Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary – Charlotte
Masters of Arts in Christian Counseling Program

CO 699 – Research Methods and Design
Fall 2015

Course Syllabus

**Instructor:** Dr. Elisabeth Suarez  
**Class Times:** Sept 18-19, Oct 16-17,  
Nov 13-14, Fridays, 6:30 pm – 9:30 pm;  
Saturdays 8:30 am – 4:30 pm  
**Office:** N/A  
**Email:** esuarez@gordonconwell.edu  
**Phone:** (757) 274-4681 (cell)  
**Office Hours:** By appointment (skype: elisabethsuarez)

**Course Description:** This course prepares students to successfully evaluate social science research and apply the results of research in one’s work as a Christian counselor. The focus will be on recognizing different research designs, understanding data analyzed statistically, evaluating peer reviewed published journal articles, and ethically interpreting the results to become better consumers of research. We will also look at models and principles of program evaluation and needs assessment as they relate to counseling.

**Gordon-Conwell Mission:**

**Article 3: To train and encourage students, in cooperation with the Church, to become skilled in ministry.** The Church and the seminary share the goal of seeing knowledge, skills and experience integrated in the person who ministers. Through the courses and the practica/internships, a combination of careful training and supervised experience in counseling ministries are pedagogical practices essential to achieving that goal.

**Relation to Curriculum:**

Research Methods and Design is a required course for all students in the MACC program. The course provides an overview of the basic approaches to research methods and design. Particular attention is given to the application of research in the counseling setting. The curriculum of Research Methods is required content for most, if not all, state licensing boards.
Objectives (Knowledge and Skills Outcomes):

CACREP Standards are written to ensure that students develop a professional counselor identity and master the knowledge and skills to practice effectively and ethically. At the completion of this course, students should be able to satisfy the following competencies outlined in the 2009 CACREP Standards:

CACREP II.G.8a. The importance of research in advancing the counseling profession;

CACREP II.G.8b. Research methods such as qualitative, quantitative, single-case designs, action research, and outcome-based research;

CACREP II.G.8c. Statistical methods used in conducting research and program evaluation;

CACREP II.G.8d. Principles, models, and applications of needs assessment, program evaluation, and the use of findings to effect program modifications;

CACREP II.G.8e. The use of research to inform evidence-based practice; and

CACREP II.G.8f. Ethical and culturally relevant strategies for interpreting and reporting the results of research and/or program evaluation studies.

Students should also be able to apply their knowledge as required in the 2009 Clinical Mental Health Counseling Standards:

CMHC I1. Understands how to critically evaluate research relevant to the practice of clinical mental health counseling.

CMHC I2. Knows models of program evaluation for clinical mental health programs.

CMHC I3. Knows evidence-based treatments and basic strategies for evaluating counseling outcomes in clinical mental health counseling.

CMHC J1. Applies relevant research findings to inform the practice of clinical mental health counseling.

CMHC J2. Develops measurable outcomes for clinical mental health counseling programs, interventions, and treatments.

CMHC J3. Analyzes and uses data to increase the effectiveness of clinical mental health counseling interventions and programs.
Course Objectives:

Understanding the relevance and importance of research and program evaluation to the work of Christian helping professionals

Ability to identify the strengths and weaknesses of various quantitative and qualitative research designs

Understanding univariate statistics methods as applied to the research process

Address ethical principles as applied to the research process

Be a critical consumer of published research relevant to the counseling profession

Acknowledge and utilize the appropriate data collection methods for conducting both quantitative and qualitative research

Know the principles and models of program evaluation and needs assessment

Integration Objectives:

1. To examine research from a Judeo-Christian perspective.
2. To integrate faith and learning by identifying and describing the contributions research makes to the Christian worldview using both assignments and classroom discussions.
3. To develop an awareness of integration issues related to scientific approaches to knowledge.
4. To understand many of the research issues relevant to investigating religious and spiritual relationships within the practice of counseling.

Methods of Instruction: This course will be taught using a variety of teaching techniques, including but not limited to, lecturing, large and small group discussion, experiential activities, online discussion boards, in class group projects, class presentations, and online quizzes.

Required Text(s):

Course Requirements/Assignments:

**Class Participation:** Students are expected to participate fully in the class activities. This includes presentations, in-class projects, discussions and presentations led by other students, and discussion of lecture materials presented by the professor. (10%)

**Reading Assignments:** Students are expected to read and understand the assigned readings. There will be online reading quizzes to verify understanding of the basic concepts. (20%) [CACREP II G.8.b,c,d; CMHC I2]

**Evaluating Research Articles:** Students shall complete the assigned chapters of the Pyrczak book. (10%) [CACREP II G.8.a; CMHC I1]

**Research Proposal including Mini Literature Review of 5 Peer Reviewed Articles:** Students will evaluate the research and design, based on concepts learned in class and reading, of five peer reviewed articles in their counseling area of interest. They will explore evidence-based treatment for the chosen counseling area. At least one of these articles should be from a Christian journal. Then they will address proposed methodology, and appropriate statistical analysis of the data. (20%) [CACREP II G.8.a,e,f; CMHC I1,I3,J2,J3]

