**ERMA 7200.001: Basic Methods in Education Research[[1]](#footnote-1)**

Auburn University - College of Education

Department of Educational Foundations, Leadership, & Technology

Summer 2, 2021

1. **Class Time/Location:** Tuesdays and Thursdays, 3:00 – 6:50

<https://auburn.zoom.us/j/5913393078>

Please have a headset, webcam, desktop or laptop, quiet location and high speed Internet connection available for these meetings.

1. **Instructor:** Dr. Hannah Baggett**,** 334.844.3024, [hcb0017@auburn.edu](mailto:hcb0017@auburn.edu)
2. **Office Hours**: I’ll log in to the chat on Canvas and our Zoom room for virtual office hours on Tuesdays and Thursdays 2:00-2:45. I’m also available to arrange a mutually convenient time to meet by Zoom. Email is the quickest way to reach me, and I try to answer emails within 24 hours during the week.
3. **Special Accommodations:** Students who need accommodations are asked to electronically submit their approved accommodations through AU Access and to arrange a meeting during the first week of classes.
4. **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.
5. **Course Description**: Major modes of inquiry in contemporary educational research including experimental, causal comparative, descriptive, qualitative inquiry, and action research models.
6. **Course Overview**: The purpose of this course is to survey the field of educational research,

specifically with regard to the modes of inquiry, variety of methodologies, and ethical standards for conducting research with human participants. In this class, we will *broadly* define educational research as research that "strives to advance knowledge about education, to encourage scholarly inquiry related to education, and to promote the use of research to improve education and serve the public good" (American Educational Research Association Mission Statement). Educational research can be conducted in both formal and informal teaching and learning settings. By the end of the course, you will be able to:

* Identify the different traditions of research and their associated modes of inquiry.
  + Define, give the significance of, and use key concepts associated with quantitative, qualitative, mixed, and action research methods.
  + Define, give the significance of, and use key concepts in research ethics (particularly, but not exclusively, research with human subjects) as they apply to research design.
* Critique research articles that employ various methodologies.
  + Classify and evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of various research designs, including ‘fit’ among the purpose, methods, data, interpretations and the underlying arguments in educational research both as published in refereed journals and as represented in policy/political debates in the popular press.
* Build a database of literature related to a topic of study and/or methodology.
  + Demonstrate, through submitted products, formalities of scholarly written formats.
  + Appropriately use APA formatting to craft reports and reference works cited.

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1. **Required Materials:**

1) Time management skills.

2) Web access. Speaking of technology:

*The Web Ate My Homework and Other Excuses:*

* This course relies heavily on online technology and often requires students to download and employ third-party software programs and troubleshoot their own technology problems. Since I can't make house calls or analyze multiple different student computer systems, troubleshooting may involve working with the campus help desk, LRC, peers, etc. That being said, if you have tech issues, I will happily try to help you during regular office hours.
* All assignments for this course are submitted electronically to Canvas. Courses with electronically submitted assignments require students to take responsibility for saving/backing up work and for re-doing assignments if they fail to back up their work.  (Create all assignments in Word, Pages, etc. in case Canvas times you out or you lose your connection.)

1. **My Teaching Practice/Our Course Format:** Scholars have long theorized that educational pedagogy and practice is rooted in a ‘banking’ approach to teaching and learning (Freire, 1970; Giroux, 1997). In this banking model, students are viewed as empty vessels to be filled by the teacher, who ‘deposits’ knowledge and expertise. Students are often positioned as passive and powerless, and teaching is a purely teacher-directed act. Due to this positioning, students are often unfamiliar with being responsible for active participation in their own learning.Since all education is political and teachers generally develop courses around their convictions, I try to be very transparent about my teaching philosophy: I approach teaching from a critical stance, which counters passive transference of knowledge. Thus, instead of assuming the role of ‘director’ of learning and ‘keeper’ of authority/knowledge(s) in a classroom of adults, I participate in teaching as a guide, wherein students emerge as co-directors of the class. This model of teaching expects that students will contribute their own experiences, knowledge, and expertise, and empowers students to be actively involved in their own development. This empowerment is particularly important in working with adult students who each add a valuable and unique perspective that is essential to quality graduate level learning. I view myself as both a learner and a teacher in the class, and I expect that you will also participate in both of these roles[[2]](#footnote-2). Our course will include small group discussions and activities, whole-class discussions and activities, reflection, conferencing, and student-led discussions and presentations. It is important that students keep current with assigned readings, attend class, and participate in discussions as informed members.

This class will run as a graduate-level seminar for most of our meetings. Discussions should revolve around the week's readings, rather than a larger topic or something that one or more students find interesting. There can be a tendency in seminars toward a "bull session" about the topic that is not informed by the readings. To be sure, lived experiences are important to share. Often, however, bull sessions happen because students are rushed and don't find the time to complete the readings before class, or have not read carefully. When this happens, the interaction crucial to a seminar simply cannot occur unless we ground our experiences and knowledges in scholarly texts and conversations. In this course, the issues raised and problems analyzed will center on the assigned texts[[3]](#footnote-3).

