

Educational Psychology Thesis

**GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT
Masters of Science in Educational Psychology**

EDUC 599

Educational Psychology Thesis

Spring 2010

Meeting Time/Days

Location

PROFESSOR(S):

Name: Kim Sheridan

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Office location: ROB A354

Office hours: T TH 3-5

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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

- A. Prerequisites:** Faculty member (thesis chair) approval and completion of coursework in Educational Psychology exclusive of 6 credit hours.
- B. Course catalog description:** The thesis is based on original research and students should enroll in this course after completion of majority of program coursework with the exception of 6 credit hours. The goal is to enable students to demonstrate their integrative knowledge and skills accrued through study in their concentration area in educational psychology.
- C. Specific course description:** This course provides the student opportunities to conduct original research and to demonstrate integrated skills and knowledge by producing a thesis with the assistance and guidance of a thesis committee.

NATURE OF COURSE DELIVERY:

This course consists of scheduled meetings with the thesis committee, periodic progress reports, and an oral defense of the proposal and the thesis.

LEARNER OUTCOMES:

This course is designed to enable students to:

- select an appropriate topic and formulate relevant research questions
- identify and evaluate theoretical and empirical research studies
- explain the connection of their research to the research base in Educational Psychology
- identify appropriate measures/instruments

- collect data and identify related procedures
- conduct statistical analyses using appropriate computer software
- interpret results
- report and discuss research findings
- discuss educational applications and limitations of enacted research study
- discuss future research in the area of interest
- present thesis proposal
- present thesis

PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS:

The program goals are consistent with the following Learner-Centered Psychological Principles outlined by the American Psychological Association Presidential Task Force in Education (APA, Division 15).

- Principle 1: The Nature of Learning Process
- Principle 2: Goals of the Learning Process
- Principle 3: Construction of Knowledge
- Principle 4: Strategic Thinking
- Principle 5: Thinking about Thinking
- Principle 6: Context of Learning
- Principle 7: Motivational and Emotional Influences on Learning
- Principle 8: Intrinsic Motivation to Learn
- Principle 9: Effects of Motivation on Effort
- Principle 11: Social Influences on Learning
- Principle 13: Learning and Diversity

For more information please see:

American Psychological Association (1997). *Learner-Centered Psychological Principles: Guidelines for the Teaching of Educational Psychology in Teacher Education Programs.*

Retrieved October 14, 2002 from <http://www.apa.org>

REQUIRED TEXTS:

Required text will vary by program emphasis and project option. These are likely to include a style manual and data analytic text such as:

Green, S. B., & Salkind, N. J. (2007). *Using SPSS for Windows and Macintosh: Analyzing and understanding data* (5th edition). Upper Saddle River, New Jersey.

American Psychological Association (2009). *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th Edition). Washington DC: American Psychological Association.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS, PERFORMANCE-BASED ASSESSMENT, AND EVALUATION CRITERIA:

A. Course Requirements

It is expected that students will:

1. Provide bibliography associated with the thesis proposal
2. Meet regularly with thesis chair and committee members
3. Write a proposal for the thesis which needs to be approved by the thesis committee
4. Complete and defend the thesis

B. Performance-based assessments

Please see assessment rubrics for thesis proposal and thesis

C. Course Evaluation

1. **Thesis Proposal Development:** Students are expected to propose their thesis ideas to their committee. Students will need to complete a written proposal that includes a thorough introduction (literature review leading to proposed study), hypotheses, methods section (including participants, materials/apparatus and procedure sections), and a brief plan for data analysis.
2. **Proposal Defense:** After completing their thesis proposal, students need to orally defend the proposal before the committee.
3. **Thesis Preparation:** The manuscript should have an introduction of the problem/significance of the study, literature review, formulate the purpose of study and related research question, methods and procedures, results, discussion, (including implications, limitations, and recommendations for future research and practice) references, tables, and figures. The manuscript should follow the APA style guide.
4. **Thesis Defense:** At the defense, students present a summary of the thesis, followed by comments and questions from the committee. After the defense is concluded, the thesis committee meets privately to reach a decision.

D. Grading Policy

Thesis Proposal Development/Defense	20/10 pts.
Final Thesis/Defense	60/10pts.
TOTAL	100 pts.*

Pass: a score of 83% higher – OR - an indication of ‘competence’ assessed by the rubrics

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT STATEMENT OF EXPECTATIONS:

All students must abide by the following:

Students are expected to exhibit professional behavior and dispositions. See <http://gse.gmu.edu/facultystaffres/profdisp.htm> for a listing of these dispositions.

Students must follow the guidelines of the University Honor Code. See <http://www.gmu.edu/catalog/apolicies/#Anchor12> for the full honor code.

Students must agree to abide by the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing. See <http://www.gmu.edu/facstaff/policy/newpolicy/1301gen.html>. Click on responsible Use of Computing Policy at the bottom of the screen.

Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with the GMU Office of Disability Services (ODS) and inform the instructor, in writing, at the beginning of the semester. See <http://www2.gmu.edu/dpt/unilife/ods/> or call 703-993-2474 to access the ODS.

