PSYC 4381 – A  
Research in Personality Psychology

O’Rourke 104  
Tues from 2:10 – 4:50

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713-942-5944

Office Hours:

Drop In:  
Mon 11:00 – 1:30  
Wed 11:00 – 1:30

By Appointment:  
Thurs & Fri
WHAT IS THIS COURSE ALL ABOUT?
Psychology has traditionally been dominated by deductive reasoning and quantitative approaches. However, qualitative methodological approaches are now gaining popularity as the discipline recognizes how these methods can be used to contribute more contextualized understanding of complex psychological phenomena. Qualitative approach is well suited to examine construction of meaning within multiple systems. Results from qualitative methods can contribute to theory-development, improvement of quantitative approaches and add unique contributions to our overall understanding of human condition(s).
Qualitative research tradition is rich and offers multiple methodological approaches to research and use of variety of qualitative tools, including open-ended interview, naturalistic observation, focus groups, and public document/archive and video/pictures analysis. This course will provide an introduction to qualitative research with a focus on qualitative interviewing, data coding and analysis.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES
The purpose of the capstone courses in psychology is to allow you to design and conduct your own study from start to finish. You will engage in hands-on activities in order to develop the basic skills involved in the formulation of research problems, design, data collection, analysis validation and presentation of study results to an audience. Each of you will also choose a subject matter for the project which can be completed individually or in group. The project will include literature review, design, data collection, analysis and reporting of qualitative interviews.
The final product of the class will be a poster that will be presented during the research symposium in spring 2016.

COURSE STRUCTURE
The capstone is an upper-level course and will be conducted in seminar format. Students are required to come to class with having completed the assigned reading(s) and expected to bring questions to class. I view my role in this class as more of a facilitator than a teacher. Therefore, instead of lecture notes, I will come to class prepared to answer questions, generate discussions and facilitate dialogue. I will guide and advise, but there will be few, if any, actual lectures. I expect you to already be well versed on how to conduct a thorough literature review, to know what a peer-reviewed research article is as well as how to read it and how to correctly do APA format. There will be more information that is provided on assignments that might be new – including qualitative data collection, data analysis, poster preparation and submission to the UST Research Symposium.
Research is a group process. Therefore, I, along with your classmates, will help you refine your research questions, provide feedback on your design and analysis. I hope that you will engage in the scientific process of critical examination of your peer’s work and learn to provide productive feedback to each other.
PARTICIPATION POLICY

You are expected to be an active participant in this class. To do this, you must be prepared – so be sure to complete all reading and other assignments according to the class schedule. I also expect that the classroom will be a place of mutual respect and that you will not engage in behaviors that are not conducive to learning (e.g., having side conversations, sleeping in class, talking or texting on the phone, late arrival or early departure). All views are valued in class and discussion is encouraged when different views are expressed. However, any behavior related to verbal or physical abuse will not be tolerated.

GRADING PROCEDURES

Final grades are based on a point system that is consistent with University’s official letter grade system. Grades are assigned according to standard rubrics (rubric for each assignment, except exams, are listed at the end of this document). I understand that grades are important and that grading concerns arise. I will listen to legitimate concerns and I am willing to change my mind if I make an error. Please remember, this is not the only class in your undergraduate career so rest assured that your GPA does not depend solely on this course!

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade in Class</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>94.00 to 100</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90.00 to 93.99</td>
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<td>B+</td>
<td>87.00 to 89.99</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>83.00 to 86.99</td>
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<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80.00 to 82.99</td>
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<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77.00 to 79.99</td>
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<td>C</td>
<td>73.00 to 76.99</td>
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<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70.00 to 72.99</td>
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<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>65.00 to 69.99</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>60.00 to 64.99</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Below 59.99</td>
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ASSIGNMENTS

50 Points (25 each)

Class Presentations

You will be required to make two presentations to the class; a brief in the beginning of class and a poster presentation during exam week.

