

COURSE SYLLABUS

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Office Hours: Thursdays 9-10pm via Wimba Pronto on Blackboard (Communications) or by appt.

Course Number: RMTD 400

Course Title: Introduction to Research Methodologies

Number of Credits: 4 CR.

Required Text: Johnson, R. B., & Christensen, L., (2005). Educational Research: Quantitative, Qualitative, and Mixed Approaches 2nd ed, Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.

Course Catalog Description: This course will utilize the online resource of Blackboard to introduce the concept of inquiry and research methods used in education, psychology, and other social sciences. The course will cover three main methods of inquiry: Quantitative, Qualitative, and Mixed Methods.

Class Format: On-line Blackboard Format.

School of Education's Conceptual Framework: The School of Education at Loyola University Chicago, a Jesuit and Catholic urban university, supports the Jesuit ideal of knowledge in the service of humanity. We endeavor to advance professional education in the service of social justice, engaged with Chicago, the nation, and the world. To achieve this vision the School of Education participates in the discovery, development, demonstration, and dissemination of professional knowledge and practice within a context of ethics, service to others, and social justice. We fulfill this mission by preparing professionals to serve as teachers, administrators, psychologists, and researchers; by conducting research on issues of professional practice and social justice; and by partnering with schools and community agencies to enhance life-long learning in the Chicago area. This course will equip students with the knowledge, skills of inquiry, and ethics necessary to be professional and socially just researchers. The case studies used in this course illustrate how educational research can illuminate issues of social justice. In addition, the research methods used in this course also add to students' ability to understand the diversity of perspectives that researchers use to address social problems.

SOE Conceptual Framework Standards Addressed in this Course:

- CF #4: Candidates demonstrate skills that will enable them to work effectively with diverse clients.
- CF #8: Candidates apply ethical principles in professional decision-making.

Course Objectives: As a result of this course, students will be able to:

- Discuss the philosophical underpinnings of educational research and describe the applications of the scientific method.
- Explain the difference between quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods research paradigms.
- Explain the difference between various research methods used in educational research.
- Discuss the relationships between theory, research objective, research question, design, measurement, and analysis.
- Select a research topic, state a research objective and research question.
- Conduct a review of relevant literature that synthesizes the knowledge from several research studies around the central idea or research question including identifying the existing gaps in the literature.
- Analyze and evaluate the research questions, design, ethics, and conclusion of existing educational research.
- Describe and determine the correct use of different sampling techniques to answer a research question.
- Describe the types of quantitative and qualitative validity and methods for establishing them.
- Discuss the logic of experimental control.
- Discuss the descriptive statistical methods for representing data.
- Discuss issues around testing for statistical significance.
- Discuss the legal and ethical issues in educational research.
- Effectively engage in an online learning community.

Instructor's Philosophy: This course is offered online to give non-traditional, working, and off-campus students the opportunity to consider an evaluative way of thinking and collaborate with other professionals to enhance their learning of this subject matter. Students who take this course will be responsible for their own learning, which includes completing the assignments on time, sharing insights and frustrations and always striving to increase knowledge and understanding of the subject matter. My job is to be a facilitator of your success.

The course is organized to allow for discussion after each reading packet, similar to how a class discussion would take place after reading materials for homework. Additionally, the course is organized to allow you to review and comment on your colleagues' work, as well as receive comments on your work from your colleagues in this course. This feedback structure is intended to facilitate increased student participation in the course, as well as make it possible for students to know each other better.

Class Participation Policies: You will be expected to contribute actively to the class discussions, at times agreeing with colleagues and adding complementary arguments, and at other times disagreeing with colleagues and providing a rationale for doing so. I seek a lively class where arguments and ideas are presented and debated. It is important that we all remain respectful of each other's views and offer constructive criticisms when disagreeing with a colleague.

In order to earn class participation points, each student should write **AT LEAST** one original Discussion posting *and* **AT LEAST** one Reply posting per week when Discussions and Replies are called for in the coursework schedule (see below). The purpose of writing a Discussion is to have you think more deeply about the readings, and to kick-start class interactions. Your Discussion is **NOT** a summary of the readings. It is your own reflection of the readings or of the instructor's lesson. Discussions are typically one or two paragraphs in length. At the end of each Discussion, please provide either issues that you would like others to discuss or specific questions that we could discuss which would clarify, elucidate, or extend the readings. The purpose of writing Reply postings is to respond to your colleagues' ideas.

