CO 699 – Research Methods and Design  
Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary—Charlotte  
Fall 2012

Instructor: Alan Myatt, PhD  
Contact Information: amyatt@gordonconwell.edu  
Class Schedule: Wed. 6:30-9:30pm, Sept. 12 – Nov. 28 (we will meet for 10 class sessions, there will be no class on Sept 5, Nov. 14 and Nov.21)  
Office Hours: by appointment

Course Description

This course prepares the student to successfully evaluate social science research and apply the results of research in one’s work as a counselor. The focus of the course will be discussions of original research publications designed to sharpen critical thinking skills and the ability to identify strengths and weaknesses of research studies. Included in the class will be brief lecture summaries of pertinent research concepts by the professor, followed by class discussions informed by the text and other readings. In addition, students are expected to read three articles from the primary literature and write abstracts summarizing and critiquing each article. Students will present one of these articles to class for discussion of methodological issues.

Gordon-Conwell Mission

The course has various objectives which are intended to develop basic competence in the area of systematic theology and to specifically contribute to the fulfilling of the mission of GCTS as expressed in the six articles of the GCTS mission statement (http://www.gordonconwell.edu/about/Mission-and-Purpose.cfm). Specifically, the faculty have identified the following learning outcomes in relation to the articles of the mission statement:

Article 1: a) Demonstrate a strong understanding of both the content of the Bible and the overarching redemptive story from Genesis to Revelation. b) Demonstrate appropriate and effective use of the tools of biblical interpretation.

Article 2: Demonstrate constructive and critical thinking about Christian ministry in light of biblical, theological, and historical scholarship in accordance with historic Christian orthodoxy.

Article 3: Develop proficiencies in practical ministry that are biblically and theologically grounded, and contextually sensitive.

Article 4: Demonstrate growth in a life of biblical discipleship and intimacy with Christ, expressed in the life of the mind, interpersonal relationships, and interaction with broader society.
Article 5: Demonstrate engagement in the Church and society, using their spiritual gifts and redemptive leadership to promote renewal and reform.

Article 6: Articulate a coherent vision of God’s global activity and develop strategies for actively engaging in God’s redemptive work in the world.

This course focuses primarily on the application of a biblical world view in understanding and applying the methods of social science research to the practice of Christian counseling.

Relation to Curriculum

This course is required for all MACC degree candidates.

Course Objectives

After successfully completing this course the student will be able to:

1) understand and apply the principles and process of empirical research, particularly with reference to the counseling profession

2) demonstrate proficiency in the scientific methods used for observation, data collection, analysis, and interpretation

3) understand and apply the American Psychological Association’s ethical guidelines for research

4) meaningfully evaluate published research findings in professional outlets

Course Requirements

Achievement of the course objectives will be measured through a variety of assignments and activities as described below.

READING ASSIGNMENTS:
A reading schedule will be provided on Sakai for each of the texts. Students are expected to complete the reading before class each week. A reading log will be submitted in order to verify that the assignments have been completed.

WRITING ASSIGNMENTS:
ABSTRACTS: Each student will prepare abstracts of three research reports from the primary literature, one for each. One of these abstracts will be presented to the class for discussion. Students will be asked to sign up for a presentation slot in one of the classes. The abstract should include brief summaries of each section of the paper, along with
critique assessing elements of experimental design and methodology. It should be single spaced, at least one page and no more than two pages in length.

Critique should be presented in the appropriate section of the abstract and distinguished from summary by a change in font, such as italics. For the class presentations, students may work in small groups, to be assigned by the professor. Research reports from the primary literature may be chosen from those posted by the professor on Sakai or chosen by the student from professional journals. Each abstract should be posted on Sakai by noon of the Monday before class.

Abstracts are to be submitted electronically to the professor via Sakai course assignments area. The abstract to be discussed in class is also to be posted to the Discussion Forum in Sakai under the thread for the appropriate week. Graded abstracts will be returned to students via the course assignments area with comments annotated in the file. For the article to be presented to the class, each student/group is required to post on Sakai the abstract (along with a PDF file of the original article if it is not one of the articles posted in Sakai) for distribution to the class. During the presentation, students are expected to briefly summarize the article, critique and lead a discussion of the article in class. The presentation is expected to be 10 to 15 minutes in length, followed by a class discussion of methodological issues raised by the review of the article. All students are expected to review the abstract prior to class. Reading the original article is at the discretion of the other students, however, this is recommended for maximum benefit of the learning experience. An example of an abstract, generated by the professor, can be found on Sakai in the course documents area.

