



Department of Psychology

PSYC 650: Research Seminar in Clinical Psychology

Fall 2008/Winter 2009

Instructor:	Dr. David Hodgins	Office:	Admin 246
Location:	Admin 247B	Office hours:	By appointment
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Objective: 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.

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 14 (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) 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 14th, 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.

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.

Important Dates

The last day to drop this course and still receive a fee refund is **September 19, 2008**. The last day to withdraw from this course is **April 17, 2009**.

Class schedule (Fall 2008)—subject to revision

Date	Topic	Required readings
September 10	Introduction to course: What you need to know to achieve success in graduate school. – MSc 1 students only	
September 24	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. Boutron I, Moher D, Altman DG, Schulz K, Ravaud P, for the CONSORT group. Extending the CONSORT Statement to randomized trials of nonpharmacologic treatment: explanation and elaboration. <i>Ann Intern Med.</i> 2008;295-309. (http://www.consort-statement.org/index.aspx?o=1417) Des Jarlais DC, Lyles C, Crepaz N, and the TREND Group. Improving the reporting quality of nonrandomized evaluations of behavioral and public health interventions: The TREND statement. <i>Am J Public Health.</i> 2004;94:361-366. (http://www.trend-statement.org/asp/statement.asp)
October 8	Article critiques	Kazdin Ch. 4-6
October 29 (note date change)(search)	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 5	Program evaluation I –	Kazdin Ch. 10-12 Program evaluation readings TBA
November 19	Program evaluation II –	Kazdin Ch. 13-15 Program evaluation readings TBA
December 3	Program evaluation III	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 2009)—subject to revision

Date	Topic	Required readings
January 14	Article Critique Exercise (in class)	
January 28	Research presentations – M.Sc. II	
February 11	Research presentations – M.Sc. II	
March 4	Research presentations – M.Sc. II	
March 18	Research presentations – M.Sc. I	
April 1	Research presentations – M.Sc. I	
April 15	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. You may also have some unresolved issues for which you would welcome some discussion and constructive input. If so, it is good practise to begin your presentation with a brief summary of your questions so that the audience can reflect upon them as you speak. 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

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