

**George Mason University
Graduate School of Education
Program: Special Education
Spring 1 2012**

Syllabus EDSE 590: Research in Special Education (3 credits)

Cohort: Fairfax County, 19 Section: 658

Thursdays, 4:30 – 8:30

Fairfax High School, Room D133

Instructor: Katie Klingler Tackett, PhD

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

Describes fundamental concepts and practices in educational research in special education. Covers specific applications of educational research methods to problems in special education. Emphasizes review and critique of special education research, and applied classroom research for teachers.

Prerequisites*: There are no *required* prerequisites for this course, but each Program in Special Education strongly *recommends a specific sequence*. Please refer to your Program of Studies to determine where this course fits within your overall program.

*Advising contact information: Please make sure that you are being advised on a regular basis as to your status and progress through your program. You may wish to contact Jancy Templeton, GMU Special Education Advisor, at jtemple1@gmu.edu or 703-993-2387. Please be prepared with your G number when you contact her.

Course Objectives: Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Identify and understand different methods of educational research suitable for different research purposes in special education.
- Describe and discuss basic theories and methods of quantitative experimental and quasi-experimental research in special education.
- Describe and discuss basic theories and methods of survey research in special education.
- Describe and discuss basic theories and methods of single subject research in special education.
- Describe and discuss basic theories and methods of qualitative research in special education.
- Describe and implement teacher application of classroom research to address specific classroom problems.

Relationship of Course to Program Goals and Professional Organizations: This course is part of the George Mason University, Graduate School of Education, and Special Education Program for teacher licensure in the Commonwealth of Virginia in the special education areas of Emotional Disturbance,

Learning Disabilities, and Mental Retardation. This program complies with the standards for teacher licensure established by the Council for Exceptional Children, the major special education professional organization. As such, the learning objectives for this course cover many of the competencies for learning environments and social interactions (CEC Standard 5) and assessment (CEC Standard 8). The CEC Standards can be found on the following web site: <http://www.cec.sped.org/> by clicking on the Professional Standards button to the left of the homepage.

Nature of Course Delivery: Learning activities include the following:

- Class lectures, handouts, discussions, activities and participation
- Study and independent library research
- Relevant media presentations
- Application activities
- Presentation of research article papers and research projects

REQUIRED RESOURCES

Textbooks

American Psychological Association. (2010). *Publication manual* (6th ed.). Washington, DC: Author.

McMillan, J. H. (2011). *Educational research: Fundamentals for the consumer* (6th ed.). Reading, MA:

Addison-Wesley Longman.

Blackboard

Check Blackboard weekly for additional course materials at <http://courses.gmu.edu>

TaskStream

Every student registered for any EDSE course as of the Fall 2007 semester is required to submit signature assignments to TaskStream (regardless of whether a course is an elective, a onetime course or part of an undergraduate minor). TaskStream information is available at <http://gse.gmu.edu/programs/sped/>. Failure to submit the assignment to TaskStream will result in reporting the course grade as Incomplete (IN). Unless this grade is changed, upon completion of the required submission, the IN will convert to an F nine weeks into the following semester.

Articles

Other readings relevant to special education research applications may be assigned at the discretion of the instructor as indicated by the needs and interests of the class.

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Student Expectations

- Students must adhere to the guidelines of the George Mason University Honor Code [See <http://academicintegrity.gmu.edu/honorcode/>].

- Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with the George Mason University Office of Disability Services (ODS) and inform their instructor, in writing, at the beginning of the semester [See <http://ods.gmu.edu/>].
- Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing [See <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/1301gen.html>].
- Students are responsible for the content of university communications sent to their George Mason University email account and are required to activate their account and check it regularly. All communication from the university, college, school, and program will be sent to students solely through their Mason email account.
- Students must follow the university policy stating that all sound emitting devices shall be turned off during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.
- Students are expected to exhibit professional behaviors and dispositions at all times.

