

HDFS 425 (Lec. 1)

Research Methods in Human Development & Family Studies

Fall Semester 2008

Tuesday & Thursday, 9:30-10:45 am
108 Human Ecology

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Required Text (Purchase at University Bookstore on Library Mall):

Adler, E., & Clark, R. (2007). How it's done: An invitation to social research (3rd Edition). Thomson/Wadsworth.

Purpose of the course

The purpose of the course is to explore the basics of research design used in studying family dynamics and individual development over the life course. Students will learn to evaluate published research reports and will be introduced to the analytical strategies commonly used in HDFS research. The course will cover quantitative and qualitative research designs, participatory action research, and evaluation research. The course will emphasize learning by *doing*. Students will participate in carrying out a research

project during the course of the semester, including research design, data collection, data analysis, and presentation of results. Some students will participate in community-based research projects that will serve a local community partner.

Assignments & Grading

1. Class attendance and participation: (5%)

Students are expected to attend class, complete text readings and homework assignments prior to class, and take part in class discussions.

Daily reaction cards: At the end of each class, students will hand in an index card with their name, date, and a question, comment, recommendation, or request for clarification related to the class material (reading, lecture, or homework assignment). You must attend class to hand in a card and must include a question or comment to receive credit.

2. Quizzes: (30%)

There will be 4 quizzes during the semester, all equally weighted. The quizzes will be based on material from the textbook and class lectures.

If students miss one quiz, a make-up quiz will be offered during the final exam period (2:45 pm, Sunday, Dec. 14th). The make-up quiz will be based on two chapters from the textbook that are not covered in class (Ch. 12 and 13).

3. Completion of research project (30%)

There will be 5-6 different research projects conducted in the class, with 3-4 students assigned to each project. Students will work together as a team during the semester (most of the actual team-work will be done during class time). The teams for each project will be responsible to define the aims of the project, find and review existing research literature on the topic, define variables to be measured, write hypotheses, choose the research design, develop the measures and sampling strategy, collect and analyze the data, and develop a poster presentation of the project. Students completing a community-based research project will work closely with a representative of the community partner to define, design, conduct, and present the research.

Group members will receive one grade based on the final product of their research. Groups not conducting community-based research will develop a research poster that will be presented on the last day of class. Groups

conducting community-based research will decide upon and develop a product that best serves the needs of the community partner (e.g., a research synopsis, fact sheets). Guidelines for the final products will be given during the semester.

All members of the group will also receive an individual grade based upon their teamwork and contributions to the research project over the course of the semester. All group members (and the community partner representatives) will evaluate the efforts of other group members and themselves, and an average of these evaluations will determine the individual grade.

4. Homework assignments (35%)

There will be 10 required homework assignments. The homework assignments are intended to lead students through the steps of designing and conducting a small-scale research project, and will relate directly to the groups' ongoing research projects. On the days an assignment is due, the research groups will meet to review and discuss what each member has written on the topic. Groups will then be asked to formulate the best approach to the aspect of the research covered in the homework assignment.

Students must complete the homework assignments individually and post them to the Drop Box on the Learn@UW website before the beginning of class on the day they are due. Note: Students may not collaborate on homework assignments. Late assignments will not be accepted. Students should also bring a copy to class to share with their research groups and aide in their groups' work that day.

Instructions for the homework assignments will be given in class. Assignments will be graded on a 10-point scale:

10	A
9	AB
8	B
7	C
6	D
1-5	F
0	Not submitted

The overall grade for homework will be the sum of the 10 homework grades.

NOTE: Students who miss an assignment due to illness or other unavoidable reason will be permitted to do one make-up homework assignment. Only one make-up assignment may be done during the semester.

Homework assignments may include the following research steps:

- Reflecting on research ethics and the role of the researcher in research.
- Training in the protection of human subjects.
- Finding published research articles on your group's research topic.
- Summarizing and reviewing research articles and developing a literature review.
- Designing a sampling and data collection plan for the research.
- Defining variables and developing measures or protocols.
- Completing the data collection: Submitting raw data and data collection report.
- Creating the computer data file for analysis and analyzing the data.

After class, group members will post their individual assignments to a PB wiki webpage to integrate and revise individual assignments into a group document to progress the research project. The instructor and community partner representatives will also be able to view and comment on these documents. Finalized and approved documents will then be posted to the Discussion section of the Learn@UW website under the appropriate homework assignments heading. These final documents will not be graded, but are posted so that all students may view and learn from each others' projects.

A note on plagiarism:

All written assignments are expected to be the student's own writing. Using the words or ideas of others in your written assignments without giving credit to the author constitutes plagiarism. Plagiarism will result in a failing grade for the assignment.

