

ELMP 8891 NA, Spring 2016
Directed Research
Wednesday, 5:00-7:10 PM

Contact Information

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Office Hours: Monday and Wednesday 2-4:30 or by appointment

Course Description

This course introduces the foundations and methods of educational research, topics that are essential for both graduate study and students' professional careers. By the end of this semester, students will be expected to have a working knowledge of how to identify and frame research topics and questions, review and analyze literature on a topic of interest, select appropriate research methods and data sources, and effectively communicate this information to practitioners, scholars, and the general public.

Course Expectations

Attendance and class participation: Students are expected to attend and participate in each class during the course of semester. Although there is no explicit credit given to regular attendance, it is unlikely that a student will succeed in the course without attending class. I recognize that many of your schedules are extremely busy and that a class may be occasionally missed, so please let me know in advance if you will be unable to attend. I am also happy to patch you into class via Blackboard Collaborate if you are out of town—just let me know if that works for you.

Office hours: I hope that everyone in the class meets with me on a one-on-one basis at least once during the semester to discuss course assignments and your goals for the class and graduate study. Appointments are not necessary during regular office hours, but are encouraged to avoid a potential wait. I am happy to arrange alternative office hours, either in person or via Skype or Google Hangout, if the regular office hours do not work for you.

Communications: I will use both Blackboard and e-mail to communicate important course messages. E-mails will be sent to your SHU account so I can guarantee that they are received. I typically respond to student e-mails within 24 hours; if the message is urgent and you have not received a response acknowledging receipt, please send your message again.

Academic integrity: All students are expected to maintain high standards of academic integrity. All completed assignments must be original work for this course, must consist of original ideas and writing, and must include appropriate citations of others' ideas. Your written work may be electronically tested for plagiarized content. As a student in this course, you are responsible for knowing and adhering to the spirit of University and ELMP policies regarding academic integrity and student conduct. Please contact me immediately if you have any questions about the academic integrity policy or if you are concerned about some of your writing inadvertently being considered plagiarism. It is far better to ask questions upfront than face a penalty later in the semester.

Department of ELMP – Cheating and Dishonesty

I. Statement —The Department of ELMP will not tolerate any form of academic dishonesty. Infractions will be appropriately penalized; students should understand that suspension or expulsion from the University is a possible result.

II. Definitions — “Academic Dishonesty” shall be understood to encompass at least the following:

Cheating — whether on tests or on other course assignments, whether by the giving, receiving or taking of information.

Plagiarism — stealing and/or passing off as one's own the ideas or words of another; using without crediting the source. It includes: (1) copying of text/research/assignments; (2) using someone else's papers/research/assignments without permission and citation; (3) representing as one's own work what is really the work of another person. This includes downloading from WEB sources.

III. Penalties:

1. A student determined to be cheating on any test or who plagiarizes on a course assignment will be appropriately penalized at the **discretion of the instructor**. This may include receiving a zero on the assignment or “F” for the course.
2. Notice that a student has cheated or plagiarized will be sent to the department chair. All cases of plagiarism resulting in an “F” for the course will be reported to the Dean. This can result in a recommendation to the Dean for suspension or expulsion from the university.
3. If the chair of the ELMP department finds that a student has been found to have committed acts of academic dishonesty in more than one ELMP course, the student is expelled from the ELMP program after due notice of the discovery. After one year, the department may rescind the expulsion upon the application of the student provided the

student evidences a genuine, informed, and vigorous commitment to academic integrity to the satisfaction of the department's faculty as a whole.

4. All department or instructor actions resulting from suspected violations of this policy will be taken in accordance with the students' due process rights. Nothing in this policy statement shall be construed to preclude the department from taking appropriate disciplinary action against forms of academic dishonesty not stipulated here.

Services: Disability Support Services offers services to students with disabilities to facilitate their full participation in all campus activities in accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. The office provides documentation review, reasonable accommodations, training groups, resource materials and referrals. For more information, see <http://www.studentaffairs.shu.edu/dss/>

Course Evaluation and Assignments

Plagiarism and human subjects tutorials (5% of final grade, due January 27 at 5 PM): Two key components of this class are to appropriately recognize the works of others and protect the reputations, identities, and safety of those being studied in research projects. To learn more about these critical topics, you will complete two online tutorials and submit the certificates of completion via Blackboard by January 27 at 5 PM. The two tutorials are available at the following websites:

Protecting human research participants (National Institutes of Health):
<https://phrp.nihtraining.com/users/login.php>

How to recognize plagiarism (Indiana University-Bloomington): <https://www.indiana.edu/~istd/>

Journal article critique (20% of final grade, due March 16 at 5 PM): In this assignment, you will critique an article from a peer-reviewed journal that was published between 2011 and 2016. (Hint: Look for an editorial board or under directions on how to submit an article on a journal's website to find out whether it was peer-reviewed.) Ideally, this article is on a topic of interest to you—and an article that you will then use later in the semester in your literature review. You will be expected to provide your comments on the following components:

- Information about the journal and peer-reviewed status. What journal did you choose, and how do you know the article was peer-reviewed? Briefly provide some information about the editorial board and whether they seem qualified to judge the quality of articles. (Peer-reviewed journals vary considerably in their rigor.)
- Summary of the article and its findings. Here, I expect to see a succinct summary of the article, including the research topics and questions, data and methods, and key results. Why is this article of interest to you and other potential readers?