Campus Resources

- The George Mason University Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) staff consists of professional counseling and clinical psychologists, social workers, and counselors who offer a wide range of services (e.g., individual and group counseling, workshops and outreach programs) to enhance students' personal experience and academic performance [See <http://caps.gmu.edu/>].
- The George Mason University Writing Center staff provides a variety of resources and services (e.g., tutoring, workshops, writing guides, handbooks) intended to support students as they work to construct and share knowledge through writing [See <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/>].

Core Values Commitment

The College of Education & Human Development is committed to collaboration, ethical leadership, innovation, research-based practice, and social justice. Students are expected to adhere to these principles. <http://cehd.gmu.edu/values/>

- For additional information on the College of Education and Human Development, Graduate School of Education, please visit our website [See <http://gse.gmu.edu/>].

Cohort Information: Please visit Blackboard at <http://gmucommunity.blackboard.com> and begin by clicking "login" and using the User Name "cohort" followed by the Password "cohort" to access a variety of materials including the Frequently Asked Questions Guide, Enrollment forms, Textbook information, and TaskStream support.

APA Style: The standard format for any written work in the College of Education. If you are unfamiliar with APA, it would benefit you to purchase the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (6th ed.) or to access one of the internet sites that provides a summary of this information. All work produced outside of class must be typed unless otherwise noted.

Academic Integrity: Students in this course are expected to exhibit academic integrity at all times. Be aware that plagiarism is presenting someone else's work as your own. **Whether the act is deliberate or unintentional is irrelevant.** You must take great care to give credit to an author when you borrow either exact words or ideas. Generally, if you use 4 or more words in a row you should use quotation marks and a proper citation. Evidence of plagiarism or any other form of cheating in this class will result in a zero on that assignment and a report of the incident to the registrar. Remember that plagiarism is a very serious offense and can result in dismissal from the University. The instructor reserves the right to submit your work to **turnitin** or **safeassign**, plagiarism detection services, for an integrity assessment as needed.

IMPORTANT NOTES

- For a satisfactory grade in the course, students are expected to attend all classes, arrive on time, demonstrate professional behavior in the classroom (see Professional Disposition Criteria), and complete all assignments with professional quality and in a timely manner.
- When absence from class is unavoidable, students are responsible for getting all class information (e.g., handouts, announcements, notes, syllabus revisions, etc.) from another class member prior to the class meeting that follows the absence. Be aware that any points earned for participation in class activities during a time of absence will not be earned and cannot be reclaimed.
- The use of electronic devices that produce sound or otherwise interfere with the learning of others (i.e., cell phones, pagers, etc.) is prohibited during class. Please turn these devices off before the start of class.
- Computers may be used to take notes during class, but they may not be used for internet exploration or other non-class activities during class time.
- Exemplary work may be kept and shared in the future (with your consent, of course!).
- Routine access (daily) to electronic mail and Blackboard for communication and assignments is crucial to effective participation in this class.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND ASSIGNMENTS

1. *Participation, Attendance, and Class Activities (30 points)*

Class attendance and participation is demonstrated by attending class and being psychologically available to learn, completing and handing in weekly class assignments, and participating in class discussions/activities throughout the semester. Points are negatively affected by being late to class, demonstrating a disinterest in the material/discussions (e.g., reflection activities, small group activities, discussions, etc.), being unprepared with materials, and/or absences. Points are positively impacted by thoughtful contributions made in class, listening to the ideas of other peers, respectively, and demonstrating an enthusiasm for learning. **Each week, there may be a weekly quiz or a group activity that will count towards this grade.** If you are not in attendance, thus not able to participate and contribute to class when these activities occur, assigned points will not be earned and cannot be made up at another time.

Point values can range from 2 to 4 per activity.

2. *Research Roundup Presentations (10 points)*

Students will informally present on a current (published within the last 12 months) study related to education. Presentations will be brief (10 minutes max), discussion-based, and will require little preparation beyond reading the article. Students may select their own article or ask the instructor to assign them one. Sign-ups for research round-up presentations will be done during the first class session.

3. *Article Critiques (50 points)*

Students are required to complete 5 article critiques using the Critique Guide Sheet, provided on Blackboard, during the course of the semester. The article critiques will be graded on the appropriateness of the selected article, clear and thorough summary, accuracy in APA citation, and overall thoughtfulness in analysis. Time may be given in class to begin (and possibly complete) each critique.

