

Research Methods in Pastoral Counseling DM 6450

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“There are three kinds of lies: Lies, Damn Lies and Statistics.”

Benjamin Disraeli

“If sufficiently tortured, data will confess to anything.”

Unknown

Course Description

This course/seminar is a study of empirical research methods and their application to pastoral counseling. Students completing the course will develop skills: 1) to understand common research methods and procedures used in counseling disciplines; 2) to examine and critique the results of counseling outcome research and research at the intersection of counseling, religion and mental health; and 3) to design and carry out qualitative research in support of the D.Min. project.

Definitions

For the purpose of this course, Pastoral Counseling is defined as an over-arching approach to counseling that intentionally integrates theology, theological reflection, and spirituality into counseling practices that are theoretically informed by Marriage and Family Therapy, Professional Counseling, and other specific counseling disciplines. Pastoral counseling is a theological and philosophical “bridge” that links ministry and contemporary counseling disciplines.

Class format

Completing the course requires substantial work prior to the seminar and participation in a one-week on-campus intensive seminar. Requirements listed below outline expectations for seminar preparation and the one week seminar. All preparatory assignments will be submitted on the CAMS site for DM 6450.

Objectives

By the end of the class, students will:

- Understand the importance of research in counseling practice and pastoral counseling integration.
- Be able to describe dominant research methods used in counseling disciplines.
- Know how to conduct literature searches through appropriate databases.

- Be able to interpret research methodology and statistical information in journal articles and evaluate conclusions drawn from these data.
- Be able to discuss the current literature related to counseling outcome and effectiveness.
- Be able to discuss current research in religion and mental health.
- Develop a beginning D.Min. project proposal based in a viable research/project question and formulate a project design that uses an identifiable qualitative research method, appropriate procedures for gathering and analyzing qualitative data, and a plan for how the project will progress to completion.

Texts

Burke, P. J. (2009). *The elements of inquiry: A guide for consumers and producers of research*. Los Angeles: Pyczak Publishing.

Koenig, R. (2005). *Faith and Mental Health: Resources for Healing*. West Conshohocken, PA: Templeton Foundation

Lebow, J. (2006). *Research for the psychotherapist: From science to practice*. New York: Routledge.

Richards, L. (2009). *Handling qualitative data: A practical guide, 2nd edition*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Chapters 2, 7 & 8 from: Duncan, B.L., Miller S.D., Wampold, B. E. and Hubble, M. A. (2010). *The heart and soul of change, 2nd ed.* Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
(This reading is on the CAMS site.)

Other Very Useful Texts

Patten, M. (2009). *Understanding research methods, 7th ed.* Los Angeles: Pyczak Publishing.

Pyczak, R. (1999). *Evaluating research in academic journals: A practical guide to realistic education*. Los Angeles, CA: Pyczak Publishing Co., 1999.

Galvan, J. L. (1999) *Writing literature reviews: A guide for students of the social and behavioral sciences*. Los Angeles, Pyczak Publishing.

Requirements

Prior to seminar:

1. **Read Lebow, 2006, and write a 2-4 page reaction paper to the text.** (Submit paper through CAMS prior to seminar.)

2. **Complete Burke, *The elements of inquiry* workbook.** As you complete the text, submit questions you have about what you are learning on the CAMS site Discussion Forum entitled “Elements of inquiry discussion.” Look at this forum occasionally as you prepare and respond to others who have questions.
3. **Read Koenig, 2005 and write a 2-4 page reaction/reflection paper to the text.** (Submit paper through CAMS prior to seminar.)
4. **Read** chapters 2, 7 & 8 of Duncan, B.L., Miller S.D., Wampold, B. E. and Hubble, M. A. (2010). *The heart and soul of change, 2nd ed.* Washington, DC: American Psychological Association. (This reading is on the CAMS site). **Write a 2-4 page reaction paper to this text** (submit on the CAMS site).
5. **Read Richards, 2009 in preparation for seminar discussion.**
6. **Write a brief summary of what you hope to accomplish toward your project during the seminar (no more than one page).** Do you need to refine your question or problem? Do you need to understand and finalize your methodology? Do you need assistance organizing literature review? Help with sampling procedures? Questionnaires? Etc. **Submit your paper through CAMS no later than one week prior to the seminar.** Be prepared to discuss your developing project during the seminar.

On campus:

The seminar will meet daily from 9:00 – 4:30. Class sessions will build on pre-seminar work. Sessions will focus on: 1) Shaping research/project questions consistent with expectations of qualitative research methods, 2) developing appropriate project design to accommodate qualitative research methods, 3) developing skills for literature review to support proposed projects, 4) managing data collection, analysis, and interpretation, 5) ethical principles and procedures in human subject research, and 6) procedures for completing the project write-up.

By the end of the seminar each participant will turn in a preliminary project prospectus that reflects good use of seminar resources. This should include 1) a well formed question, 2) a brief, preliminary outline of anticipated literature review, 3) a project design that reflects an appropriate qualitative research method, 4) a preliminary plan for sampling, data gathering, coding and analysis, 5) a time line for the project and its completion, 6) an ethical statement prepared for LPTS Institutional Review Board, and 7) a preliminary outline how pastoral and theological concerns will be integrated into critical analysis of data, the project, and its report.

Grading

Grades will be determined based on the quality of work reflected in written reviews, participation in seminar discussions, and effective use of seminar material in forming a preliminary project proposal.