EDUC 7674 Master's Seminar: Research in Specialization
FAIRLEIGH DICKINSON UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
Semester:
Professor:
TIME: LOCATION:
OFFICE HOURS: EMAIL:
PHONE:

COURSE DESCRIPTION
This course serves as a capstone experience that extends and reinforces the teachers’ knowledge, skills and competencies related to professional and educational practice through field-based action research and completion of a culminating project. In this course, Students will conduct a survey of the literature on a selected topic and use the higher order thinking skills to develop a research question or series of questions. Course topics to be covered
- The purpose and value of research
- Introduction to research in education and the social sciences
- Problem formulation
- Literature review
- Hypothesis formulation
- Methodology
- Defining a methodology
- Qualitative Methods of Data Collection and Data Analysis
- Citations and references
- How to do on-line research
- Research ethics

COURSE OBJECTIVES
Successful candidates will be able:
- To appreciate the value of educational research.
- To define the necessity of educational research.
- To link educational research and practice.
- To use the language of research.
- To apply data, readings, and analysis to educational research on a chosen topic.
- To write a thorough literature review with appropriate citations.
- To use APA format.
- To identify the complexities associated with human subject research.

REQUIRED READINGS


How to Write a Literature Review
http://www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb/handouts_pdf/Literature_Review.pdf
On-line link for Human Participant Protections Education for Research

SUPPLEMENTAL READINGS

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS & DEADLINES

**Task 1 Brainstorm of Mini-Research Projects (10 points) FEB 9**
Come to class with a list of 4-5 mini research projects. Be prepared to share your brainstorm with the class. Students will not submit anything to the professor. Grade will be earned based on coming to class with the 4-5 ideas and presenting them thoughtfully and engaging with class members on their topics.

**Task 2 Formulation of research question(s) and rationale for the study (10 points) FEB 16**
You will describe in one or two paragraphs why you selected this topic to study and you will formulate a research question. Since the research process is recursive, a student may modify the original question as the project unfolds. However, *students will be expected to make a commitment to the research topic in the first two weeks of the course*. Students will submit this assignment to the professor.

**Task 3 Draft of Literature Review (15 points). due MARCH 1**
You will begin writing the literature review of your topic. You will summarize ideas from the articles and books you have consulted up to this point. You will include in the draft a list of references in APA style. This draft should be about 4-5 pages in length. The details of a literature review will be explained in class. Students will be expected to read and cite articles from scholarly journals although other sources can be used but should not constitute the bulk of the readings for the project. A special research session in Weiner Library will help students utilize the FDU online journals specific to their topic.

**Task 4 Draft of Methodology & Conclusion (15 points) due APRIL 1**
You will explain in 1-2 pages how you would implement your project design. You may include appendices such as an interview protocol, surveys, etc.

**Task 5 Final Project (40 points) due MAY 4**
The **FINAL PROJECT** will contain the following sections. Each chapter should incorporate items and material from earlier drafts but must show evidence of growth of your research and your thoughts on the topic. These chapters should be longer and more sophisticated in their organization, content, and presentation in order to reflect the reading and analysis you have done since the original drafts were submitted.

**Chapter 1:** The introduction of the problem which includes a history of the problem, a statement of the problem, a hypothesis if appropriate, the importance of the problem, definitions of important terms.

**Chapter 2:** A review of the literature. What has already been written on the topic and what does it say? Do all researchers agree on the problem and issues concerned? If
not, what are the varying points of view? What are the similarities and differences? Is one camp more persuasive, more powerful, in the majority?

**Chapter 3: Methodology.** You are to design a study to research a problem connected with your topic. Who or what will you study and how? What do you hope to learn? How will you access these subjects? Design an appropriate questionnaire or formulate questions to obtain the information you will need. How many subjects will your study need? What criteria need to be established? What will be the limitations of your study?

**Chapter 4.** Conclusion. Based on you reading and research, what do you expect the results to be? How does your study relate to others? What might be future research questions related to your study? Synthesize!

**References** - All work must follow APA format. Proofread, *proofread, proofread!*

Evaluation of written work will be based on the attached rubric.

NOTE: Reflection and thoughtful analysis weigh heavily in the instructors' review of all work.

**Task 6 Professional Dispositions and Class Participation (10 points) All Semester** See attached criteria check sheet at the end of this syllabus. Key dispositions are professional enthusiasm for discipline, appreciation and care for others, eliminate bias from perspective, remain confidential, and advocate appropriately. Attend all classes and participate by contributing actively to the discussion and inquiries of others. The interactions, debates, discussions with peers and professor help clarify ideas of all stakeholders.

