



WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

EMR 5400

Fundamentals of Evaluation, Measurement & Research

Course Pack & Syllabus

Fall 2016

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Course Catalogue Description

EMR 5400 is a graduate level course designed to develop skills in the fundamentals of research design and the uses and interpretations of research findings. Each student is expected to prepare a research proposal/literature review. EMR 5400 will introduce the student to many of the essential components necessary to carry out and evaluate research in the behavioral sciences. Topics include philosophy of science, finding and formulating research problems and questions, literature reviews and searches, basic concepts in measurement, sampling, ethical treatment of human subjects and qualitative and quantitative research methods and designs.

Course Details

Course Prerequisite

Graduate Status

Credit and Clock Hours

3 Semester credit hours

Tuesday 6:00-8:45 PM

Sangren Hall, Room 4705

Instructor Contact

Brooks Applegate, Ph.D.

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Office Hours

My posted office hours are Monday 1:00-2:30 PM, however if this time is inconvenient, please make an email request to for private conversations either by phone or live chat. I will make every attempt to reply to email questions within 36 hrs Monday thru Friday and 48 hrs over the weekends. Alternatively, email should be used and if you think your question(s) have a wider appeal; such as course content clarification please use the discussion board so that all students can benefit from the discussions and clarifications.

WMU eLearning Portal

<https://elearning.wmich.edu>

Western Michigan University Office of Instructional Technology:

Helpdesk; <http://www.wmich.edu/oit/helpdesk/index.html>

Hours: 8am-5pm (Monday-Friday, EST)

Phone (269) 387-HELP (387-4357)

Email: HELPDESK@WMICH.EDU

Required Text

Gall, M. D., Gall, J. P., & Borg, W. R. (2007). *Educational research: An introduction*, (8nd ed.). Boston: Pearson.

Publication manual of the American Psychological Association, (6th ed.). New York: Author.

Recommended/Supplemental Text

Pyrzczak, F. (2013). *Evaluating research in academic journals: A practical guide to realistic evaluation*, (5th ed.). Glendale, CA: Pyrczak Publishing.

Galvan, J., L. (2014). *Writing Literature Reviews: A guide for students of the social and behavioral sciences*, (6th ed.). Glendale, CA: Pyrczak Publishing.

Instructional Objectives

By the end of the semester the student will be able to:

1. Describe the purpose and nature of scientific research.
2. Differentiate how knowledge gained from scientific research differs from other types of knowledge.
3. Formulate and articulate research problems, questions and hypotheses suitable for initiating inquiry in the educational and social sciences.
4. Differentiate various types and uses of variables in a research study.
5. Differentiate various methods and techniques for establishing and evaluating reliability and validity of a measure (assessment, survey, test, etc).
6. Demonstrate the ability to access and critically review literature relevant to a particular research problem.
7. Describe the relationship between research questions and particular research approaches/designs.
8. Differentiate some of the common forms of quantitative and qualitative approaches to research in education and the social sciences.
9. Compare and contrast the strengths and shortcomings of these approaches to research.
10. Write a literature review that justifies and formulates a research proposal on a focused topic.

Professional Concerns

You are responsible for making yourself aware of and understanding the University policies and procedures that pertain to Academic Honesty. These policies include cheating, fabrication, falsification and forgery, multiple submission, plagiarism, complicity and computer misuse. The academic policies addressing Student Rights and Responsibilities can be found in the Undergraduate Catalog at <http://catalog.wmich.edu/content.php?catoid=24&navoid=974> and the Graduate Catalog at <http://catalog.wmich.edu/content.php?catoid=25&navoid=1030>. If there is reason to believe you have been involved in academic dishonesty, you will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct. You will be given the opportunity to review the charge(s) and if you believe you are not responsible, you will have the opportunity for a hearing. You should consult with your instructor if you are uncertain about an issue of academic honesty prior to the submission of an assignment or test.

