



Department of Psychology  
PSYC 650: Research Seminar in Clinical Psychology  
Fall 2009/Winter 2010

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**Objective:** This course is required in years 1 and 2 of the M.Sc. program and has rotating content. The 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. 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.

**Readings:** See schedule below.

Lilienfeld, S. O., Lynn, S. J., & Lohr, J. M. (2003). *Science and pseudoscience in clinical psychology*.

New York: Guilford. (Please note the assigned readings from this book are required but purchasing the text is optional. There are numerous copies in the program so you may want to borrow it from a fellow student.)

**Requirements and evaluation procedures:** This year-long course meets for two hours biweekly. The grading criteria are as follows:

Attendance and participation (40%) – a midterm mark will be given

Research presentation (40%)

Final exam (20%)

*Attendance and Participation.* 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. Note that a significant portion of your grade is based on class discussion. In order to effectively take part in a class discussion, participants need to have not only read the material but also thought about it. So, in terms of evaluating this component of the course, I will specifically be looking for discussion contributions that reflect not only the essence of the reading but also the ability to critically evaluate the content and to integrate it with other areas in psychology, or, other relevant disciplines.

*Research presentation.* Presentations should be 45 minutes in length, with time at the end for discussion. **One week** prior to your presentation, please provide me with the powerpoint slides for your presentation. M.Sc. II students should also provide one or two articles that summarize the issues in your research area (preferably in pdf format). Both the powerpoint slides and the articles will be posted to blackboard well in advance of the

presentation date so that all students will have ample time to read the material. If you have any questions, please consult with me well in advance of the presentation. Note that I have reserved a pc and data projector for each class.

The research presentation will be different depending on whether you are in your first or second year of the program. First-year students will present on their thesis research, following the outline below. Students are expected to ask questions and provide constructive feedback on the project.

### **Outline for Student Research Presentations – M.Sc. I**

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.

- 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**

**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

### Student Research Presentations – M.Sc. II

Recognizing that second-year students have more research knowledge and experience in their areas of expertise, they will present a more general talk on the conceptual and methodological issues that are unique to their research areas. The focus of the presentation should be quite broad and might cover topics such as the state of existing theory, ethical issues, definitional issues, specific research designs, sampling, internal/external validity, pragmatic issues related to doing research in this area, etc. Students should begin by providing a brief overview of their M.Sc. research and then broaden the discussion to more general issues in their area of research. The goal of the presentation is to familiarize your colleagues with the research issues that are unique to your area, using your own research to illustrate how these conceptual and methodological issues have influenced your work and how you have dealt with them (or not, but instead recognize them as limitations).

**The criteria for marking your presentation are as follows:**

- Organization and clarity of content
- Quality of summary articles
- Knowledge of the general research area
- Your ability to discuss and integrate your research in the context of the broader research issues.
- Your ability to critically evaluate your research, including both strengths and weaknesses
- Knowledge translation strategies
- Your ability to address questions and comments

*Final exam.* The final exam will be an opportunity to demonstrate your knowledge of research methodology and your ability to critically evaluate the literature. Further details will be provided closer to the time of the exam.

### Class schedule (Fall 2009 - Winter 2010)

Date	Topic	Required readings
Sept. 9	Introduction to the course: What you need to know to achieve success in graduate school – M.Sc. I students only	
Sept. 23	Doing research and publishing your work: Opportunities and obstacles	
Oct. 7	Qualitative Methods – Dr. Hank Stam	Krahn, G.L., & Putnam, M. Qualitative methods in psychological research. In M.C. Roberts and S.S. Ilardi (eds.), <i>Handbook of research methods in clinical psychology</i> (pp. 176-195). Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing. (Available on-line.)
Oct. 21	Methodological and conceptual issues in community psychology research: The long-term care “community” as an example	Jason et al., (2004). Participatory community research: Theories and methods in action. Wash.DC: APA (Chapts. 1 & 6)
Nov. 4	Evaluating Qualitative Research Methods M.Sc. II research presentation	
Nov. 25	Knowledge translation M.Sc. II research presentation	Helpful websites: Canadian Institutes of Health Research <a href="http://www.cihr.ca/e/29418.html">http://www.cihr.ca/e/29418.html</a> World Health Organization <a href="http://www.who.int/kms/en/">http://www.who.int/kms/en/</a>

Dec. 2	Knowledge translation M.Sc. II research presentation	
<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Required readings</b>
Jan. 13	Science versus pseudoscience in clinical psychology M.Sc. II research presentation	Lilienfeld et al. (2003). Chapters 1 and 2 Interesting journals on this topic: <i>Scientific Review of Mental Health Practice</i> and <i>Skeptical Inquirer</i>
Jan. 27	Science versus pseudoscience in clinical psychology: The good, the bad, and the ugly M.Sc. II research presentation	Lilienfeld et al. (2003). Chapters 7, 8, and 11 Norcross, J. C., Koocher, G. P., & Garofalo, A. (2006). Discredited psychological treatments and tests: A Delphi Poll. <i>Professional psychology: Research and practice, 37</i> , 515-522. Walsh, R., & Shapiro, S. L. (2006). The meeting of meditative disciplines and western psychology. <i>American Psychologist, 61</i> , 227-239.
Feb. 10	Science versus pseudoscience in clinical psychology: Controversies regarding self-help and the media M.Sc. I research presentation	Lilienfeld et al. (2003). Chapters 14-16 Redding, R. E., Herbert, J. D., & Forman, E. M. (2008). Popular self-help books for anxiety, depression, and trauma: How scientifically grounded and useful are they? <i>Professional psychology: Research and practice, 39</i> , 537-545.
Feb. 24	M.Sc. I research presentations (2)	
Mar. 10	M.Sc. I research presentations (2)	
Mar. 24	M.Sc. I research presentations (2)	
Apr. 7	Final exam	

### 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

### **Reappraisal of Grades:**

A student who feels that an exam has been unfairly graded, may have the work re-graded as follows. The student shall discuss the work with the instructor within fifteen 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 fifteen 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 fifteen 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 which warrant an appeal of the appraisal. 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 an 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, which present a Statement of Intellectual Honesty, as well as definitions and penalties associated with Plagiarism/Cheating/and Other Academic Misconduct.

**Academic Accommodation:**

*It is a student's responsibility to request academic accommodation.* If you are a student with a disability who may require academic accommodation and **have not** registered with the Disability Resource Centre, please contact their office at 220-8237. If you are seeking academic accommodation, please notify your instructor no later than fourteen (14) days after the commencement of the course. Note that the lecturer must approve any tape recordings of lectures.

**Absence from a Test:**

Make-up exams are NOT an option without an official University medical excuse (see the University Calendar). You must contact the professor before the scheduled examination or you will have forfeited any right to make up the exam. At the instructor's discretion, a make-up exam may differ significantly (in form and/or content) from a regularly scheduled exam. Except in extenuating circumstances (documented by an official University medical excuse), a make-up exam is written within two (2) weeks of the missed exam.

A completed Physician/ Counselor Statement will be required to confirm absence from a test for health reasons. The student will be required to pay any cost associated with the Physician Counselor Statement.

**Important Dates:**

The last day to drop this course and still receive a fee refund is **September 21, 2009**. The last day to withdraw from this course without academic penalty is **April 16, 2010**.