Seminar in Action Research

56:792:605
Spring 2024

Instructor:
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Course information:
Th 6-8:40pm
Room ARM 205
(Plan to meet in person each Thursday. Depending on students' progress on their projects, some weeks may include one-on-one meetings in place of class and some weeks it may make sense to meet over Zoom. If the meeting room on the 4th floor of ARM is available, we'll meet there.)

Course description:
In this course, graduate students will complete an applied research project in cooperation with a community organization. We will discuss relevant research and work on developing skills conducive to consulting and community-engaged prevention science research. By the end of the semester, students will share a final report and presentation of the completed project.

Course objectives:
The learning objectives of this course are consistent with the goals of the Prevention Science Graduate Program. Upon successful completion of this course, you should be able to:
- Communicate with a community/organizational partner to complete a research project that serves the organization's needs.
- Work on data collection and/or data analyses with a partner organization.
- Interpret the findings of data analyses completed for the project.
- Effectively communicate the background, method, analyses, results and conclusions of your research in writing and in an accessible presentation, including a final report at the end of the semester.

Course requirements:
This is the second course in a two-part course sequence. The goal of this course is to complete the work initiated in the fall with a partner organization.

1) **Peer Review of Community Report (due 1/25):**
In order to facilitate revision of the paper you completed last semester, I'm asking you to participate in a peer review assignment. You will read and offer feedback on a classmate's paper during this first week of class. See further instructions under "Assignments" on Canvas.
This assignment is worth 10 points.

2) **Revision of Community Report (due 2/8):**
Revise your community report, paying careful attention to the feedback I offered and the feedback received from your peer review. Reflection and commentary on the process of working on the project should be eliminated as this will not be appropriate for the final draft (which should be shared with your community organization and which will count as your Capstone project that fulfills a major requirement of receiving your M.A. in Prevention Science).
This assignment is worth 10 points.

3) **Draft of Analyses for Community Report (3/7, with some flexibility)**
In order to keep you on schedule and provide you with feedback about your analyses and results, I am asking you to submit a draft of these components of your paper. I appreciate that if you are collecting data, some flexibility regarding the timeline may be needed. I would expect that the description of your analyses is one paragraph to one page (double-spaced). I would expect that your results (text) is one to four pages long. Most of you should include tables and figures to display your results.
This assignment is worth 15 points.

4) **Draft of Discussion/Implications/Conclusions for Community Report (4/4, with some flexibility)**
In order to keep you on schedule and provide you with feedback about your Discussion, Implications, and Conclusions sections of your paper, I am asking you to submit a draft of these sections. You may also want to include some limitations in this section. I would expect these sections of your paper to be between three and five pages.
This assignment is worth 15 points.

5) **In class discussion facilitator (2x during the semester):**
Each class, starting the second week of class, 1-2 students will be asked to lead the discussion of some of the assigned readings. Please confer with me about the readings as I may have plans for activities or discussions focused on certain readings. Some weeks, you may be asked to select a relevant reading to discuss.
This assignment is worth 5 points for each time, for a total of 10 points.

6) **Practice presentation (due 2/29):**

Pick a published journal article written by your advisor or an article of particular interest to you or relevant to the work you'll be doing this semester (not a book chapter, not a review article; an article that reports on one study will be easiest; not the same article from last semester, but I'd stick with the same theme/topic). Present the entire study (article) as if it were your own as a "practice presentation." Your presentation should be no more than 15-20 minutes long (I'll time these) and approximately 15-20 PowerPoint slides. You will be expected to present this in a more formal manner than the presentations you completed in the fall. Practice at least one run through of the presentation prior to your class presentation and time yourself. Plan to stand up in front of the class. Your classmates and the instructor will provide feedback on your presentation.
This assignment is worth 15 points.

7) Class Project Presentation (due 4/4):

Toward the end of the semester, you will be expected to do a presentation that is a practice run of your project presentation. It should include discussion of the background (research supporting the importance of your research), research questions, methodology, analytic plan, results, interpretation of your results, utility and implications of your findings. You should rehearse this ahead of time and have your presentation timed to be 15-20 minutes. You should prepare PowerPoint slides (15-20 slides max). You will be expected to present this in a more formal manner than the presentations you completed in the fall. Practice at least one run through of the presentation prior to your class presentation and time yourself. Plan to stand up in front of the class. Your classmates and the instructor will provide feedback on your presentation.
This is worth 20 points.

8) Official Project Presentation (Thursday 4/11, 4/18, or 4/25):

This is the final presentation that you will do in person during the Readings in Prevention Science course. It should include discussion of the background (research supporting the importance of your research), research questions, methodology, analytic plan, results, interpretation of your results, utility and implications of your findings. You should be prepared to answer questions from the audience. You should incorporate feedback from your class presentation into the final presentation.
This is worth 25 points.

