

ASSOCIATED CANADIAN THEOLOGICAL SCHOOLS OF TRINITY WESTERN UNIVERSITY

Graduate Course Syllabus

Course Number: MFT 582

Course Name: MFT Research Methods &
Implications for Evidence-Based Practice

Semester and Year: Fall Semester 2021

Course Times: Wednesdays 11:30 – 2:30 pm

Instructor: Danielle Vriend Fluit, PHD, RP, RMFT, CAMFT APPROVED SUPERVISOR

Contact Information: danielle.fluit@twu.ca

Office Hours: Tues pm, Wed am/pm

Co-requisites or Pre-requisites: Statistics Undergraduate

Semester Hours: 3 Credit Hours

Semester Dates: Sept 8 – Dec 8, 2021

Course Description

This course provides students with an understanding of clinical research methods and design. Additionally, this course addresses the relevance of research to students' clinical work. Students will investigate existing research and research methods used in MFT, including quantitative and qualitative and mixed methods designs. Ethical issues and considerations in research will also be addressed, as well as learning to critically evaluate existing research. A primary aim of this course is to help students become evidence-based practitioners and navigate how to critically evaluate current research.

Course Objectives

By the end of this course:

1. Student will be able to identify various research designs, their underlying paradigms, and main components of each design.
2. Students will be able to differentiate the basic elements of the research process.
3. Students will know relevant literature in the field of MFT research
4. Students will be able to select empirical research to guide clinical practice.
5. Students will be able to appraise the various kinds of research evidence available to MFTs and critique research articles for their application and methodology.
6. Students will gain understanding of the importance of ethics in research, particularly with cultural sensitivity and population diversity.
7. Students will be able to apply elements of evidence-based practice.

Course Learning Outcomes

TWU Graduate Student Learning Outcomes	Course Learning Outcomes	Assessment Strategies
<p>Knowledge and its Application</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate in-depth knowledge of a particular field of study and/or profession • Demonstrate ability to apply knowledge and discipline specific methodology to solve unique problems • Demonstrate superior ability to identify and interpret new ideas and research in a specific discipline • Demonstrate superior skills in academic research, writing, and act as skilled practitioners to move beyond knowledge into practice 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students will be able to identify various research designs, underlying paradigms and main components 2. Students will be able to differentiate the basic elements of the research process. 3. Students will know relevant literature in the field of MFT. 4. Students will be able to select empirical research to guide clinical practice. 5. Students will be able to appraise research evidence available to MFTs and critique research articles. 6. Students will gain understanding of ethics in research 7. Apply elements of evidence-based practice. 	<p>1. 1-7: To be measured by assignments, class discussion and Article Critiques.</p>
<p>Cognitive Complexity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show ability to carry out discourse and research as an active member of the counselling and psychotherapy community • Demonstrate the ability to “undertake inquiry and analysis, to solve problems with a high degree of innovation, divergent thinking and risk taking” 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students will be able to select empirical research to guide clinical practice 2. Students will be able to appraise the various kinds of research evidence available to MFTs and critique research. 3. Students will strive for application of robust research studies and integrate into Evidence Based Practice. 	<p>1. 1-3. To be measured by the Article Critiques and class discussions.</p>

<p>Inter-and intra-personal Wellness.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate increased professional capacity and autonomy • Demonstrate superior organizational and time management skills • Demonstrate academic and personal integrity. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The student will be able to identify various research designs and their main components 2. Students will be able to select empirical research to guide clinical practice 3. Students will be able to appraise the various kinds of research evidence available to MFTs 4. Students will gain an understanding of the importance of ethics in research. 	<p>1.1-4: To be assessed by Reflection Paper, assignments.</p> <p>2. 1-4: To be assessed by use of class time, participation and timeliness and integrity of completed assignments.</p>
<p>Social Responsibility and Spiritual Formation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate the ability to analyze, appraise and evaluate their discipline in a social context • Develop the ability to become socially responsive agents with a commitment to understanding global issues • Demonstrate greater understanding of and connection to God’s work in the world • Utilize spiritual practices for self-reflection and the helping of others • Exemplify a Christian ethic in pursuit of truth, reconciliation, compassion and hope 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To understand and consider diversity in research and research ethics. 2. To integrate and discern paradigm and perspectives in research and how they interact, conflict, or complement a Christian worldview. 3. Understand and practice an ethical and respectful way of reading, carrying out and incorporating research that upholds and honours the dignity of human beings and their unique contexts. 	<p>1. & 3. To be measured and assessed using the Journal Critique Assignment</p> <p>2. & 3. To be assessed during the final class discussion facilitation and the final Reflection Paper.</p>

