



Department of Psychology
Psychology 650 (L01) – Research Seminar in Clinical Psychology
Fall 2010 – Winter 2011 – Course Outline

Instructor:	Candace Konnert	Lecture Location:	A053
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Course Description and Goals: This course is required in years 1 and 2 of the M.Sc. program and has rotating content. 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.

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.

Evaluation: This year-long course meets for two hours biweekly. The grading criteria are as follows:

- Article critique exercise – January 5 (25%) – essay format, content from text/readings/lecture
- Research presentation – (25%)
- Attendance and class participation - (50%)

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 critique. 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) and the CONSORT and TREND guidelines. Ask yourself, does this article meet the “gold standard” for clinical research as outlined in these sources. 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 5th, 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.

Grading Scale

A+	96-100%	B+	80-84%	C+	67-71%	D+	54-58%
A	90-95%	B	76-79%	C	63-66%	D	50-53%
A-	85-89%	B-	72-75%	C-	59-62%	F	0-49%

As stated in the University Calendar, it is at the instructor’s discretion to round off either upward or downward to determine a final grade when the average of term work and final examinations is between two letter grades. To determine final letter grades, final percentage grades will be rounded up or down to the nearest whole percentage (e.g., 89.5% will be rounded up to 90% = A but 89.4% will be rounded down to 89% = A-).

Date	Topic	Readings
Sep 15	Introduction to course: what you need to know to achieve success in graduate school – M.Sc. I students only	
Sep 29		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. Boutron, I, Mohor, D., Altman, D. G., Schulz, K., Ravaud, P. for the CONSORT group. (2008). Extending the CONSORT Statement to randomized trials of nonpharmacologic treatment: explanation and elaboration. <i>Annals of Internal Medicine</i> , 148, 295-309. (http://www.consort-statement.org/index.aspx?o=1417) Des Jarais, D. C., Lyles, C., Crepaz, N., and the TREND group. (2004). Improving the reporting quality of nonrandomized evaluations of

		behavioral and public health interventions: The TREND statement. <i>Am J Public Health</i> , 94, 361-366. (http://www.cdc.gov/trendstatement/Index.html)
Oct 6	Article critiques	Kazdin Ch. 4-6
Oct 20	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.
Nov 3	Research Proposal Writing Program evaluation I	Kazdin Ch. 10-12
Nov 17	Program evaluation II	Kazdin Ch. 13-15
Dec 1	Program evaluation III	Kazdin Ch. 16-19 McKnight, K. M., Sechrest, L., & McKnight, P. E. (2005). Psychology, psychologists, and public policy. <i>Annual Review of Clinical Psychology</i> , 1, 557-576.
Jan 5	Article Critique Exercise (in class)	
Jan 19	Research presentations – M.Sc. II	
Feb 2	Research presentations – M.Sc. II	
Feb 16	Research presentations – M.Sc. II	
Mar 2	Research presentations – M.Sc. I	
Mar 16	Research presentations – M.Sc. I	
Mar 30	Research presentations – M.Sc. I	
Apr 13	Research presentations – M.Sc. I	

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.

Reappraisal of Grades

A student who feels that a piece of graded term work (e.g., term paper, essay, test) has been unfairly graded, may have the work re-graded as follows. The student shall discuss the work with the instructor within 15 days of being notified about the mark or of the item's return to the class. If not satisfied, the student shall immediately take the matter to the Head of the department offering the course, who will arrange for a reassessment of the work within the next 15 days. The reappraisal of term work may cause the grade to be raised, lowered, or to remain the same. If the student is not satisfied with the decision and wishes to appeal, the student shall address a letter of appeal to the Dean of the faculty offering the course within 15 days of the unfavourable decision. In the letter, the student must clearly and fully state the decision being appealed, the grounds for appeal, and the remedies being sought, along with any special circumstances that warrant an appeal of the reappraisal. The student should include as much written documentation as possible.

