HSR 461 Topics in Health Services Research: Methods & Measurement

Fall 2013
Wednesdays 2-3:30 PM
750 N Lake Shore Drive, 10th Floor
Lakeshore Conference Room

Course Director: Megan McHugh, PhD
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Office Hours: By appointment
Minimum enrollment: 4
Maximum enrollment: 12

This is a required course for all students in the Masters of Science and Methodology Certificate in Health Services and Outcomes Research. The course is open to other graduate students with permission from the course director.

Credits: 0.5

Course Description:

This seminar course will provide an overview of methods for conducting health services and outcomes research. It is intended to complement students’ training in epidemiology and biostatistics, and help prepare students to conduct independent research. This is a lecture course, though students will be encouraged to ask questions, discuss their current research projects, share relevant experiences conducting research, and participate in in-class exercises.

Course Objectives:

After completing this course, students will be able to:

- Articulate the importance of conceptual models in research and identify existing conceptual models that can be used to guide their research
- Conduct systematic literature reviews
- Articulate the steps involved in designing and fielding a survey
- Identify several commonly-used data sets for health services research
- Describe approaches for collecting and analyzing qualitative data

Course Workload:

The weekly, 90-minute classes will consist of lecture, discussion, and in-class exercises. Students should expect to spend an additional 3-4 hours per week on readings and homework assignments.
### Weekly Class Topics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Lecturer(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>September 25</td>
<td>Course Introduction</td>
<td>McHugh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Conceptual Models</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>October 2</td>
<td>Systematic Reviews</td>
<td>McHugh &amp; Linda O’Dwyer (Galter Health Sciences Library)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>Class will be held in Galter Library, in the small classroom on the first floor, near the lockers and restrooms.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>October 9</td>
<td>Survey Methods</td>
<td>McHugh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>October 16</td>
<td>Qualitative Data Collection</td>
<td>McHugh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>October 23</td>
<td>Qualitative Data Analysis</td>
<td>McHugh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>October 30</td>
<td>Mixed Methods</td>
<td>McHugh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>November 6</td>
<td>Using Large Data Sets</td>
<td>McHugh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>November 13</td>
<td>Community Based Participatory Research</td>
<td>Ashely Dyer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>November 20</td>
<td>Introduction to Measurement</td>
<td>Allen Heinemann</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>November 27</td>
<td>No Class - Thanksgiving</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>December 4</td>
<td>Consensus Conferences/Delphi</td>
<td>Suzanne Cox</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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### Course Assignments and Grading:

20% Class participation, based on weekly attendance and discussion.

80% Written assignments (20% each).

1. Identify or develop a conceptual model, and describe how it can be used to address a particular research question. If you develop a new model, describe how it was developed. Due October 30 via e-mail to the instructor. (Approximately 750 words.)

2. Identify a secondary data set applicable to your research. Give an informal, 10-minute presentation on the data set to your classmates on November 6. Consider the following in your presentation: access to the data set, unit(s) of analysis (e.g., patients, hospitals), key outcome variables and how they are measured, ability to link to other data sets, strengths and limitations of the data set. Send the instructor an e-mail with the name of the data set by October 9.

3. Identify an original, peer-reviewed research article using qualitative or mixed methods and write a critique of its methods. Consider the following in your critique: selection of the study population, data collection approach, recording and coding of data, development of themes, use of quotations, and (if mixed methods) data integration. Due November 20 via email to the instructor. (Approximately 750 words.)

4. Describe your research goals. Explain how three of the methods discussed during this course (e.g., surveys, systematic reviews) could be used to address different aspects of your research topic. Due December 10 via email to the instructor. (Approximately 750 words.)
Course Materials

Reading will be available on the Course Management System (“Blackboard”). There are two types of readings. *Instructional readings* provide an overview of a research method and how to apply it. Students will be better prepared if they review the instructional readings in advance of class. *Example readings* simply illustrate how various project teams have employed the method, and may be useful to students who wish to publish using a particular research method.

Slides from the lectures will be posted on Blackboard after each class.

September 25 – Conceptual Models

Goals:

- Understand how to use conceptual models to support health services research
- Gain familiarity with several commonly-used frameworks in health services research

Instructional Readings:


Example Readings:

Cunningham et al. The Use of Hospital Emergency Departments for Nonurgent Health Problems: A National Perspective. *Medical Care Research & Review*, 1995. (Example of an existing framework – the Anderson model – applied to the author’s research)

Cyr et al. Efficacy of the Health Belief Model for Predicting Intentions to Pursue Genetic testing for Colorectal Cancer. *Journal of Genetic Counseling*, 2010. (Example of an existing framework – the health belief model – applied to the author’s research)

Alexander et al. Consumer Trust in Sources of Physician Quality Information. *Medical Care Research & Review*, 2011. (Example of a framework developed by the authors)

Cabana et al. Why don’t Physicians Follow Clinical Practice Guidelines? JAMA, 1999. (Example of a framework developed by the authors)

Bradley et al. Expanding the Anderson Model: The Role of Psychosocial Factors in Long-Term Care Use. *Health Services Research*, 2002. (Example of a modification to an existing model)
October 2 – Systematic Literature Reviews

- View the recorded lecture (<30 minutes) on Blackboard.
- An abbreviated class will be held in Galter Library, in the small classroom on the first floor, near the lockers and restrooms.
- After class, identify two systematic reviews published in your target journals. Come to class on Oct 9th prepared to discuss how their methods compare to methods used in the Wiler article.