- Strengths and weaknesses. What did the author(s) of the article do well, and what could have been improved upon? Provide an analysis of the research questions, literature review, data and methods, and concluding sections—and don't be afraid to be critical of the article. Are you convinced by the research findings, or did the author(s) need to provide more details?
- Recommendations for future research. What recommendations (if any) do the author(s) make for future research on the topic? Do you find these recommendations to be reasonable? And what would you do to potentially extend their research?

The midterm paper should be between 8 and 12 double-spaced pages in length (excluding tables and references) in standard APA format (12-point Times New Roman font, 1-inch margins, etc.).

Research proposal: The primary assignment for this class is the development of a research proposal in an area of your interest within the field of education. You will develop a draft of the proposal in stages during the course of semester, with a complete proposal due at the end of the semester. The final proposal should be between 15 and 20 double-spaced pages in length (excluding tables and references) in standard APA format.

The grading weights and deadlines for the proposal are as follows:

Research topic and problem statement (5% of semester grade, due February 17 at 5 PM): You will submit a brief summary (1-2 pages is perfectly fine) of your proposed topic and why you feel it is of interest to policymakers, practitioners, and/or researchers. Early submissions are encouraged, as are inquiries about potential topics. Students should meet with me before substantially changing their focus from the submitted topic.

Purpose statement (5%, due February 24 at 5 PM): You will submit a 1-2 page summary of what you intend to do in your research proposal. Why is your proposed study necessary, and how could it add to the body of knowledge on your topic of interest?

Research questions (5%, due March 23 at 5 PM): You will submit your draft research questions on your topic of interest. Make sure the questions are appropriate for your intended topic and do not imply causality when your research design focuses on relationships between factors.

Literature review (20%, due March 30 at 5 PM): In this component of the proposal, you will synthesize and analyze at least ten previous studies either on your topic of interest or in closely related areas to your topic. At least eight of the studies must be peer-reviewed (which includes many journal articles and some books), and five must have been published no earlier than 2011. An annotated bibliography is not acceptable for this assignment, as interpretation and analyses of the literature are critical in your development as an emerging scholar. This lit review should be between 8 and 12 pages for this submission.

Presentation (10%, in class on April 20 and 27): You will give a presentation of roughly 10-15 minutes (depending on final course enrollment) to the class summarizing your proposal and identifying areas in which you specifically want feedback. Presentation dates will be randomly assigned if needed to guarantee an equal number of presenters each week.

Learning how to give an effective presentation is one of the most important skills that you can learn in graduate school. The effectiveness of a presentation is strongly correlated with the amount of preparation, so take time to practice your presentation and make sure it is as clear as possible. I strongly recommend using simple slides with large font sizes that can be easily read in the back of the classroom.

There are three course-specific requirements for presentations. First, all slideshows must be submitted via Blackboard by **noon** that day so it can be loaded on the computer in advance of class. Second, I request that students not use Prezi for presentations and also avoid special graphics for transitions. (My eyes cannot handle the sudden zooms and transitions of Prezi, and they make some other people dizzy.) Finally, course presentation days are designed to be interactive. Grades will be assigned based on both the quality of the presentation and the feedback you provide to other students' presentations.

Blog post/op-ed piece (5%, due April 20): In addition to writing a scholarly research proposal, it is increasingly important to be able to communicate quickly and concisely with policymakers and practitioners. For that reason, you will write a 750-word summary of your proposal that would be suitable for a blog post or op-ed piece. More details on the assignment—and how to communicate research effectively with the public—will be provided in class two weeks prior to the due date.

Completed proposal (25%, due May 4 at 5 PM): The final paper must be submitted by this time via Blackboard and includes updated versions of the topic/problem statement, purpose statement, research questions, and literature review in addition to a proposed data and methods section of approximately 3-5 pages.

Notes on assignments: Your assignments will be graded in part based on the quality of writing, which includes clarity, proper formatting and citations, and correct spelling and grammar. Students are encouraged to make an appointment with the Writing Center (<http://www.shu.edu/academics/artsci/writing-center/>) as soon as a draft paper is complete in order to receive feedback. All assignments must be submitted via Blackboard; please let me know immediately if you encounter any problems uploading files.