PROPOSED CLASS SCHEDULE

Date	Topic/Learning Experiences	Readings and Assignments
Week 1	Confirmation of negotiated proposal and evaluation criteria	Readings are dependent on the activity chosen
Week 2	Development of bibliographic resources and research problem	
Week 3	HSRB proposal	
Week 4	Progress meeting with thesis chair	
Week 5	Independent research activity	
Week 6	Thesis proposal defense	
Week 7	Independent research activity	
Week 8	Independent research activity	
Week 9	Progress meeting with thesis chair	
Week 10	Independent research activity	
Week 11	Independent research activity	
Week 12	Submit thesis to committee	
Week 13	Thesis Defense	
Week 14	Revisions	
Week 15	Formal thesis review and approval	

ASSESSMENT RUBRIC(S)

Thesis Proposal Evaluation Rubric

Student Name _____

Date _____

Title of Thesis _____

Criteria	Outstanding (4)	Competent (3)	Minimal (2)	Unsatisfactory (1)
<i>Content</i>				
Introduction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Description of the nature and importance of the problem • Justification for the need of the study is provided based on the literature, societal value, or other relevant sources • Research problem is well-formulated within the conceptual framework of the study • Purpose of research and research questions/hypotheses clearly stated 	Introduction fully addresses all 4 criteria. The conceptual framework/theoretical basis for the study are aligned with the research problem. The research questions/hypotheses are well aligned with the research problem. The study addresses an important issue in the field.	Introduction addresses all 4 criteria. The conceptual framework/theoretical basis for the study are aligned with the research problem. The research questions/hypotheses are well aligned with the research problem.	Introduction does not address all 4 criteria. The conceptual framework/theoretical basis for the study are not adequately related to the research problem. The research questions/hypotheses are not well aligned with the research problem.	Introduction does not address the criteria. The conceptual framework/theoretical basis for the study are not provided. The research questions/hypotheses are not articulated.

<p>Methods</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Description of data sources and data collection for the study • Description of research design for addressing research questions/problems/hypotheses • Description of data analysis procedures for the study 	<p>Methods fully address all three criteria. Data sources, research design, and data analysis are appropriate and thoroughly described. Selection and justification of methods reflects contemporary educational research methodology. The research methods are well aligned and address the research problem and related questions.</p>	<p>Methods address all three criteria. There are methodological concerns with data sources, research design, or data analysis OR methods are appropriate, yet not fully described. The research methods are aligned and address the research problem and related questions.</p>	<p>Methods do not address all three criteria. Data sources, research design, and/or data analysis are not fully appropriate.</p>	<p>Methods do not address the criteria. Data sources, research design, and data analysis are not appropriate.</p>
<p>Ethical Considerations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CITI training is completed • Considers issues of social justice 	<p>CITI training is completed Human Subjects Review Board application is approved. Social justice issues are thoroughly considered and explicated in the paper.</p>	<p>CITI training is completed satisfactorily. Social justice is only addressed superficially. More work is needed to explicate social justice issues in the project.</p>	<p>CITI training is completed satisfactorily. Social justice is considered in only a superficial way as the issues involved are not thoroughly explored.</p>	<p>CITI training is not completed satisfactorily. Project elements do not consider equity in any way.</p>
<p>Organization and Clarity of Writing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality of writing • Adherence to Guidelines and APA style • Organization of manuscript 	<p>Writing is exemplary, demonstrating clarity, coherence, and conciseness without sacrifice of thoroughness. Minimum typographical and grammatical errors found. Excellent use of advance organizers and transition paragraphs demonstrated. Excellent adherence to the required guidelines and APA style and organization.</p>	<p>Writing is exemplary in all respects <i>except</i> for a lack of thoroughness in the presentation of ideas OR <i>some demonstrated weakness</i> in use of advanced organizers and transition paragraphs OR in the use of some of the critical elements of the guidelines or APA style (e.g., use of subheadings, pagination, citations, references, and table headings);</p>	<p>Writing conveys a pervasive lack of clarity, coherence, or thoroughness AND limited use of advanced organizers or transition paragraphs OR found to be replete with typographical or grammatical errors OR only minimum adherence to the required guidelines or APA style and organization.</p>	<p>Writing demonstrates only a bare minimum degree of clarity and organization with little or no attention given to the required guidelines and APA style and organization. Typographical and grammatical errors are pervasive.</p>

