

METHODS OF RESEARCH IN EDUCATION

University of Georgia ♦ ERSH 6200 ♦ Fall, 2009 ♦ 3 cr hrs
Bldg. 7210, Room 122 ♦ Gwinnett University Campus ♦ Tuesdays 5:00-7:45 p.m.

Course Objectives. During and upon completion of the course you will be able to:

This course is designed to enhance your understanding of educational research and to improve your ability to comprehend and use research reports. The course is designed expressly for Master's students in Human Resource and Organizational Development (HROD) and Adult Education (AE). Specific objectives include:

- Describe the important role of research in your HROD practice.
- Demonstrate enhanced skills to conduct literature reviews and analyze/synthesize literature/research.
- Understand research paradigms and the related methods used to conduct research.
- Demonstrate critical skills for appraising HROD research and its applicability in your practice.
- Comprehend and utilize research reports to inform your HROD practice.
- Demonstrate skills for proposing a field based research project.

Required Texts and Readings

Required:

- Course Packet. I will provide copies of all assigned readings until we get a packet on e-reserves or WebCT at which time I will provide further instructions.

Supplemental (not required):

- Fraenkel, J.R., & Wallen, N. E. (2006). *How to design and evaluate research in education (8th ed)*. New York: McGraw-Hill. (ISBN: 0-07-298136-9) .
- Merriam, S.B. (2002). *Qualitative Research in Practice: Examples and Analysis*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.(ISBN: 0-7879-5895-6).
- Swanson, R. A., & Holton, E.F. (2005). *Research in Organizations*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler.
- Creswell, J.W. (2003). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches (2nd ed.)*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- APA 6th Edition

Contact Information

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E-mail is the best way to reach me. You can expect a response within 48 hours.

Office hours by appointment: Please make an appointment at least 2 days ahead of when you would hope to meet. We can meet before or after class, or we can set-up an appointment that best accommodates our schedules and locations.

Active Learning & Creating Our Learning Environment

*“Teaching only happens when learning does.
“Learning only takes place when you teach something to yourself.”
-Anthony De Mello*

Learning can only happen when you take an active role. It is important to place more emphasis on developing your insights and skills, rather than transmitting information. Knowledge is more important than facts and definitions. It is a way of looking at the world, an ability to interpret and organize future information. An active learning approach will more likely result in long-term retention and better understanding because you make the content of what you are learning concrete and real in your own mind.

Although an active role can look differently for various individuals, it is expected in this class that you will work to explore issues and ideas under the guidance of those around you (teacher and your colleagues). You can do this by reflecting on the content and activities of this course, asking questions, striving for answers, interpreting observations, and discussing issues. During class we will strive to clarify, supplement, and analyze the things you are reading. Lecture and presentation will be minimal and, instead, class sessions will include small and large discussion groups, “stories”, simulation, experiential exercises, application activities, case studies, guest speakers, etc... We will learn much more about the content based on your opinions, knowledge, and experience and you are *strongly* encouraged to contribute in class. *You are responsible for all assigned readings and all materials, whether presented or not presented in class.*

As a participant in this class, you are expected to:

1. Be committed to learning as much as possible.
2. Be ready to work hard to reach class and learning goals.
3. Take responsibility to direct your own learning and study. Motivate yourself to excel in this course!
4. Raise relevant and fresh questions and contribute your observations and opinions. Help to keep our inquiry rigorous and lively.
5. Take class and team responsibilities seriously.
6. Practice good and constructive group participation methods and behaviors.
7. Conduct yourself with a high level of professionalism.
8. Treat other class members with the same respect and courtesy you would like for yourself.
9. Help create a safe learning community that strives for mutual exploration, discovery and learning.

10. Treat information shared in class with respect, sensitivity, and confidentiality.
11. Bring your readings to every class.
12. Attend every class. In the event that you must miss class, it is your responsibility to make arrangements with your colleagues to review the session and obtain materials that you did not get. If you must miss more than 2 classes during this semester, your final grade for the course will automatically be reduced.
13. Check your e-mail at least three times a week, and before coming to each class. I will often send announcements about the class in-between our meeting times.
14. Provide feedback and input about how the course is going. Your continuous input is invited. I will also provide a few opportunities to more formally offer your input about how to improve the course, and every reasonable effort will be made to address your input.

