



## PSY 701 Psychological Research Methods Fall 2025

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Course Dates: August 27 (mandatory group workday) & September 2-5, 2025

Course Delivery Method: Online Modular

3 Credit Hours

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will serve as an introduction to the approaches and techniques involved in research within applied social sciences, will provide an opportunity for firsthand experience in the use of these techniques, and will assist seminary students in the preparation of their SRP or Thesis proposal. Students will be required to participate in class research projects.

### COURSE INTEGRATION

This course seeks to fulfill Briercrest Seminary Outcome #2 by equipping students to think about how research, as inherently relational, can contribute to the larger mission of the Church. It also seeks to fulfill Seminary Outcome #3 by considering scholarship and academic rigour as part of their spiritual development.

This course also seeks to fulfill MC/MAMFT Program Outcomes #1 and 2 by equipping students to be critical consumers of research and how a lens of discernment on clinical literature can inform their practice. This course also seeks to fulfill MC/MAMFT Program Outcome #3 by meeting the CCPA/CACFT requirement of an elective on research and evaluation, indigenous perspective, and ethics.

### COURSE TEXTS

Lambert-Shute, J. J., Nguyen, H. N., Peterson, P. W. and Pirasteh, A. B. (2019). Reflecting on the past: A content analysis of family therapy research from 2000-2015. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, 45, 256- 274. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jmft.12334> (available through library database)

Levitt, H., Bamberg, M., Creswell, J., Frost, D., Josselson, R., & Suárez-Orozco, C. (2018). Journal article reporting standards for qualitative primary, qualitative meta-analytic, and mixed methods research in psychology: The APA publications and communications board task force report. *American Psychologist*, 73(1), 26-46. **(available on Canvas)**

McMorrow, S. (2017). What gets in the way? Examining the breakdown between research and practice in counselling. *Counselling Today*. <https://ct.counseling.org/2017/03/gets-way-examining-breakdown-research-practice-counseling/>

Moberg, D. O. (1999). The great commission and research. *Perspectives on Science and Christian Faith*. 51(1), 8-17. **(available on Canvas)**

Ponterotto, J. G. (2005). Qualitative Research in Counseling Psychology: A primer on research paradigms and philosophy of science. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 52(2), 126-136. **(available on Canvas)**

Smith, J. K. A. (2015). Science as cultural performance: Leveling the playing field in the theology and science conversation. In R. N. Williams and D. N. Robinson (Eds), *Scientism: The new orthodoxy* (pp.177-191). **(available on Canvas)**

Sprenkle, D. H., and Piercy, F. P. (2005). *Research methods in family therapy* (2nd Edition). Guilford.

Walter, M. and Suina, M. (2019). Indigenous data, indigenous methodologies and indigenous data sovereignty. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*. 22, 3, 233-243.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/13645579.2018.1531228> **(available on Canvas)**

### Recommended Reading

American Psychological Association. (2020). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (7<sup>th</sup> Edition). American Psychological Association.

Brock, G.W., Whiting, J.B., Matern, B. and Fife, S.T. (2009), Integrity of the Marriage and Family Therapy research literature: Perceptions and recommendations. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, 35: 248-252. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1752-0606.2009.00109.x> (available through library database)

Chen, R., Hughes, A. C. and Austin, J. P. (2017). The use of theory in family therapy research: Content analysis and update. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, 43, 514– 525.  
doi: [10.1111/jmft.12217](https://doi.org/10.1111/jmft.12217) (available through library database)

Badke, W. (2021). *Research strategies: Finding your way through the information fog*. iUniverse.

Booth, W. C., Colomb, G. G., Williams, J. M., and Bizup, J. (2016) *The craft of research* (4<sup>th</sup> edition). University of Chicago Press Books.

Creswell, J. W. and Poth, C. N. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches*. Sage.

Creswell, J. W., and Guetterman, T. C. (2019). *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research* (6th ed.). Boston: Pearson.