Discussion postings are to be made on the course website by Friday at 5pm of that week with Reply postings concluding by Sunday at 5pm. This deadline allows us all enough time to read the postings before moving onto the next week's topic, at which time the newly assigned readings will be the topic of class Discussion and Reply postings. Feel free to begin posting Discussions and Replies during the week when you are reading the assignments. Discussion postings are also required on weeks that Projects A, B, C, and the Final Presentation are posted on the course website as a method of responding to and commenting on your colleagues' work.

When you post, to prevent random thoughts without a coherent thread, it helps to take a position (e.g., this was interesting because; I disagree with this because; this was difficult for me to read because, etc...) and to defend it based on other evidence or your personal experiences. It will also help the flow of class interactions if you title your Discussion posts with a short descriptive title that will help me and your colleagues distinguish your thread from another. Likewise, to help the flow of class interactions, when you Reply with a point that extends upon another person's Discussion posting, please reply to the original post, rather than starting a new thread. To reiterate: new discussions and thoughts should have their own thread with a descriptive title, and replies regarding an already existing thread should remain in the same thread.

Final Grades:

Final grades will be based on the following:

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| 1) | Class Participation: Discussions and Replies (7 weeks x 10 points each) | 70 points |
| 2) | Ongoing Project: Research Plan Table (Completed over the 16-week course) | 70 points |
| | • Post (#1) "Researcher Name," (#2) "Research Project Title," and (#3) "Problem Statement" during Week Three | 10 pts |
| | • Post (#4) "Information Needed" during Week 5 | 10 pts |
| | • Post (#5) "Measurement Tools" during Week 7 | 10 pts |
| | • Post (#6) "Collection Arrangement" during Week 8 | 10 pts |
| | • Post (#7) "Population Parameters" during Week 10 | 10 pts |
| | • Post (#8) "Sample Size and Selection Criteria" during Week 12 | 10 pts |
| | • Post (#9) "Analysis Plan" during Week 14 | 10 pts |
| 3) | Final Literature Review (Post during week 15) | 75 points |
| | • Introduction: Develop a problem statement and lay groundwork for the direction of the report | 15 pts |
| | • Body: Report flows from general ideas to specific conclusions tying sections and paragraphs together logically in 1,500-2,000 words | 15 pts |

- Content: At least six relevant peer reviewed articles are cited and analyzed logically 15 pts
- Clarity: Writing is succinct, uses active voice, and proper grammar 15 pts
- Citations/References: Proper APA format is used throughout 15 pts

Grading Scheme:

95% -100% of total points = A+
 90%-94.9% of total points = A
 85% - 89.9% of total points = B+
 80% - 84.9% of total points = B
 75% - 79.9% of total points = C+
 70% - 74.9% of total points = C
 Less than 70% = F.

Late Assignments, Make-up Participation: Because all of the course work is to be completed online and each assignment has a long window for work to be completed it is expected that late assignments and make-up participation will not be necessary due to illness or extenuating circumstances. If illness or extenuating circumstances make meeting a deadline impossible, contact the instructor for instructions.

Academic Honesty: Academic honesty is an expression of interpersonal justice, responsibility and care, applicable to Loyola University faculty, students, and staff, which demands that the pursuit of knowledge in the university community be carried out with sincerity and integrity. The School of Education's Policy on Academic Integrity can be found at:

http://www.luc.edu/education/academics_policies_integrity.shtml. For additional academic policies and procedures refer to: http://www.luc.edu/education/academics_policies_main.shtml

Accessibility: Students who have disabilities which they believe entitle them to accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act should register with the Services for Students with Disabilities (SSWD) office. To request accommodations, students must schedule an appointment with an SSWD coordinator. Students should contact SSWD at least four weeks before their first semester or term at Loyola. Returning students should schedule an appointment within the first two weeks of the semester or term. The University policy on accommodations and participation in courses is available at: <http://www.luc.edu/sswd/>

