ERMA 7200-DC1: Basic Methods in Education Research

Auburn University – College of Education

3 credit hours Course Syllabus – Fall 2022

**Instructor:** Dwayne Clark, PhD

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**Office Hours:** Zoom meetings available by appointment

# Course Description and Objectives

This course is designed to give you an overview and introduction to the major modes of inquiry in contemporary educational research including experimental, casual comparative, descriptive, qualitative inquiry, and program evaluation. We will also compare and contrast the assumptions, design, and methods of different paradigms and epistemologies that guide educational research. Finally, argumentation is the foundation of research and therefore will undergird our experience.

As a single-semester course on research could not feasibly capture the nuances required to be a fully-functional researcher, I have scoped my expectations into three primary learning goals:

1. Have a working knowledge of how our worldviews and choice of research design intersect to influence what we can "know" about our research.
2. Construct an argument using the appropriate components--I want you see, evaluate, and construct decent arguments.
3. Be able to construct a basic research proposal.

## Course Materials

There is one required and one recommended text for this course. I will assign other readings through Canvas.

(Required) Privitera, G.J., & Ahlgrim-Delzell, L. (2019). *Research methods for education.* Sage.

ISBN-13: 978-1506303321; ISBN-10: 1506303323

(Recommended) American Psychological Association. (2019). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association (*7th ed.). American Psychological Association.

ISBN-13: 978-1433832161; ISBN-10: 143383216X

# Auburn University Diversity Statement

# Diversity at Auburn University encompasses the whole human experience and includes such human qualities as race, gender, and ethnicity, physical ability, nationality, age, religion, sexual orientation, economic status and veteran status. These and other socially and historically important attributes reflect the complexity of our increasingly diverse student body, local community, and national population. It is expected that all students in this course abide by and respect the AU Diversity Statement when working and interacting with classmates and the instructor.

# Disability Accommodations

Students who need special accommodations in class, as provided for by the Americans with Disabilities Act, should arrange a confidential meeting with the instructor during office hours in the first week of classes, or as soon as possible if accommodations are needed immediately. You must bring a copy of your Accommodation Memo and an Instructor Verification Form to the meeting. If you do not have these forms but need accommodations, make an appointment with the Program for Students with Disabilities, 1244 Haley Center, 844-2096.

# Course Activities and Deliverables

## Teaching and Learning Philosophy

## Since I started teaching, I have observed a phenomenon consistent at most levels of education. Professors and learners tend to engage in the learning process with a high degree of passivity on part of the learner. The result is a shared expectation, from both faculty and learners alike, that it is the responsibility of the faculty member to “push” the learning process on students. In my teaching philosophy, I strive to break this cycle by getting learners to participate actively in both learning and knowledge creation. Your learning will result from your level of engagement with the course concepts, the readings, your peers, and with me. Collectively, we will learn from each other and hopefully exit this semester slightly more educated than when we started. If there is a week of concepts that you have a strong handle on, then I encourage you to challenge your boundaries of understanding and/or your peers.

## Class Participation

This is an online course, so there are no class meetings to attend. However, certain assignments will require you to meet deadlines throughout the lesson-week. Please read assignment instructions and directions carefully. Each week begins on Monday and concludes on Sunday.

## Group Participation and Peer Review

There are several activities and assignment that require group interaction. While all assignments are individual efforts, we will use peer engagement to help enrich our products and thinking. For group discussions, I will rely on automatic distribution to randomize group assignments. For the research proposal, we will use a peer-review process to gain feedback on the draft assignment. Partner assignments will be visible through the announcements closer to that point in the course. It will be your responsibility to email your draft and feedback directly to your peer.

## Research Proposal

Each student will prepare an empirical research proposal. This will be the primary deliverable for the course. You have the option of selecting the research question, the mode of inquiry (**qualitative or quantitative only**), and the design methodology. I will grade you on how well you create a cogent and coherence design proposal that aligns properly with your selected mode of inquiry.

The proposal assignment will cover the following:

* Problem statement: The identification of a researchable problem
* Scoped literature review (a synthesis of **a minimum of 5 empirical articles**)
* The research question(s)
* The research design and methodology
* The sampling approach
* Measurement instrumentation (if quantitative)
* Data collection procedures
* Data analysis plan
* Study Limitations

As mentioned in the previous section, there will also be a peer review component to the research proposal assignment. Your peers will be able to offer feedback on your research question, literature review, and design proposal. As a peer-reviewer, your job is to assist your partner in their argumentation, alignment of their design to their selected mode of inquiry, and offer generalized feedback on their product. Specifications for this will be found in Canvas.