WMU aspires to be a community of academics and professionals who value the diverse perspectives and experiences each individual brings to the university community. These differences contribute to a rich and vibrant academic environment which strives to broaden our understanding of complex issues and gain new insights of the world. Although our perspectives, ideas and opinions may vary, each person is valued and treated respectfully. Several University policies speak to this goal: 1) prohibited sexual misconduct under Title IX, the Clery Act and the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) and Campus Safe the *Sexual and Gender-Based Harassment and Violence, Intimate Partner Violence, and Stalking Policy* can be found at www.wmich.edu/sexualmisconduct; 2) the *Faculty Senate Religious Observances Policy* (MOA-07/02) was passed by the Senate in May, 2007 and approved by the provost and president in June, 2007 can be found at

http://www.wmich.edu/facultysenate/downloads/MOA0702_religious_observances_final.pdf.

Please note that members of the Jewish faith may participate in two religious observances during the first few weeks of the new academic year. Rosh Hashanah observances begin at sunset on **Sunday, Oct. 2** and continue through **Tuesday, Oct. 4**. Yom Kippur observances begin at sunset on **Tuesday, Oct. 11** and continue through **Wednesday, Oct. 12**. The Interfaith Calendar available at www.interfaithcalendar.org is a helpful resource for identifying religious observance dates.; and 3) The Faculty Senate, provost and president approved an aspirational *Civility Statement* in May, 2016 which can be found at

http://wmich.edu/sites/default/files/attachments/u370/2016/Civility%20Stmt.7-27-16_0.pdf.

Need for Accommodations

Any student with a documented disability (e.g., physical, learning, psychiatric, vision, hearing, etc.) who needs to arrange reasonable accommodations must contact the professor and the Disability Services for Students office (www.wmich.edu/disabilityservices).

Diversity Statement

The University and Department of Educational Leadership, Research & Technology (ELRT) EMR program maintains a strong and sustained commitment to the diverse and unique nature

of all learners and high expectations for each student. A general resource got Diversity can be found at Division of Student Affairs www.wmich.edu/students/diversity.

Plagiarism and Academic Honesty

Students who take this class must be prepared to submit electronic copies of some or all assignments. The University expects that all students will be evaluated and graded on their own work. If you use language, data, or ideas from other sources, published or unpublished, you must take care to acknowledge and properly cite those sources. Failure to do so may constitute plagiarism or other violation of University academic honesty policies, see above reference to University policy. To detect and deter plagiarism, encourage responsible student behavior, improve student learning, and ensure greater accountability, assignments for this class may be submitted for textual similarity review to Turnitin.com and/or other resource. Use of the Turnitin.com service is subject to the Terms and Conditions of Use posted on the Turnitin.com website.

Papers that are submitted to Turnitin.com become part of the Turnitin.com database (student identities are protected) solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers. Use of the Turnitin.com service is subject to the Terms and Conditions of Use posted on the Turnitin.com site. Students agree that by taking this course all required papers maybe subject to submission for textual similarity review to Turnitin.com for the detection of plagiarism. All submitted papers will be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers. Use of the Turnitin.com service is subject to the Terms and Conditions of Use posted on the Turnitin.com site. The results of a Turnitin.com originality report or other resources may be used as evidence to charge you with plagiarism or other offense. If that is the case, you will be you will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct.

If you wish to request that your paper(s) not be included in the Turnitin.com reference database, I need to receive your request in writing prior to submission of any course assignments; the paper(s) can then be processed and reviewed accordingly.

Evaluation Policy

Course Expectations

This course utilizes a F2F course delivery method supplemented with asynchronous discussions. This course is **not** a hybrid course but utilized online learning modules and discussions. In order to receive the greatest benefit from your study you are expected to read the course text, related documents, journal articles, complete all assignments. Documentation of your mastery of the course content is demonstrated through discussions (online and F2F), assessments, homework evaluations and a literature review/proposal.

All course related activities are managed via the D2L eLearning WMU web site. All course PowerPoint and Flash content, assessments, homework and discussion posts open 9/6/2016 @

12:00 AM EDT. Please note there are **specific closing dates** for each homework, discussion posts and assessments. These dates are explicated in this Syllabus and in the D2L course site. Failure to adhere to these closing dates may result in a zero score.