Required Texts and Materials

REQUIRED:

BOOKS

Williams, L., Patterson, J., & Edwards, T. M. (2014). *Clinician's guide to research methods in family therapy*. New York, NY: Guilford.

Locke, L. F., Silverman, S. J., & Spirduso, W. W. (2010). *Reading and understanding research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

ARTICLES

Beasley, C. C., & Ager, R. (2019). Emotionally focused couples therapy: A systemic review of effectiveness over the past 19 years. *Journal of Evidence-Based Social Work, 16*(2), 144-159.

Blow, A. J., & Sprenkle, D. H. (2001). Common factors across theories of marriage and family therapy: A modified Delphi study. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy, 27*, 385-401.

Blow, A. J., Davis, S. D., & Sprenkle, D. H. (2012). Therapist-worldview matching: Not as important as matching to clients. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy, 38*, 13-17.

Cain, H. I., Harkness, J. L., Smith, A. L., & Markowski, M. L. (2003). Protecting persons in therapy research: Ethical and regulatory standards. *Journal of Marital Family Therapy, 29*(1), 47-57.

Clement, P. (2013). Practice-based Evidence: 45 years of psychotherapy's effectiveness in private practice. *American Journal of Psychotherapy, 67*, 23-46.

Fife, S. T., Whiting, J. B., Bradform, K., & Davis, S. (2014). The therapeutic pyramid: A common factors synthesis of techniques, alliance and way of being. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy, 40*, 2-133.

Hodgson, J. L., Johnson, L. N., Ketring, S., Wampler, R. S., & Lamson, A. (2007). Integrating research and clinical training into marriage and family therapy training programs. *Journal of Marital & Family Therapy, 31*(1).

Mobley, J. (2009). *Crash: Modernism meets postmodernism*.

<https://www.counseling.org/resources/library/VISTAS/2009-V-Online/Mobley.pdf>

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.

Stratton, P., Silver, E., Nascimento, N., McDonnell, L., Powell, G. & Nowotny, E. (2015). Couple and family therapy outcome research in the previous decade: What does the evidence tell us? *Contemporary Family Therapy, 37*, 1-12.

Wachholtz, A. B., Malone, C. D., & Pargament, K. I. (2017). Effect of difference meditation types on migraine headache medication use. *Behavioural Medicine, 43*(1), 1-8.

Wachholtz, A. B., & Pargament, K. I. (2008). Migraines and meditation: does spirituality matter? *Journal of*

Behavioural Medicine, 31(4), 351-66.

Wiebe, S.a., Elliott, C, Johnson, S., Burgess Moser, M., Dagleish, T. L., Lafonatine, M., & Tasca, G. A. (2019). Attachment change in emotionally focused couple therapy and sexual satisfaction outcomes in a two year follow-up study. *Journal of Couple and Relationship Therapy*, 18(1).

RECOMMENDED:

Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approaches (4TH ed.)*, Los Angeles, CA: Sage.

Sprenkle, D., Davis, S., & Lebow, J. (2009). *Common factors in couple and family therapy: The overlooked foundations for effective practice*. New York: Guildford Press.

Sprenkle, D. H., & Piercy, F. P. (2005). *Research methods in family therapy (2nd ed.)*, New York, NY: Guildford Press.

American Psychological Association. (2001). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association, (5th ed.)*. Washington, D.C.: Author.