**COURSE POLICY & EXPECTATIONS**

Students will attend class sessions each week for the first 5 weeks of the course. From the 6th week to the 14th week, the professor will set up a modified schedule with your section to allow for research and writing time as well and individual conferences. Class will meet again the last week of the semester to share and compare research experiences and to finish up the major concepts of research.

**Drafts**
- are part of your grade and must be handed in on time unless prior written approval has been received from the professor. Drafts should be written in clear, concise prose—no outlines.
- are not expected to represent the full length of the finished project but drafts are to reflect the progress of your research.
- are designed to assist students by providing timely feedback on their work in progress so that revisions and additions can be made and the project can grow.
- are to be submitted electronically to the professor, either via email or Digital Drop Box in Blackboard. The professor will not be available to respond from Friday PM through Monday AM. Friday the professor will also be conducting research away from campus and may be unavailable to respond. Spring Break the week of March 8 through March 20, the professor will be presenting research paper in Oxford, England and will have limited email availability. Research papers can allow you to interact with many other scholars while visiting exciting places.

**Failure to submit these DRAFTS when due**
- will result in the loss of credit for the assignments.

**All material submitted to the professor must be typed.**
**Individual Meetings**
Each student will meet with the professor for at least two 30 minute sessions. Research partners should meet twice during this period. Students will meet with the professor between March 6th—March 7th to receive feedback on the literature review. Students will meet with the professor between April 3rd—April 7th to receive feedback on the methodology and conclusion. Students should treat individual meetings just like class: you need to be prepared and be on time. Rescheduling a meeting will result in loss of credit unless there is an emergency.

**COURSE SCHEDULE**
Course schedule, assignments and due dates. The following contains readings in the texts and the date for the submission of 6 different assignments. The APA manual is intended for use as a supplemental text. The chapters in the Thomas book should be read for the session indicated for the purposes of discussion and to help you understand methodology. (* denotes full class meetings)

**SESSION TOPIC(S) ASSIGNMENT**

1. *Jan 26 Introduction:
   Procedure/policies/syllabus
   Topic selection/Problem formulation

2. *Feb 2 Research Questions and Rationale
   Components of Research Proposal
   What is a Literature Review?
   **Johnson 1, 2, 3**
   **Thomas 1, 2, 3**

3. *Feb 9
   Task #1 Brainstorm (Class and Via Email)

4. Feb 16 Library Visit on Metro Campus
   Task #2 Draft of research question and rationale due (Class and Via Email)

5. *Feb 23 Literature Review cont
   Methodology
   Data collection/analysis;
   Research ethics
   Synthesis and conclusions
   **URL – How to Write a Lit Review**
   **Johnson 4, 5**
   **Thomas 4, 5, 6**

6. March 1st Task #3 Draft of literature review due VIA EMAIL

7. March 2 - 10 Individual Meetings
   My meeting is: ______________________

8. April 2 Task #4 Draft of methodology
conclusion due VIA EMAIL

9. April 3-7 Individual Meetings
   My meeting is: ____________________

13. *May 4th Class Presentations
   Task #5 Final Project due CLASS

   Your paper must have a cover page which looks like the following example:

   TITLE
   BY
   YOUR NAME

   Mentor
   Professor:
   Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
   of the Requirements for the Degree
   Masters of Arts in Education
   Fairleigh Dickinson University
   Semester:
POOR
1
FAIR
2
GOOD
3
OUTSTANDING
4

ORGANIZATION
Paper lacks any semblance of organization or structure. Sections and subsections are disjointed, following no apparent logical arrangement. Paper is missing required elements. While the paper is organized into sections and subsections, the logic behind the arrangement is not always apparent. The transition between sections is not consistently smooth or logical.

The paper is well organized. Transitions between sections and subsections allow for a logical connection from one section to another. Topics and subtopics are arranged in a logical sequence.

The paper is extremely well organized with seamless transitions between subsections. Topics within sections are logically arranged resulting in a clear presentation of the topic(s).

RESEARCH
The review of the literature is grossly inadequate. Few relevant research studies are cited. The research is limited; drawn primarily from secondary or unreliable sources. The review represents a minimal effort to examine the body of research addressing the topic.
The review of the literature represents an adequate examination of the available information on the topic. The studies cited suggest some evidence of relevance. Sources include both primary and secondary, but too few primary sources to support a logical and convincing analysis.

The review of the literature represents a fairly in-depth examination of the research literature addressing the topic under study. The studies cited represent a reasonable sampling of the available research. Primary research constitutes the major source of information.

The review of the literature represents an exhaustive and comprehensive examination of the literature. The cited studies, the preponderance of which are from primary research, are a clear representation of the body of knowledge on the topic.

