

University of Florida
Department of Health Education and Behavior
HSC 6735: Research Methods in Health Education
Spring 2012

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Course Overview

Health education specialists who hold graduate degrees are typically involved in planning and conducting research as part of their efforts to assess needs, plan health education programs and other interventions, evaluate those programs and interventions, and develop health policy. Such efforts include reading and evaluating research, synthesizing findings from existing research studies, as well as designing and conducting research. The purpose of this course is to enable health education graduate students to gain knowledge and skills in the areas of research interpretation, assessment, and synthesis; apply research design appropriate for specific research questions; collect and analyze quantitative data; evaluate the credibility of research resources and studies; and apply this knowledge and skill to practical program evaluation problems.

Course Objectives

By the end of the course, students should be able to do the following:

- Communicate a basic understanding of the 9 step research process
- Explain the basic tenets of the scientific method and how theory plays a critical role in scientific inquiry
- Apply ethical principles in the research process
- Communicate an understanding of the different types of research designs
- Communicate an understanding of internal and external validity issues associated with different research designs
- Apply appropriate research designs for specific research questions
- Communicate an understanding of how to collect and analyze quantitative data
- Evaluate the quality of research designs and methodologies used in studies within the health literature
- Communicate an understanding of program evaluation

Course Materials

Required Text: Crosby, R.A., DiClemente, R.J. & Salazar, L.F. (eds.). *Research Methods in Health Promotion*. San Francisco: John Wiley & Sons, Inc, 2006.

Academic Honesty:

Though this course involves group work where individuals are expected to share information and work together, several assignments are to be accomplished by an

individual working alone. In the case of individual assignments, the acts of cheating, plagiarism, and falsification or attempts to cheat, plagiarize or falsify will not be tolerated. Should an academic integrity violation take place, the student(s) involved will either be assigned a grade penalty or the case will be referred to the Dean of Students Office for further evaluation. The *minimum* grade penalty that will be assigned is an F for the assignment.

As commonly defined, plagiarism consists of passing off as one's own ideas, words, writings, etc., which belong to another. In accordance with this definition, you are committing plagiarism if you copy the work of another person and turn it in as your own, even if you should have the permission of that person. Plagiarism is one of the worst academic sins, for the plagiarist destroys the trust among colleagues without which research cannot be safely communicated.

If you have any questions regarding plagiarism, please consult the University of Florida Student Rules (<http://regulations.ufl.edu/chapter4/4017.pdf>), (Student Honor Code).

Every student that is admitted to the University of Florida has signed a statement of academic honesty committing him/her to be honest in all academic work and understanding that failure to comply with this commitment will result in disciplinary action.

This statement is a reminder to uphold your obligation as a student at the University of Florida and to be honest in all work submitted and exams taken in this class and all others.

Acknowledge the work you borrow from others:

Cite the sources of the information you have used and avoid plagiarism by doing the following:

- Acknowledge other people's words, ideas, and data.
- Place quotation marks around direct quotes.
- Paraphrase the information you obtain from your sources. This means more than rearranging the structure of a sentence or changing a few words. A good way to do this is to figure out the meaning of the information and write it in your own words. Always cite the source of information you have paraphrased (use APA format).

Disabilities:

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact the Dean of Students Office, The Disability Resource Center, 001 Reid Hall, 352-392-8565.

How is this course organized?

The course has modules (on Sakai) organized around specific chapters in the text. You will need to read assigned chapters PRIOR to class meetings.

What I need to do:

Learning Activities: Learning Activities can be thought of as homework. You will have one opportunity at this work, and you should turn it in by the deadline (NO EXCEPTIONS, unless a university-approved excuse is provided to me).

Class Activities/Participation: Many classes will involve class activities, which will involve the participation of all students. It is expected that students attend class and participate in the activities to receive full credit for class participation. Class participation activities will be administered throughout the semester, and will be weighted equally, according to the # of assignments.

Exams: A midterm and final exam will be given in the class. Each exam will be a combination of multiple choice, true/false, and open-ended questions.

Evaluation Procedures

The course grade will consist of several components as follows:

Learning Activities – 25 points each (total 100 pts) – **may be submitted only once.**

Major exams – Midterm Exam (125pts), Final Exam (125pts). Thus, there will be 250 points available for exams. These exams will include tasks that require you synthesize and apply the material under consideration.

Class activities/participation – 25 points for participating in class activities.