Course Activities/Requirements

1. Assigned Readings, Class Participation & Quizzes (10%)

Students will complete required readings, remain engaged with the course material, participate in class discussion and prepare for quizzes.

2. Journal Article Critiques (25% each, total 50%) 8 pages each in length

Students will complete **two separate journal article critiques** during the semester. One will focus on quantitative journal articles and the other on qualitative research articles (3 articles for each method). Critiques should be comprised of substantial reviews of articles and should demonstrate competent understanding of class content up to when the critique is due. The purpose of the critique is to summarize the conclusions and centrally evaluate articles for their quality of research their usefulness of results and conclusions. In each critique, you will need to describe how you think results can be useful or not useful in your clinical work. Students will choose their intended research topics (e.g. Treatment of Eating Disorders, Emotional Regulation in Session, Use of EFT with Military-based couples, etc.) and must have their research topics AND their 6 articles approved prior (see course outline) to writing each critique.

Students will critique the adequacy of the studies by addressing the following issues:

1. What research question (s) do the authors state that they are addressing and is this what they actually address?
2. What analytical strategy was used, and how appropriate is it for addressing their questions of interest?
3. Include a description of the quality of the study, mainly the sample size and characteristics, the methods used and if the methods used meet the existing standards of rigour for that type of research.

4. Summarize the study's main results / findings: What were their main conclusions?
5. Are the claims they make in their discussion section warranted from the actual results?
6. What, if any, changes / additions need to be made to their methodology to provide a more complete picture of the phenomenon of interest (e.g. sampling, description of analysis process, effect sizes, dealing with multiple comparisons, etc.?)

Another helpful method for working through a critique for your articles is to use the 5 A's:

1. **ASK** – what is the important clinical question that is addressed by the study (who, what where, when, why, How?)
2. **ACQUIRE** – Summarize in brief what this article is setting out to do and how the authors intend to do so.
3. **APPRAISE and ANALYZE** – Summarize the article's strengths and weaknesses / concerns related to issues of internal and external validity, measurement, analyses, ethics, other relevant issues.
4. **APPLY** – Discuss what you will take from this article – and how this may be applied to clinical practice. Address to WHOM the results of the study might apply, address the CONTEXT in which the results of this study might apply
5. **ADJUST** – How might you adapt or adjust your therapy, if at all, based on these articles?

Also note that marks will **be subtracted for not using proper APA format, grammar and syntax **

3. Presentation of Research Topic and Lit Review (15%)

Students will be asked to present their article critiques to their peers. Students are encouraged to create a brief Powerpoint to help with this summary. Students are expected to succinctly summarize **3** of the strongest articles, their methods, their findings, their critique of each study, and clinical implications (if any) of this body of research.

In addition to the oral presentation, students will be asked to provide a list of relevant references / resources for classmates to use if they wish to explore your topic further. Proper APA formatting for the reference list is essential. This list will be part of the presentation.

4. Final Class Discussion on Faith and Research Integration – Discussion Facilitation & Written Summary (25%)

The last day of class will be dedicated to the discussion of the integration of faith / Christian worldview with research methods and the epistemological assumptions underpinning each method. Students will be divided into groups and be asked to prepare questions in order to facilitate a class discussion on the integration of faith and research. Student will be asked to submit a written reflection and summary of this discussion following the final class (2 -3 pages in length).

Students will be asked to explore the following considerations:

1. How compatible / incompatible with a Christian understanding of the world is your paradigm and its stance on a.) the nature / existence of the social world (ontology); b.) the way knowledge is accumulated / created / uncovered (epistemology); and c.) the appropriate role of the researcher in the research process.
2. Be sure to specify what doctrines or theological perspectives you are using as a Christian worldview because multiple and sometimes, divergent perspectives exist within Christianity. If you do not

adhere to a Christian worldview, you may reflect on the paradigm critique from your own perspective.

