

CHFD 5110 Research Methods in Child and Family Development
The University of Georgia
Department of Child and Family Development
Spring Semester 2008

Instructor: Dr. Lee Johnson

Office: Family Science Center 1, Room 207

Office Hours: By appointment

Meeting Time: Tuesday & Thursday, 3:30 to 4:45 p.m., 306 Dawson Hall

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Course Description:

This course will provide students with a basic understanding of research methods and data analysis in child and family development. Students will be guided through the research process from the beginning phases of research planning, to writing up research results. Additionally, research issues such as ethics in research and human subject review boards will be discussed. Finally, students will be taught skills necessary to be a good consumer of research.

Course Objectives:

1. Develop a basic understanding of research methods.
2. Develop a basic understanding of the importance of research participant selection.
3. Develop a basic understanding of measurement.
4. Develop a basic understanding of data analysis.
5. Be able to understand ethical research and the purpose of human subjects review boards.
6. Develop skills necessary to be a good consumer of research.

Course Requirements:

1. Attend class and participate in class discussions (50 points). Attendance will be taken randomly throughout the semester. Your total points in this category will be based on the number of days you are present when attendance is taken and if you participate in class discussion. As part of this course requirement and to facilitate the instructor taking attendance and learning student names, each student must submit a picture of themselves by January 15, 2008. The picture should have your name on the front, be appropriate, and show how you look when you attend class.
2. Assignment (50 points). For this assignment you will be required to find an instance where research is presented in the popular press (i.e. newspapers, magazines, TV programs, Internet). Some examples are provided in the "fun websites" page on WebCT. The presentation of research can be accurate, inaccurate, misleading, or an example how the lack of accurate research was detrimental to the situation. In some instances you may need to look up the actual research articles to see if the representations were accurate or inaccurate. Your assignment needs to be presented to the class (no longer than 10 minutes) and a one-page typed summary must be turned in on the day of your presentation. A presentation schedule will be passed out the second week of class. If you need any audio/visual equipment for your presentation please inform the instructor at least one week before your presentation.
3. Three midterm exams (100 points each). The midterm exams will be on January 31, 2008, February 28, 2008 and April 3, 2008. Midterm exams will not be comprehensive. The midterm exams will be a combination of multiple-choice, true/false, and short answer questions.
4. Group Critiques (100 points). To aid in the completion of your course project you will critique sections of articles in small groups using Google Documents. The link to the articles will be posted on Google at the beginning of each section. Google Documents allows each group member to add, change, or text to the group document so you will be working together to create a critique of the strengths and weakness of each type of validity. Group critiques will be graded on the following dates: external validity January 29, 2008; construct validity February 21, 2008, interval validity March 27, 2008; and conclusion validity April 22, 2008. Each critique is worth 25 points.
5. Course Project (100 points). For this project you need to find 2 research articles on a topic of interest related to child and family development. Qualifying articles can be either qualitative or quantitative and need to report actual research findings and, thus, should contain participants, methods, and results sections. Articles do not meet the criteria if the

article only summarizes findings from previous research. Paper copies of the articles need to be turned into the instructor on January 22, 2008 for approval. After reading the articles a 4 to 5 page summary of each article should be prepared that describes the topic of the article, external validity (description of the participants, sampling strategies, generalizability, and your critique of external validity), construct validity (description of the variables studied, how the variables are measured, and the quality of measurement, and your critique of construct validity), internal validity (description of the design used and your critique of internal validity), and conclusion validity (description of the findings and your critique of conclusion validity). Make sure your critique includes positive and negative points of the type of validity. While all parts of your summary are important, your critique of each article should be the bulk of each summary. In grading, particular attention will be given to your critique of the article and the reasoning for your critique. A copy of each article needs to be turned in with the summary. Projects are due on April 24, 2008. All papers must be typed and follow APA Publication Manual (5th edition) guidelines.

6. Final Exam (100 points). The final exam will be on May 6, 2008 from 3:30 to 6:30 and will be comprehensive. The final exam will be a combination of multiple choice, true/false, short answer, and short essay questions.
7. Extra Credit (up to 40 points). Extra credit can be earned by completing quizzes prior to class on the day a new chapter is being discussed. There is a quiz for each chapter (13 total). All quizzes will be on WebCT and are open book. Once you start the quiz you will have 20 minutes to finish. Each quiz can be taken twice and your highest score will count. Quiz questions will be randomly selected from a bank of questions so each time you take the quiz there is a possibility that you will receive different questions. Each quiz is worth up to 3 points and only your 10 highest quiz scores will be used for a possible total of 30 points.

The other 10 points of extra credit can be earned by turning in a video clip of research being conducted in the media. Clips need to focus on research or describe enough of the research methods to be able to determine how the data were collected and not focused on the reporting of research results. All video clips must be turned in by April 17, 2008 and be submitted on a DVD or CD (no exceptions).

Grading:

The assignments and exams are worth a total of 700 points. All grades will be posted on WebCT. Grades will be assigned on the following basis:

A 93% and above	B- 80% and above, less than 83%	D+ 67% and above, less than 70%
A- 90% and above, less than 93%	C+ 77% and above, less than 80%	D 63% and above, less than 67%
B+ 87% and above, less than 90%	C 73% and above, less than 77%	D- 60% and above, less than 63%
B 83% and above, less than 87%	C- 70% and above, less than 73%	F less than 60%

Required Readings:

Trochim, W. M. K. (2005). *Research methods: The concise knowledge base*. Cincinnati, OH: Atomic Dog Publishing.