Heppner, P. P., Wampold, B. E., Owen J., Thompson, M. N., & Wang, K. T. (2016). *Research Design in Counseling* (4th ed.). Cengage Learning.

Mcgregor, Sue. (2017). *Understanding and Evaluating Research: A Critical Guide*.  
10.4135/9781071802656.

*Students are expected to refer to Briercrest Seminary's Format and Style Guides and Guide for Writing Research Papers, available as PDF documents here: <https://www.mybriercrest.ca/seminary/documents/>.*

*These texts are available in store and online at the Briercrest Bookstore: <http://briercrest.ca/bookstore>.*

Students are responsible for course materials and communication on Canvas (<https://briercrest.instructure.com>) and their myBriercrest.ca email account.

### SEMINARY-WIDE OUTCOMES

Students will graduate:

1. Describing and demonstrating evangelical faith and values.
2. Preparing to serve God's kingdom in its diversity. Describe God, God's kingdom, and your calling (vocational sensitivity) within it, including the types of contexts and people you feel best prepared to serve.
3. Participating in the action of our Triune God through formation of the soul (i.e., virtue and spiritual integrity), mind (academic rigour), and strength (vocation).

### COURSE OUTCOMES

Successful completion of this course will help students to:

1. Become familiar with general principles of research and its value.
2. Become informed readers of the research literature, especially MFT research.
3. Sharpen their ability to identify research topics and identify the research methods, mainly qualitative, best suited to address research questions.
4. Prepare a written SRP proposal or Thesis topic approval.
5. Understand the role of research ethics and how to apply for Briercrest Research Ethics Board (REB) approval, if needed.

### COURSE OUTLINE AND CONTENT

DATE	TOPIC	SUPPORTING RESOURCES
August 27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Group work on Quantitative and Qualitative research methods</li> </ul>	Sprenkle, D. H., and Piercy, F. P. (2005). Research methods in family therapy (2nd Edition)
Tuesday September 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The contribution of research to the Kingdom of God</li> <li>Cross-cultural dialogue of theology and science</li> </ul>	Moberg, D. O. (1999). The great commission and research. Smith, J. K. A. (2015). Science as cultural performance: Leveling the playing field in the theology and science conversation.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Topics, problems, and research questions</li> </ul>	Booth, W. C., Colomb, G. G., Williams, J. M., and Bizup, J. (2016) <i>The craft of research</i> (4 <sup>th</sup> edition)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Paradigms of knowledge and principles of social science and psychological research</li> </ul>	Levitt, H., Bamberg, M., Creswell, J., Frost, D., Josselson, R., & Suárez-Orozco, C. (2018). Journal article reporting standards for qualitative primary, qualitative meta-analytic, and mixed methods research in psychology.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MFT research literature</li> <li>Consumers and creators of research</li> </ul>	Brock, G. Whiting, J. B., Matern, B., and Fife, S. T. (2009). Integrity of the marriage and family therapy research literature: Perceptions and recommendations. Chen, R., Hughes, A. C. and Austin, J. P. (2017). The use of theory in family therapy research: Content analysis and update.

		Lambert-Shute, J. J., Nguyen, H. N., Peterson, P. W. and Pirasteh, A. B. (2019). Reflecting on the Past: A Content Analysis of Family Therapy Research from 2000-2015. McMorrow, S. (2017). What gets in the way? Examining the breakdown between research and practice in counselling.
Wednesday September 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Basic Structures</li> <li>• Research methodologies</li> <li>• Qualitative methods</li> <li>• Quantitative methods</li> <li>• Mixed methods</li> </ul>	Sprenkle, D. H., and Piercy, F. P. (2005). Research methods in family therapy (2nd Edition)
Thursday September 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conducting human research</li> <li>• Research ethics and the Tri-Council Policy</li> </ul>	Walter, M. and Suina, M. (2019). Indigenous data, indigenous methodologies and indigenous data sovereignty. Ross, L. (2017). An account from the inside: Examining the emotional impact of qualitative research through the lens of "insider" research. Booth, W. C., Colomb, G. G., Williams, J. M., and Bizup, J. (2016) <i>The craft of research</i> (4 <sup>th</sup> edition)
Friday September 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Topics, problems, and research questions</li> </ul>	Booth, W. C., Colomb, G. G., Williams, J. M., and Bizup, J. (2016) <i>The craft of research</i> (4 <sup>th</sup> edition)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preparing for and writing proposals</li> </ul>	<a href="https://www.mybriercrest.ca/doc/?ID=529">https://www.mybriercrest.ca/doc/?ID=529</a> <a href="https://www.mybriercrest.ca/doc/?ID=528">https://www.mybriercrest.ca/doc/?ID=528</a>