Online discussions are required; they are to facilitate all lecture topics. A discussion thread for each chapter is available on the WMU eLearning D2L web site. **Course expectations are that you are to post a response to a minimum of TWO Extended Response Questions per chapter unless otherwise noted. If a thread has been started post an extension to a thread, do not restart an existing thread.** A post must provide new information either in initiating or extending a ongoing thread. There is no credit for posting a response that: 1) restates what is in the book or lecture notes (although this is a good place to start) or 2) restates what has already been posted or 3) provides simple agreement/disagreement to the thread. For example, Prompt#2, Chapter 1 is “Describe theory, what it is and is not,” if someone has already posted a first response, you can extend and add new information to this thread, but you cannot earn credit for restarting the thread. Alternatively, you can earn credit for starting a new thread to a different writing prompt. All chapter specific posts should be directed to the appropriate chapter discussion area. All discussion posts must additionally provide appropriate citation so that interested students can follow-up if interested.

It is expected that you will complete and turn in all assignments on time. To ensure success on the chapter tests, critical reading of the textbook and comprehensive review of the posted course material is essential. At the end of each posted lecture are extended response type questions. These are designed to facilitate and focus your study into the aspects of the course that will help with both your literature review/proposal and the chapter tests. These discussion prompts offer good starting points for online discussions.

Methods of Evaluation

To successfully complete this course, students are expected to do the following:

- Complete all scheduled reading and participate actively in online discussions.
 - Online discussion posts are required and graded. Posts made after the assessment closes will not count towards your point total.
- Complete all online assessments. There is an on-line assessment for each reading chapter. You get one 30-minute opportunity to complete the assessment; there are no restarts or retakes.
 - All chapter assessments open at 12:00 AM 9/6/2016 Eastern, however, each chapter assessment has a specific closing date at 6:00 PM Eastern. Once an assessment closes you will not be able to take it. Refer to the D2L website for specific assessment dates. Chapter assessments are essentially a self-assessment. My belief is that if you do well on the chapter quizzes your success on the major writing assignments will be higher. If your score reflects your work this is a good guide for your achievement progress against the book content. Obviously if your work features contributions from other classmates the validity of a conclusion that

- your achievement against the book standards is high/low is in doubt! There is a 10 question quiz for each chapter and we will cover 17 chapters. I will retain the best 15 quiz scores, e.g., you get to drop or skip 2 quizzes.
- The online posts associated with the two lowest assessment scores will be dropped along with the assessment score.
 - Complete and turn in all homework as assigned. All homework assignments and due dates are detailed in this Syllabus.
 - Write a research proposal/literature review. Please refer to the proposal/literature review assignment description included in this Syllabus.
 - Extra Credit: You can earn 5 EC points by reviewing and completing a **feedback form** (posted on the web: *Ethics Evaluation EC Survey* in the course module: General Course Supporting Materials) for a new course the University is developing in Research Ethics. This new course can be accessed through the GoWMU portal. After logging into the GoWMU, towards the upper right corner of the screen is a link to “SELF REGISTRATION” – click this link. Note you should see a list of courses and modules: Locate and click on the course labeled “RESocial2012 – Research Ethics Social Sciences.” This will load a new page, in the center of the page-heading look for “Content” and click to start the course. This EC must be completed and turned in no later than 10/11/16 @ 11:30 PM Eastern.

You may e-mail any questions to me or if it is a question that your classmates will benefit from, post your question to the discussion board under the heading “**questions.**” This will allow for your classmates to help in answering the question. Be advised that it is your responsibility to gain clarification. Participation is mandatory for success in this class.

