

## **EPSY 5050 Foundations of Educational Research Methodology**

Sections 020, 026, 600 - Spring 2015

Instructor Information:

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**Email:** use email within the course please

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**Course Meeting:** The course is 100% web-based and there are no formal meetings. Exams will be taken online during designated exam periods as stated in the online course materials. I can be seen by appointment for on-campus or phone meetings or respond to emails within 48 hours.

### **Course Description:**

This course is designed as an initial Master's level research methods course often required in education, psychology, and behavioral sciences programs. It is important for persons in most professions to be able to design and critically evaluate research studies. Our emphasis will be on understanding the various approaches to research and developing the ability to critically evaluate the literature. The course will cover a range of research design methods and issues, including quantitative research, qualitative research, mixed methods research, sampling procedures, study validity, and rival hypotheses.

There are multiple expectations for this course. Please remain aware of due dates and subsequent penalties. If you are having any difficulty, please do not hesitate to contact me ahead of time. Students are expected to actively participate in the course.

### **Catalog Description**

5050. Foundations of Educational Research Methodology. 3 hours. Overview of the process of conducting research, from formulating research questions to sampling, data collection, analysis, and drawing inferences. The main focus is on being able to understand, evaluate, and utilize published research, both qualitative and quantitative. Final product is a detailed critique of published research.

### **Course Objectives:**

Upon completion of this course, students should be able to:

1. Describe and evaluate various quantitative, qualitative, mixed-methods, and single-case research designs.
2. Describe the concept of validity and threats to study validity.
3. Describe and develop sampling procedures.
4. Develop a quality critique of research to suggest practice and policy changes.

## **Course Format**

The course will be 100% distance education and administered through the Blackboard Learn system at UNT. Content will primarily be communicated from textbook readings and PowerPoint lectures (with audio), which are available for download in the online course materials. The PowerPoint lectures provide students with considerable flexibility in how they approach and process the material. Students can pause the lectures at any point, listen to them as often as desired, or view them without audio discussion. The overall goal of the lectures is to replicate the presentation in the traditional classroom.

Students and the instructor will interact via email and online discussions.

### **Computer Skill and System Requirements:**

Students should be able to comfortably implement basic computer operations, including using email, navigating an internet browser, and attaching and downloading files. Students who cannot comfortably do these things should not take this course, or their final grade will likely suffer.

Students are specifically referred to Student Resources at <https://learn.unt.edu> to check platform and browser compatibility. The internet connection should be sufficiently fast to allow reasonable navigation of the course and download of large PowerPoint files.

### **Software Required:**

- PowerPoint version or reader that will play the slides
- A word processing program, such as Word or WordPerfect

### **Required Text:**

Johnson, B., & Christensen, L. (2014). Educational research: Quantitative, qualitative, and mixed approaches (5th ed.). Los Angeles: SAGE Publications.

### **Optional Text Resources:**

There are many other introductory and intermediate research methods texts available in academic libraries and other sources. Students can purchase textbooks from the UNT bookstore (via the UNT website at [www.unt.edu](http://www.unt.edu)) or other book dealers.

### **Course Evaluation:**

Exam 1 20%

Exam 2 20%

Exam 3 20%

Article Critique 30%

Discussion Post Assignments 10%

**Exams:**

Exams will be a combination of multiple-choice and essay questions. The exam will be released for 48 hours, and must be completed within a four- hour time frame once beginning the exams. Students are expected to complete their own work and not share or receive any information from other people during exam periods. Each test will be primarily over the material covered directly before the exam and may have some content carried over from previous exam periods. It is your responsibility to take the exam on open days, make up tests will not be allowed except in extreme circumstances with prior approval by the instructor!

**Note:** For test security reasons, exams are not released back to students online. You will be able to see the grade you achieved at the end of the test. However, you will not be able to see what specific items you might have missed online. Tests are not cumulative, so you will not be held responsible for the information after a test closes. However, if you would like to review your exam you can arrange to meet with the instructor in person.

**Article Critique:**

A final paper in the form of an article critique is due at the end of the semester. This review assignment is approximately 5-7 pages and is intended to familiarize you with the current literature in your area while increasing your critical perspective of research as a whole. The focus here is on examining research methods used and a critical evaluation of the conclusions drawn by the author(s). Failure to turn in the article critiques by the assigned due dates will lower your assignment grade by one letter grade for each day that elapses!

**Discussion Posts:**

Because of the online nature of this course, it is particularly important that students actively engage in the course and participate. Therefore, participation will be counted as part of your grade. Participation will be monitored according to each student's involvement in online discussions that will be held weekly during the course of the semester. For these discussions, topics or assignments will be posted and students will be expected to respond appropriately, depending on the nature and purpose of the topic/assignment.