## ASSIGNMENTS

Please submit all written assignments to Canvas.

### *Pre-Course Assignments:*

Preliminary Topics Paper (4-pages): briefly describe three possible research topics you are considering for your SRP or thesis along with ONE preliminary source (book, article, etc.) for each that might be worth looking at for this topic. (Note: It is not necessary to have read the book or article in full but have some sense of its content). With each topic indicate why it is an issue for consideration. Upload your paper to Canvas and read all papers from your classmates, using the peer review feature. Please comment on each paper to indicate you have read it (no other feedback to your classmates is needed).

Due Date for submission of paper: **August 15, 2025**

Due date for reading of other student papers: **August 22, 2025**

Value: 10%

Reflection paper (3 pages). Reflect upon the following required article Walter, M. and Suina, M. (2019). Indigenous data, indigenous methodologies and indigenous data sovereignty.

Write a 750-word reflection paper on the impact of research broadly and how you hope to be aware of this in your own SRP or thesis.

**Due Date: August 29, 2025**

**Value: 10%**

Spirituality of scholarship reflection paper (4 pages). The paper will be divided into two parts:

Part I (3 pages): Considering these required articles:

- Moberg, D. O. (1999). The great commission and research.
- Smith, J. K. A. (2015). Science as cultural performance: Leveling the playing field in the theology and science conversation.

Articulate your theological understanding of scholarship and research relative to counselling.

Discuss how Scripture informs an answer to the following question: What is the biblical/theological basis for why ongoing learning and research is vital to your ongoing spiritual development and vocation of counselling?

Part II (1 page): Considering the required article McMorrow, S. (2017). What gets in the way?

Examining the breakdown between research and practice in counselling, reflect upon and report your own strengths and weaknesses as it pertains to your own attitudes, abilities, and habits of life-long learning and research. Articulate an answer to the following question: Given your own strengths and weaknesses in learning and research, how will you plan to engage in a life of research and learning ("scholarship") as part of your life and counselling vocation?

**Due Date: August 29, 2025**

**Value: 10%**

### ***Mid-Course Assignments:***

Students will be assigned to groups that will present on a quantitative and qualitative methodology. Students will be provided time on August 27 to both read the required material that will sufficiently prepare them for the assignment. No additional research will be required. Each student should come to their group time having read and have notes on the approach they have been assigned to. During the day you will be given group time to prepare a PPT for the class that covers:

1. Philosophical assumptions of the approach (2-4 key points)
2. Process for investigation
  - A. Any general considerations?
  - B. How is data collected?
  - C. How is data analyzed?
  - D. How are findings reported? (not all approaches may speak to this)
3. Benefits and limitations of the approach

**Value: 10%**

### ***Post-Course Assignments:***

*\*Please note: post-course assignments differ for MC students and those preparing to do an SRP or thesis. Students wanting to prepare for a thesis must request initial approval for this from Dr. Margaret Clarke two weeks prior to the course starting by submitting a copy of their transcript.*

***For SRP students only:***

***1. Annotated bibliography & Critique.*** Develop an annotated bibliography of 12 credible sources related to the topic of your proposed SRP; seven of the sources must be from scholarly journals. This assignment must include:

