Research in Health Sciences (HSCI 6310)
Course Syllabus, Spring 2017, Module 2

Instructor: Suad Ghaddar, PhD
Office: EHABW Bldg, Rm 2.150
Office Hours: If you need to discuss any course-related issues, please send me an email to schedule a phone call or a meeting.
Office Phone: (956) 665-7937
Email: suad.ghaddar@utrgv.edu
Email Policy: For all communication, please use my email (suad.ghaddar@utrgv.edu) and NOT course messages. Generally I will respond to emails within 24 hours of receiving them.

Course Description
Welcome to Research in Health Sciences. This course aims to provide graduate medical and health professions students with the tools to understand and critically appraise health sciences and health services research and to practice evidence-based health care. It will introduce students to different quantitative and qualitative research methods and to the foundations of evidence-based health care practice.

Prerequisites
None.

Learning Objectives
By the end of this course, students will be able to:
- Describe the different research methods and study designs in health sciences and health services research (quantitative and qualitative)
- Critically appraise published health sciences and health services research
- Utilize research to support evidence-based practice

Textbook and Course Materials
Required Textbook
Textbook is available for purchase through the UTRGV bookstore, through Amazon, and is available as an electronic book.
Required Readings
As part of each week’s to-do-list and assignments, you will be required to read various research articles. These readings will be available in the Articles section for each week.

Weekly Overview
Each week, a new series of PowerPoint slides, and required readings will be available for students to review. Detailed information about each week’s learning objectives, lectures, assignments, and deadlines is available on Blackboard. In this course weeks begin at 12:00 am (Central Standard Time) each Wednesday and end at 11:59 pm (Central Standard Time) on the following Tuesday. Announcements will be posted regularly. Make sure to check the Announcements section frequently for any schedule changes and general comments addressing student issues.
The following is a tentative schedule of each week’s topics.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Topics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>March 1, 2016</td>
<td>Week 1</td>
<td>Introduction, Overview of Statistical Concepts and Study Designs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 8, 2016</td>
<td>Week 2</td>
<td>Ethics, Evidence-Based Practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 15, 2016</td>
<td>Week 3</td>
<td>Methods Section</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 22, 2016</td>
<td>Week 4</td>
<td>Quantitative Study Designs: Non-Experimental Designs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 29, 2016</td>
<td>Week 5</td>
<td>Quantitative Study Designs: Experimental Designs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 5, 2016</td>
<td>Week 6</td>
<td>Qualitative Study Designs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 12, 2016</td>
<td>Week 7</td>
<td>Economic Evaluation Studies</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** Any changes to this schedule will be posted online.

**Grading and Assignments**

**Grading**
The overall passing grade for this course is 70%. To earn a passing grade, students must complete a baseline and course-end survey, quizzes, graded assignments, and a final exam.

**Quizzes**
Students shall complete six multiple-choice quizzes. Quizzes can be accessed in the quizzes area. All quizzes are open-book. Keep in mind that if you do not have a good grasp of the material, you will not be able to answer the questions or to finish on time. So make sure to prepare well before attempting to take the quizzes.

**Important note** on common glitches while taking your quizzes: In the past students would experience being kicked out of the quiz while taking it. I reported the issue to COLTT and they alerted me to the following potential user-end issues:
- If the student is going in and out to other tabs, then he/she is likely to have this problem
- If the student is taking the quiz (it opens in a new window) and closes the main blackboard window
- If the student closes the quiz thinking they can go back in and resume
- If the student is using a connection that is accessible by many persons (the broadband is distributed by strength of signals coming in, hence, getting kicked off the network by a “bigger truck” is going to happen when it is full).

Please avoid the above. If you get kicked out, nevertheless, please email me/your coach so that we can address the problem.

**Assignments**
Students shall complete specific assignments that include but are not limited to retrieving information related to course material, reading journal articles and critically appraising different elements of the study design and reporting.

**Final Exam**
Students shall complete a comprehensive, multiple-choice final exam. The final exam is open-book.

**Grade Distribution**
Baseline Course Survey 2%
Course-End Survey 2%
Student Introductions 1%
Six Quizzes (4% each) 24%
Eight Assignments (6% each) 48%
Final Exam 23%

Final grades for this course will be assigned as follows:
A = 90-100%
B = 80-89%
C = 70-79%
F = Below 70%

Deadlines
The deadlines on all quizzes, exams, and assignments are hard deadlines; work submitted beyond the deadline will not count for a grade. Please be sure to give yourself enough time to complete your work well before the deadline to account for any technical or unforeseen issues you may encounter. In the case of unforeseen emergencies, please contact me ahead of time for special arrangements.

Viewing Grades in Blackboard
Points you receive for graded activities will be posted to the Blackboard Grade Book. Click on the My Grades link on the left navigation to view your points. Your instructor will update the online grades each time a grading session has been complete - typically 4 days following the completion of an activity. You will see a visual indication of new grades posted on your Blackboard home page under the link to this course.

Naming and Submitting Documents
Before you submit a document, name your file according to the format below. Avoid special characters and spaces in file names. Use a single underline _ to separate words.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The name of your…</th>
<th>…should follow the format:</th>
<th>Example:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assignment1a</td>
<td>LastNameFirstInitial_Assignment#.doc</td>
<td>SmithJ_Assignment1a.doc</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Discussion Forums
In the Discussion Forums, students can introduce themselves, discuss assignments, and talk about each week’s topic. Each week has its own dedicated discussion forum. With the exception of the “Introductions” discussion forum on Week 1, forums are not graded.

