**BASIC METHODS IN EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH**

**(ERMA 7200)**

**Spring 2017**

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Class hours: Mondays Email: kks0013@auburn.edu

Office hours: Mondays, 9AM-11AM Office Address: 4018 Haley Center

Thursdays, 9AM-11AM

Or By Appointment (appointments recommended even during office hours)

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

Major modes of inquiry in contemporary educational research including experimental, casual comparative, descriptive, qualitative inquiry, and action research models.

**COURSE OVERVIEW:**

Reading, applying, and conducting research are critical components of many education and counseling careers. All of these tasks require an understanding of the scientific process, basic research methods and designs, and the conventions of scholarly writing. In this course, you will develop a working knowledge of these processes of research through the course readings, classroom instruction, in-class and out-of-class activities, and individual projects. A major focus of the course will be to gain the knowledge, understanding, and applied skills needed to inform practice.

**Required Course MATERIALS:**

American Psychological Association. (2010). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th ed.). Washington, DC: Author.

Other course readings are required, and will be posted on Canvas.

**Course Objectives:**

By the end of this course, students will:

1. Articulate their own epistemology.
2. Identify and describe various theoretical perspectives.
3. Describe the fundamental principles of research ethics.
4. Read and understand research from various methodologies.
5. Review the existing research literature to answer a research question.
6. Critically evaluate existing research, particularly for internal and external validity.
7. Identify techniques for analyzing data, including their strengths and weaknesses.
8. Synthesize the existing research evidence in a publication-quality literature review.
9. Present their synthesis of existing research in a paper-presentation format.

**Mode/Style of Teaching:**

The teaching style for this class is based on a four-domain holistic education model (Montgomery, Strunk, Steele, & Bridges, 2012), wherein education is targeted toward the whole person. In this model the “whole person” is conceptualized as the body, mind, soul, and heart, or the “doing”, “thinking”, “creating”, and “feeling” functions. Weekly discussions and course projects are all designed to target these domains and functions to encourage development and growth in all of these areas. This class is also built on a constructivist and social learning model, wherein students are expected to learn from the readings, from the instructor, and from each other. This is accomplished through a reciprocal social interaction process where students contribute their understanding and knowledge to each other, thus enhancing the overall understanding of everyone in the class and allowing everyone to construct a more complete base of knowledge than would otherwise be possible.

**Course Assignments:**

1. **Project:** For this course, you will identify a research problem relevant to your discipline, review the relevant research literature regarding that problem, create a conference proposal-style paper synthesizing the available research evidence, and finally present your paper in a “paper session” format to the class. In total, across all project “parts”, the project is graded out of 600 points. More details regarding this assignment are found in the project assignment document, which will be distributed in class and available via Canvas.
2. **CITI Training:** A requirement of all Auburn students who will conduct research, you will complete two modules of CITI training – the responsible conduct of research, and the research with human subjects modules. You will turn in completion certificates in class. Further instructions on completing this training will be provided in class. This assignment will be graded out of 50 points, and is graded on a completion basis.
3. **Reading Worksheets:** During weeks when we read published research as assigned in the syllabus, you will be responsible for completing “research worksheets” that summarize what you have read and ask for analysis of particular components of those readings. Each reading worksheet will be graded out of 10 points.
4. **Epistemology Statement:** You will write a statement, 1-3 pages in length, of your epistemology, how it relates to your research and/or professional interests, and how that epistemological stance might influence how you read, evaluate, and use research. Further details will be provided in class on this assignment. This statement will be graded out of 50 points.
5. **Positionality Statement:** You will write a statement, 1-3 pages in length, of your positionality. Specifically, how are you connected to the research and/or professional area of practice you plan to pursue? Why have you chosen this area? What is your investment in the area you are pursuing? Further details on this assignment will be provided in class. This statement will be graded out of 50 points.
6. **Peer Review Feedback:** You will provide peer review and feedback of two of your classmate’s research proposals. You will use a standardized worksheet for doing so. This activity is graded out of 20 points.
7. **Presentation Feedback:** You will complete a feedback sheet for each of your classmates’ presentations. This activity is graded out of 50 points.

