

## PSYC 351: Community/Program Evaluation

**Instructor:** Dr. Kathy Russell

**Office:** 121 Clough

**Hours:** Monday, Wednesday, Friday

Open hour: 10:00 – 11:00 am  
Or by appointment.

**Email:** russellk@rhodes.edu

**Class Time:** TR 3:30-4:45, room 100

**Required Text:** Craig, W. (2000). Childhood Social Development: The Essential Readings. Wiley

**Additional Reading:** Any additional readings and a copy of this syllabus can be found on the academic file server: \\Fileserver1\acad\_dept\_pgm\Psychology\Russell\_Kathryn\Public\PSYC\_351-01\_S08

### Course Description

Middle childhood is a time when social development is occurring rapidly and peers have a growing influence over this development. In this advanced methods course, students will learn how to conduct research within a school community. Students will read and present relevant research, collect data within a school setting, analyze data using SPSS, write up findings in an APA-style paper, and present results in a professional setting.

### Course Objectives

The primary objective of this course is to give you experience of participating in ongoing research. In this case, you will be working on a brief cross-sectional research project. Please be attentive to the development of the following skills required of researchers in psychology, education, and other related fields:

- The ability to work as part of a team, collaborating with members of your research team, and with other professionals in the community.
- The ability to find, and to evaluate research literature relevant to specific research questions.
- The ability to think about and discuss theoretical issues and philosophical questions that ground our research.
- The ability to lead and to participate in graduate-school-like seminar discussions of research materials.
- A familiarity with the ethical, scientific, and logistical issues that must be negotiated as we design research to be conducted in school settings.

### Course Components

- I. Discussion Points/Class Participation (10%): Students are expected to attend all class meetings as class discussion and feedback to peers are critical to the success of the course. To help facilitate this, at least two students will be required to each prepare four to five discussion points for a designated class based on assigned readings. These discussion points should provide a brief amount of background information and raise an issue or question to help facilitate discussion. Each discussion point should be approximately a paragraph in length. Copies of the discussion points for all members of the class must be put on my door by 9:00 am on the day

the readings are due. The class participation grade will be based on the quality of the student's discussion points, the student's ability to facilitate classroom discussion, and every student's overall level of participation in class discussions. If students have an excused absence on the day on which they are assigned to lead class discussion, they will be assigned additional readings for which they will write discussion points.

On days with no student discussion facilitators, each student is required to bring at least one discussion question to class based on the assigned readings.

- II. Data Collection (10%): In this course we will be collecting data in an elementary school setting. We will be collecting this data early to mid-way through this semester on MWF between 8:00 and 3:00, when school is in session. This means that you **must** have some free time in these intervals in order to help with data collection. Data for each of your projects will be collected at the same time from the students and you must participate in this data collection in order to complete your project.
- III. Draft of Research Paper (10%): Each student will be expected to submit an initial draft of the literature review section of their part of the group paper. Sections on their research questions/hypotheses, preliminary analyses, and bibliography should also be included. Papers should be written according to APA style.
- IV. Research Paper (50%): Each student or student research group will conduct a research project and submit a final paper based on their work. Papers must be written according to APA style (5<sup>th</sup> edition of the Publication Manual). Students will be assigned research projects in consultation with me. Options for the project will be constricted to the measures we are collecting at the school with IRB approval. The final paper should be approximately 20-25 pages excluding references, tables, and figures. The amount of weight given to each of the different components of the paper will be as follows:
 

A.	Abstract	2%
B.	Literature Review	15%
C.	Method Section	10%
D.	Results Section	10%
E.	Discussion	13%

Late papers will be penalized by ½ letter grade for each day that they are late.

- IV. Professional Presentation (10%): Each student or student research group will be required to present their work to a public professional audience. Examples of ways to satisfy this component of the course include presenting their work at a professional conference or presenting at an on-campus poster session (URCAS).
- V. Peer Group Evaluation (10%): To assess each student's contribution to the successful completion of group research projects, other group members will evaluate each student. All evaluations will be kept strictly confidential. For any students working alone, these points will be distributed evenly between the class participation and oral presentation components of the course.
- VI. Attendance Policy: Given the importance of class discussion/feedback, your final grade will be lowered by 2 points for each class that you miss. If you feel that you have a legitimate excuse for an absence, you should talk with me in advance.