The research proposal is designed to offer students the opportunity to apply what has been learned in the course. This assignment is a **proposal-only**, you do not have to conduct the actual study for this course. The research proposal must be on a topic that is professionally relevant to each student. Specifications for this will be found in Canvas.

## Reflection Essays (10 points each)

## There are a total of 4 reflection essays. The purpose of these assignments is for you to demonstrate that you have read and engaged with the course readings. This assignment is intended for you to process and articulate your thoughts, or confusions about the readings. See Canvas for specific requirements.

## Final Reflection (25 points)

## At the conclusion of the semester, you will submit a final reflection that summarizes at least three learning takeaways from the semester. You will be asked to present a meta-cognitive evaluation of what you learned, areas that still required refinement, and how you plan to transfer what you learned this semester to your future work.

## Discussion Assignments (10 points each)

There are five total discussion board during the semester. I am **only grading your top four discussion boards**. In other words, except for the first discussion board, you can choose to elect out of completing one DB during the semester.

Each of these assignments have two due dates. The purpose of this assignment is to engage in a meaningful dialogue with peers within your group.  This dialogue should be a conversation concerning the concepts and ideas that are presented in the readings.  You will be evaluated based on the quality of your contributions to the discussions.

Each week, one student within a group, will act as moderator for the discussion.  The role of the moderator is to drive, facilitate, or even question the discussion occurring within the group.   Discussion moderators are free to facilitate the discussion in ways that are meaningful to them.

To aid a dialogue, the discussion boards will have progressive due dates. The first is for the initial postings. These are due each week on Wednesday by 1159pm. For the second, individuals are required to engage in a “back and forth” dialogue with at least **two** class members for each discussion thread, due Sunday by 11:59pm. This allows everyone to have the opportunity to read the initial posts and engage in a discussion.

No late Discussion assignments will be considered for a grade. It is important to keep up with the work, and it is important to be sure to communicate with the instructor when issues arise. See Canvas for further instructions.

## Article Critique (25 points each)

## There are two article critique assignments. The purpose of these assignments is to help you develop a critical eye for evaluating quantitative and qualitative research, respectively. You will be asked to critique an empirical article that aligns with your approved research proposal topic, one article for each mode of inquiry.

## Literature Matrix (10 points each)

## In similar fashion to the article critique assignments, you will be asked to complete two literature review matrices, a quantitative and a qualitative matrix. Each matrix will include a minimum of 5 empirical studies that address your approved research proposal topic. Specific requirements for this assignment are in Canvas.

## Quizzes (5 points each)

There will be **five** low-stakesquizzes during the semester. I am grading quizzes based upon completion, not accuracy. The purpose of a low stakes quiz is to help you gauge your understanding of material. I recommend you attempt closed book to help you illuminate gaps in your knowledge. No late quizzes are accepted, and quizzes are due by 11:59pm on Sunday. As a caveat, if you happen to get all quiz questions incorrect you will receive 0 points. However, you may submit a 1-page essay on the concepts to earn full credit for quiz. This reflection essay will be due the following Wednesday by 11:59pm.

## CITI Training (20 points)

The Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) offers training in conducting ethically sound research. Most institutions of higher learning, including Auburn University, require individuals to be up- to-date with their CITI training to conduct research. **You should not pay anything to complete this.** For this course, you will be required to:

1. Register with CITI at [www.citiprogram.org](http://www.citiprogram.org/)
2. Choose to register as a member of an affiliated organization; type in Auburn University.
3. Select Human Subjects Courses.
4. Complete the IRB #2 Social and Behavioral Emphasis – AU Personnel – Basic/Refresher course (ID 72746)
5. Submit your certificates of completion via Canvas by Sunday, 21 August.

**Grading**

Quizzes (4x5 points each) 20 points

Discussion Board Posts (4x10 points each) 40 points

Reflection Essays (4x10 points each) 40 points

CITI Training 15 points

Research Proposal Topic 10 points

Literature Matrix (2x10 points each) 20 points

Article Critique (2 x 25 points each) 50 points

Proposal Draft 20 points

Peer Review 20 points

Final Proposal 100 points Final Reflection 25 points

**Total Possible Points: 360 points**

# Grading Scale

100 – 90 A

89.99 – 80 B

79.99 – 70 C

69.99 – 60 D

59.99 and below F

# Late Assignments Policy

All assignments are due at 11:59pm on the date they are due. Late assignments will receive a deduction of 10% for each day they are late. The only exceptions will be documented emergencies and situations approved with the instructor in advance of the due date. Assignments will not be accepted if they are over one week late; assignments over a week late will receive the grade of a zero.

