom. Computers must only be used for class material only (ex: taking notes, searching up information pertaining to class topics, etc.) and other usages are considered a distraction from class session.

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	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 and program evaluation in the literature.	SLO 3.1 SLO 3.2	CC 6.3.3	Qualitative Research Study 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

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.

Class Participation Expectations	Points Possible
Prompt and dependable presence in class	4
Prepares for class by reading course readings and engages with active listening, critical consciousness, and interpersonal humility.	4
Helps to create an atmosphere of safety and mutual respect among all class members.	4

Contributes to class discussion: contributions may include how you feel about the material but merely articulating your feelings is not sufficient. You are expected to put those feelings in context of your thoughts and analysis of the material. Ongoing reflection and evaluation of own development of a critical contextual consciousness and awareness of research practices and methodology. Engage with differences in personal experience. Be accountable for impact on others. Demonstrate ability to be challenged or given critical feedback in discussion.	4
Contributes to group assignment: Contributes to group project materials with eagerness and readiness. Communicates effectively with group members such as respect, curiosity, and relational humility. Be accountable for involvement in group project. Demonstrate ability to be open to feedback and challenge from group members.	4
TOTAL:	20

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. 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.

Turn in & Grading:

Please either include your full name in the header/footer OR save or name the document for submission with your full name. Paper will be submitted on Moodle by 11:30pm. 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.

Turn in & Grading:

Please either include your full name in the header/footer OR save or name the document for submission with your full name. Paper will be submitted on Moodle by 1 person in each group by 11:30pm. The IRB application must be no more than 5 pages, 12-point font, Arial/Calibri/Times New Roman/Sans Serif font, a Word document format, and 7th 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%-point deduction for every day that the paper is late.

- 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

Turn in & Grading:

Please either include your full name in the header/footer OR save or name the document for submission with your full name. **All group members will on Taskstream by 11:30pm.** The paper will be a no more than 15 pages (without title page, TOC, and references pages), double-spaced, 12-point font, Arial/Calibri/Times New Roman/Sans Serif font, a Word document format, with 5-7 peer-reviewed journal articles, and 7th 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.

EVALUATION AND GRADING

Class Participation	20
IRB Application	30
Qualitative Research Study	50
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 maybe seen as an absence that requires make-up work.

DISABILITY SERVICES STATEMENT

- If you have a disability that may impact your academic performance, you may request accommodations by meeting with the Office of Student Accessibility staff and submitting documentation on the Office of Student Accessibility website. Email access@lclark.edu with any additional questions or concerns.

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;
- Standards for professional student conduct and academic integrity: go.lclark.edu/gsec-conduct;
- Sexual misconduct: go.lclark.edu/titleIX.
- LC COVID policy: <https://www.lclark.edu/news/2020-plans/health-and-safety>

If you have any questions regarding these policies, please speak to your instructor for clarification.

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

Course Schedule	
Any changes to the reading schedule will be announced at least 24 hours prior	
Class Session Dates	Textbook, Supplemental Readings, and Assignment Due Date Reminders
Week 1	
Jan 24th	Topic: Choosing a Research Topic & Group Assignment, & Online Survey Guest Speaker: Elaine Hirsch, Watzek Librarian
Week 2	
Jan 31st	Topic: Research Paper Info Session, & IRB Application
Week 3	
Feb 7th	Topic: Therapist as Researcher, & Intro to Qualitative Research & Ethics

	<p>Course Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creswell & Poth (2018)- Ch. 1, & 7 • Owenz & Hall (2011) https://primo.lclark.edu/permalink/01ALLIANCE_LCC/1pphi3t/cdi_proquest_journals_851541801 • Wittenborn et al. (2019) https://primo.lclark.edu/permalink/01ALLIANCE_LCC/1pphi3t/cdi_openaire_primary_doi_dedup_52c12b02e8b2da526e2a95274a1db991
	Assignment Due: IRB Application on Moodle by 11:30pm
Week 4	
Feb 14th	<p>Topic: Quantitative Research- the Basics & Ethics, & Therapist as Researcher</p> <p>Course Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lappen et al. (2017) https://primo.lclark.edu/permalink/01ALLIANCE_LCC/1pphi3t/cdi_openaire_primary_doi_2fcde2d1dd768c1c13139c0ad703b4e1
	Assignment due: <i>Black Jeopardy</i> question due on Moodle by 11:30pm
Week 5	
Feb 21st	Topic: <i>Black Jeopardy Game</i>
Week 6	
Feb 28th	<p>Topic: Transcribing & Coding Interviews pt. 1</p> <p>Course Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anderson (2007) Thematic Content Analysis • Creswell & Poth (2018)- Ch. 8
Week 7	
March 6th	<p>Topic: Coding Interviews pt. 2, & Qualitative Research- Introducing Phenomenology, Narrative, & Ethnography Approaches</p> <p>Course Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creswell & Poth (2018)- Ch. 4-5 • Holyoak et al. (2019) https://primo.lclark.edu/permalink/01ALLIANCE_LCC/1pphi3t/cdi_openaire_primary_doi_dedup_750efa03c877c1c4e319df04946cbcbf
Week 8	
March 13th	Out of Class Workday
Week 9	
March 20th	<p>Topic: & Qualitative Research- Introducing Grounded theory, & Case study Approaches</p> <p>Course Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creswell & Poth (2018)- Ch. 4-5 • Côté et al. (2021) https://primo.lclark.edu/permalink/01ALLIANCE_LCC/1pphi3t/cdi_openaire_primary_doi_dedup_75b99ceba46c2497274038a9faeaede2 • Whiting et al. (2020) https://primo.lclark.edu/permalink/01ALLIANCE_LCC/1pphi3t/cdi_openaire_primary_doi_dedup_0b2d9686112221611ec53ae71bd6306a
	Assignment due: <i>Black Jeopardy</i> question due on Moodle by 11:30pm
Spring Break (March 23rd-31st)	
Week 10	

April 3rd	Topic: <i>Black Jeopardy Game</i>
April 10th	Assignments Due: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Qualitative Group Research Study paper on Taskstream by 11:30pm• Termination of Data Agreement form on Moodle by 11:30pm

IRB Application Assignment (30 points)

IRB Application Rubric	Possible points	Points demonstrated
<u>IRB Application Evaluation Criteria:</u>		
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 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 7th edition APA format and references. Any suspicions of violations to the Academic Integrity policy will be reported (please review the policy). *All* group members will submit the paper on Taskstream.

	0 = Did not meet Expectations	5 = Somewhat meet Expectations	10 = Meets Expectations
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	Provides general qualitative aspects of	Provides detailed qualitative aspects of

	of design. Is incomplete or unclear in research design, sampling, and procedure. Incorrect application of concepts.	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.	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.
TOTAL: 50			