**Honor Code**

Explicit details concerning honor code violations are listed in your college handbook. Honor code violations will not be tolerated and will be reported immediately to the appropriate authority. Please review the Rhodes College academic dishonesty policies. Since you will be required to submit written reports for this course pay special attention to the section on plagiarism and pledge all of your work. I value collaborative work highly, and I believe that students frequently learn most when they work together on assignments. I will not ask you to pledge that you have neither given nor received help on any assignment. However, I will ask you to be very attentive and careful to give credit and to acknowledge those who have helped you. An acknowledgment foot note to your final research paper should credit those people who helped edit and proofread, as well as those who shared ideas and made substantive suggestions.

All written work in this should include the following two pledges:

"I pledge that the above paper reflects my own thinking and my current understanding of this material."

"I pledge that the word count for this paper is \_\_\_\_\_."

In addition, for coauthored papers, all authors should sign the following pledge:

"I pledge that I have contributed my fair share to this project."

### Course Schedule

Day	Date	Assignment
Thursday	Jan 10	First day of class – Overview/Discussion of project options
Tuesday	15	Meet the Neighborhood
Thursday	17	Introduction to Children’s Social Development – Craig intro & chp 4
Tuesday	22	Children’s Peer-Directed Aggression – Craig chp 11 & 12; Coie & Dodge, 1998; Underwood et al., 2001
Thursday	24	Ethics in Developmental Research; Plan first school visit (1/25 or 1/28) Formulating Research Questions; Scientific Research Methods
Tuesday	<b>29</b>	Research Project Selection/Assignment & Discussion; Plan data collection part 2; Children’s Friendships – Craig chp 3 & 6
Thursday	31	Scientific Research Methods (cont’d) ; Children’s self-concept – Craig chp 9; Importance of gender – Craig chp 8; Plan data collection part 2
Tuesday	Feb 5	Early draft of annotated bibliography due; Discussion of Reading – Selected by Student/Research Group in consultation with Dr. Russell
Thursday	7	Discussion of Reading – Selected by Student/R Group in consultation with Dr. Russell
Tuesday	12	Research Designs for Developmental Research & Discussion of tentative research questions; how to write a methods section
<b>Mid February: Data collection</b>		
Thursday	14	Discussion of Reading – Selected by Student/R Group in consultation with Dr. Russell
Tuesday	19	<b>No Class - Draft of literature review due to me including:</b> a. Tentative hypotheses/research questions and analysis plan (i.e., what analyses you plan to use and which questions/data you will use to answer each hypothesis/research question) b. Preliminary bibliography Must submit a print & electric copy; Electric copies of Lit reviews will be distributed to all class members by 2/20
Thursday	21	<b>Provide written critique/feedback to individuals on their literature review;</b> Discussion of Reading – Selected by Student/R Group in consultation with Dr. Russell
Tuesday	<b>26</b>	Discussion of Reading – Selected by Student/R Group in consultation with Dr. Russell
Thursday	28	Discussion of Reading – Selected by Student/R Group in consultation with Dr. Russell
<b>Early March: Data entry</b>		
Tue & Thur	Mar 4, 6	Spring Break
Tuesday	11	Discussion of Reading – Selected by Student/R Group in consultation with Dr. Russell
Thursday	13	Discussion of project findings; How to write a results section
Tuesday	18	<b>Second draft due.</b> Should include: a. Introduction, Methods, Results b. Preliminary Discussion Discussion of Reading – Selected by Student/R Group in consultation with Dr. Russell
Thursday	20	Easter Break
Tuesday	25	Discussion of Reading – Selected by Student/R Group in consultation with Dr. Russell
Thursday	27	Ethical challenges & other limitations in developmental research
Tuesday	<b>Apr 1</b>	Preliminary Research Presentations/Discussion
Thursday	3	Preliminary Research Presentations/Discussion
Tuesday	8	No Class – Writing day
Thursday	10	<b>Last day to submit draft of entire paper to me for feedback;</b> Discussion of Reading – Selected by Student/Research Group in consultation with Dr. Russell
Tuesday	15	Creating a Poster Presentation
Thursday	17	Discussion of Reading – Selected by Student/R Group in consultation with Dr. Russell
Tuesday	22	Group Presentation & Feedback
Thursday	24	Group Presentation & Feedback (Last Day of Class)
Friday	<b>25</b>	URCAS
Tuesday	<b>29, 4:00</b>	Final Paper Due / Peer Group Evaluations Due