- The first article critique will be done in class (as a class) on 1/19.
- The second article critique must be done independently on an intervention article directly related to your research topic.
- The third article critique must be on a qualitative study*. It may be done individually or in groups.
- The fourth article critique must be done on a survey study*. It may be done individually or in groups.
- The fifth article critique must be on a literature synthesis*. It may be done individually or in groups.

*The instructor will bring in hard copies of various studies that meet the criteria for each article critique. You may use one of those studies or bring in a study that is on a topic of interest for you. If you bring in your own study, it must be published in a peer-reviewed journal within the last 5 years.

Article Critique Guide

Name:

Type of Article:

Points: /10

Identify key points from the article. (2 points)

1. Research Question/Hypothesis:

2. Participants:

3. Procedures:

4. Results:

How would you cite this article in text? (1 point)

How would you reference this article on the reference page? (1 point)

List & justify at least 2 strengths of the article/study (2 points)

1.

Because:

2.

Because:

List & justify at least 2 weaknesses of the article/study. (2 points)

1.

Because:

2.

Because:

What is one thing you learned about the research methodology in reading this article? (1 point)
What is one thing you learned about the content in reading this article? (1 point)
Other Comments or Questions

4. Class Qualitative Research Project (25 points)

The class will conduct a qualitative research project. The topic, question(s), measure(s), and due dates will be decided upon by the class. Once the research design and plan are selected and agreed upon, tasks will be assigned to groups. Grades will be calculated using peer and self evaluation.

*5. * Research Proposal (65 points)*

The research proposal is designed to provide experience in designing and evaluating a research application project in special education. Students will employ appropriate intervention research methodology (experimental, quasi-experimental, or single subject) to investigate an area of interest in their classrooms or schools.

Students will prepare a research proposal on this project using the format recommended by the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (6th ed.). The research proposal will include an introduction, literature review, methods, and discussion (limitations only) sections. **NOTE: As this is the signature assignment for EDSE 590, submit both a hard copy for grading AND an electronic version to TaskStream as directed below.**

Students may turn in sections of the paper for feedback on particular dates (see course schedule.) Feedback will not be given past the assigned dates.

Research Project Proposal Rubric		
	Points	Comments
Introduction (5) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Problem Clear • Purpose Clear • Brief description of variables 		
Literature Review (8) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DV lit • IV lit • Research Questions • Logic is Clear 		
Method Research Design (8) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design described • Why design was selected 		
Participants (4) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposed subjects described • Sampling method to be used described 		
Setting (2) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposed context described 		
Intervention (6) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposed intervention described • Details given about proposed frequency, duration, provider, etc. 		
Measures (6) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposed measures described • Details given about proposed administration timelines, procedures, etc. 		
Data Analysis (6) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Description of how data will be analyzed (PND, t-tests, ANOVA, etc.) 		
Discussion (10) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possible limitations of methodology (threats to internal and external validity) • Proposed steps to minimize limitations 		
APA Style/Form (10) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ref. list • In-text citations • Graduate level work (typos, writing style, etc.) 		

Total	/65	

6. Research Application Poster Presentation (10 points)

As master's level educators in the field, you will often be asked to attend and present at professional conferences. At our last class meeting, we will simulate a professional conference, where all students will be required to bring a tri-fold presentation board illustrating the major topic areas in their research proposal. All students will be expected to design their presentation boards with an audience in mind, taking into account readability of information, type of content displayed, and creativity exhibited in the final product. Students should be able to informally talk about their presentation boards to peers as well as answer questions the night of the presentation. The grading rubric and a sample presentation will be available on the class Blackboard site. Instructor and peer feedback will be used to calculate the grade.

Grading

Below are the values of the various kinds of work required for the course, but students should always bear in mind that grading is primarily a judgment about your performance on a particular assignment. Grades are designed to indicate your success in completing assignments, not the level of effort you put into them.