All course assignments are to be completed in APA style, including the use of double-space throughout, and 12-point Times New Roman font.

**Grading Structure/Requirements:**

There are a total of 1000 points in the course, which means you can take your total points and divide by ten to determine your percentage grade in the course. The grading structure is as follows:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Assignment Type** | **Total Points Possible** |
| Project | 600 |
| CITI Training | 50 |
| Epistemology Statement | 50 |
| Positionality Statement | 50 |
| Reading Worksheets | 180 |
| Peer Review Feedback | 20 |
| Presentation Feedback | 50 |
| **TOTAL POINTS** | **1000 points** |

The course is graded as follows: A = 1000-900, B = 899.9-800, C = 799.9-700, D = 699.9-600, F < 600.

**CLASS PREPAREDNESS:**

Students are expected to arrive to class on time and prepared for required coursework. This means arriving prepared for in-class activities that may require the use of the textbook, spare paper, and copies of out-of-class assignments. This class meets in a computer lab, so you may consider using your university-provided storage space and/or a removable USB drive to make note-taking, reviewing articles, etc. easier and more efficient.

**LATE WORK POLICY:**

Late work is not acceptable in graduate work. However, if you find that you are falling behind in your coursework, it is of the utmost importance that you immediately contact your instructor. As soon as you know there is any problem, immediately contact the course instructor. This is the best way to stay caught up with the course, and to achieve the highest possible grade.

If you find that you need to submit late work **it is required that you contact the instructor before submitting any late work.** Any late work submitted without first contacting the instructor to discuss the work and form a plan for getting caught up to date with coursework will not be accepted. This is to make sure that you receive all information you need about which assignments will take priority in getting caught up, and what, if any, credit can be given to late work before beginning. Communication is the key in getting caught up if you find yourself behind on work, so call, email, or stop by, whatever you need to do to get in contact!

If any late work is accepted following communication with the instructor and establishment of a written plan, it will be worth a maximum of 50% of its graded point value. The exact percentage will be established in the written plan you make with the instructor.

**TENTATIVE Course Calendar:**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Week** | **Readings** | **Content** | **Project** |
|  | 1 – 01/16/17 | **NO CLASS** | **NO CLASS – MARTIN LUTHER KING JR DAY** |  |
|  | 2 – 01/23/17 | 1A, 1B; Skim 1C | Introduction to Education Research; Research Ethics |  |
|  | 3 – 01/30/17 | 2A, 2B, 2C | Epistemologies – an overview; Conducting the literature search. | Project Part 1 DUE  CITI Training DUE |
|  | 4 – 02/06/17 | 4A, 4B | Key Concepts in Evaluating and Using Research; Internal and External Validity; Truth claims in context | Epistemology Statement DUE |
|  | 5 – 02/13/17 | 5A, 5B, 5C | Post-Positivist Research; Introducing Quantitative Methods | Project Part 2 DUE  Reading Worksheet DUE |
|  | 6 – 02/20/17 | 6A, 6B, 6C | Post-Positivist Research; Evaluating Quantitative Work | Reading Worksheet DUE |
|  | 7 – 02/27/17 | 7A | Making an argument: Writing about research; Constructing a literature review | Project Part 3 DUE |
|  | 8 – 03/06/17 | 8A, 8B, 8C | Constructivist Research; Introducing Qualitative Methods | Project Part 4 DUE  Reading Worksheet DUE |
|  | 9 – 03/13/17 | **NO CLASS** | **NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK** |  |
|  | 10 – 03/20/17 | 9A, 9B, 9C | Constructivist Research; Evaluating Qualitative Methods | Project Part 5 DUE  Reading Worksheet DUE |
|  | 11 – 03/27/17 | 11A, 11B, 11C | Critical Research; Introducing and Evaluating Critical Methods; Peer Review | Reading Worksheet DUE |
|  | 12 – 04/03/17 | 12A, 12B | Evaluating positionality; Constructing a professional presentation |  |
|  | 13 – 04/10/17 | 13A, 13B, 13C | Post-Structuralist Research: Introducing and Evaluating Post-Structuralist Methods | Project Part 6 DUE  Reading Worksheet DUE  Positionality Statement DUE |
|  | 14 – 04/17/17 |  | Presentations In Class | Project Part 7 DUE |
|  | 15 – 04/24/17 | **NO CLASS** | **NO CLASS – AERA CONFERENCE** |  |

