

NATIONAL-LOUIS UNIVERSITY

MASTER COURSE OUTLINE

Course / Workshop Prefix and Number INT430 Qtr or sem hours 4 (fixed)

Course / Workshop Title Methods of Inquiry in the Behavioral Sciences

College Arts and Sciences Unit/Program/Department: Applied Behavioral Sciences

Catalog description (maximum @ 100 words):

Students will be introduced to the basic concepts, methods and tools employed in the research process. Emphasis is placed on practical applications of these ideas, with the central goal being to assist students in becoming intelligent consumers of research findings and conclusions.

Prerequisite(s): Good standing in the ABS program.

Relationship to specific NLU program(s): Required course in the ABS sequence.

Course goals and expected student learning outcomes:

Methods of Inquiry in the Behavioral Sciences is designed to be presented in the accelerated ABS program model. A variety of methods are employed (e.g., lecture, discussion, instructional media, experiential activities, library and online search). Upon completion of the course, students will:

- Understand basic attitudes and qualities necessary for effective and accurate inquiry.
- Understand basic research concepts and tools and their appropriate uses in the inquiry process.
- Formulate effective research questions, identifying central variables, population, relevant research hypotheses, and scope/history/limitations of question.
- Demonstrate online search skills of major research databases (e.g., PsychINFO).
- Demonstrate the critical ability to analyze a researchable question and conduct preliminary review of the professional literature.

Major Topics:

- Sources of knowledge and the research process (logic)
- The nature of research questions and articulation of central variables of interest
- Qualities inherent in effective inquiry (e.g., objectively, curiosity, theory-based) and sources of potential error/bias).
- Formulating the problem statement
- Uses of professional literature and online search strategies
- Methodological issues (i.e., design through thoughts on operationalization of variables and implications for measures)
- Confidence levels, warranted conclusions and appropriate cautions
Suggested method(s) for evaluating student performance:

- Classroom preparation and participation.
- Review of assigned worksheets illustrating the various stages in the research process.
- Observation of online search abilities (i.e., informal 1:1 “quizzes”).
- Evaluation of the “mini-lit” review demonstrating understanding of (a) search strategies and (b) integration of found studies shedding historical and theoretical light on question of interest.
- Formal proposal for the *Independent Study in the Behavioral Sciences* (INT 490).
- Final paper: case study (learner critique of student research proposal).

Representative text(s) and/or supporting resources:

Babbie, E. (2000). *Practice of Social Research* (9th ed). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Company.

Campbell, S.K. (1974). Flaws and fallacies in statistical thinking. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc.

Isaac, S. & Michael, W.B. (1995). Handbook in Research and Evaluation (3rd ed.). San Diego, CA:EdITS.

Leedy, P.D. & Ormrod, J.E. (2001). Practical Research: Planning and Design (8th ed.). Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc.

Salkind, N.J. (1999). *Exploring Research* (4th ed.). Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc.

Delivery systems (check all that apply):

- Traditional classroom delivery
- Field model
- On-line
- Other system (describe):

Submitted by: William A. Owen, Ed.D. _____

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