Grading scale:

The following grading scale will be used in computing final grades:

93 - 100%	A
87 - 92%	AB
80 - 86%	B
74 - 79%	BC
68 - 73%	C
60 - 67%	D
Below 60%	F

Course web site:

The course will use the [Learn@UW](#) web site. This web site will be used to post the syllabus, lecture materials, homework assignments, announcements, and documents related to each group's research project. Students will also post their homework assignments to the Drop Box feature of the website, and their groups' final documents under the Discussion feature. Students will also be able to monitor their quiz and other grades on the website. Log in using your UW username and password. You can access the [Learn@UW](#) web site by clicking on the Learn@UW link on the UW home page.

Students with special needs:

I wish to fully include persons with disabilities or other special needs in this course. Please let me know if you need any special accommodations in the curriculum, instruction, or assessments to enable you to fully participate. I will try to maintain the confidentiality of the information you share with me.

Schedule & Topics

Week 1

- 9/2 Orientation and introduction. Review of syllabus, assignments, and group project.
Guest speaker: Alyssa Kenney, Kennedy Heights Community Center
- 9/4 The research process and approaches to research.
Adler & Clark, Chapters 1 & 2.
Students submit top two choices of research projects (between three community-based research projects and basic research option).

Week 2

- 9/9 Ethics in research.
Adler & Clark, Chapter 3.
Students meet research groups and select research topics (or discuss community-based research project).
- 9/11 Ethics, continued, and the influences of the researcher in research.
Milner, H. R. (2007). Race, culture, and researcher positionality: Working through dangers seen, unseen, and unforeseen. *Educational Researcher*, 36(7), 388-400.
Homework assignment #1 due: Complete the on-line tutorial on protection of human subjects.

Week 3

- 9/16 Developing research questions.
Adler & Clark, Chapter 4.
Homework assignment #2 due: Reflection on your personal identity and its possible influences on your research project.
- 9/18 Reviewing the literature, reading and evaluating research.
Adler & Clark, Chapter 4.
Homework assignment #3 due: Find published research articles on your group's research topic.

Week 4

9/23 **Quiz #1** (Adler & Clark Chapters 1-4, and lectures).

9/25 Introduction to sampling.
Adler & Clark, Chapter 5.

Homework assignment #4 due: Summarize and critique two research articles.

Week 5

9/30 Sampling, continued.

Homework Assignment #5 due: Designing a sampling and data collection plan for the research.

10/2 Measurement and qualitative conceptualization.
Adler & Clark, Chapter 6.

Week 6

10/7 Measurement, continued.

Homework Assignment #6 due: Defining variables and developing the measures, or qualitative conceptualizations.

10/9 Research designs: Cross-sectional, longitudinal, case study, and experimental.
Adler & Clark, Chapters 7 & 8.

Week 7

10/14 Research designs, continued.

Homework assignment #7 due: Developing the literature review.

10/16 **Quiz #2** (Adler & Clark Chapters 5-8, and lectures).

Week 8

10/21 Applied social research: Action research, intervention/prevention research, evaluation research.

Adler & Clark, chapter 14.

10/23 Quantitative data collection: Questionnaires and structured interviews.
Adler & Clark, Chapter 9.

Week 9

10/28 Questionnaires and structured interviews, continued.
Qualitative interviewing.
Adler & Clark, Chapter 10.

10/30 Qualitative interviewing, continued.

NOTE: Finished questionnaires will be distributed to groups so that data collection can begin.

Week 10

11/4 Observational techniques.
Adler & Clark, Chapter 11.

11/6 **Quiz #3** (Adler & Clark Chapters 9-11, and lectures)

Week 11

11/11 Quantitative data analysis.
Introduction to data analysis with Microsoft Excel.
Adler & Clark, Chapter 15, pp. 432-445.

Homework assignment #8 due: Completing the data collection and submit raw data and data collection report.

11/13 Quantitative data analysis, continued.
Adler & Clark, Chapter 15.

Week 12

11/18 Qualitative data analysis.

Adler & Clark, Chapter 15, pp. 453-480.

Homework assignment #9 due: Creating the computer data file for analysis.

11/20 Qualitative data analysis, continued.

Preparing the research products.

Adler & Clark, Appendix A.

Week 13

11/25 Group work: Data analysis.

Research groups must bring a draft of their data analysis to class.

Homework assignment #10 due: Analyzing the data and presenting research results.

11/27 ***Thanksgiving Break.***

Week 14

12/2 Group work: Data analysis & research product preparation.

12/4 **Quiz #4** (Adler & Clark Chapters 14-15, and lectures)

Week 15

12/9 Group work: Research product preparation.

Research groups must bring a complete, formatted draft of the research product or poster presentation to class for review and revision.

12/11 Poster presentations.

The poster presentations will be in Room 178 Human Ecology and will be open to the public.

Make-up quiz (during final exam period): 2:45 pm, Sunday, Dec. 14th.