Unit Key

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Basic Issues | Becoming a Researcher | Post-Positivism | Constructivism | Beyond Constructivism | Holiday |

Underlined readings also require the completion of a reading worksheet, which must be submitted by Canvas before class.

Average weekly reading requirement = 35 pages. Average weekly writing requirement = 6 pages. Anticipated out-of-class workload = 9.3 hours per week.

**Possible Changes to the Syllabus:**

This syllabus is your contract for production in the course. If changes are made to it they will be posted on Canvas and announced in class or by email. No changes increasing requirements will be made.

**EXTRA CREDIT OPPORTUNITY:**

There may be occasional opportunities for extra credit points in this course as the instructor identifies relevant opportunities. These will be announced in class.

To earn substantial extra credit points in this course, you have the opportunity to submit the proposal you develop in this class to a research conference. One such conference would be the Eastern Educational Research Association (EERA). Due dates in this course are designed to line up with proposal due dates for that conference. Many programs in the College of Education take students to that conference. If you identify another professional or research conference you wish to submit your work from this class to, please discuss with the instructor. Submitting your proposal to a professional or research conference will result in 30 points added to your grade (equivalent to a 3% increase in the final course grade).

**Additional Information and Policies:**

Graduate study requires a high level of independence, accountability, and conscientiousness in order to achieve success both in their program and in careers that require graduate study. As such, a number of guidelines are helpful that make clear the expectations of graduate students.

1. The standard for graduate-level coursework is approximately 3 hours of out-of-class work for every hour of class. That means you should expect to spend about 9 hours per week outside of class on readings and assignments for this course. There are about 30-40 pages of assigned reading for the course each week, plus the reading you will do toward completing your project. As such, this class will be reading-intensive. Plan your time accordingly, and ensure your weekly schedule has enough time for you to complete all readings and assignments before the class meets each week.
2. 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 10th class day with no grade assignment. From the 10th class day to mid-semester 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.
3. The Department of EFLT 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 subject to several sanctions upon violations of the Student Academic Honesty Code. See the Tiger Cub publication for the current year for specifics regarding academic misconduct as well as student’s rights and responsibilities associated with the Code.
4. Students who need accommodations are asked to arrange a meeting during office hours the first week of classes, or as soon as possible if accommodations are needed immediately. If you have a conflict with my office hours, an alternate time can be arranged. To set up this meeting, please contact me by e-mail. If you have not established accommodations through the PSD office, but need accommodations, make an appointment with The Program for Students with Disabilities, 1228 Haley Center, 844-2096 (V/TT).
5. Students are expected to be in class for the entire class period every class meeting. If there is an unavoidable conflict (such as a professional conference that coincides with a class meeting) this should be communicated with the instructor as early as possible. In the event that you have a legitimate emergency that prevents you from attending class, you should: 1) contact the instructor by phone and/or email immediately upon learning you will be unable to attend class (this should be before the class meets), 2) take appropriate steps to catch up with in-class learning opportunities, 3) ensure that all of your work that was due during that class meeting makes it to the instructor before the class meeting ends (email it, have a friend drop it by the office, etc.). Failure to be in class during an exam without agreement from and prior arrangements with the course instructor will result in a grade of zero on the exam.
6. Students are responsible for checking their student email account regularly for course announcements and course-related communications.
7. This course uses Canvas as a tool to manage course readings and other materials not included in the required texts for this course and for online course discussions. Students are expected to have a working knowledge of Canvas in order to access materials and participate in online course discussion.
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