The Bob Shapell School of Social Work at Tel-Aviv University

MA in Coping with Stress, Crisis and Trauma

Research paradigms and methods
Semester I, 2014-15
Wednesdays, 10.15-11.45

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COURSE OVERVIEW AND OBJECTIVES

Course Goal:
• Help students become critical consumers and users of research.

Course Objectives:
• Use research vocabulary correctly.
• Improve ability to critically read and evaluate research.

REQUIREMENTS

Attendance and participation - Attendance is mandatory. Active involvement in class discussion is encouraged.

Reading – For each class you will have to read the "required reading". The articles are accessible through the course internet site. Suggestions for additional reading are also offered.

Final paper (can be prepared alone or with another student)
Goal: To critically analyze qualitative and quantitative research articles (2 separate papers).
Deadline for submission: To be decided. Submit a hardcopy to Nili.
Length: Each of the papers should not exceed 12 pages (double space, not including references and appendices).
Style: All papers should be in APA format.

A. Chose two research articles – one qualitative and one quantitative, which deal with issues that are of interest to you. Make sure that the articles include a relatively detailed description of the research method. Attach a copy of the articles as an appendix to your paper.
B. Preparatory work (attach it as an appendix): For each of the articles, analyze in a table or in another systematic format the various components of the research article, referring to the following questions about each one of them:

- Is there information on it in the article?
- Is the information adequate?
- Is the approach/procedure used by the researchers adequate? If not, why?
- What can be a more adequate alternative?

Refer to the following components:
1. Literature review and rationale for the study.
2. Research questions or hypotheses.
3. Research approach (paradigm, theory, genre).
4. Research design.
5. Population, sampling method and sample size.
6. Recruitment of participants.
7. Data collection tools/instruments.
8. Data collection procedures.
9. Data analysis.
10. Reflection on the role/influence/impact of the researcher(s).
11. Standards for assessing the quality of research.
12. Research ethics.
13. The results.
14. The discussion of the results.
15. The implications of the results for research, theory and practice.

C. The paper: Based on the preparatory work you have done, analyze critically the overall methodological quality of each of the papers and demonstrate your claims. Include in your analysis a reference to the following points (not necessarily in this order):

- Is the essay coherent and systematic methodologically?
- What are the methodological strengths and weaknesses of the article?
- Does the research that the article describes meet the expected standards of the methodological approach?
- What is the relationship between the methodological quality of the article and the significance of the findings and their contribution?

EVALUATION

Grading – the course grade will be based on the final paper.
COURSE SCHEDULE, TOPICS, READINGS

29.10.14

Topics

- A class exercise: How do we know it is good?
- Questions we need to ask ourselves when we read a research report (PCDC).

Reading (Please bring a copy of these articles to the class)


5.11.14

Topics

- What are research paradigms?
- Research paradigms I – Positivism and Post-Positivism

Required reading


Additional Reading


19.11.14 class hours- 10.15-13.45!!!

A. Topics

- Research paradigms II - Constructivism

Required reading


**Additional Reading**


**B. Topics**

- Research paradigms III – Critical Theory

**Required reading**


**Additional Reading**


**26.11.14**

**Topics**

- Quantitative research: Research questions and hypotheses, and research designs.

**Required reading**


traumatic events: A randomized controlled study. *Journal of Traumatic Stress, 23*(6), 744–750.

**Additional Reading**


3.12.14

**Topics**

- Quantitative research: Sampling and measurement (instruments and data collection).

**Required reading**


10.12.14

**Topics**

- Class exercise: A critical reading of a quantitative research report

**Required reading**


17.12.14

**Topics**

- Qualitative research – Research questions, reflexive standpoint and sampling

**Required reading**


**Additional Reading**


**7.1.15**

**Topics**

- Qualitative research – Data collection and data analysis

**Required reading**


**Additional Reading**


**14.1.15**

**Topics**

- Qualitative research – writing and quality standards

**Required reading**


**Additional Reading**


**21.1.15**

**Topics**

- Research ethics

**Required reading**


**Additional Reading**


**28.1.15**

**Topics**

- Class exercise: A critical reading of a qualitative research report

**Required reading**