Thesis Evaluation Rubric

Student Name _____

Date _____

Title of Thesis _____

Criteria	Outstanding (4)	Competent (3)	Minimal (2)	Unsatisfactory (1)
Content				
Introduction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Description of the nature and importance of the problem • Justification for the need of the study is provided based on the literature, societal value, or other relevant sources • Research problem is well-formulated within the conceptual framework of the study • Purpose of research and research questions/hypotheses clearly stated 	Introduction fully addresses all 4 criteria. The conceptual framework/theoretical basis for the study are aligned with the research problem. The research questions/hypotheses are well aligned with the research problem. The study addresses an important issue in the field.	Introduction addresses all 4 criteria. The conceptual framework/theoretical basis for the study are aligned with the research problem. The research questions/hypotheses are well aligned with the research problem.	Introduction does not address all 4 criteria. The conceptual framework/theoretical basis for the study are not adequately related to the research problem. The research questions/hypotheses are not well aligned with the research problem.	Introduction does not address the criteria. The conceptual framework/theoretical basis for the study are not provided. The research questions/hypotheses are not articulated.
Methods <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Description of data sources and data collection for the study • Description of research design for addressing research questions/problems/hypotheses • Description of data analysis 	Methods fully address all three criteria. Data sources, research design, and data analysis are appropriate and thoroughly described. Selection and justification of methods reflects contemporary educational research methodology. The research	Methods address all three criteria. There are methodological concerns with data sources, research design, or data analysis OR methods are appropriate, yet not fully described. The research methods are aligned and address the research	Methods do not address all three criteria. Data sources, research design, and/or data analysis are not fully appropriate.	Methods do not address the criteria. Data sources, research design, and data analysis are not appropriate.

procedures for the study	methods are well aligned and address the research problem and related questions.	problem and related questions.		
Results/Findings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report of data analyses • Description of results/findings • Interpretation of results/findings 	<p>Results/Findings fully address all three criteria. Data analyses are appropriate, complete, and accurately described. Reporting and interpretation of the results/findings are appropriate for the methodology employed (e.g., qualitative, quantitative, mixed methods).</p>	<p>Results/Findings address all three criteria. Data analyses are appropriate but are not complete or accurately described. Reporting and interpretation of the results/findings are generally appropriate for the methodology employed (e.g., qualitative, quantitative, mixed methods).</p>	<p>Results/Findings do not address all three criteria. Data analyses are not fully appropriate or are incomplete.</p>	<p>Results/Findings do not address the criteria. Data analyses are not appropriate.</p>
Discussion and Interpretation of Findings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interpretation of findings in relation to the research problem, literature, and conceptual framework • Identification of limitations and validity issues • Discussion of implications for research and/or practice in the field • Discussion of directions for future research 	<p>Discussion fully addresses all four criteria. Interpretations and generalizations are well grounded in the results/findings. Findings and their interpretations are meaningfully connected research problem, literature, and conceptual framework. Limitations and validity issues are thoughtfully addressed. Implications and directions for future research stem from the findings are well justified and explained.</p>	<p>Discussion addresses all four criteria. Interpretations and generalizations are grounded in the results/findings. Findings and their interpretations are generally connected research problem, literature, and conceptual framework. Limitations and validity issues are addressed. Implications and directions for future research are provided.</p>	<p>Discussion does not address all four criteria. Interpretations and/or generalizations are not grounded in the results/findings. Findings and their interpretations are not connected research problem, literature, and conceptual framework. Limitations and validity issues are not fully addressed. Implications or</p>	<p>Discussion does not address the criteria. Interpretations and generalizations are not grounded in the results/findings. Findings and their interpretations are not connected research problem, literature, and conceptual framework. Limitations and validity issues are not addressed. Implications and directions for future research are not provided.</p>

			directions for future research are not provided.	
<p>Ethical Considerations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human Subjects Review Board application approval • Considers issues of social justice • Data were collected according to the HSRB protocol 	<p>CITI training is completed Human Subjects Review Board application is approved. Social justice issues are thoroughly considered and explicated in the paper. Data were collected according to the HSRB protocol</p>	<p>CITI training is completed satisfactorily and Human Subjects Review Board application is approved. Social justice is only addressed superficially. More work is needed to explicate social justice issues in the project. Data were collected according to the HSRB protocol</p>	<p>CITI training is completed satisfactorily and Human Subjects Review Board application is approved Social justice is considered in only a superficial way as the issues involved are not thoroughly explored. Data were not collected according to the HSRB protocol</p>	<p>CITI training is not completed satisfactorily. Project elements do not consider equity in any way. Data were not collected according to the HSRB protocol</p>
<p>Organization and Clarity of Writing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality of writing • Adherence to Guidelines and APA style • Organization of manuscript 	<p>Writing is exemplary, demonstrating clarity, coherence, and conciseness without sacrifice of thoroughness. Minimum typographical and grammatical errors found. Excellent use of advance organizers and transition paragraphs demonstrated. Excellent adherence to the required guidelines and APA style and organization.</p>	<p>Writing is exemplary in all respects <i>except</i> for a lack of thoroughness in the presentation of ideas OR <i>some demonstrated weakness</i> in use of advanced organizers and transition paragraphs OR in the use of some of the critical elements of the guidelines or APA style (e.g., use of subheadings, pagination, citations, references, and table headings);</p>	<p>Writing conveys a pervasive lack of clarity, coherence, or thoroughness AND limited use of advanced organizers or transition paragraphs OR found to be replete with typographical or grammatical errors OR only minimum adherence to the required guidelines or APA style and organization.</p>	<p>Writing demonstrates only a bare minimum degree of clarity and organization with little or no attention given to the required guidelines and APA style and organization. Typographical and grammatical errors are pervasive.</p>