- 3-4 sentence description of your SRP topic at the beginning of this paper.
- 12 annotations of 2 paragraphs (approx. 250 words) each. Annotations should include:
  - a brief summary of the content (for research articles this should include methodology, methods, findings, and conclusions drawn),
  - a *brief* critique of the strengths and the weaknesses of the source, and
  - usefulness of the source for your topic (If the source is not clearly relevant to your topic, it should not be included).
- Each annotation should be followed by a written critique (1-page) of the article that will include:
  - Description of study
  - What research question(s) do the authors state that they are addressing and is this what they actually address?
  - Description of methodology and methods used, including sample, data collection methods, and analysis.
  - Summarize the study's findings and conclusions?
- Critique of quality of the study
  - Summarize strengths and weaknesses
  - Did the research design meet the existing standards of rigour for that type of research and how appropriate is it for addressing their research question(s)?
  - What, if any, changes / additions need to be made to their research design to provide a more complete picture of the phenomenon of interest (e.g. sampling, description of analysis process, effect sizes, dealing with multiple comparisons, etc.?)
  - Are the claims they make in their discussion section warranted from the actual results?
- Clinical implications
  - Usefulness of the study's findings and conclusions to clinical practice
  - How study results will or will not impact their clinical work and cause adjustment to their practice.

Due Date: **September 26, 2025**

**Value: 20%**

***2. SRP proposal (5-pages):***

- Read the SRP syllabus (<https://www.mybriercrest.ca/doc/?ID=529>) in its entirety.
- As per the requirements outlined in the SRP syllabus and aspects discussed in class, write a first draft of your SRP proposal.
- This initial draft will be assigned to 1-3 fellow students for peer review feedback.
- From peer feedback you will submit a 1-page plan for revision based on the feedback.
- Submit a revised proposal.

**Draft SRP Proposal to Peer Reviewers Due Date: October 3, 2025**

**Value: 5%**

**Peer Reviewer Feedback to Writer Due Date: October 15, 2025**

**Revision Plan Due Date: October 17, 2025**

Based on feedback given write a plan for how you will revise your SRP proposal (1-pg) **Value: 10%**

**Revised SRP Proposal Due Date: October 31, 2025**

**Value: 25%**

(Please note: the SRP proposal for this assignment is not being submitted for actual SRP approval. It can be revised or changed before submitting for approval, as per the process outlined in the syllabus).

***For MC students only:***

1. Qualitative Articles Critique (8 pages)

Students will choose a research topic from:

- Effectiveness of EFT for specific couples (e.g. military couples)
- Gottman's Model of Couple Therapy for Improving marital satisfaction
- The use of mindfulness for treatment of depression
- Use of somatic experiencing for the treatment of trauma
- The use of spirituality in therapy – outcome studies
- Other topic with professor pre-approval

Students will then select two qualitative journal articles on the topic to critique. Students must submit a pdf of each article they use.

Written critiques of the articles will include:

1. Description of study
  - a. What research question(s) do the authors state that they are addressing and is this what they actually address?
  - b. Description of methodology and methods used, including sample, data collection methods, and analysis.
  - c. Summarize the study's findings and conclusions?
2. Critique of quality of the study
  - a. Summarize strengths and weaknesses
  - b. Did the research design used meet the existing standards of rigour for that type of research and how appropriate is it for addressing their research question(s)?
  - c. What, if any, changes / additions need to be made to their research design to provide a more complete picture of the phenomenon of interest (e.g. sampling, description of analysis process, effect sizes, dealing with multiple comparisons, etc.?)
  - d. Are the claims they make in their discussion section warranted from the actual results?
3. Clinical implications
  - a. Usefulness of the study's findings and conclusions to clinical practice
  - b. How study results will or will not impact their clinical work and cause adjustment to their practice.

Due Date: **September 26, 2025**

**Value: 30%**

2. Quantitative Articles Critique (8 pages)

Continuing with the topic selected for the Qualitative articles critique, students will then select two qualitative journal articles on the topic to critique. Students must submit a pdf of each article they use.