Late assignments: There will be a 10% penalty assessed per day for late reflection papers, paper proposals, draft papers, or final papers unless an emergency exists. Late assignments will also receive minimal feedback. Class presentations cannot be made up unless prior arrangements have been made.

Individual consultations: In lieu of two class meetings, you will have a 20-minute one-on-one meeting with me in my office to discuss your research proposal and professional goals. Please come prepared for the meeting with any questions about your assignments, and send me any materials to look over no later than the Friday evening before the meeting.

Grading scale: The grading scale for assignments and the overall class is as follows:

93-100 pts- A
90-92 pts - A-
86-89 pts - B+
82-85 pts - B
78-81 pts - B-
73-77 pts - C+
70-72 pts - C
Below 70 pts - F

Schedule (subject to change)

January 13: Course introduction

Discuss syllabus and deadlines

Primer on plagiarism and research ethics

January 20: Identifying research topics

Lovitts, B. E. (2005). Being a good course-taker is not enough: A theoretical perspective on the transition to independent research. *Studies in Higher Education*, 30(2), 137-154.

Maxwell, J. A. (2009). Designing a qualitative study. P. 214-253 in L. Bickman & D. J. Rog (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of applied social research methods, second edition*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

January 27: Library resources and introduction to APA style

Plagiarism and human subjects tutorials due at 5 PM

Familiarize yourself with general APA guidelines:

<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/> or <http://www.apastyle.org/>

Daniel, L. G., & Onwuegbuzie, A. J. (2007). Editorial: Effective use of APA style in manuscript preparation. *Research in the Schools, 14*(1), 1-10.

February 3: Problem statements/significance of topic

Creswell, J. W. (2014). The introduction. P. 107-121 in *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Hernon, P., & Metoyer-Duran, C. (1993). Problem statements: An exploratory study of their function, significance, and form. *Library and Information Science Research, 15*(1), 71-92.

February 10: Purpose statements/identifying gaps in literature

No readings—but come prepared with an idea of your topic to discuss its place in the body of knowledge

February 17: Literature reviews

Topics and problem statements due at 5 PM

Boote, D. N., & Beile, P. (2005). Scholars before researchers: On the centrality of the dissertation literature review in research preparation. *Educational Researcher, 34*(6), 3-15.

Knopf, J. W. (2006). Doing a literature review. *PS: Political Science and Politics, 39*(1), 127-132.

February 24: Individual consultations in lieu of class meeting

March 2: No class (spring break)

March 9: Writing research questions

Boudah, D. J. (2011). Identifying a research problem and question, and searching relevant literature. P. 21-42 in *Conducting educational research: Guide to completing a major project*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Onwuegbuzie, A. J., & Leech, N. L. (2006). Linking research questions to mixed methods data analysis procedures. *The Qualitative Report*, 11(3), 474-498.

March 16: No class (Association for Education Finance and Policy conference)

Journal article critique due at 5 PM

March 23: Introduction to research methods

Research questions due at 5 PM

Holloway, I., & Wheeler, S. (2002). The nature of qualitative research: Development and perspectives. P. 3-25 in *Qualitative research in nursing (2nd ed.)*. Oxford, United Kingdom: Blackwell Science.

Pasek, J. (2012). *Writing the empirical social science research paper: A guide for the perplexed*. Working paper.

Shadish, W. R., Cook, T. D., & Campbell, D. T. (2002). Experiments and generalized causal inference. P. 1-32 in *Experimental and quasi-experimental designs for generalized causal inference*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin.

March 30: Writing grant proposals

Literature review due at 5 PM

Bourne, P. E., & Chalupa, L. M. (2006). Ten simple rules for getting grants. *PLoS Computational Biology*, 2(2), 59-60.

Przeworski, A., & Salomon, F. (1995). *The art of writing proposals*. Brooklyn, NY: Social Science Research Council.

April 6: Giving presentations and writing for broad audiences

Anderson, C., & Duarte, N. (2013). How to give a killer presentation. *Harvard Business Review*, 91(6), 121-125.

Burke, K. L. (2015, July 31). 12 tips for scientists writing for the general public. *American Scientist*. <http://www.americanscientist.org/blog/pub/12-tips-for-scientists-writing-for-the-general-public>.

Perry, D. M. (2013, July 22). My initial public offering. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. <http://chronicle.com/article/My-Initial-Public-Offering/140407/>

April 13: Individual consultations in lieu of class meeting

April 20: Presentations

Blog post/op-ed piece due at 5 PM

April 27: Presentations

May 4, 5 PM: Final paper due