Plagiarism and Other Academic Misconduct

Intellectual honesty is the cornerstone of the development and acquisition of knowledge and requires that the contribution of others be acknowledged. Consequently, plagiarism or cheating on any assignment is regarded as an extremely serious academic offense. Plagiarism involves submitting or presenting work in a course as if it were the student's own work done expressly for that particular course when, in fact, it is not. Students should examine sections of the University Calendar that present a Statement of Intellectual honesty and definitions and penalties associated with Plagiarism/Cheating/Other Academic Misconduct.

Academic Accommodation

It is the student's responsibility to request academic accommodations. If you are a student with a documented disability who may require academic accommodation and have not registered with the Disability Resource Centre, please contact their office at 403-220-8237. Students who have not registered with the Disability Resource Centre are not eligible for formal academic accommodation. You are also required to discuss your needs with your instructor no later than 14 days after the start of this course.

Absence From a Test/Exam

Makeup tests/exams are NOT an option without an official University medical excuse (see the University Calendar). A completed Physician/Counselor Statement will be required to confirm absence from a test/exam for health reasons; the student will be required to pay any cost associated with this Statement. Students who miss a test/exam have 48 hours to contact the instructor and to schedule a makeup test/exam. Students who do not schedule a makeup test/exam with the instructor within this 48-hour period forfeit the right to a makeup test/exam. At the instructor's discretion, a makeup test/exam may differ significantly (in form and/or content) from a regularly scheduled test/exam. Except in extenuating circumstances (documented by an official University medical excuse), a makeup test/exam must be written within 2 weeks of the missed test/exam.

Evacuation Assembly Point

In case of an emergency evacuation during class, students must gather at the designated assembly point nearest to the classroom. The list of assembly points is found at

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints>

Please check this website and note the nearest assembly point for this course.

Important Dates

The last day to drop this course and **still receive a tuition fee refund** is **Sep 24, 2010**. Last day for registration/change of registration is **Sep 28th, 2010**. The last day to withdraw from this course is **Apr 15, 2011**.

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. You may also have some unresolved issues for which you would welcome some

discussion and constructive input. If so, it is good practice to begin your presentation with a brief summary of your questions so that the audience can reflect on them as you speak. Presentations should be 45 minutes in length, with time at the end for discussion. Please leave some time (5-10 minutes) for questions at the end. Students are expected to ask questions and provide constructive feedback on the project. Note that I have reserved a pc and data projector for each class.

Outline for Student Research Presentations

- 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?**
- 11. Knowledge translation strategies** (see <http://www.cihr.ca/e/29418.html>)

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 and knowledge translation strategies
- Your ability to address questions and comments

Tips for Making Effective PowerPoint Presentations

1. Use the slide master feature to create a consistent and simple design template. It is fine to vary the content presentation (i.e. bulleted list, 2-column text, text & image), but be consistent with other elements such as font, colors, and background.
2. Simplify and limit the number of words on each screen. Use key phrases and include only essential information.
3. Limit punctuation and avoid putting words in all capital letters. Empty space on the slide will enhance readability.
4. Use contrasting colors for text and background. Dark text on a light background is best. Patterned backgrounds can reduce readability of text.
5. Avoid the use of flashy transitions such as text fly-ins. These features may seem impressive at first, but are distracting and get old quickly.
6. Overuse of special effects such as animation and sounds may make your presentation "cutesy" and could negatively impact your credibility.
7. Use good quality images that reinforce and complement your message. Ensure that your images maintain their impact and resolution when projected on a larger screen.
8. Limit the number of slides. Presenters who constantly "flip" to the next slide are likely to lose their audience. A good rule of thumb is one slide per minute.
9. Know how to and practice moving forward AND backward within your presentation. Audiences often ask to see the previous screen again.
10. If possible, view your slides on the screen you'll be using for your presentation. Make sure they are readable from the back row seats. Text and graphics should be large enough to read, but not so large as to appear "loud."
11. Do not read from your slides. The content of your slides is for the audience, not for the presenter.
12. Do not speak to your slides. Many presenters face the direction of their presentation rather than their audience.
13. Do not apologize for anything in your presentation. If you believe something will be hard to read or understand, don't use it.
14. When possible, run your presentation from the hard disk rather than a flash drive. Running from a floppy disk may slow your presentation.

These tips and suggestions came from Susan Allison, Communication Technologies Branch, Office of Communications, National Cancer Institute.