Blackboard Collaborate Ultra
A Collaborate session will be scheduled once a week to provide a quick overview of the week’s material and to address any questions you may have. If you are not able to join the live session, you have the opportunity to send me your questions ahead of time so that I can address them. The session will also be recorded so that you can view it at your convenience.

Technical Requirements
Computer Hardware
To participate in this online course, you should have easy access to a computer less than 5-years old with high-speed internet connection via cable modem, LAN or DSL. To ensure you are using a supported browser and have the required plug-ins please refer to Supported Browsers, Plugins & Operating Systems for Blackboard Learn from Blackboards resource page.
**Student Technical Skills**
You are expected to be proficient in installing and using basic computer applications and to have the ability to send and receive email attachments.

**Software**
- Microsoft Office’s Internet Explorer (latest version)
- Mozilla’s Firefox (latest version; Macintosh or Windows)
- Google Chrome (recommended)
- Adobe’s Flash Player & Reader plug-in (latest version)
- Virus protection
- Microsoft Office

**Technical Assistance**
If you need technical assistance at any time during the course or to report a problem with Blackboard you can:
- Submit a Blackboard Helpdesk Ticket
- COLTT Help Desk Contact Information (UTRGV’s Blackboard Support)
  Location: Brownsville Campus, Rusteberg, 108, (956) 882-6792
  Edinburg Campus, Education Complex 2.202, (956) 665-5327
  Hours: Monday – Friday 7:30AM – 6:00PM
24/7 Blackboard Support: Blackboard phone and chat support is now available 24/7. You can call COLTT main office numbers, 956-882-6792 or 956-665-5327, at any time and speak to a support representative.

**Course policies are subject to change.** It is the student’s responsibility to check Blackboard for corrections or updates to the syllabus. Any changes will be posted in Blackboard.

**UTRGV POLICY STATEMENTS**
*Please read carefully as these contain important information and dates.*

**STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:** If you have a documented disability (physical, psychological, learning, or other disability which affects your academic performance) and would like to receive academic accommodations, please inform your instructor and contact Student Accessibility Services to schedule an appointment to initiate services. It is recommended that you schedule an appointment with Student Accessibility Services before classes start. However, accommodations can be provided at any time.

**Brownsville Campus:** Student Accessibility Services is located in Cortez Hall Room 129 and can be contacted by phone at (956) 882-7374 (Voice) or via email at ability@utrgv.edu.

**Edinburg Campus:** Student Accessibility Services is located in 108 University Center and can be contacted by phone at (956) 665-7005 (Voice), (956) 665-3840 (Fax), or via email at ability@utrgv.edu.

**MANDATORY COURSE EVALUATION PERIOD:** Students are required to complete an ONLINE evaluation of this course, accessed through your UTRGV account ([https://my.utrgv.edu/home](https://my.utrgv.edu/home)); you will be contacted through email with further instructions. Students who complete their evaluations will have priority access to their grades. Online evaluations will be available:
- Feb 15 – Feb 21 for Module 1 courses
- **Apr 12 – Apr 18 for Module 2 courses**
- Apr 12 – May 3 for full spring semester courses
**SCHOLASTIC INTEGRITY:** As members of a community dedicated to Honesty, Integrity and Respect, students are reminded that those who engage in scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and expulsion from the University. Scholastic dishonesty includes but is not limited to: cheating, plagiarism, and collusion; submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person; taking an examination for another person; any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student; or the attempt to commit such acts. Since scholastic dishonesty harms the individual, all students and the integrity of the University, policies on scholastic dishonesty will be strictly enforced (Board of Regents Rules and Regulations and UTRGV Academic Integrity Guidelines). All scholastic dishonesty incidents will be reported to the Dean of Students.

**SEXUAL HARASSMENT, DISCRIMINATION, and VIOLENCE:** In accordance with UT System regulations, your instructor is a “responsible employee” for reporting purposes under Title IX regulations and so must report any instance, occurring during a student’s time in college, of sexual assault, stalking, dating violence, domestic violence, or sexual harassment about which she/he becomes aware during this course through writing, discussion, or personal disclosure. More information can be found at [www.utrgv.edu/equity](http://www.utrgv.edu/equity), including confidential resources available on campus. The faculty and staff of UTRGV actively strive to provide a learning, working, and living environment that promotes personal integrity, civility, and mutual respect in an environment free from sexual misconduct and discrimination.

**COURSE DROPS:** According to UTRGV policy, students may drop any class without penalty earning a grade of DR until the official drop date (April 11, 2017 for Module 2 courses). Following that date, students must be assigned a letter grade and can no longer drop the class. Students considering dropping the class should be aware of the “3-peat rule” and the “6-drop” rule so they can recognize how dropped classes may affect their academic success. The 6-drop rule refers to Texas law that dictates that undergraduate students may not drop more than six courses during their undergraduate career. Courses dropped at other Texas public higher education institutions will count toward the six-course drop limit. The 3-peat rule refers to additional fees charged to students who take the same class for the third time.