Goals:

- Understand the difference between narrative reviews, systematic reviews, and meta-analysis
- Gain familiarity with the steps involved in performing a systematic review
- Gain practical information for conducting literature reviews

Instructional Readings:


Example Readings:


October 9 – Surveys

Goals:

- Understand when surveys are appropriate for health services research
- Gain familiarity with the steps involved in designing and fielding a survey
Instructional Readings:


Example Readings:


Miller and Weissert. The Commonwealth Fund Survey of Long-Term Care Specialists. Medical Care Research and Review, 2010. (Web survey)


October 16 – Qualitative Data Collection

Goals:
- Understand when case studies and qualitative methods are appropriate for health services research
- Gain familiarity with various qualitative research designs (epistemology, grounded theory, phenomenology, case studies)
- Discuss approaches to data collection (observation, focus groups, interviews)

Instructional Readings:


Yin RK. Enhancing the quality of case studies in health services research. HSR: Health Services Research 1999;34(5 Part II):1209-1224.

Example Readings:

Kurtzman et al. Performance-Based Payment Incentives Increase Burden and Blame for Hospital Nurses. Health Affairs, 2011. (interviews)

Hasnain-Wynia, et. al. Collecting Race, Ethnicity, and Language Data to Identify and Reduce Health Disparities: Perceptions of Health Plan Enrollees. Medical Care Research and Review, 2011 (focus groups)

October 23rd – Qualitative Data Analysis

Goals:

- Gain familiarity with approaches to analyzing qualitative data
- Understand how qualitative software can facilitate the organization and analysis of qualitative data
- Practice coding qualitative data

Instructional Readings:


Example Readings:


Martsolf et. al. Multistakeholder Perspectives on Composite Measures of Ambulatory Care Quality: A Qualitative Description Study. *Medical Care Research and Review*, 2013. (Interesting approach to analysis involving team members writing memos to address key questions after reviewing the data.)

October 30 – Mixed Methods

Instructional Readings:


**Example Readings:**


Capoccia, et. al. Massachusetts’ Experience Suggests Coverage Alone is Insufficient to Increase Addition Disorders Treatment. *Health Affairs*, 2012.

**November 6 – Using Large Data Sets**

**Goals:**

- Describe practical issues concerning the use of large data sets
- Identify data sets that can be used to conduct health services research

Watch Recorded Lecture on Blackboard before class.

**ADDITIONAL READINGS FROM GUEST LECTURERS WILL BE POSTED ON BLACKBOARD AT LEAST 4 DAYS IN ADVANCE OF CLASS.**

**November 13 – Community Based Participatory Research (Ashely Dyer)**

**November 20 – Introduction to Measurement (Allen Heinemann)**


**November 27 – NO CLASS (Thanksgiving)**

**December 4 – Consensus Conferences/Delphi (Suzanne Cox)**


ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Academic integrity is fundamental to every facet of the scholarly process and is expected of every student in The Graduate School (TGS) in all academic undertakings. Integrity involves firm adherence to academic honesty and to ethical conduct consistent with values based on standards that respect the intellectual efforts of both oneself and others.

Ensuring integrity in academic work is a joint enterprise involving both faculty and students. Among the most important goals of graduate education are maintaining an environment of academic integrity and instilling in students a lifelong commitment to the academic honesty that is fundamental to good scholarship. These goals are best achieved as a result of effective dialogue between students and faculty mentors regarding academic integrity and by the examples of members of the academic community whose intellectual accomplishments demonstrate sensitivity to the nuances of ethical conduct in scholarly work.

Standards of academic integrity are violated when a student engages in actions including:
- cheating in the classroom or on examinations, including master's final examinations and Ph.D. qualifying examinations;
- the intentional and deliberate misuse of data in order to draw conclusions that may not be warranted by the evidence;
- fabrication of data;
- omission or concealment of conflicting data for the purpose of misleading other scholars;
- use of another's words, ideas, or creative productions without citation in either the text or in footnotes;
- paraphrasing or summarizing another's material in such a way as to misrepresent the author's intentions;
- and use of privileged material or unpublished work without permission.

Academic dishonesty is a serious matter for graduate students committed to intellectual pursuits, and will be adjudicated in accordance with procedures approved by the Graduate Faculty. [http://www.tgs.northwestern.edu/academics/academic-services/integrity/index.html](http://www.tgs.northwestern.edu/academics/academic-services/integrity/index.html)

POLICY ON CLASS ATTENDANCE (FROM THE STUDENT GUIDE)

Students are permitted one unexcused absence per course. Two absences within a course will result in a B- or lower grade. In order to pass the course, students with more than two absences must propose and complete a suitable (at the discretion of the course director) learning activity to restore their grade. If a student anticipates more than two absences within a quarter, we highly recommend that the student not enroll in the course.