Final Grade Calculation

Areas of Evaluation	Points	Final Grade (%)
Midterm Exam	125	A = 93 - 100
Final Exam	125	A - = 90 - 92
Learning Activities (4 x 25 = 100)	100	B + = 87 - 89
Class participation	25	B = 83 - 86
		B - = 80 - 82
		C + = 77 - 79
		C = 73 - 76
		C - = 70 - 72
		D + = 67 - 69
		D = 60 - 66
		F = LESS THAN 60%
TOTAL POINTS	375	

***I do not subscribe to the blatantly unfair practice of awarding “extra credit”. All students are evaluated on exactly the same criteria.**

Learning Activity #1 – Students will read the article, titled *Correlates of Physical Activity in a Community Sample of Older Adults in Appalachia*. In a 2-3 page reflection paper, students will identify the key steps in the research process. Provide a description of the steps used in this particular research study, use APA style referencing, write in third person, and provide insightful discussion on the strengths and weaknesses of the overall use of the research steps.

Learning Activity #2 – Students will read the article, titled *Family Context as it Relates to Weight-Related Behaviors in Preadolescent African American Girls*, and complete the UF IRB2 application (including all the components needed to get approval). Prepare an informed consent document and an assent script for the children. Lastly, develop a 1 page justification for the methods used in your IRB application and informed consent documents.

Learning Activity #3 – Students will be given example research questions and study backgrounds, and asked to determine the type of research (observational, causal, experimental, non-experimental?) propose a research design (including a paragraph description of the design and the correct notation), identify all threats to internal validity and methods of controlling those threats.

Research question #1:

Do childhood activity levels predict obesity in early adulthood?

Research question #2:

What is the efficacy of a three-session intervention program designed to promote the consumption of a diet low in saturated fats among cardiac rehabilitation patients?

Research question #3:

What is the relationship of sleep to depression in college students?

Study Background #4:

Since the implementation of Title IX, the number of women participating in interscholastic and intercollegiate athletics has continued to increase while the number of women in coaching has declined. What approach (experimental, non-experimental, etc.) would be most beneficial in attempting to understand why fewer women are coaching (since Title IX).

Learning Activity #4 – Students will read two articles, by Dr. Thomas O'Rourke, related to instrument development and survey research, and will critique and edit a sample survey. Provide a description of the best method(s) to use to administer the survey, analyze results, and disseminate findings to the intended audience.

Course Calendar

	Topic	Readings/Items Due
Week 1 – January 10		
	Introductions Learning Activity Discussion Key Steps in the Research Process	Chapter 1 in text
Week 2 – January 17		
	Philosophy of Science and Theory Construction	Chapter 2 in text <i>Learning Activity #1 Due</i>
Week 3 – January 24		
	Ethical Issues in Health Promotion Research	Chapter 3 in text
Week 4 – January 31		
	Choosing a Research Design	Chapter 4 in text
Week 5 – February 7		
	Conducting Observational Research	Chapter 5 in text <i>Learning Activity #2 Due</i>
Week 6 – February 14		
	Designing Randomized Controlled Trials in Health Promotion Research	Chapter 6 in text
Week 7 – February 21		
	Qualitative Research Strategies and Methods for Health Promotion	Chapter 7 in text
Week 8 – February 28		
	Program Evaluation	Chapter 8 in text <i>Learning Activity #3 Due</i>
Week 9 – March 6		
	Spring Break – No Class	
Week 10 – March 13		
	2012 AAHPERD NATIONAL CONVENTION (Boston, MA; March 13-17, 2012) – No Class	Study for Midterm Online Review Posted
Week 11 – March 20		
	Midterm Exam (100 points)	
Week 12 – March 27		
	Measurement in Health Promotion Review midterm exam	Chapter 9 in text
Week 13 – April 3		
	Improving Validity of Self-Reports for Sensitive Behaviors	Chapter 10 in text
Week 14 – April 10		

	Principles of Sampling	Chapter 11 in text
Week 15 – April 17		
	Analytic Techniques for Observational Research Basic Principles of Statistical Analysis for Randomized Control Trials	Chapters 12 & 13 in text <i>Learning Activity #4 Due</i>
Week 16 – April 24		
	Introduction to Scientific Writing Crafting a Successful Research Proposal	Chapters 14 & 15 in text
Week 17 – May 2		
	FINAL EXAM (100pts) 7:30am-9:30am	HAVE A GREAT SUMMER!!!