Course Evaluation

Class Participation, Assigned readings, Quizzes	10%
Article Critique (2 x 25%)	50%
Critique Presentation	15%
Faith Integration Discussion & Reflection	25%
TOTAL	100%

Grading System

Grading Scale

Letter Grade	Percentage	Grade Point
A+	97-100	4.30
A	93-96	4.00
A-	90-92	3.70
B+	87-89	3.30
B	83-86	3.00
B-	80-82	2.70
C+	77-79	2.30
C	73-76	2.00
C-	70-72	1.70
F	Below 70	0.00

(OR)

Letter Grade	Percentage	Grade Point
A+	Superior	4.30
A	Excellent	4.00
A-	Very Good	3.70
B+	Proficient	3.30
B	Good	3.00
B-	Average	2.70
C+	Adequate	2.30
C	Acceptable	2.00
C-	Needs Work	1.70
F	Below Standard	0.00

Course Outline (*May be Subject to Change)

DATE	TOPIC	READINGS (subject to new text)	ASSIGNMENTS
WEEK 1: September 08	Course Introduction: Warm-up, Myths, Preconceptions		Pre Quiz
WEEK 2: September 15	The Nature of Social Sciences Research, The Development of the Research Question	WPE – Chp 1,2,3,4,5,6,7 LSS – Chp 1,2,3 Wachholtz et al. (2017); Wachholtz et al. (2008).	Group Research Question
WEEK 3: September 22	Research Foundations / Paradigms: Quantitative Post-Positivism, Mixed-methods Pragmatism, Constructivism/Social Constructivism, Participatory/Advocacy/ Approach	WPE – Chp 2,3,4 LSS – Chp 4 Ponterotto (2005), Mobley (2009)	
WEEK 4: September 29	Ethics in Research	WPE – Chp 8 Cain et al. (2003)	Select your research topic and submit for approval
WEEK 5 October 6	Evidence Based Approaches – The Common Factors Model	WPE – Chp 12, 13 Fife et al. (2014); Blow et al. (2012); Blow et al. (2001); Stratton et al. (2015)	
WEEK 6: October 13	Reviewing Research – Reading & Evaluating Research Reports	WPE – Chp 14,15 LSS – Chp 5,6 Beasley & Ager (2019)	Select research articles (6 total) and submit for approval
WEEK 7: October 20	Understanding and Evaluating Quantitative Research	WPE – Chp 9, 10, 11, 12 LSS – Chp 7 Wiebe et al. (2019);	
WEEK 8: October 27	READING BREAK		
WEEK 9: November 3	Understanding and Evaluating Qualitative Research	WPE – Chp 6 LSS – Chp 8	Quantitative Article Critique Due
WEEK 10: November 10	Integrating Research into Practice – Class Presentation	WPE – 16, 17 Clement, P. (2013) Hodgson et al. (2007)	
WEEK 11: November 17	Integrating Research into Practice – Class Presentations	WPE 18-19	Qualitative Article Critique Due
WEEK 12: November 24	Summary / Preparation for Class Discussion		

WEEK 13: December 1	Integrating Faith and Research Methods: Class Discussion		
December 08			Final Summary / Reflection Due

Topic Ideas for Article Critique

- Play Therapy Approaches for Loss / Grief in Childhood
- Solution-focused Therapy for Treating Adolescent Conduct and Behavior Issues
- CBT for Substance Use Disorders
- Gottman's Model of Couple Therapy for Improving Marital Satisfaction
- EMDR for Trauma-related disorders
- Efficacy of Family Therapy for Diverse Populations
- Effectiveness of EFT for Specific Couples (e.g. Military couples, Trauma, etc.)
- Family Therapy Approaches for the Treatment of Eating Disorders
- DBT Approaches for Working with Clients with Borderline Personality Disorder
- The Use of Mindfulness for Treatment of Depression
- The Use of Spirituality in Therapy
- Attachment to God and Sexual Abuse Survivors
- The Use of Hope in Therapy
- Common Factors in Therapy and Change Outcomes
- Use of Somatic Experiencing for the Treatment of Trauma

Alternatively, students can pick their own topic, however, **topics MUST be approved** prior to writing the critiques.