It is anticipated that the experiences during class time will result in more astute and critical reading of the literature. This will be reflected in the expectations for grading the second and third abstracts.

**Critical Review:** Each student will write a critical review of *Ex-Gays?*. This review will examine the methods used in the studies described, and reflect on the choice and validity of the methods, measures, analysis, and the conclusions drawn from them. In addition, students will compare these methods to those of studies conducted by other “pro change” as well as “pro-gay” researchers, and evaluate the role of the pro- and con- positions on the methodology and conclusions drawn in the report of the research (articles may be gleaned from the bibliography of the book, or found through library research of professional journals). The paper should be typed, double spaced, in APA format, and 10-12 pages in length. **Due Date: Dec 31, 2012 submitted electronically in the Sakai course assignments area.**

Grading for this paper will be according to the following standard:
1. Setting - consideration of significance of this research 10 pts
2. Understanding of methodological decisions made by the authors 20 pts
3. Additional critique based on students own reading 10 pts
4. Inclusion and critique of other pro-change literature 20 pts
5. Inclusion and critique of other pro-gay literature 20 pts
6. Insights regarding politics, ethics, and research 10 pts
7. Quality of writing 10 pts
Total 100 pts

File names of submitted assignments should include the student’s name. Lateness will be penalized 1 point for each day an assignment is late. Assistance with correct APA format is available online in Counseling Central, under Program Documents (see also http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/2/10/). Plagiarism is considered a serious academic offense at GCTS. Please note the guidelines at http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/wts/plagiarism.html.

Attendance and full participation is expected during all class meetings. If you miss up to three hours of class for any reason, you can either choose to (1) Have five points deducted from your final course grade or (2) Submit an annotation for an additional 500 pages of reading pertaining to course content as well as making up any pertinent assignments related to missed content to be decided by professor.

The successful completion of these activities will require each student to spend approximately 135 hours devoted to coursework, both in class and out of class. The following chart indicates how these hours are distributed across the various course assignments.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Assignment</th>
<th>Expected Time Commitment (hrs)</th>
<th>Student’s actual time on task</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class attendance</td>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critique of Ex-Gays</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abstracts</td>
<td>25</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quiz preparation</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>40</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Students will keep a record of time spent on each course-related task, and will submit a final report, as above, with their actual hours spent on each task listed in the last column of the table.

**CLASS PARTICIPATION:** Class participation by students is expected. This includes the presentation of critiques of research reports, participation in discussions lead by other students, and participation in discussions of the lecture materials presented by the professor.
**QUizzes:** There will be three quizzes, covering the material from the class and the texts. The licensing exams you will take in order to secure your LPC or LMFT license are all multiple choice tests. I am committed to helping you prepare for these exams by ensuring that you have the opportunity to practice this format in your classes here at GCTS. Therefore, these quizzes will be a multiple choice test.

**GRADING:**
The student’s final grade in this course is based on class participation, reading, writing assignments and exams, distributed as follows:

- Reading Log 10%
- Critical review of *Ex-Gay?* 30%
- 3 abstracts (10% each) 30%
- 3 exam (10% each) 30%

**COURSE TOPICS:**
- Organization of a research report;
- developing hypotheses;
- Measurement issues;
- Quantitative data analysis;
- testing the hypothesis
- Control and experimental methods;
- Between- and within-subjects designs;
- Single subject experimental designs;
- The human element in research;
- Qualitative methods and analysis;
- Survey and evaluation research
- Secondary data analysis;
- Ethics in research

**Required Textbooks and Materials**


Syllabus Addendum

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**
Faculty have six weeks from the course work due date to submit a final grade. 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 (unless instructed otherwise). Those individuals who need an official grade report issued to a third party should put their request in writing to the Registration Office.

**Returned Work**
Submitted hard-copy course work will be returned to the students if they provide a self addressed and postage-paid envelope with their final work. Work submitted without the appropriate envelope will be destroyed after the grade has been assessed and issued.