Late and Careless Work

Timely completion and the quality of your work will contribute to your overall course grade. In fairness to all, a penalty will be imposed for any work submitted late. Generally speaking, the penalty will be between 10 and 20% of the point value of the homework. Extenuating circumstances will be considered with proper documentation. Course grades are based on total points from homework assignments, exams, and participation/discussions (F2F and online), as described herein. Professionalism in all course-related endeavors and active online participation is expected. All work will be evaluated based on accuracy, adherence to guidelines, due dates, thoroughness, evidence of effort, evidence of professionalism, evidence of data integration, writing structure, coherence and mechanics, and APA style. Be sure to check, proof, and edit all work submitted.

Class Participation

Being prepared to discuss problems and readings over the chapter material is mandatory. If you have questions, post them to the chapter discussion area. You are expected to actively contribute to each chapter discussions as previously detailed. It is important to keep up with participation in the discussion board to allow for fellow students to follow suite. I will be reviewing the chapter discussion.

Grading

Course grades are based on total points earned plus any extra credit points. There are 150 Assessment points, 150 Homework points, 150 Literature Review/Proposal points, and 30 Participation posts (2 points per chapter) for your Discussion posts. Your point total %, is determined by dividing your total point total *including* extra credit points into the highest total number of points earned, *excluding* extra credit points and multiplying by 100. So if you have earned 325 points and 5 EC points your total points = 330. If the highest point total excluding EC is 350 points your % is $(330/350) * 100$ or 94%.

Letter grades will be assigned by the following scale:

100 - 95 % A	94 - 90 % BA	89 - 85 % B
80 - 84 % CB	79 - 75 % C	Below 75% E

Drop-Box

Students are required to submit certain assignments to the digital Drop Box via the on-line course web site (WMU eLearning) in **Word file format only**. Do not submit any homework in a *.PDF or other format, it will be returned ungraded and any repost will be considered late if past the assignment closing date. If you are unable to meet this requirement, please inform the instructor immediately. The Word attachment requirement allows for easy handling and instructor based feedback to the students (i.e., track changes). When the Drop Box closes for a given assignment you will still be able to submit the assignment via this portal; however, you may be numerically penalized for the late submission, exclusive to the Literature Review/Proposal which is due 12/6/16 @ 6:00 PM Eastern.

Steps for dropping a completed assignment into the digital drop-box:

Save the completed Word document so that the instructor knows (by the filename) who is dropping the assignment: For example, John Doe - HMK#3 – EMR5400: **JDoe3.docx**. YOUR last name **MUST** be included within the file name. Please do not email the instructor to check on the status of an assignment placed in the Drop Box.

Submission of Assignments

The following information **MUST** be included on a separate cover page for assignments 2-7:

Example

Your name & email address	Brooks Applegate: brooks.applegate@wmich.edu
Course	EMR5400
Homework #	HMK#2 General Problem Statement
Date	Sept 20, 2016

The simplest way to do this is to create a template cover page with the necessary information for all homework submissions.

Homework Schedule and Descriptions

Homework assignments are to be sent to the Drop Box for submission as described in this syllabus. I will only accept documents written in Microsoft Word, with a minimum of a 12-point font. DO NOT SUBMIT HOMEWORK AS A PDF OR RTF file, it will be returned ungraded. You must submit your assignment before the digital drop box closes. **All homework write-ups (when appropriate) must conform to APA style.** If you are not familiar with this style, it is your responsibility to become so; you will lose points for not adhering to APA.

Assignment	Description	Due	Points
Hmk 1	Hello Note & CITI HSIRB	9/9 & 9/30	5
Hmk 2	General Problem Statement	9/20	20
Hmk 3	Article Critique	9/27	25
Hmk 4	Literature Search Findings	10/4	25
Hmk 5	Draft Introduction	10/18	25
Hmk 6	Draft Literature Review	11/1	25
Hmk 7	Draft Methods	11/15	25
Final Paper	Literature Review/Proposal	12/6	150

HMK1: Blog Post (1 pt) & HSIRB CITI Completion (4 pts)