Written critiques will include:

1. Description of study



- a. What research question(s) do the authors state that they are addressing and is this what they actually address?
- b. Description of methodology and methods used, including sample, data collection methods, and analysis.
- c. Summarize the study's findings and conclusions?
2. Critique of quality of the study
  - a. Summarize strengths and weaknesses
  - b. Did the research design used meet the existing standards of rigour for that type of research and how appropriate is it for addressing their research question(s)?
  - c. What, if any, changes / additions need to be made to their research design to provide a more complete picture of the phenomenon of interest (e.g. sampling, description of analysis process, effect sizes, dealing with multiple comparisons, etc.?)
  - d. Are the claims they make in their discussion section warranted from the actual results?
3. Clinical implications
  - a. Usefulness of the study's findings and conclusions to clinical practice
  - b. How study results will or will not impact their clinical work and cause adjustment to their practice.

Due Date: **October 31, 2025**

**Value: 30%**

***For Thesis students only:***

*\*Please note: The below post-course assignments are for students preparing to do a thesis and who have obtained approval for this as indicated above under "Assignments" on page six.*

1. Application of methods paper (8-9 pages): Outline three different *qualitative* research methods possible for your research topic of choice using 1-3 references for each method. Compare and contrast these methods and conclude by indicating which method you think is most appropriate for your research study and why.

**Due Date: September 26, 2025**

**Value: 15%**

2. TCPS 2: CORE online course: Complete the eight modules of the Tri-Council Policy Statement Course on Research Ethics (<https://tcps2core.ca/welcome>) and submit your completion certificate to Canvas.

**Due Date: October 10, 2025**

**Value: 10%**

3. Research design paper (4-5 pages): Having decided what method(s) you will use for your research study, provide a thorough description of your proposed research design outlining your methodology and methods, participant sample, data analysis plan, and how validity of your findings will be ensured. Please ensure that your design is referenced to credible sources.

**Due Date: October 24, 2025**

**Value: 10%**

4. Topic approval paper (2-3 pages) Read the thesis syllabus in its entirety (<https://www.mybriercrest.ca/doc/?ID=528>). As per the requirements outlined in the thesis syllabus, write your initial topic approval paper.



*(Please note: this is not being submitted for actual thesis topic approval. It can be revised or changed before submitting for approval as per the process outlined in the syllabus).*

Due Date: **October 24, 2025**

**Value: 10%**

5. *Ethics application.* Review the Briercrest ethics policies and procedures

(<http://media.briercrest.ca/documents/seminary/REB-Policies-and-Procedures-May2011.pdf>)

Draft a Briercrest REB application (<http://media.briercrest.ca/documents/seminary/REB-Application-for-Review.pdf>) for the project you propose in your topic approval. With the draft application you must also include the following appendices: information letter(s)/recruitment materials, informed consent form, data collection questions, and copy of your TCPS 2 certificate.

*(Please note: this is not being submitted for actual REB approval. It can be revised or changed before submitting for approval as per the process outlined in the thesis syllabus).*

Due Date: **October 31, 2025**

**Value: 15%**

## SEMINARY CALENDAR

Students are expected to be aware of the policies that govern course work at Briercrest Seminary, all of which are published in the current Seminary Calendar:

<https://www.briercrestseminary.ca/academics/calendar/>.

### ***Attendance Policy***

In order to benefit fully from a seminary education, to be good stewards of time and finances, and to be considerate of their classmates and faculty members, students must be in class at every opportunity.

### ***Modular Courses***

Students are expected to attend 100 per cent of each modular for which they register. If this is impossible due to extenuating circumstances, arrangements must be made with the course professor before the first day of class. If extenuating circumstances prevent a student from attending class, a maximum of one (1) full day of class can be foregone. If additional time is missed, the student will fail the course unless they first request to withdraw from the course or move the course to an audit.

### ***Online Courses***

If extenuating circumstances prevent a student from attending scheduled meeting times, then up to 20% of meeting time can be foregone. Students missing scheduled meeting times should make every effort to inform the course professor prior to any time missed. If additional time is missed, the student will fail the course unless they first request to withdraw from the course or move the course to an audit.

