



USC

MPTX 630: Directed Research Units: 6

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[Other participating faculty as arranged](#)

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Office Hours: By Appointment

Day/Time/Location: Hybrid, By Appointment

Course Description:

Students enrolled in MPTX 630 must develop an in-depth examination of a specific research area in the form of a report. Students are expected to demonstrate intellectual and professional maturity and the ability to apply the concepts they have studied during their preceding academic training by writing an academic research paper. Students are encouraged to select a broad topic area and familiarize themselves with this topic before narrowing their research to a specific focus within that chosen area. When identifying a specific research topic, the following should be considered:

- Why is it important to study the proposed topic?
- What is the work intended to demonstrate? Keeping in mind that even a topic which at first may appear “traditional” can prove to be innovative.

Formulating one or more research questions related to the chosen topic means the following:

- Defining the limits of the chosen topic
- Identifying aspects of the topic on which to concentrate
- Identifying the significance of the chosen topic

The final project report is a synopsis of student research and writing and must be completed within the semester of course enrollment. Students must meet regularly with the supervising faculty advisor for project guidance and development. The faculty advisor will actively monitor progress, provide assistance and insight, and review project deliverables. Students can collaborate with peers to the extent of sharing literature research and general discussion. However, students must submit individual final reports on an aspect of the research topic. Duplication of work among students is prohibited.

Learning Objectives:

This course is designed to provide students the opportunity to:

- Apply the knowledge and skills acquired in their courses to research relating to a specific area of interest.
- Extend their academic experience into areas of personal or professional career interests, including working with new ideas, organizations, or individuals.
- Demonstrate the ability to think critically and creatively about academic, professional, and/or social issues and to further develop their analytical and ethical leadership skills.
- Demonstrate improvements in research skills and proficiency in written and/or oral communication skills.

Course Format:

- Students must meet with their supervising faculty advisor at the beginning of the semester and every 3-4 weeks to track progress and answer any questions.
- Students must develop (with guidance) and submit a written research project outline and proposal prior to starting their project.
- Students must present updates on the progress of their research plan, review methodological approach and preliminary results, and gain critical feedback from the supervising faculty advisor.
- Students are expected to ask questions and expand the depth of their understanding of the research topic.
- Students are responsible for tracking their project schedule, work flow and the final work.

Required Text(s): There is no required text for this course.

Supplementary Materials: Will be assigned based on the following:

- What information is available to answer the research question? Books? Articles? Data from internet websites?
- What analysis methods have been carried out on the topic chosen? What data was used? What sources do they come from?

Each student is expected to search appropriate databases (PubMed, Clinicaltrials.gov, FDA.gov, Google Scholar, CRS reports, National Academy reports, ICH, IMDRF, IQVIA's Tarius database, etc.) to become familiar with the literature relating to their research. A careful and detailed list of references is essential for the final paper. The detailed reference bibliography should be arranged using APA style 6th edition. For more information on how to reference using APA style, or reference a variety of different sources, visit: <https://libguides.usc.edu/APA-citation-style>. This is a continuous process and references must be added while writing the final paper. With the help of participating faculty, the student should become an expert on the literature relevant to their research topic.

Description and Assessment of Assignments:

Research Project Definition and Work Plan

- Students must prepare a research project definition plan. The project definition plan serves as the initial effort to define the goals, approach, and scope of the research project.
- Students must submit a written proposal and a research project outline prior to starting the project to the faculty advisor.
- Students must prepare presentations for bi-weekly meetings with the faculty advisor. The purpose of the presentation is to assess progress on completing research project deliverables, review technical analysis, review preliminary results, and gain guidance from faculty advisor.

Final Research Paper

- The resulting work must constitute a personal contribution and attention should be paid to citing references and quotations. Nothing must be copied from other sources.
- The final report should be 55-60 pages in length, double-spaced, 12pt Times New Roman font with one-inch margins. References will not be included in the page count.
- The report must have the following outline format:

Title page	
Table of Contents	
Abstract	
Chapter 1.	Overview
1.1	Introduction
1.2	Statement of the Problem/ Research Question
1.3	Purpose of the Study
1.4	Definitions
Chapter 2.	Methodology
Chapter 3.	Results
Chapter 4.	Discussion
Chapter 5.	Conclusion and Future Outlook
References	

Evaluation and Grading

Evaluation will be based on deliverables identified by the student and faculty advisor including but not limited to the following:

- Project Meetings
- The Research Project Definition Plan
- The Research Project Work Plan
- The Final Project Report

Assignment Submission Policy:

- All submissions are to be entered in to <http://blackboard.usc.edu> and emailed to your preceptor.
- MS Word file titles should be formatted with last name, initial, course number and assignment number, for example: Brown_C_516_A1.doc.
- The students name, the course number and title should be included at the beginning of the report.
- For further questions regarding advising, please contact Kristen Felthousen, Program Administrator (felthous@usc.edu) and for questions regarding Blackboard and submission logistics, contact Erin Chow, Program Assistant (erinchow@usc.edu).

Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

Academic Conduct:

Plagiarism – presenting someone else’s ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in SCampus in Part B, Section 11, “Behavior Violating University Standards” policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in SCampus and university policies on scientific misconduct, policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct.

Support Systems:

Counseling and Mental Health - (213) 740-9355 – 24/7 on call
studenthealth.usc.edu/counseling

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention.

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline - 1 (800) 273-8255 – 24/7 on call
suicidepreventionlifeline.org

Free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) - (213) 740-9355(WELL), press “0” after hours – 24/7 on call
studenthealth.usc.edu/sexual-assault

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm.

Office of Equity and Diversity (OED) - (213) 740-5086 | Title IX – (213) 821-8298
equity.usc.edu, titleix.usc.edu

Information about how to get help or help someone affected by harassment or discrimination, rights of protected classes, reporting options, and additional resources for students, faculty, staff, visitors, and applicants.

Reporting Incidents of Bias or Harassment - (213) 740-5086 or (213) 821-8298
usc-advocate.symplicity.com/care_report

Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions to the Office of Equity and Diversity | Title IX for appropriate investigation, supportive measures, and response.

The Office of Disability Services and Programs - (213) 740-0776
dsp.usc.edu

Support and accommodations for students with disabilities. Services include assistance in providing readers/notetakers/interpreters, special accommodations for test taking needs, assistance with architectural barriers, assistive technology, and support for individual needs.

USC Campus Support and Intervention - (213) 821-4710

campussupport.usc.edu

Assists students and families in resolving complex personal, financial, and academic issues adversely affecting their success as a student.

Diversity at USC - (213) 740-2101

diversity.usc.edu

Information on events, programs and training, the Provost's Diversity and Inclusion Council, Diversity Liaisons for each academic school, chronology, participation, and various resources for students.

USC Emergency - UPC: (213) 740-4321, HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24/7 on call

dps.usc.edu, emergency.usc.edu

Emergency assistance and avenue to report a crime. Latest updates regarding safety, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible.

USC Department of Public Safety - UPC: (213) 740-6000, HSC: (323) 442-120 – 24/7 on call

dps.usc.edu

Non-emergency assistance or information.