Class & Reading Schedule:

- January 8** *Discussion of syllabus and class assignments, Introductions; Why take a research methods course.*
- January 10** *Foundations of Research—Complete Chapter 1 Quiz Prior to Class*
Chapter 1
- January 15** *Foundations of Research*
Chapter 1
- January 17** *Institutional Review Boards and Human Subjects*
- January 22** *Sampling: The Importance of Participants—Copies of Articles for Course Project Due; Complete Chapter 2 Quiz Prior to Class*
Chapter 2
- January 24** *Sampling: The Importance of Participants*
Chapter 2

- January 29** *Sampling Continued—External Validity Group Critique Due*
- January 31** *Midterm Exam*
- February 5** *Theory of Measurement: Reliability and Validity—Complete Chapter 3 Quiz Prior to Class*
Chapter 3
- February 7** *Reliability and Validity*
Chapter 3
- February 12** *Reliability and Validity*
Chapter 3
- February 14** *Survey Research—Complete Chapter 4 Quiz Prior to Class*
Chapter 4
- February 19** *Survey Research & Scales and Indexes—Complete Chapter 5 Quiz Prior to Class*
Chapter 4 & Chapter 5
- February 21** *Qualitative and Unobtrusive Measures—Construct Validity Group Critique Due; Complete Chapter 6 Quiz Prior to Class*
Chapter 6
- February 26** *Measurement Continued*
- February 28** *Midterm Exam*
- March 4** *Design: Internal Validity—Complete Chapter 7 Quiz Prior to Class*
Chapter 7
- March 6** *Internal Validity*
Chapter 7
- March 11** *Spring Break*
- March 13** *Spring Break*
- March 18** *Experimental Design—Complete Chapter 8 Quiz Prior to Class*
Chapter 8
- March 20** *Experimental Design*
Chapter 8
- March 25** *Quasi-Experimental Design—Complete Chapter 9 Quiz Prior to Class*
Chapter 9
- March 27** *Advanced Design Topics—External Validity Group Critique Due; Complete Chapter 10 Quiz Prior to Class*
Chapter 10
- April 1** *Design Continued*
- April 3** *Midterm Exam*

- April 8** *Analysis: Conclusion Validity—Complete Chapter 11 Quiz Prior to Class*
Chapter 11
- April 10** *Analysis: Data Preparation and Descriptive Statistics*
Chapter 11
- April 15** *Analysis for Research Design: Basic Statistics—Complete Chapter 12 Quiz Prior to Class*
Chapter 12
- April 17** *Analysis for Research Design: More on Statistics*
Chapter 12
- April 22** *Writing-up Research and Analysis Continued—Conclusion Validity Group Critique Due; Complete Chapter 13 Quiz Prior to Class*
Chapter 13
- April 24** *Last Day of Class, Summary and Review—Course Project Due.*
- May 6** *Final Exam, 3:30 to 6:30 p.m.*

Class Policies

Computer Access: If you have added the class late it is your responsibility to email the instructor your MyID to be added to WebCT. As part of this class quizzes will be done online via WebCT. Additionally, class announcements will be made via email through WebCT. Finally, as part of this course we will be using Google Documents. Each student is required to get a Google account by January 10, 2008 and email the instructor the email address associated with the account.

Cell Phone Policy: Cell phones and pagers must be turned off and put away prior to the start of class. If your cell phone or pager goes off during class you will lose attendance points for one day regardless of whether or not attendance was taken.

Academic Honesty: All academic work must meet the standards contained in “A Culture of Honesty.” Students are responsible for informing themselves about those standards before performing any academic work. The policy can be found at the following web site: http://www.uga.edu/ovpi/honesty/culture_honesty.htm

Missed or Late Assignments: Students will be expected to turn in assignments prior to the beginning of class on the due date. Turning in late assignments will **NOT** be permitted without **prior approval** of the instructor. If you have a conflict with any assignment due date or test date please see the instructor prior to January 17, 2008, to make alternative arrangements. If an assignment is missed due to a medical or family emergency, the student is expected to make every effort to notify the instructor prior to the due date (phone or email). If the student wishes to turn the assignment in late, the student must provide proof of the emergency.

Changes in the Schedule: The course syllabus is a general plan for the course; deviations announced to the class by the instructor may be necessary.

Questions on Grading and Assignments: Every attempt will be made to fairly and consistently evaluate student’s performance on assignments. If students would like the instructor to reconsider points that have been deducted from any assignment the request must be submitted in writing within **one week** from the day the assignment was returned or the grades were posted. The request must include the reason why you believe the points should be granted.

Protection of Private Information: If you have requested a restriction of your personal information please call or email the instructor as soon as possible and we will have another way of calling role and calling names in class.

Special Needs: Any student with a disability should make an appointment to talk with the instructor as soon as possible.

Adding the Class Late: Late additions to enrollment in this course will not be permitted unless exceptional circumstances can be shown. Approval by the Instructor and Department Head are required.