



UNIVERSITY OF
CALGARY

Department of Psychology

PSYC 650: Research Seminar in Clinical Psychology

Fall 2006/Winter 2007

Instructor:	Dr. Candace Konnert	Office:	Admin 233C
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Objective: This course has two objectives. First, to assist students with their professional development, and to provide them with information and advice for success as a clinical psychology trainee. Second, to help students develop their clinical research skills, including their grasp of issues related to research design and methodology. Specific course objectives include (1) allowing students to share and develop their own research ideas and plans, (2) developing and enhancing skills in critical thinking and integrating research findings, (3) developing oral and visual presentation skills, and (4) providing exposure to selected research-related professional issues. Students are required to present their own research at the formulation and design stages and to provide constructive feedback to their peers regarding their research proposals.

This seminar includes lectures, student presentations, article critiques, and discussion. Your active involvement and participation are central to the success of this course. Lively, thoughtful discussions will make the class more interesting and enjoyable for all, so your efforts to participate will pay off.

Requirements and evaluation procedures: This year-long course meets for two hours biweekly. The grading format for this course is credit/no credit. Students must receive a grade of 80% to receive credit for the course. The grading criteria are as follows:

Article critique exercise – January 10 (25%)

Research presentation (25%)

Attendance and class participation (50%) – a midterm mark will be given

Attendance at each class, participation in discussion, and acceptable completion of presentations and assignments are mandatory to receive credit for this course. Students must make every effort to attend all sessions, and must confer with the instructor in advance if they find they must miss a class.

- *Article critiques.* Periodically students will work in class in small groups to critique an article on theoretical, methodological, and statistical grounds, suggesting alternative strategies where possible to improve the research. The course readings will help you build your research evaluation skills. In particular, articles should be read with reference to Kazdin (2003). Ask yourself, does this article meet the “gold standard” for clinical research as outlined by Kazdin? Keep in mind that it is important to note strengths as well as weaknesses of the research. Students may be asked to present their critiques in class. On January 10th, students will be given an article to critique as an in class exercise. This is similar to what is required for the Candidacy Exam and is intended to provide students with that experience prior to writing the Exam.

- *Research presentation.* Students will each make a 45-minute presentation on their thesis research, following the outline below. Class members who are not presenting in a given class are expected to ask questions and provide constructive feedback on the project.

Required text: Kazdin, A. E. (2003). *Research design in clinical psychology* (4th ed.). New York: Allyn & Bacon. This text is available in the bookstore. Other readings will be assigned.

Class schedule (Fall 2006)—subject to revision

Date	Topic	Required readings
September 13	Introduction to course: What you need to know to achieve success in graduate school.	
September 27	More good stuff you need to know! How to evaluate a research article Article critiques	Kazdin Ch. 1-3 Olesen, K. C., & Arkin, R. M. (1996). Reviewing and evaluating a research article. In F. T. L. Leong & J. T. Austin (Eds.), <i>The psychology research handbook</i> (pp. 40-51). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
October 11	Article critiques	Kazdin Ch. 4-6
October 25	On preparing an article for publication Article critiques	Kazdin Ch. 7-9 Bem, D. J. (2000). Writing an empirical article. In R. J. Sternberg (Ed.), <i>Guide to publishing in psychology journals</i> (pp. 3-16). Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press.
November 8	Program evaluation I – Dr. Helen Gardiner	Kazdin Ch. 10-12 Program evaluation readings TBA
November 22	Program evaluation II – Dr. Helen Gardiner	Kazdin Ch. 13-15 Program evaluation readings TBA
December 6	Program evaluation exercise	Kazdin Ch. 16-19 Program evaluation readings TBA

Note: How to read Kazdin (2003). The goal is not to remember every detail provided in the text. Instead, you need to be able to use the information provided in the text to design your own research, and to critically evaluate the research of others.

Class schedule (Winter 2007)—subject to revision

Date	Topic	Required readings
January 10	Article Critique Exercise (in class)	
January 24	Research presentations – M.Sc. II	
February 7	Research presentations – M.Sc. II	
February 28	Research presentations – M.Sc. II	
March 14	Research presentations – M.Sc. I	
March 28	Research presentations – M.Sc. I	
April 4 Note date change.	Research presentations – M.Sc. I	

Outline for Student Research Presentations

When you present the design of your thesis research, include a discussion of each the following areas, in roughly the order presented. The basic idea is that you will lead the audience logically through the planning of your thesis and its proposed execution. Depending at what point in the semester you are presenting, it's understood that you may not have every detail of your study determined. Please leave some time (5 -10 minutes) for questions at the end. It's a good idea to use visual aids, such as PowerPoint or overheads, to organize your presentation. Note that I have reserved a pc and data projector for each class meeting that you may use for a PowerPoint presentation.

1. **Title of project; supervisor; committee members; date of pro-seminar**
2. **Background**—What research, published or unpublished, led up to this project? What concepts do we need to know to understand what you are studying?
3. **Study question/key hypotheses**
4. **Rationale**—Why is this study important? Why should we care about it? How does this study extend theory and/or our knowledge base?
5. **Methods**—Sample size, description; how is sample being ascertained? Procedure? Data analytic approach?
6. **Status of the research project**—If you have not already, when do you anticipate starting and completing data collection?
7. **Results and conclusions**—Preliminary or final.
8. **Methodological challenges**—What weaknesses or limitations of this study can you identify? To what extent does it or does it not meet the “gold standard?”
9. **What are some things you have learned** in designing this study? What might you do similarly and differently in designing and implementing your next project?
10. **Pending successful completion of this study, what direction should this research take?**

The criteria for marking your presentation are as follows (weight of each criterion will depend on the stage of your research):

- Organization and clarity of content
- Knowledge of the extant literature and your study as an extension of this line of research
- Your ability to demonstrate the significance of the research and the rationale for your study
- Critical evaluation of your methodology (strengths and weaknesses) and suggestions for improvement (in an ideal world with vast resources of time and money)!
- Your ideas for future research

Some tips on making successful PowerPoint presentations

- Use a dark background with light lettering to maximize readability
- Use large font sizes (i.e., > about 24) so it's easily legible even from across the room
- Use telegraphic sentences and phrases to minimize the number of words on any given slide, so the audience focuses on what you have to say instead of busily reading everything on your slide
- Use pictures and graphs to illustrate your points wherever you can.