Accommodations

I am committed to doing whatever is necessary to make this learning experience as fulfilling as possible for people who may have special needs due to a disability, whether visible or invisible. If there is anything I can do--such as providing materials in alternative formats, assuring physical access to class sessions, or being sensitive to interaction difficulties that may be posed by communication and/or learning disabilities--please take time to discuss your concerns with me early in the semester so we can work together to make the necessary accommodations for you. Please know that anything you discuss with us in this regard will be held in strictest confidence.

Assignments

All academic work must meet the standards contained in "A Culture of Honesty." Students are responsible for informing themselves about those standards before performing any academic work. The link to more detailed information about academic honesty can be found (until August 22) at:

<http://www.uga.edu/honesty/>

	Possible Points	Earned Points
1. Active Participation	10	
2. Session Leader	10	
3. Abstract and Critique of Research Studies (2 @ 10 points each)	20	
4. Volunteer Reviewer for AHRD Proceedings	20	
5. Research Proposal and Presentation	30	
6. Reflection Paper	10	
TOTAL POINTS	100	

Grades	Points
A	90-100
B	80-89

C	70-79
D	Re-register
F	Re-register

1. Active Participation

Since this course uses a number of active methods (including WebCT), your active engagement and participation is very, very important—so important that it warrants a grade. It is expected that you will strive to exceed all of the expectations listed earlier in this syllabus under “Active Learning and Creating Our Learning Environment” as well as those set forth in the Discussion Guidelines for WebCT that is posted on WebCT. I assume “A” effort, and will talk with you personally if you are not meeting these expectations.

2. Session Leader

Work individually or in groups of two and choose a quantitative or qualitative research methodology and provide a 20-30 minute presentation and lead the class discussion for the week the topic methodology is being discussed. Students need to consult with Dr. Dirani on the topic and presentation schedule.

3. Abstract and Critique of Research Studies (2 assignments at 10 points each)

Find two studies conducted within the mode of each of the two paradigms examined in this course (1 qualitative and 1 quantitative). Write an abstract for each of the studies and critique each on the basis of how well it meets the criteria and assumptions of its paradigm.

4. Volunteer Reviewer for AHRD Proceedings

Go to the Academy of Human Resource Development (AHRD) website (www.ahrd.org) and check the 11 different tracks of research on the website. Choose the track that best fits your practice/research interests, contact the Track Chair Editor (TCE) and volunteer to review manuscripts for the upcoming AHRD Conference (you need to do this asap)

5. Research Proposal

Work individually or in groups of 2 to develop a research proposal on a topic of your own choosing. This paper will involve you outlining the major components of a research proposal based on a problem/question you formulate. We’ll spend time in class later in the semester talking more about this assignment and I will provide further guidelines in a few weeks. Present your proposal in class at the end of the semester.

I highly recommend that you start working on your proposal asap and submit it to one of the AHRD conference tracks (deadline for submissions is September 8th).

6. Reflection Paper (Choose one of the following topics)

- 1) **Modes of Inquiry:** Reflect on your own evolving views of the different approaches to research we examine by writing a short reflective paper. Papers should be 3-4 pages double-spaced (or 2-3 single-spaced).

Or

- 2) **Scholarly Practice:** Reflect on the concept of being a scholar practitioner and how this does/will “connect” with your current and future practice. How are you making sense of this new content in relationship to your practice? What does it mean to you? Why? What commitments are you willing to make about how research will fit in your professional life? Why? Etc...

Policy Re: Grades

1. Complete your assignments on time. Late assignments will result in significantly lower grades (and a zero grade will be given for all assignments received after Dec. 8th class meeting).
2. In the spirit of continuous improvement, assignments may be re-written in **very specific cases** for a higher grade. If you are allowed re-writing an assignment, there are four requirements:
 - Your revised paper must show *substantive* improvements. That means major improvements that specifically address expressed concerns, major gaps, or substantive things that were lacking or missing from the original assignment. Papers will not re-graded for proofreading or APA edits--the revisions you make to be considered for a higher grade than originally earned must be content-focused and substantive.
 - You must include a cover sheet specifically outlining the improvements that you have made--highlighting what was done and specific page numbers in the new version. Or, if you prefer, you can use the “Track Changes” feature in Microsoft Word and turn in a copy of the edited paper with edits shown as well as a “clean” copy.
 - When you turn in your second version, you must turn in your original version (with the Professor’s notes) and the grade sheet with it.
 - You can submit one re-write only, and it must be within two weeks of getting your original assignment back.