**Program Evaluation Group Project:** During class on the 3rd weekend, students will use their knowledge of program evaluation and needs assessment to evaluate a counseling program from a given case study. (10%) [CACREP II G.8.d,f; CMHC I2,J2,J3]

**Class Presentation/Poster Session:** Students will orally present to the class their findings from the critique of their 5 articles. They will summarize and give best practices for counseling based on the research studied. This will be done in the poster format common at professional conferences. (10%) [CACREP II G.8.a,e,f; CMHC I1,I3,J1]

**Final Exam:** Format to be determined later. (20%)

**Grades:** Final letter grades will be assigned based on the following distribution:

A  93-100  
A-  90-92  
B+  87-89  
C  73-76  
B-  70-72  
D+  67-69
Course Schedule:

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading/Assignments DUE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Before Weekend #1</td>
<td>Reviewing Research Articles: <em>Title, Abstract, Introduction</em></td>
<td>Pyrczak Chaps 1-4</td>
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<td>Pyrczak Assignment</td>
<td>Houser Chaps 1-2</td>
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<td>Houser Chaps 3-4, 11-13</td>
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<td>Before Weekend #2</td>
<td>Online Reading Quiz on Quantitative Methods and Statistics</td>
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<td>Weekend #2 – Oct 16-17</td>
<td>Reviewing Research Articles: <em>Procedures, Instrumentation, Results, Discussion; Ethics, Qualitative Research Designs, Mixed Methods</em></td>
<td>Pyrczak Chaps 8-12, Appendix A</td>
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<td>Houser Chaps 5-7, 10, 14-17</td>
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<td>Before Weekend #3</td>
<td>Online Reading Quiz on Qualitative and Mixed Methods and Ethics</td>
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<td>Research Proposal (Mini Lit Review)</td>
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<td>Weekend #3 – Nov 13-14</td>
<td>Program Evaluation: Models, Examples; Single-case, Action and Outcome-based research; Program Evaluation Group Project; Poster Presentations</td>
<td>Pyrczak Chaps 8-9, 18, 19, 21</td>
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*After Weekend #3* Final Exam

**Academic Standards**

Cheating and plagiarism are considered serious breaches of personal and academic integrity. Cheating involves, but is not necessarily limited to, the use of unauthorized sources of information during an examination or the submission of the same (or substantially same) work for credit in two or more courses without the knowledge and consent of the instructors. Plagiarism involves the use of another person’s distinctive ideas or words, whether published or unpublished, and representing them
as one’s own instead of giving proper credit to the source. Plagiarism can also involve over dependence on other source material for the scope and substance of one’s writing. Such breaches in academic standards often result in a failing grade as well as other corrective measures. For more information, please consult the Student Handbook.

ADA Policy

The seminary complies with the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act. A student with a qualifying and authenticated disability who is in need of accommodations should petition the seminary in accordance with the stated guidelines in the Student Handbook.

Cancellation of Class

In the event the seminary has to cancel a class meeting (impending storm, professor illness, etc.), the Registration Office will send out an email (via the GCTS email account) notification to all students registered in the respective course. If the cancelation occurs the day of the scheduled meeting, the Registration Office will also attempt to contact students via their primary phone contact on record. The professor will contact the students (via GCTS account) regarding make-up. If a weekend class is cancelled, the class will be made up during the scheduled Make-Up weekend (see the academic calendar for the designated dates). For more info, consult your Student Handbook.

Extension Policy

Arrangements for submission of late work at a date on or before the “last day to submit written work”, as noted on the seminary’s Academic Calendar, are made between the student and professor. Formal petition to the Registration Office is not required at this time. This includes arrangements for the rescheduling of final exams. However, course work (reading and written) to be submitted after the publicized calendar due date, must be approved by the Registration Office. An extension form, available online, must be submitted to the Registration Office prior to the “last day to submit written work.” Requests received after this date will either be denied or incur additional penalty. For a full discussion of this policy, please consult the Student Handbook.

Grades

Grades are posted on line within twenty-four hours of receipt from the professor. Students are expected to check their CAMS student portal in order to access posted grades. Those individuals who need an official grade report issued to a third party should put their request in writing to the Registration Office. Faculty have six weeks from the course work due date to submit a final grade.
Returned Work

Work submitted through Sakai will be returned via Sakai since no hard copies will be turned in. Enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope with any hard copy work submitted if you wish to have it returned.

Virtual Writing Center

Free assistance in writing papers is available to students through the Virtual Writing Center at Gordon Conwell. The Virtual Writing Center is staffed by Gordon Conwell graduates, or writing tutors with specialized knowledge in writing and/or ESL. Generally, this service is available to students who have completed or are currently enrolled in one of the following three classes:

- CT500 (Introduction to Theological Research)
- CO501 (Introduction to Counseling Research)
- IS502 (Theological Research and Writing)

If you enrolled in GCTS before Fall 2008, you were not required to take one of the three pre-requisites above, and you may request access to the Virtual Writing Center. Also, ESL writing tutors are available to ESL students even if they are not currently enrolled in a degree program. If you do not meet one of these qualifications, but feel you would benefit from using the Virtual Writing Center, contact us and we will evaluate your status.

Email writingcenter@gordonconwell.edu for more information.