1. **Relationship to other courses in the College of Education**: This course serves a foundational role in preparing students to be 1) critical consumers of educational research, and 2) successful in the research methodology sequences offered in the College of Education. Specifically, this course serves as a recommended prerequisite to ERMA 7300 & 7310 (quantitative sequence) and ERMA 7210 & 7220 (qualitative sequence).
2. **Course Requirements and Evaluation**
3. **Preparation for Discussion (9 classes x 5 pts = 45 points) :** The reading for this class is

not casual. To demonstrate that you have read, engaged with the course readings, and are prepared to discuss in class, a preparatory writing assignment is due before class. This assignment is intended for you to process and articulate your thoughts about the readings so that you can engage in meaningful discussion in class; thus, you should be prepared to share what you've written in class. It is also a way for me to gauge your engagement with the concepts so that I might decide how our synchronous time together is best focused. *You must both complete your written preparation and be in class to participate in the discussion* to earn credit for the assignment.

Critical and scholarly discussion of readings do not include your feelings about the author's writing style ("I like this.", "This is boring", etc.)  Instead, push yourself to synthesize the main ideas of the readings, identifying how they are 'in conversation' with one another.  What are the themes across the readings?  Where do these ideas diverge/do the authors appear to disagree?  What questions do you have, after unpacking the readings?

**Reflection Rubric**

1. Unpacks at least 2 specific concepts or points from the readings (with in-text citations). (1 pt)

2. Relates new information to old information learned in the course to date. (1 pt)

3. Relates information in article or reading to personal experience. (1 pt)

4. Synthesis, rather than recitation and summary, **of *all* of the readings**. (1 pt)

5. Length of reflection: approx 1 page. (1 pt)

1. **Asynchronous Tasks (5 points):** To make the most of our time together this minimester, I

will often assign you tasks in class that you will complete after our synchronous time together is over. These assignments might include, for example: outlines, readings summaries and charts, graphics, and concept maps. These activities will be graded for completion, and may often be completed with partners or in small groups.

1. **‘Best Practices’ Position Work, in Two Parts\*:**

**Literature Search and Annotated Bibliography (25 points):** This assignment tasks you to: 1) identify an area of interest in your field wherein ‘best practices’ about a topic are under debate or development; 2) explore the research literature to see what has already been done about the topic; 3) create an annotated bibliography of at least 10 research articles; and 4) construct a reference list, either manually or using a citation manager.  This assignment is designed for you to become familiar with the variety of research databases available to search for educational research (i.e. ERIC, Academic Search Premier, Psychinfo etc), as well as the various modes of inquiry in educational research. A rubric for this assignment will be posted in Canvas.

**Step 1:** Complete multiple searches using research databases for your topic. Experiment with keywords, search terms, and synonyms for those keywords; try searching by method; try searching specific journals in your field, etc. (Your search will be ongoing.)

**Step 2**: Select at least 10 articles from your searches to compile into a document/table. For each article, include: keywords utilized in the search, title, author(s), year, synopsis or key findings, and method/mode of inquiry. Try to find multiple kinds of sources (ie. journal articles, books, book chapters, dissertations, etc.) and different methods (ie. interview studies, survey research, ethnographies, critical discourse analysis, mixed methods research, etc.). This task also requires that you put what you've found and read into your own words. That's the work of an annotated bibliography: it's a first step in sense-making as you explore the literature about a given topic.

**Step 3**: Format all sources into a “Reference” list either manually or using a tool like Refworks, Zotero, Mendeley, or EndNote (you'll have to learn these on your own, or with the help of a RBD library tutorial).  If you're working manually, check your references carefully.  Many citation functions in databases (and often even online mechanisms like Google Scholar) do not export citations correctly.  Please consult the 8th edition of the APA Style guide (or online APA resources) as you format your reference list.

**Step 4:** Submit your summary of the articles (document/table from step 2) and the reference list (from step 2) to Canvas.

**In-class Presentation (30 points):** You will also create a 15-20 minute presentation to be shared during our last class that communicates what you have learned from your literature search and reading. Your presentation should include: 1) an overview of your topic, a brief rationale about why this topic is of importance to your field, and the key assumptions you are making about this topic; 2) key findings from the studies in your annotated bibliography; 3) a critical review of the studies in your annotated bibliography that may have yielded differing results about the topic; and 4) a position statement regarding the ‘best practices’ that you/one should adopt as a practitioner, given your critical review. Please plan to rehearse. This is a tight timeline, and I doubt you will be successful without practice. A rubric for this assignment will be posted in Canvas, which we may negotiate in class together.