Harassment (Bias Reporting): It is unacceptable and a violation of university policy to harass, discriminate against or abuse any person because of his or her race, color, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, disability, religion, age or any other characteristic protected by applicable law. Such behavior threatens to destroy the environment of tolerance and mutual respect that must prevail for this university to fulfill its educational and health care mission. For this reason, every incident of harassment, discrimination or abuse undermines the aspirations and attacks the ideals of our community. The university qualifies these incidents as incidents of bias. In order to uphold our mission of being Chicago's Jesuit Catholic University-- a diverse community seeking God in all things and working to expand knowledge in the service of humanity through learning, justice and faith, any incident(s) of bias must be reported and appropriately addressed. Therefore, the Bias Response (BR) Team was created to assist members of the Loyola University Chicago community in bringing incidents of bias to the attention of the university. If you believe you are subject to such bias, you should notify the Bias Response Team at this link: <http://webapps.luc.edu/biasreporting/>

Technology: This course is designed as an online course, and thus, students are expected to know how to use Blackboard and its features, be able to navigate the internet to explore resources, and to use the electronic resources available through LUC's library homepage.

Diversity: The School of Education is committed to diversity including but not limited to race, gender, sexual orientation, social class, ethnicity, and ability. Through this course, students will learn how to interpret and critique fundamental research methods used in the social sciences. The course is designed to provide students with the knowledge necessary to evaluate research concerning the social dimensions mentioned above.

COURSE OUTLINE

Dates	Week	Topic	Assignments
01/18/11 - 01/23/11	1	Welcome: Getting to know course and each other.	(1) Log onto Blackboard course (2) Review syllabus and post any questions (3) Develop homepage
01/24/11 – 01/30/11	2	Research paradigms, Research problems, and Research questions	(1) Read Chapters 1, 2, 3
01/31/11 – 02/06/11	3	Use of scientific approach and a comparison of methods	(1) Post Discussions to Chapters 1, 2, 3 (2) Post Replies of colleagues' posts (3) Post Research Plan Table: #s 1, 2, and 3
02/07/11 – 02/13/11	4	Research ethics	(1) Read Chapter 5 & online Belmont Report (2) Apply Feedback to Research Plan (3) Attend Library Tutorial Feb 12th at 10am
02/14/11 – 02/20/11	5	Cost-benefit analysis	(1) Post Discussions to Chapter 5 Reading (2) Post Replies of colleagues' posts (3) Post Research Plan Table: #4
02/21/11 – 02/27/11	6	Qualitative and quantitative validity and the use of mixed methods	(1) Read Chapters 10, 16 (2) Apply Feedback to Research Plan
02/28/11 – 03/06/11	7	Becoming an informed consumer of literature and methods	(1) Post Discussions of Chapter 10, 16 (2) Post Replies of colleagues' posts
03/07/11 – 03/13/11		SPRING BREAK	(1) Rejuvenate yourself
03/14/11 – 03/20/11	8	Measurement Methods	(1) Read Chapters 6,7,8 (2) Post Research Plan Table: #s 5 & 6 (3) Post 6 Peer Review Journal Articles for Final
03/21/11 – 03/27/11	9	Different Questions Different Methods	(1) Post Discussions of Chapters 6, 7, 8 (2) Post Replies of colleagues' posts (3) Apply Feedback to Research Plan
03/28/11 – 04/03/11	10	Samples and Sampling Parameters	(1) Read Chapter 9 (2) Post Research Plan Table #7
04/04/11 – 04/10/11	11	Experimental research and non- experimental research	(1) Post Discussions of Chapter 9 (2) Post Replies of colleagues' posts (3) Apply Feedback to Research Plan
04/11/11 – 04/17/11	12	Selecting a research method	(1) Read Chapters 11, 12, 13, 14 (3) Post Research Plan Table #8
04/18/11 – 04/24/11	13	Inferential versus descriptive statistics	(1) Post Discussions of Chapters 11, 12, 13, 14 (2) Post Replies of colleagues' posts (3) Apply Feedback to Research Plan
04/25/11 – 04/29/11	14	Paradigm wars	(1) Read 17, 18 (2) Post Research Plan Table #9
04/30/11- 05/08/11	15	The role of the literature review in a research proposal	(1) Post Discussions of Chapters 17, 18 (2) Post Replies of colleagues posts (3) Post Literature Review