- Read this course syllabus completely and carefully. Many answers to questions that you may have can be found here.
- Obtain the required textbooks and begin your assigned chapters in Gall, Gall & Borg.
- Post a hello note by 9/9/16 @ 11:30 PM Eastern to the **discussion board** under the heading: **Student Introductions**. Include your profession, your degree program, interests, experience with research and research methods, and any questions or comments you have for the instructor. For example, what are you hoping to gain by participating in this course?
- The second element of HMK#1 is to complete the WMU CITI HSIRB course “Group 1- Social & Behavioral Sciences Researchers” at <https://www.citiprogram.org>. This is a required element to earn the full 5 points for HMK#1 and must be completed by 9/30/16 @ 11:30 PM Eastern. Once you have loaded this page, you need to create an account with a username and password. After logging-in look for the WMU module named “Group 1- Social & Behavioral Sciences Researchers.”

Once you have completed the training successfully, email the completion certificate to the Drop Box. If you have previously completed this training, please upload your certificate of completion to the Drop Box, you do not need to complete the training a second time.

HMK2: General Problem Statement Paragraph (20 pts)

- Turn in a problem statement following these questions.
 - What is the problem, what is wrong?
 - What are the consequences if the problem persists?
 - What makes the problem relevant to an audience beyond you?
- Include all your references (on a separate page) for all cited sources.
- Scoring is balanced among the three elements listed above (up to 5 points each) plus up to 5 points for APA style, general writing mechanics, referencing, and logical connectedness for your text.

HMK3: Article Critique (25 pts)

- This assignment must conform to the APA writing style
- Review the pdf file *Critical Review of Scholarly Literature* available on Dr. Applegate's homepage web site.
 - This link may be helpful: <http://www.westga.edu/~kielborn/studentexample.html>
- Review each of the areas of a research paper to develop an understanding of the common/basic parts of published research.
- You may also use your *APA Publications Manual* pages and the Literature Review section of this syllabus to learn more about these areas.
- After learning about what each area includes, find an article that is a primary source (an article where the author(s) present on data they have collected) that was published in a peer reviewed journal no older than 2010, and is of interest to you. In general, there are four broad kinds of "academic" articles: primary sources, secondary sources, practitioner focused and theoretically focused. In this assignment you are to select a primary source.
- Once you have found a suitable article, write a critical review of it. Use the following to guide your review, keep in mind that there is no standard criteria for this review, only that you address all of the points listed below.
 - Begin by reading the entire article, don't focus too much on the details yet. Get an overview of the paper and how the authors have organized their presentation, look at their use of headings, can you find a purpose paragraph or statement? Is there a general statement of the problem or do you have to infer what it is?
- Write your *summary/review* in a brief paragraph (about 300 words) that answers the following questions:
 1. What is the problem – did they write or can you write a problem statement, what makes the problem relevant?
 2. What was the purpose of the study (what author hoped to accomplish)?
 3. What was the research question or hypothesis?
 4. Describe the sample (age, gender, number, how obtained, type of sample – non-probability, random, etc.)

5. Describe the study procedure/design (data collection method - survey, interview experimental design, longitudinal, etc), variables (independent and dependent measures) and the primary analytical procedure
 6. What were the primary findings that related to addressing/answering the research question or hypothesis?
 7. What did the author(s) conclude?
- Use your words, this is not a place for quotation, i.e., don't quote from the article.
 - Now write a *critique* paragraph (about 200 words) by examining the strengths, weaknesses (maybe the author(s) provided a limitation section), and relevance of the article. Did the authors actually answer the question/address the problem, were the results consistent with the proposed hypotheses, can the results be generalized – should they be generalized. What you need to focus on is this general question: can you/should you add the knowledge gained in this research to the general knowledge base and to your personal knowledge base or is it flawed to the point that you question the validity of the conclusions.
 - Be sure to include the complete APA reference for your source. Attaching the article is not necessary.
 - Scoring: up to 15 points for review portion, up to 10 point for the critique portion.