9) Final Community Partner Report (due 5/2):

At the end of the semester, you will turn in a final report that includes the Introduction/ Background, Methods, Analyses, Results, Discussion/Implications/Conclusions sections of your paper. Although you are submitting drafts of both new sections of this report, I recommend that you have me look at the report again before the final submission. This report will be your "Capstone Project" that allows you to earn the M.A. degree in Prevention Science (in addition to your required coursework). I will not sign off on report as sufficient to earn the M.A. unless you have earned at least 90% on it. Papers earning <90% will need to be revised and reread before they can be submitted as Capstone Projects. The graduate school has instructions concerning

formatting and other requirements for Capstone Projects that you should be aware of:
https://graduateschool.camden.rutgers.edu/graduation/
This assignment is worth 60 points (because it is not only a paper but represents your work on your entire project).

10) Class participation
To promote engagement in learning the course material, you are expected to attend and actively participate in class. You should come to class prepared by reading the assigned readings *beforehand* and participate regularly in class discussions. You will be graded on active and high-quality participation. If you must miss class, please inform the instructor if and why you plan to miss (if you miss more than 1 class, you will lose points from your grade).
Class attendance and participation is worth 20 points.

Total class points = 200
180 points to earn an A in the course, 160 to earn a B, 140 to earn a C, etc.

Course policies:

- **Course webpage:** Additional information about this class, a copy of the syllabus, assignment details, and required readings will be available on the Canvas course webpage. It is your responsibility to keep informed of any updates made to the syllabus and other assignments.

- **Course communication:**
    Announcements: Announcements will be posted in Canvas on a regular basis. They will appear on your Canvas dashboard when you log in and/or will be sent to you directly from Canvas via your preferred method of contact. Please make sure the "announcements" feature is activated in Canvas (under "course notifications") and be certain to check them regularly.
    Email: You may contact me by email. Please do not submit your assignments via email. If you email me and do not receive a response within 48 hours during the week, I did not receive your email. Please note that I will not promise that I can respond to emails after 9pm, on weekends, during holidays, or during university breaks.
    Office hours: I am available to meet in person, by phone, or via Zoom. Please email me for an appointment.

- **Missed class/assignments**: Please contact me as soon as possible if you experience an event that affects your ability to attend class or complete an assignment on time. Valid reasons for missing class include serious/highly contagious illnesses, deaths in the family, academic interviews (e.g., doctoral programs), and conference presentations; valid reasons for not being able to complete an assignment on time are determined by

me on a case-by-case basis (and do NOT include insufficient planning/time management). There is limited flexibility in rescheduling presentations.

- **Academic Integrity:** As a student at the University, you are expected to adhere to the [Academic Integrity Policy.](#) Academic Integrity is critical to the success of our students and the community. It is everyone's responsibility to take their education seriously and follow the requirements to ensure that you are doing your own work and following the guidelines of the course and professor and program. Academic dishonesty includes (but is not limited to): cheating; plagiarism; aiding others in committing a violation or allowing others to use your work; failure to cite sources correctly; fabrication; using another person's ideas or words without attribution; re-using a previous assignment; unauthorized collaboration; and sabotaging another student's work. <u>The introduction of new AI technology will be discussed in class and appropriate uses for our class will be considered.</u>

    - In brief, I expect you to do your own writing. If I believe you are not, you risk earning a 0 on an assignment or in the course. It is acceptable to use ChatGPT and other AI technologies to brainstorm or essentially as a search engine.

- **Code of Conduct:** You are also expected to adhere to the [Student Code of Conduct.](#) The conduct code specifically addresses disruptive classroom conduct, which means "engaging in behavior that substantially or repeatedly interrupts either the instructor's ability to teach or student learning. The classroom extends to any setting where a student is engaged in work toward academic credit or satisfaction of program-based requirements or related activities." Please be aware of in-classroom and out-of-classroom expectations by making yourself familiar with and by following the Student Code of Conduct. For this class, please be courteous to others and arrive to class on time, stay the entire time, and **<u>do not use electronic devices during class</u>**. If you engage in any disruptive, offensive, or disrespectful behaviors, you may be asked to leave class and will lose points from your attendance grade.

- **Dropping the course/incompletes:** The last date to drop this course *without* a W grade is **Thursday, January 25th;** the last date to drop *with* a W grade is **Monday, April 1.** (Please note that this is a required course that graduate students must take to fulfill the requirements of their degree.) Please consult the academic calendar for additional dates related to dropping the course without tuition penalties.