**USAGE/STYLE**

The paper is difficult to read and understand, with numerous syntactical, grammatical, spelling and typographical errors. APA format was not utilized as required. Little or no proofreading is evidenced.

The paper requires some revision. The writing style needs improvement and, coupled with syntactical, grammatical, and typographical errors, detracts from the overall effectiveness of the presentation. The required APA conventions are not always followed.

The paper is well-written. Standards for acceptable usage and style are followed. Few syntactical, grammatical, spelling, and typographical errors are evidenced, suggesting that the paper was proofread. APA style conventions were followed.

The paper is extremely well written, following accepted rules of usage and style. APA conventions are followed throughout. No syntactical, grammatical, spelling or typographical error, suggesting the paper was carefully proofread.

**ANALYSIS**

The paper lacks a substantive analysis of the topic. Very little, if any, systematic analysis is evident.
No support or evidence is established for the importance or timeliness of the topic, nor has the author demonstrated his or her understanding of the efficacy of further research into the subject. While the paper includes an analysis, the analysis lacks depth and thoughtful inquiry. The analysis provides little support for the need for further research, and represents little more than a summary of the literature review.

The paper includes a well thoughtout analysis of the topic. The analysis includes a summary of convergent and divergent thinking on the subject. The importance of examining the topic is supported through the analysis and reflects a strong, established research base. The paper represents a comprehensive, systematic, and cogent analysis of the topic under study. The author’s presentation represents an insightful and reflective examination of the subject. The author’s analysis provides unequivocal support for the timeliness and importance of the subject.

SYNTHESIS/CONCLUSIONS

The paper lacks closure. Neither conclusions nor implications are considered. There is a glaring absence of any type of synthesis, and few, if any, additional research questions are raised. The synthesis lacks depth and thoughtful inquiry. Conclusions and implications for further study are addressed, yet not to the extent required for meaningful analysis. The paper includes a synthesis that ties together the focus of the research on the topic. Conclusions and implications are addressed, and suggestions for further research are identified.

The paper artfully concludes with a synthesis that provides the reader with an understanding of the “state of the subject,” suggesting avenues for future research, implications for further consideration, and logical conclusions.

Please see the (returned) copy of your paper and/or the back of this sheet for further comments.
Profession Disposition and Class Participation

Name: ___________________________ Due Date: Assessed for the entire semester

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS: How does a teacher conduct himself or herself as a professional? What professional dispositions must a teacher demonstrate to be considered a highly-qualified teacher?

The New Jersey Professional Standards for Teachers, NJPST, identifies many dispositions for highly-qualified teachers. Each Fairleigh Dickinson University candidate for a Master of Education for Certified Teachers will demonstrate professional dispositions during all class-related activities: before, during, and after. Professional dispositions will be evident in discussions, presentations, class work, and teamwork in the classroom and outside of the classroom in conversations and communiqués with peers and the Professor. Class Participation requires that a candidate attend every class, be prepared to discuss the assigned topics by having read the assigned text and articles and reflect on its relationship to education. The candidate must remain confidential concerning information and data obtained about specific children and school districts.

The successful candidate must exhibit all Professional Dispositions listed below at a level of D, developing competence:

- I = Introductory Competency (Candidate is knowledgeable of the disposition but does not demonstrate competency.)
- D = Developed Competency (Candidate demonstrates dispositions.)
- P = Proficient Competency (Candidate extends dispositions to include and lead peers to exhibit professional dispositions.)

Any categories designated with an I, Introductory Competency, will have 2 points deducted from the Total 10 points on this Task. The Professor will assess the student’s entire class participation and professional dispositions as a complete entity to determine the total number of points. The successful M.A. candidate demonstrates caring and competence when he or she:

___ Appreciates, Respects, and Cares about multiple perspectives of others;
___ Tolerates diverse learning styles of others in this course;
___ Accepts working with diverse personality types of others in this course;
___ Displays patience when exploring tasks in this course;
___ Demonstrates persistence on all tasks in this course without criticism or complaint;
___ Accepts educational risk taking as an opportunity to grow professionally;
___ Exhibits eagerness to explore new ideas;
___ Shows flexibility of thought;
___ Disagrees agreeably;
___ Advocates appropriately to the proper person or people;
___ Engages actively and enthusiastically in all lessons and activities;
___ Attends all classes and appointments;
___ Submits all assignments in accord with the course policies;
___ Demonstrations ability to be self-reflective to grow professionally; and
___ Remains confidential about information related to specific children and schools
I. Attendance
A. Students are required to attend class, arrive on time and participate in all courses for which they are enrolled. Class attendance and participation are essential to academic progress. Individual instructors may include class participation in the determination of the final grade. Each instructor will announce his or her grading policies at the beginning of the semester in each course, making clear the weight to be given to participation in grade determination. (FDU, 2002, p.13).
B. Attendance Policy for this class:
NOTE: Missing an individual meeting with the Prof is equivalent to missing one class
1. Attendance is required in all our classes
2. 1 absences, grade drops by a half a grade
3. 2 absences, grade drops by one full grade
4. 3 absences, the student fails or withdraws from the class
II. Academic integrity
A. Fairleigh Dickinson University will not condone academic dishonesty in any form. To do so would be unfair to those students who perform honestly. Academic dishonesty undermines the confidence of the student in his or her ability to learn and perform and casts a shadow on the value of the academic process, past and future. (FDU, 1966, p. 5).
B. Students enrolled at Fairleigh Dickinson University are expected to maintain the highest standards of academic honesty. Students have the responsibility to each other to make known the existence of academic dishonesty to their course instructor, and then, if necessary, the department chairperson or the academic dean of their College. Course instructors have the added responsibility to state in advance in their syllabi any special policies and procedures concerning examinations and other academic exercises specific to their courses. Students should request this information if not distributed by the instructor. (FDU, 2002, p. 15)
C. Student using online resources for their work are expected to provide appropriate citations and references. APA format should be used to cite sources.
III. Grade equivalents
A. A = exemplary performance, excellent understanding and demonstration of the knowledge and skills addressed
B. B = competent performance, very good understanding and demonstration of the knowledge and skills addressed
C. C = adequate performance, good understanding and demonstration of the knowledge and skills addressed, some minor flaws
D. D = inadequate performance, lacks a demonstration of an understanding of the knowledge and skills addressed, serious flaws in substance and presentation of material
E. I - Incomplete - this designation is not a substitute for a letter grade. It merely describes a student’s temporary status in a course. It is to be given only in exceptional or emergency circumstances at the discretion of, and after consultation with, the instructor. Students have a responsibility to notify the instructor of circumstances preventing them from completing the requirements on time. Students will have up to the third week of the next full semester (excluding summer sessions) to complete the requirements. If the requirements have not been met within the prescribed period, the I automatically will become an F. The F is a letter grade and will count in the student's CGPA. (FDU, 2002, p. 14)
F. Note: All graduate students are expected to maintain a GPA of 3.25 or better. The grade of "C - " in a graduate course is considered a failing grade.
IV. Grading policies
A. Graduate Programs – Grading and similar policies
1. Grades:
   a) Weighted grades: A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, and F. (Grades of C- or D are not acceptable grades in graduate programs.) The minimum passing grade for the graduate programs is a C.
   b) Incompletes (not a grade but a temporary status): STUDENTS HAVE THE RESPONSIBILITY TO COMPLETE ALL WORK IN A COURSE IN THE PRESCRIBED TERM. A student has the added responsibility to notify the course instructor of circumstances that will prevent the stud ent from completing the required coursework on time. An incomplete should be given only in exceptional or emergency circumstances at the discretion of, and after consultation with, the instructor. The students will have through the third week of the next full semester (fall or spring) to complete the requirement for the course or the incomplete automatically will change to a failure. If appropriate, the instructor can request an extension of the incomplete, which requires the approval of the school director and the college dean.
   c) Change of Letter Grades: "No instructor shall change a grade from one letter grade to another based upon submission by the student of additional work unless the same opportunity has been made to all other students in the class." A change of grade is always legitimate and appropriate when the recorded grade is the result of an error by any university employee.
V. Picking up grades papers
Students are requested to pick up all of their papers from their professors (or the Quest office in Madison) within the first 3 weeks of the new semester. All work not retrieved by the end of these 3 weeks will be discarded.
VI. Instructor Specific Policies
A. Please type and double-space all assignments. All papers must be submitted with cover page indicating title of
assignment, course name and section, instructor’s name, your name, and date of submission. In addition to fulfilling the content requirements of each assignment, it is expected that each paper will be written using correct English, spelling, and grammar. Both content and mechanics will be considered in the grading. Remember to cite sources for ideas that are not your own using APA format. Citations are necessary for both conceptual issues and direct quotations. It is expected that all papers will be submitted by the due date unless prior approval is given for a good reason.

B. Student assessment and evaluation is performance based. Criteria for assessment include, but are not limited to:
   1. Demonstration of an understanding of the theory and concepts related to the topics of the course
   2. Demonstration of critical thinking
   3. Sufficient and appropriate evidence to support one’s position
   4. Creativity and development of strategies and procedures which reflect an understanding of the teaching/learning process
   5. Effective written and verbal communication skills which includes correct usage and expression

Disclaimer - This syllabus is subject to change as the need arises. Students will be given ample notice of any changes in assignments and due dates.