Presentation I – You are required to examine ONE peer-reviewed papers that uses qualitative data. You will develop a short PowerPoint presentation highlighting the following:

i) Main focus of the study
ii) Theoretical approach identified (if applicable)
iii) Data collection tool
iv) Sample selection process
v) System of data analysis and coding
vi) Main findings

Poster Presentation - A poster outlining your research will be the main product of your semester-long hard work. You will be required to give a 15 minute presentation to your classmates and/or other faculty members outlining the rationale behind the study, methods, results, limitations and future directions.
Annotated Bibliography 25 Points
You will compile a minimum of 6 articles related to your research idea. At least half of these articles must have been published in the past 5 years. For each article, you will provide a brief summary outlining four important component of any research paper – main focus of the study, theoretical orientation, qualitative tool used, data coding method, analysis and major conclusions. In addition, you will explain how the article is related to your project. You will turn in a title page for the bibliography in APA format (6th edition). This project must be done individually, with each student finding his or her own research articles. You will be graded on this assignment in terms of how relevant your articles are to the topic at hand, and how well you follow APA format.

Human Subjects Application 25 Points
You will need to submit a human subjects application. If you are working on a group project, you may turn in one application. I will grade your last draft that goes in to the Human Subjects Committee.

Data Collection 50 Points
Each student will complete 2-3 interviews and transcribe the interview.

Data Coding 50 Points
Each student will identify themes that emerge in his/her interview. Then, the student will get together with their group and identify overarching categories that emerged in their interviews. The students, as a group, will relate the final categories to the literature.

Extra Credit
Per departmental policy, students may earn up to 1/3 letter grade improvement in the final grade by participating in departmentally-approved psychological research. Research opportunities will be announced in class. Additional class-specific extra credit opportunities may be available, like, attending Psi Chi educational or other on-campus psychology-related events.

If you earn a D or an F on an assignment, I expect that you will meet with me during my office hours within one week to discuss how you plan to improve your performance. Students who are pro-active in remedying problems early in the semester can expect to see their grades improve over the course of the term. Any student who is dissatisfied with his or her performance on the exams is encouraged to meet with me during office hours to review the material, identify strategies for improving performance, etc.

ATTENDANCE POLICY
All students are expected to attend every class on time but I will not take attendance. If you are absent, obtain class notes from another student. The instructor does not provide notes for any classes missed. As noted in the Evaluation Procedures, there are no make-ups for missing a mini-assessment. See Exam-Related Policy below for missing exams.
EMAIL CORRESPONDENCE POLICY
If you have any question, feel free to email me at my stthom address. Emails sent from Monday through Thursday will be answered within 48 hours. Those sent on Friday will be addressed by Monday of the following week.

EXAM-RELATED POLICY
There is no exam for this class.

LATE PAPER POLICY
Points will be deducted from late papers: a half-letter grade if it is one day late, or a full-letter grade for 2-7 days late. Papers will not be accepted if overdue by more than seven days.

GRADES OF INCOMPLETE
This course follows the current university policy concerning incomplete grades. Incomplete grades are given only in situations where unexpected emergencies prevent a student from completing the course. Your Instructor is the final authority on whether you qualify for an incomplete. Incomplete work must be finished by the end of the subsequent semester or the “I” will automatically be recorded as an “F” on your transcript.

PROFESSIONALISM & COURTESY POLICY
Entering/Exiting Class: Please arrive on time prior to the designated start time for class. DO NOT pack up or exit from the class until the class is dismissed. These basic tenets represent good manners and respect for each other.

Email: Students must check their e-mail regularly (i.e., daily) to obtain emergency announcements concerning class. Not checking your accounts, losing, or forgetting usernames/passwords are not valid excuses.

Cellular Phones & Communication/Recording Devices: Per university policy and classroom etiquette; mobile phones, iPods, etc. must be silenced during all classroom lectures. Those not heeding this rule will be asked to leave the classroom immediately so as to not disrupt the learning environment.

Laptops: If you bring laptops to class to take notes, accessing the internet during class is not allowed so that other students are not disturbed. Those surfing the internet during class will be asked to leave.

Food/Beverages: Snacks/drinks are allowed as long as it is not a distraction and the room is kept clean. Students must throw out their own garbage and must not leave items behind. If food becomes a big
distraction or mess, the instructor will ask students to put all food away until the 75-minute class is over.