HMK4: Literature Search

- Turn in a record of your literature search results. Use a table (in correct APA format, Ch 5) to identify the database(s) you have searched, your search criteria (descriptors and logical operators) and the number of hits (to qualify for all points you must search multiple databases). Consider using column headers such as: Database, Search Descriptors, Boolean Operator, # Hits and rows as the different search entries. A table template is available on the D2L website in the course module: General Course Supporting Materials. You may search any database, but for HMK 4 you must search a minimum of 3 ACADEMIC data bases; for example, MEDINE, ERIC, PsychINFO.

HMK5: Draft Introduction (see Syllabus pages 12 to 14)

- Include any revisions to your General Problem Statement (HMK2) as the beginning of this assignment. When I react to HMK5, I should be reading you're second draft of the General Problem Statement and first draft of the paper Introduction.
- Scoring is broken down as follows: problem statement, introduction and context up to 15 points, purpose of the proposed study with research questions and or hypotheses up to 5 points, and up to 5 points for APA style, referencing, general writing mechanics, and logical connectedness of your text.
- Include all your references (on a separate page) for all cited sources.

HMK6: Draft Literature Review (see Syllabus pages 11 to 13)

- Include any revisions to your Introduction (HMK2 & HMK5) as the beginning of this assignment. When I react to HMK6, I should be reading you're third draft of the General Problem Statement, second draft of the paper Introduction, and first draft of the Literature Review.
- Scoring for this assignment: up to 20 points for an organized and logically connected review of current literature that places the problem and your proposed study in context with existing research and up to 5 points for APA style, referencing, general writing mechanics, and logical connectedness of your text.
- Include all your references (on a separate page) for all cited sources.

HMK7: Draft Methods (see Syllabus page 14)

- Include any revisions to your Introduction (HMK2 & HMK5) and Literature Review (HMK6). When I react to HMK7, I should be reading you're third draft of the Introduction, your second draft of the Literature Review and your first draft of the methodology.
- Scoring for this assignment: up to 20 points for detailing the proposed study methodology. Generally, subsections, are a convenient way of structuring your text. Subsections can be combined when specific details are few and multiple subheadings creates choppy text, e.g., Subjects and Procedures or Subject and Design or Measures and Analytics. What is critical is that the study methodology is presented in such a manner that the reader could conceivably execute the study based on your description. Up to 5 points for APA style, referencing, general writing mechanics, and logical connectedness of your text.
- Include all your references (on a separate page) for all cited sources.
- This is your first full draft of the Literature Review/Proposal - Yea!

Suggested Weekly Readings

9/6	Syllabus Ch 1	Course Introduction Nature of Educational Research
9/13	Ch 2 Ch 4	The Research Process: From Proposal to Final Report Ethics and Site Relations in Educational Research
9/20	Ch 3	Reviewing the Literature
9/27	Ch 5	Statistical Techniques
10/4	Ch 6	Selecting a Sample
10/11	Ch7	Collecting Research Data with Tests and Self-Report Measures
10/18	Ch 8	Collecting Research Data with Questionnaires and Interviews
10/25	Ch 9	Collecting Research Data through Observations and Content Analysis
11/1	Ch 10	Nonexperimental Research Designs: Descriptive and Causal-Comparative Designs
11/8	Ch 11	Nonexperimental Research: Correlational Designs
11/15	Ch 12 Ch 13	Experimental Research: Designs Part 1 Experimental Research: Designs Part 2
11/22	Ch14 Ch 15	Case Study Approach Qualitative Research Traditions
11/29	Ch 18	Action Research
12/6	Ch 17	Evaluation Research
12/7		FINAL EXAM

Note: Week dates begin on Monday

Guidelines for Literature/Review Proposal

DUE: 12/6/2016

6:00 PM EST

PLEASE NOTE there is a firm 10-page text limit for this paper. Per APA format this paper should conform to the following physical characteristics: one-inch margins, double-spaced, single sided and no smaller than 12-point Times Roman (or equivalent) font. This page limit does not apply to the Title page, Abstract (150 word max), Tables, Figures, References, or Appendices. Do not put essential text into an appendix to circumvent the 10-page text limit.

Literature Review Elements

Title Page

Simple, just follow the APA style manual.