Open communication is the key. If you have a situation that interferes with your ability to complete an assignment on time, it is your responsibility to contact the instructor as soon as you are aware of this. Life happens, and individual circumstances will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

All work is expected to be typed. All electronic documents submitted for the course are expected to be in Word format.

# Incompletes and Withdrawals

Grades associated with incomplete course work or withdrawal from class will be assigned in strict conformity to University policy (see Auburn University Bulletin). If you wish to drop this course, you may do so by the 15th class day with no grade assignment. From the 15th day of class to mid-quarter a W (withdrawn-passing) grade will be recorded in your transcripts. After this period withdrawal from the course will only be granted under unusual circumstances and must be approved by the Dean of the College of Education.

Note that a new incomplete grade (IN) policy is in effect. The new policy requires that students complete a form requesting an IN grade be assigned. If this form is not completed and given to the instructor of the class, a grade will be assigned with a score of zero (0) for work that has not been completed and turned in by the time the instructor reports grades.

# Academic Misconduct

The Department of Educational Foundations, Leadership, and Technology recognizes university policy regarding academic misconduct. Violations include, but are not limited to: plagiarism, unauthorized assistance during examinations, submitting another’s work product as your own, using another’s words as your own without appropriate citation, sharing unauthorized materials with another that contain questions or answers to examinations, altering or attempting to alter assigned grades. In accordance with University policy regarding academic misconduct, students may be assigned several sanctions upon violations of the Student Academic Honesty Code. See the Student Policy eHandbook for specifics regarding academic misconduct as well as student’s rights and responsibilities associated with the Code.

# Course Schedule

This represents a schedule of the assignments and activities for the semester. This schedule is subject to change; however, advanced notice will be given if that applies. Assignments and activities may be added to the schedule per the needs of the learning community. The third column represents the readings, assignments, and activities to be completed by the date listed. Reading assignments where only a chapter is listed will be from the Privitera and Ahlgrim-Delzell text.

\*All assignments are due by 11:59pm\*

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| DATE | TOPIC(S) | TO BE COMPLETED |
| **Week 1**  August 16 | Course Introduction | * Review syllabus and establish course expectations * Discussion Board #1 * CITI Training |
| **Week 2**  August 22 | The Nature of Empirical Research / Qualitative vs Quantitative Inquiry | * Chap 1: Introduction to Scientific Thinking * Crotty (1998) * Reflection Essay #1 * Quiz 1 |
| **Week 3**  August 29 | Introduction into Argumentation / Reading an Empirical Article | * Booth et al. (2016) * Reflection Essay #2 |
| **Week 4**  September 5 | Research Paradigms | * Mertens (2010) * Discussion Board #2: Research Proposal Topic Submission & Problem Statement |
| **Week 5**  September 12 | Ethics in Research | * Chap 3: Research Ethics * The Belmont Report * Parsell et al (2014) * Reflection #3 * Submit Final Research Question |
| **Week 6**  September 19 | Part 1: Quantitative Research Designs | * Lecture on Quantitative Research * Chap: 7, 9, 13-14 (Week 6 & 7) * Chap 5: Review Table 5.1 * Quiz 2 * Discussion Board #3 |
| **Week 7**  September 26 | Part 2: Quantitative Design Considerations | * Cont’d Chap: 7, 9, 13-14 * Quantitative Lit Matrix   Article Critique #1 (Quantitative) |
| **Week 8**  October 3 | Fall Break | Take a breather…perhaps work towards proposal |
| **Week 9**  October 10 | Measurement & Instrumentation | * Chap 4 – 5 * Reflection Essay #4 |
| **Week 10**  October 17 | Part 1: Qualitative Research Designs | * Chap 10 * Lecture on Qualitative Research * Quiz 3 * Discussion Board #4 |
| **Week 11**  October 24 | Part 2: Qualitative Design Considerations | * Chap 11-12 * Qualitative Lit Matrix * Article Critique #2 (Qualitative) |
| **Week 12**  October 31 | Sampling | * Chap 6 * Reflection #4 * Discussion Board #5 |
| **Week 13**  November 7 | Mixed Methods Research, Applied Research, & Program Evaluation | * Chap 15-17 * Quiz 4 * Draft Proposal Due |
| **Week 14**  November 14 | Peer Review Proposal | * Proposal Peer Review Due |
| **Week 15**  November 21 | Thanksgiving Holiday Break | * Holiday Break |
| **Week 16**  November 28 | Final Proposal | * Final Proposal & Final Reflection Paper Due |
| **Week 17**  December 5 | End of Semester |  |