**ACADEMIC CONDUCT POLICY**

Academic integrity is for everyone’s benefit. When students cheat, they lose out on valuable learning and create a culture that encourages negative mindset. Academic dishonesty is any attempt by the student to gain academic advantage through dishonest means, to submit, as his or her own work which has not been done by him/her or to give improper aid to another student in the completion of an assignment. Such dishonesty would include, but not limited to: submitting as his/her own a paper, project, report, test, or speech copied from, partially copied or paraphrased from the work of another words quotes or paraphrased. The rules apply to any academic dishonesty, whether the work is graded or ungraded, group or individual, written or oral. Academic dishonesty in any form will not be tolerated. If you are uncertain as to what constitutes academic dishonesty, consult Student Handbook for details (http://www.stthom.edu/Campus_Student_Life/Policies_Procedures/Student_Handbook.aqf).

Violations of these rules will result in a record of the infraction being placed in your file and receiving a zero on the work in question AT A MINIMUM. At the instructor’s discretion, you may also receive a failing grade for the course. Confirmation of such incidents can also result in expulsion from UST.

**ADDITIONAL COURSE POLICIES**

**University Writing Center:** In my experience good writing skills is necessary to communicate your thoughts effectively. Since this class requires two written assignments, it is important that you are able to write well. If you need assistance, there is a free resource for UST students, the Learning and Writing Center. For more information or to make an appointment, call (713) 525-3878.

**Disability Access:** The University of St. Thomas is committed to providing reasonable accommodations for all persons with disabilities. This syllabus is available in alternate formats upon request. Students with disabilities who need accommodations in this course must contact the professor at the beginning of the semester to discuss needed accommodations. For more information, contact Executive Director of Counseling, Wellness and Disability Services, at (713) 525-3162

**Grade Dissemination:** Graded tests and materials in this course may be reviewed individually during office hours. However, students are not allowed to take the exams home. All papers and mini-assessments will be returned in class. Students will be able to track their grades on blackboard.

**Recommendation Letters:** UST is a small university and you have a small pool of faculty to request letters of recommendation from (i.e., for graduate school or job applications). I will be able to write a more compelling recommendation, if I have taught you in more than one course or better yet, you have worked on a research project with me.
CLASS SCHEDULE
The following course schedule is tentative and may change at the discretion of the instructor. Remember, it is your responsibility, and your responsibility alone, to keep apprised of any announced changes. All changes will be announced in class at least one class in advance.

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<tr>
<th>WEEK</th>
<th>DATES</th>
<th>TOPICS &amp; CLASS DEADLINES</th>
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| 1    | 8/25   | Review of syllabus and requirements  
Identification of project ideas/ Group assignment |
| 2    | 9/1    | Reading: Chapter 1  
Literature Review |
| 3    | 9/8    | Reading: Chapter 3, pp. 93-103  
Weiss “Preparing for Interviewing” – on blackboard  
Presentation I Due |
| 4    | 9/15   | Reading: Chapter 5  
Identify study sample and list of potential questions  
Annotated Bibliography Due |
| 5    | 9/22   | Weiss “Interviewing” – on blackboard  
Tutorial on Human Subjects Application |
| 6    | 9/29   | Reading: Chapter 4  
Complete Human Subjects Application  
Submit Human Subjects Application Due 10/2 (must include informed consent and all copies of questionnaire) |
| 7    | 10/6   | Reading: Chapter 5, pp. 105-128  
Listen to old tapes |
| 8    | 10/13  | NO CLASS – FALL BREAK  
Start Data Collection |
| 9    | 10/20  | Reading: Chapter 12, pp. 301-318  
Listen to old tapes/Share Interview with Class  
Continue Data Collection/Start transcription/Field notes |
| 10   | 10/27  | Share Interview with Class  
Continue Data Collection/ Work on transcription/Field notes |
| 11   | 11/3   | Share Interview with Class  
Continue Data Collection/ Work on transcription/Field notes  
Theme identification |
| 12   | 11/10  | Power point training  
Finalize interview themes |
| 13   | 11/17  | NO CLASS  
Poster Preparation |
| 14   | 11/24  | THANKSGIVING BREAK |
| 15   | 12/1   | Complete Data Analysis  
Poster Preparation |
|      |        | **Finals Week**  
**Poster Presentation** |