

Course Syllabus
PSYC 5950 Thesis
Counseling Psychology Program
Department of Psychology
University of North Texas

Instructor

The student's main research advisor

Credit Hours

1. Students are required to complete a minimum of 6 thesis credit hours in total.
2. Each of the thesis course unit is 3 credit hours.
3. Once beginning the first enrollment, UNT TGS requires continuous enrollment in PSYC 5950 (including summer unless the student is not using any UNT resources to work on thesis in summer) until the thesis is completed.

Course Time

This course is usually carried out via one-on-one meetings or in a small-group format in which the main research advisor and the student(s) will meet regularly during the semester(s) while the student is enrolled in the thesis course.

Course Descriptions

The main purpose of the thesis course is to assist Counseling Psychology graduate students in acquiring fundamental knowledge in research design, psychometrics, and measurement issues. This course is designed to help students develop research competencies to critically evaluate the existing literature and be able to conduct a research project and/or other scholarly activities. The acquired knowledge, developed research competencies, and the quality of the thesis research project will be evaluated by a thesis committee of at least three Psychology faculty members in two occasions using the program's thesis/dissertation rating form (see appendix).

The required readings provide an overview of critical elements and topics related to evaluating, developing, and conducting psychology research as well as the procedures of proposing and publishing an empirical study. Particular attention will be focused on various types of quantitative and qualitative research designs commonly used in the counseling psychology field, research validity and methodological issues, ethical considerations, and data analysis strategies. The end products of the thesis courses include (1) a thesis proposal, which includes a literature review section; (2) presenting in the thesis proposal meeting; (3) conducting the study following the approved procedures and methods described in the proposal; (4) analyzing the data and completing the thesis write-up; and (5) presenting in the thesis defense meeting.

Objectives

Students who successfully complete this course will

1. develop knowledge in various types of quantitative and qualitative research designs as well as the merits and limitations associated with different sampling methods and research designs.
2. acquire understanding in different threats to research validity and strategies of mitigating them.
3. obtain understanding in theories, model, and issues related to psychometrics and psychological measurement.

4. demonstrate familiarity of analytical methods appropriate for different research questions.
5. gain experience in conducting and disseminate research.

Textbooks:

- American Psychological Association. (2010). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th ed.). Washington: American Psychological Association.
- Desjardins, C. D., & Bulut, O. (2018). *Handbook of Educational Measurement and Psychometrics using R*. CRC Press, Boca Raton, FL.
- Heppner, P. P., Wampold, B. E., & Kivlighan, D. M. (2008). *Research design in counseling* (3rd ed.). Belmont, CA: Thomson.

Required Journal Article Readings:

Notes: these articles are basic readings and your advisor will assign additional articles related to research design and psychometrics topics.

- Cohen, J. (1992). A power primer. *Psychological Bulletin*, 112(1), 155-159.
- Frazier, P. A., Tix, A. P., & Barron, K. E. (2004). Testing moderator and mediator effects in counseling psychology. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 51(1), 115-134.
- Martens, M. P. (2005). The use of structural equation modeling in counseling psychology research. *The Counseling Psychologist*, 33(3), 269-298.
- Ponterotto, J. G. (2005). Qualitative research in counseling psychology: A primer on research paradigms and philosophy of science. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 52(2), 126-136.
- Schlomer, G. L., Bauman, S., & Card, N. A. (2010). Best practices for missing data management in counseling psychology. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 57(1), 1-10.
- Stout, W. (2002). Psychometrics: From practice to theory and back. *Psychometrika*, 67(4), 485-518.
- Worthington, R. L., & Whittaker, T. A. (2006). Scale development research: A content analysis and recommendations for best practices. *The Counseling Psychologist*, 34(6), 806-838.

Course Topics/Assignments

Specific course assignments vary but all the following topics will be covered:

- Formations of Research Questions/Ideas, Conceptualizations/Models, and Corresponding Hypotheses
- Various types of research designs
- Various types of research validity and threats to validity
- Sampling methods & population
- Measurement theory and psychometric properties of instruments
- Reliability, validity, and normative sample
- Effect size and power analysis
- Reviews, Evaluations, and Summaries of Relevant Literature
- Research Proposal (including introduction, proposed methods, ethical considerations, and proposed analysis)
- Writings of Thesis Proposal and Presentation

- IRB applications (if applicable)
- Data Collection & Data Analyses
- Complete Thesis Write-up and Defense Meeting

Students will complete each of these written assignments by the due dates developed with their research advisor.

Grading:

1. Based on the progress made by the student, the instructor will assign “In Progress” or “No Progress” as course grades until the thesis is defended.
2. The quality of the final product (thesis proposal and complete thesis write-up) will be evaluated by the thesis committee using the thesis evaluation form. Students may receive either “Pass” or “No Pass” on the form. Once the student receives a “PASS” on their thesis defense meeting, grades for all of the thesis courses will be changed into “Credit.”

ACCOMMODATIONS: The University of North Texas makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide you with an accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding your specific needs in a course. You may request accommodations at any time, however, ODA notices of accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. Students are strongly encouraged to deliver letters of accommodation during faculty office hours or by appointment. Faculty members have the authority to ask students to discuss such letters during their designated office hours to protect the privacy of the student. For additional information see the Office of Disability Accommodation website at <http://www.unt.edu/oda>. You may also contact them by phone at 940.565.4323.

Final Note: This syllabus does not constitute a contract and the plans for this course may be modified during the semester. The instructor, the Department of Psychology, and the College of Arts and Sciences reserve the right to modify, amend, or change the syllabus (course requirements, grading policy, etc.) as the curriculum and/or programs require(s).

Thesis/Dissertation Rating Form
UNT Counseling Psychology program

Thesis Proposal Thesis Defense Dissertation Proposal Dissertation Defense

Student: _____

Date: _____

Title of Dissertation: _____

Committee Members: _____

Please use the rating scale for each of the items listed below

(1) the thesis or dissertation is unacceptable	(2) the thesis or dissertation reflects potential but at this point unacceptable quality.	(3) the thesis or dissertation reflects work deemed proficient based on the student's level of training.	(4) the thesis or dissertation reflects high quality work beyond what is expected.	(5) the thesis or dissertation reflects exemplary work which far exceeds what is expected.
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1. Literature Review (for both proposal & defense)						
1a. Adequacy of literature review	1	2	3	4	5	
1b. Clarity of rationale and research questions/hypotheses	1	2	3	4	5	
2. Method (for both proposal & defense)						
2a. Representativeness of the sample	1	2	3	4	5	
2b. Sampling procedures	1	2	3	4	5	
2c. Sample size & power	1	2	3	4	5	
2d. Psychometrics of instruments	1	2	3	4	5	
2e. Research design	1	2	3	4	5	
2f. Proposed analyses (for proposal only)	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
3. Results (for defense only)						
3a. Participant flow and recruitment	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
3b. Correctness of analysis	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
3c. Clarity and organization of the section	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
4. Discussion (for defense only)						
4a. Clarity and organization of the section	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
4b. Integration of results with literature	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
4c. Discussion of strengths and limitations	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
5. Dissemination (for both proposal & defense)						
5a. Quality of writing	1	2	3	4	5	
5b. APA Style	1	2	3	4	5	
5c. Quality of oral presentation		1	2	3	4	5
5d. Responses to committee's questions	1	2	3	4	5	
6. Scope (for both proposal & defense)						
6a. significance of the issue	1	2	3	4	5	
6b. contribution to the literature	1	2	3	4	5	

Overall Result: ____ Pass ____ No Pass