Your performance in the course will be rated upon the following

Participation in Class Activities	40
Research Roundup Presentation	10
5 Article Critiques	50
Class Qualitative Research Project	25
Research Proposal*	65
Research Proposal Poster Presentation	10
Total	200

***The Research Proposal is the signature assignment that will be posted to TaskStream**

The course letter grade will be determined by a point system in which the following thresholds will be used: **A=94 – 100%, A-=90 – 93%, B+=87 – 89%, B=80 – 86%, C=70 – 79%, F=< than 70%**

***Traditional rounding principles apply (i.e. .5 rounds up)**

All assignments should be typed (submitted as hard copy please) and are due at 4:30 p.m. on the dates indicated. **In fairness to students who make the effort to submit work on time, 5% of the total assignment points will be deducted each day from your grade for late assignments.** Please retain a copy of your assignments in addition to the one you submit.

A final grade of Incomplete will be considered only due to extreme extenuating circumstances; please contact the instructor.

COURSE SCHEDULE

- The course schedule WILL change according to class needs.
- **The class will follow Fairfax County and GMU school closures.**

Class	Date	Big Topics	Readings and Assignments Due
1.	1/12/12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Start of Class Logistics • Pretest • Syllabus • Sign up for Research Roundup Presentation • Ways of Knowing • Two Research Projects 	READ: BRING: DUE: Registration forms
2.	1/19/12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research Roundup Presentation - model • Intervention Research Overview <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experimental • Quasi-experimental • Quality Indicators • How to determine a Research Project Topic/Research Questions • Qualitative Project Discussion • In-class Article Critique #1 	READ: BRING: DUE:
•	1/26/12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research Roundup Presentation - model • Ethical Concerns • Intervention Research Overview <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single Subject • Quality Indicators for Single-Subject Studies • Research Questions/Hypotheses • Writing a Literature Review • Qualitative Project Discussion 	READ: BRING: DUE: Article critique #1 (if not turned in on 1/19)
•	2/2/12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research Roundup Presentation - model • In-class Article Critique #2 • Literature Draft peer review • Qualitative Research Overview <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality Indicators • Qualitative Project Discussion 	READ: BRING: One intervention article related to your research proposal topic DUE: Literature Review Draft
5.	2/9/12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research Roundup Presentations • Writing an Introduction • Participants • Educational Measures • In-Class Article Critique #3 • Qualitative Project Discussion 	READ: BRING: One qualitative article DUE: Article critique #2 (if not turned in on 2/2)

6.	2/16/12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research Roundup Presentations • Introduction draft – Peer Review • Data Analysis <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PND • Descriptive Statistics • Inferential Statistics • Survey Research • Qualitative Project Discussion 	<p>READ:</p> <p>BRING:</p> <p>DUE: Article critique #3 (if not turned in on 2/16); Introduction draft</p>
7.	2/23/12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research Roundup Presentations • In-Class Article Critique #4 • Literature Syntheses • Qualitative Project Discussion 	<p>READ:</p> <p>BRING: One survey article*</p> <p>DUE:</p>
8.	3/1/12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research Roundup Presentations • Methods Draft – Peer Review • In-Class Article Critique #5 • Qualitative Project Discussion 	<p>READ:</p> <p>BRING: One literature synthesis*</p> <p>DUE: Article critique #4 (if not turned in on 2/23); Methods draft</p>
9.	3/8/12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research Roundup Presentations • Overview of Poster Presentation Guidelines • Modeling of Poster Presentation • Proposal Draft – Peer Review • Qualitative Project Discussion 	<p>READ:</p> <p>BRING:</p> <p>DUE: Draft of proposal; article critique #5 (if not turned in on 3/1)</p>
10.	3/15/12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poster Presentations with Peer Review • End of Course Logistics • Wrap Up, Closing Comments, & Celebration 	<p>READ:</p> <p>BRING:</p> <p>DUE: Hard copy of research proposal; Poster Presentation</p>
Any changes will be posted as an announcement on Blackboard prior to class.			

Note: Syllabus is subject to change as needed. Common sense and instructor discretion will be the governing forces in dealing with any circumstances that may arise that are not explicitly addressed in this syllabus.