### ***Semester-Based Courses***

All students missing more than two full weeks of a particular course from registration to the last day of classes will receive an automatic fail (0%). A student may appeal a course failure due to excessive absences. Successful appeals will be granted only in rare cases where all absences are clearly beyond the student's control. Appeals must be made through the Academic Appeal Process.

***Modular Course Schedules***

Modular classes begin at 9:00 a.m. on Monday morning and run a minimum of 30 hours through the course of the week. The schedule is determined by the course professor. Students should check the syllabus for specifics. When the syllabus does not state class times, students are responsible to check with the professor prior to making travel plans.

***Assignment Submission***

All assignments must be submitted no later than eight weeks after the last day of class as stated in the syllabus. The correct due dates will be clearly noted in the syllabus and each faculty member will state in their syllabus how assignments should be submitted. Assignments submitted within a week after the due date will be accepted with a 10 per cent penalty. For additional information refer to the late assignment policy or the extension policy in the [academic calendar](#).

***Return of Graded Assignments***

Professors are expected to return graded assignments within six weeks of the due date. If they fail to do so, students may submit an inquiry to the [Seminary](#). If an extension is granted, the professor is no longer obligated to meet this deadline.

***Academic Honesty***

As members of the Briercrest learning community, students have a responsibility to conduct themselves with integrity and honour. Students who cheat on exams, plagiarize, inappropriately collaborate, or use generative AI without instructor authorization violate the trust placed in them by their instructors, fellow students, and the seminary. Any such actions constitute a breach of academic honesty and will result in serious consequences, such as failure of an assignment, failure of a course, or expulsion from the seminary.

Plagiarism, whether intentional or involuntary, is the submission of the work of others, published or unpublished, in whole or in part without acknowledgment or proper documentation. All information, ideas and/or direct quotations taken from other primary or secondary sources must be documented appropriately.

Generative AI is an umbrella term for a type of machine learning and a group of algorithms that can create new content, such as text, code, images, videos, music, or a combination of all these formats. Generative AI produces output in response to a query or prompt using generative models such as Large Language Models (LLMs) that rely on large datasets. Generative AI features are also often embedded within tools such as Grammarly, allowing these tools to generate new content, such as the rewriting, paraphrasing, or summarizing of existing text. The generated responses of these tools are probabilistic, which can result in errors and biases in responses.

The use of generative AI to create audio or visual media, to produce outlines, to generate partial or complete drafts of assignments, to answer questions on quizzes or exams, or to edit the grammar of assignment drafts is considered unauthorized unless it is explicitly permitted by the course instructor in writing. All use of generative AI tools must be properly documented.

Students are responsible for ensuring they are using their sources and completing their assignments with transparency and honesty. For more details, consult the [Seminary Calendar](#) and

the Briercrest Format Guide. In addition to being familiar with these pages, instructors assume that you have completed the Briercrest Academic Integrity course on [Canvas](#) and understand the information contained in it.

### ***Academic Accommodations***

Any student with a disability, injury, or health condition (mental or physical) who may need academic accommodations (permanent or temporary) should contact the ARC Coordinator in person (L234 in the Library), by phone (1-306-801-6159), or by email ([arc@briercrest.ca](mailto:arc@briercrest.ca)). Documentation from a qualified practitioner will be required (i.e., medical doctor, psychologist, etc.). It is recommended that students meet with their professors to discuss the requirements of their accommodations (i.e., how the student will receive lecture notes, or how the professor wants to receive extension requests).

### **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

- Brock, G.W., Whiting, J.B., Matern, B. and Fife, S.T. (2009), Integrity of the Marriage and Family Therapy research literature: Perceptions and recommendations. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, 35: 248-252. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1752-0606.2009.00109.x> (available through library database)
- Chen, R., Hughes, A. C. and Austin, J. P. (2017). The use of theory in family therapy research: Content analysis and update. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, 43, 514– 525.  
doi: [10.1111/jmft.12217](https://doi.org/10.1111/jmft.12217) (available through library database)
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