Course Policies

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND AVOIDING PLAGIARISM AT TWU

One of the core values of Trinity Western University is the integration of academic excellence with high

standards of personal, moral, and spiritual integrity. The University considers it a serious offence when an individual attempts to gain unearned academic credit. It is the student's responsibility to be informed about what constitutes academic misconduct. For details on this, and on identifying and avoiding plagiarism go to the [University Homepage > Academics > Academic Calendar](#) (p. 47).

<https://prezi.com/od62fxnkbmxh/plagiarism-how-to-get-it-out-of-your-life/> (Prezi presentation)

<http://bit.ly/1p00KX3> (Google Slide presentation offering more comprehensive information)

STUDENTS WITH A DISABILITY

Students with a disability who need assistance are encouraged to contact the Equity of Access Office upon admission to TWU to discuss their specific needs. All disabilities must be recently documented by an appropriately certified professional and include the educational impact of the disability along with recommended accommodations. Within the first two weeks of the semester, students must meet with their professors to agree on accommodations appropriate to each class. Students should follow the steps detailed by the Equity of Access Office on their website at: <http://www.twu.ca/student-life/student-success/disabilities-and-equity-access>

HOSPITALITY IN THE CLASSROOM

TWU is committed to an ethic of inclusion centred on the principles of Christian hospitality, reciprocity and reconciliation. We seek to cultivate generous learning spaces that are based on respect for differences and are open to diverse views, opinions, and identities that are thoughtfully expressed in a collegial manner. We welcome and value all voices, including those from under-represented groups or those who have been marginalized.

CAMPUS CLOSURE AND CLASS CANCELLATION POLICY

In the event of extreme weather conditions or other emergency situations go to the <https://www.twu.ca/campus-notification>.

FINAL EXAMINATIONS

A student who is absent from a final examination without an acceptable excuse will be assigned a zero for that examination. Absence due to illness must be supported by a medical certificate indicating the nature of the illness. If an examination is missed for any reason, including illness, the student must notify the faculty member prior to the examination and the Office of the Registrar within 48 hours of the missed examination, giving written documentation explaining the absence." [2019-20 Academic Calendar](#)

PLEASE NOTE

The MAMFT is a program gearing students for Professional Life. Therefore, students are expected to budget their time and anticipate due dates for assignments. Extenuating circumstances will/do happen. Please learn time management skills, create margins in your life, and plan for them. In addition, late assignments create a backlog that effects the timely return of other student papers

- a) All work is due before class on the day it is due.
- b) Late assignments will be deducted 2% per day. Assignments received after a week after exams (12:00 p.m.) will receive an F.
- c) Only medical emergency or other extreme circumstances will be acceptable excuses for late assignments. Those who have extenuating circumstances delaying their work are required to fill out the necessary paperwork and pay the required fee at the registrar. An incomplete (INC) will be entered on your transcript until all work is completed (15 weeks maximum).

I will do my best to budget my time and return your assignments within 2 weeks of the due date. There are some times when I am on other traveling assignments and your papers may take longer to be returned. Well written papers require much less time to grade so please do your part in handing in well written papers.

For philosophical, ethical, and professional reasons, only hand in your best work. Students at a Graduate level are expected to:

- a) Carefully **proof read** all written assignments and to turn in papers free of spelling and grammatical errors.
- b) **Edit** your papers several times so that your thoughts are logical and well organized.
- c) Understand and utilize APA style for all submitted work
- d) Submit papers electronically to Moodle with your name and assignment clearly indicated in the file name (e.g. JHaleyProfIssues). Students should use the “.doc” file extension when submitting papers so that you have no trouble receiving the written feedback in your paper.
- e) All assignments are to be dropped into Moodle. If technology is a challenge, please find someone to help you out: e.g. reduce file size

These factors will be incorporated into the grade. Students with known writing challenges must make full use of the Writing Centre. .

Lastly, what you need to know: Everything you need to know for successful completion of your studies and Graduation is contained in the 2 student handbooks (**Program Guide and Practice Handbook** are available from MAMFT website): Please make sure you thoroughly read and absorb the information. “I didn’t know about that” will not be an acceptable excuse for not fulfilling requirements.