Abstract

The Abstract represents a **150-word summary** of the entire literature review/proposal. Included in your Abstract should be sentences that summarize the: problem – taken from the Introduction (1-2 sentences); establishes the context of the problem - taken from the literature review (2 or 3 sentences); describes the sample of participants – taken from the Subjects section; how the study is to be conducted and what measures are to be analyzed – taken from the Design, Procedures and Measures sections (2-3 sentences); and lastly your proposed analysis - taken from the Analysis section (1 sentence).

Introduction (Recommended length: 1 - 2 pages)

The introduction to the literature review/proposal orients the reader to the problem under study and has three parts.

- First, you need to provide a statement of the problem and the context within which it exists. This statement sets out the general reasons that the research area is important. You might indicate the prevalence of the problem, its relevance or cost, its importance to theory, the relative absence of knowledge, some contradictory research, etc. Prevalence statistics, knowledge gaps, contradictory research, the need for theory testing, presence of puzzling anomalies, etc. help to make your case here. Secondary sources (books, chapters, review articles) or tertiary sources (newspapers, magazine articles) can be helpful in making a general case for research in his area. However, do not rely on tertiary sources to make your case. I expect you will use a majority of primary sources with a limited (small) number of secondary/tertiary sources.

- The second section of the Introduction sets out the purpose of the proposed study. This can be brief and simply clarifies how your proposed study will address the problem you have identified.
- The third part of the Introduction is a statement of the research question (or hypotheses). Write your research question according to the guidelines for good research questions discussed in class. Parts one and two set the stage for the research question.

Review of Literature (Recommended length: 3 – 6 pages)

The written review of literature (also called Background) presents an argument that justifies your choice of topic and the way you have chosen to address it.

- Begin the review with the most general aspects of your topic and gradually narrow it until it implies your research questions or hypotheses. Define any specialized terms as you introduce them. Provide the general context for the proposed study. This can be done in terms of a general overview of the field, with a description of a classic study or studies, on the basis of history of the field, grounded in a theory to be tested, or with other context setting methods.
- Critically evaluate the current research in the field to provide specific reasons why your proposed study will make a contribution to the literature. This has two related parts. First, you want to show some deficiency in the literature. This may involve (a) some weakness in previously used methods, (b) builds on or extends previous research, and/or (c) shows how new knowledge will help theoretically or practically. Second, on the basis of your critique of the existing literature, show why your proposed study is the best way to investigate the question.
- As you review studies, discuss the specific limitations in the internal and/or external validity. Describe what needs to be done differentially to improve on the body of knowledge (e.g., better instruments, more representative sampling, ruling out alternative explanations, etc.). This provides the specific basis for the importance of your study.
- If you are proposing a quantitative study, give the rationale for the hypotheses you are proposing.
- Very briefly summarize the main points of the review. The task is to determine what general conclusions do or do not follow from the literature you reviewed. Consider the weight of the evidence for specific and general conclusions. If the majority of studies support the same or similar conclusions, it can be drawn more confidently than if the evidence is mixed. When there is mixed evidence, be sure to qualify your conclusions as appropriate. A good way to know if you have succeeded here is that the reader should be able to guess your hypotheses based on this section. If you are proposing a qualitative study, provide a similar summary that suggests the importance of the foreshadowed problems in which you are interested.
- State your hypotheses clearly. If your literature review/proposal suggests directional hypotheses, write them this way. If the literature is ambiguous, write them as non-

directional hypotheses. If you are proposing a qualitative study, list the foreshadowed problems to which you would attend in the research.

Methods (Recommended length: 1 - 3 pages)

Write a brief methods section in which you describe four characteristics in four subsections about your proposed study.

- The first subsection (Subjects) describes the population from which you plan to sample and all relevant sampling considerations.
- The second subsection (Design) should describe the general research design you plan to use: Experimental, ex post facto, correlational, participant-observer, historical, etc. Include a statement suggesting which data analysis method you would propose (e.g., ANOVA, multiple regression, grounded theory, etc.). Make sure that your design is consistent with your stated research question and hypotheses. For example, if you are interested in exploring group differences or experimental effects, the research question and hypotheses should be written in the language of contrast. If you are interested in exploring some phenomenon in significant depth using qualitative methods, your research should be stated consistently with that approach.