***\*Note: You may develop these assignments individually, with a partner, or in a group no larger than 3 people.***

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| Final grade composition | Points possible |
| Preparation for Discussion | 45 |
| Asynchronous activities (assigned in  synchronous meetings) | 5 |
| Literature Search and Annotated Bibliography | 25 |
| Final presentation | 25 |
| **TOTAL** | **100** |

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| --- | --- |
| Points | Letter Grade |
| 90 to 100 points | A |
| 80 to 89.99 points | B |
| 70 to 79.99 points | C |
| 60 to 69.99 points | D |
| Below 60 points | F |

**Course Policies**:

1. Professionals show up on time and prepared every day for work. Class attendance is a key component of success in graduate-level coursework. Failure to attend class sessions usually results in a lower grade due to the challenging nature of the course content, and to the seminar approach to class structure. Students with more than three absences (other than university-approved excused absences) will receive a grade of failing due to excessive absences, regardless of scores on course assignments. Refer to the university attendance policy for information on attendance requirements and university-approved excused absences. Retain all documentation of university-approved excused absences – this documentation will only need to be turned in if you exceed three total absences. Treat synchronous meetings in Zoom as you would treat an in-class meeting. Please come to class prepared to have your camera and your audio connected for the duration of our meeting. **Note that if you are unable to attend synchronous Zoom sessions, there are asynchronous versions of this class each semester taught by different instructors**.
2. Professionals complete assignments on time. Assignments are due in Canvas as indicated in the syllabus and the course calendar. Assignments handed in after this time will be considered late. **Late assignments will be penalized by 10% per day late**.
3. Professionals use appropriate means for discussing disagreements. Please respect our class time together and my own time as a teacher and researcher by planning to discuss grades or other points of contention during office hours or by appointment, **not via email**.
4. Professionals take responsibility for their own learning. My overarching goal is to support class members in becoming the very best they can possibly be at this point in their professional development. Please allow me to assist in any way possible including, but certainly not limited to: listening, providing feedback, answering questions, sharing and addressing concerns, brainstorming, clarifying course content or expectations, and mediating or facilitating work with collaborating peers. While I do check my e-mail regularly, **I do not check e-mail after 8 pm.**
5. Professionals give credit where credit is due. Even though I will encourage you to work in groups and learn from each other, each individual is held responsible for their own behavior and learning. I expect students to submit their own work for all assignments. The University Academic Honesty Code will apply to this class. See also Student Policy eHandbook ([www.auburn.edu/studentpolicies](http://www.auburn.edu/studentpolicies)) for rules on academic honesty. If and when resources are found (even those online!), proper citation must be used. It is a graduate student’s responsibility to learn and adhere to APA style guidelines. Failure to provide appropriate citations constitutes a violation of the Auburn University Academic Honesty Code. In addition, written assignments that are similar or identical to those of other students in the class (past or present) is also a violation of the Code. Violations of the Auburn University Academic Honesty Code will be treated according to university policy. Rewriting and resubmission is not an option. **Finally, you may not submit the work of someone else or work that you have submitted for another class to satisfy a requirement of ERMA 7200.**
6. Professionals make others aware of what they need to be successful. Please inform me within the first week of class if you require adaptations/modifications to any assignment because of special needs (disabilities, religious observances, and so on). **Grades of Incomplete (IN) are issued only according to university policy and are granted at the discretion of the instructor.**
7. Professionals respect other professionals. Except in the case of an approved disability accommodation, **students are not permitted to audio or video record** any portion of class. Prohibiting the recording of class sessions helps to preserve an inclusive, friendly, and safe learning environment where learners can take risks without fear of retribution or scrutiny. This risk-taking is essential to high quality graduate learning.
8. Course Calendar. This is a brief overview course; as such, I’ve made some decisions about what the class will cover. You will also have some decisions to make about what you read and evaluate in some modules. As an instructor, I aim to be responsive to students’ needs and interests. Thus, some readings may change as we move through the course. All readings will be posted in Canvas modules.

\*\*Readings will be made available in Canvas modules each week.

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| **Class** | **Content** | **Assignments** |
| 1  6/29 | What is research? Why do we do it? What drives our decision-making about how to do it? | Preparation for Discussion due before class; asynchronous activities due after class. |
| 2  7/1 | Paradigms and Assumptions | Preparation for Discussion due before class; asynchronous activities due after class. |
| 3  7/6 | Research Ethics | Preparation for Discussion due before class; asynchronous activities due after class. |
| 4  7/8 | Searching for and Reviewing Literature | Preparation for Discussion due before class; asynchronous activities due after class. |
| 5  7/13 | Qualitative Designs | Preparation for Discussion due before class;  asynchronous activities due after class. |
| 6  7/15 | Quantitative Designs | Preparation for Discussion due before class; asynchronous activities due after class. |
| 7  7/20 | Mixed Methods and Multi-Methods Designs | Preparation for Discussion due before class; asynchronous activities due after class. |
| 8  7/22 | Action Research | Preparation for Discussion due before class  Annotated Bibliography due by end of day Sunday 7/25. |
| 9  7/27 | Wiggle room – possible graduate student panel/Q&A? | Preparation for Discussion due before class |
| 10  7/29 | In-class presentations | Presentations due before class; peer review of presentations due asynchronously. |

1. This syllabus was adapted from syllabi written by Malina Monaco, Heather A. Davis, and Sean Forbes. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Teaching philosophy with adult learners adapted from Dr. Bonnie Fusarelli. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Seminar expectations adapted from Dr. Susan Nordstrom. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)