It is important to pay attention in this section, especially in mixed methods research proposals where there is often one design consideration for the quantitative side of the proposal and a different design consideration for the qualitative side of the proposal.

- The third subsection (Measures, Variables or Outcomes) of the Methods should describe all dependent (outcome) measures you plan on studying and any available psychometric information pertaining to their reliability and validity.
- The Fourth subsection (Procedure) spells out the actual steps you will take to conduct your study.
- The last subsection of the Methods section describes the specifics of the proposed Analytics or Analysis Plan. In this section you are to describe in detail what analyses you are planning on conducting with the data (Measures subsection) collected according to the plan (Design and Procedures subsections).
-

It is important to note, that not all literature reviews/proposals require a Methods section to be broken down by these specific subsections. What IS required; however, is that all the elements of these sections are detailed in your paper. In fact, it is often quite difficult to break down these subsections in qualitative research plans, however this does not alleviate the requirement that this information be included in your paper. Furthermore, in many quantitative research proposals it is convenient to collapse some of these subsections as an aid to your writing, e.g., Subject and Design or Measures and Procedures. Moreover, it is sometimes best to further subdivide a subsection due to complexity, e.g., breaking a Measures subsection into sub-

subsections, one for each outcome variable when there are multiple outcomes. This is especially relevant when there are different research hypotheses, specific for separate outcome variables.

References

Simple, just follow the APA style manual.

APA Writing Style

Use the *Publications Manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th ed.) as the writing style, organization, quotations, citations, and references.

- You should include a title page and an abstract, double space the paper throughout, use one-inch margins and follow correct table/figure structure.
- Organize your review into logical sections. Keep the length of a section under four pages if possible. If you need to, subdivide long sections with subheadings. Dividing the paper assists the reader in following the steps of your argument. The headings reflect the basic organizational plan of the paper. The *Publications Manual* provides directions on which types of heading to use depending on how many levels of heading you have. Your outline (Assignment #7) is a good model for determining the number of heading levels you have. The roman numerals in an outline are the highest level, followed by capitalized letters, Arabic numerals, and lower case letters. An outline that has all of these levels would suggest four levels of headings in the paper.
- Scientific writing focuses on documentation and verification. When you make an assertion of fact or a statement of theory, you should document that claim with a citation from the literature. Do not be excessively repetitive if it can be clearly understood that several statements follow from a given source.
- You must **include at least 10 original reports of research studies (primary sources) no older than 10 years** in your literature review/proposal. A good review will likely contain more references, but this is a minimum. You may cite books and chapters on your topic (secondary sources), but these citations are in addition to the primary sources.
- Again you must follow the *Publications Manual* as the reference for content and style. If you have never written a proposal or data based research paper before, please familiarize yourself with sections 1.06 - 1.09 and 2.01 – 2.12.

Literature Review/Proposal Grading Form

The literature review will be graded according to the criteria on the form described below. Refer to the supplemental text listed in the course syllabus for additional information.

Galvan, J., L. (2004). *Writing Literature Reviews: A guide for students of the social and behavioral sciences*, (2nd ed.). Glendale, CA: Pyczak Publishing.

Student Name: _____

Scoring Criteria: 0 = Unacceptable to 10 = Excellent per section

Title Page	
Abstract	
Introduction	
Statement of Problem	
Purpose of the study with research questions or hypotheses	
Review of Literature	
Overall context of the review, is it clear what you are proposing, why it is important and what your are trying to accomplish	
Critical Evaluation of Cited Literature	
Description of how this proposed study adds to the literature	
Justification and rationale for research questions or hypotheses, do they logically follow the problem	
Use of references to support your arguments' (number, age & style)	
Methods	
Subjects	
Design	
Measures	
Procedures	
Proposed Analysis	
Overall writing, grammar and APA style	

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