To further facilitate student involvement, students are required to initially direct all questions to a fellow student (in a study group, to the class at large, or via email to a specific classmate) for an answer. Questions that are not satisfactorily answered can then be directed to the teaching assistant or the instructor.

**Other Course Resources:****Study Groups:**

Students may divide into small groups to facilitate focused discussion and provide a forum for students to actively question and study with classmates in a smaller environment. Participation in study groups is not required as part of one's grade. However, students are STRONGLY ENCOURAGED to utilize their study group regularly. Historically, students who are active in a study group tend to do better in the course.

**Blackboard IM:**

An online (synchronous) chat system will also be available for students and study groups to interact more directly. Students and study groups may organize their own times for chatting should they wish to do so. If needed, I may use this system to hold online real time discussion to address questions or problems as they come up. Instructions on setting up Blackboard IM on your computer can be accessed through the Blackboard IM link in the course toolbar.

**Grading Scale**

A 90-100%

B 80-89%

C 70-79%

D 60-69%

F 59% and below

**Course Drop Deadlines**

Jan 20 – Feb 2 Instructor Approval Not Required to Drop

Feb 3 – April 7 Students may drop the course with written approval of instructor

April 24 – Last day to withdraw from the semester

**Administrative Policies and Requirements****Academic Integrity:**

Academic Integrity is defined in the UNT Policy on Student Standards for Academic Integrity. Academic Dishonesty includes cheating, plagiarism, forgery, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, and sabotage. Any suspected case of Academic Dishonesty will be handled in accordance with the University Policy and procedures. Possible academic penalties range from a verbal or written admonition to a grade of “F” in the course. Further sanctions may apply to incidents involving major violations. You will find the policy and procedures at:  
<http://vpaa.unt.edu/academic-integrity.htm>.

**Incompletes:**

The grading system for the University of North Texas indicates a grade of “I” is a non-punitive grade given only during the last quarter of the semester and only if the student is currently passing the class and has a justifiable reason why assignments cannot be completed on time. In addition, the student must arrange with the instructor to finish the course at a later date. Students requesting an “I” are required to sign a “Contract to Remove Incomplete” which states the specific assignments and their due dates required to remove the “I.” Only those students who experience some unforeseen major life crisis (e.g., emergency surgery, death in the family, newly diagnosed life-threatening illness) will be considered to have a justifiable reason that merits an

“I”. Inability to turn assignments in on time or displeasure with grades is NOT a valid reason to request an “I.” Students who experience “normal” life events (e.g., time crunches due to other courses, employment, etc.) should go to the Registrar to drop the course as soon as it becomes evident assignments will not be completed by their due date. It is the student’s responsibility to drop him/herself from the course if it becomes necessary.

#### **Disability Accommodations:**

The University of North Texas makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide you with an accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding your specific needs in a course. You may request accommodations at any time, however, ODA notices of accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. For additional information, see the Office of Disability Accommodation website at <http://www.unt.edu/oda>. You may also contact them by phone at 940.565.4323.

#### **Retention of Student Records:**

Student records pertaining to this course are maintained in a secure location by the instructor of record. All records such as exams, answer sheets (with keys), and written papers submitted during the duration of the course are kept for at least one calendar year after course completion. Coursework completed via the Blackboard on-line system, including grading information and comments, is also stored in a safe electronic environment. You have a right to view your individual record; however, information about your records will not be divulged to other individuals without the proper written consent. You are encouraged to review the Public Information Policy and F.E.R.P.A. (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act) laws and the university’s policy in accordance with those mandates at the following link:  
<http://essc.unt.edu/registrar/ferpa.html>

#### **SETE:**

The Student Evaluation of Teaching Effectiveness (SETE) is a requirement for all organized classes at UNT. This short survey will be made available to you at the end of the semester, providing you a chance to comment on how this class is taught. I am very interested in the feedback I get from students, as I work continually to improve my teaching. I consider the SETE to be an important part of your participation in this class.

Course Schedule			
	Class Topic	Assignment	Test Content
1/20	Welcome to EPSY 5050; Start Here! Information <b>Begins PPT Units 1 ~ 3</b> <b>Chapters 1, 2, 4, 6, 7, &amp; 10</b>		
1/27	<b>Chapters 1, 2, 4, 6, 7, &amp; 10</b>	Discussion #1 ends 1/27 at 11:59pm	
2/3	<b>Chapters 1, 2, 4, 6, 7, &amp; 10</b>		
2/10	<b>Chapters 1, 2, 4, 6, 7, &amp; 10</b>	Discussion #2 ends 2/10 at 11:59 pm	
2/17	TEST 1		<b>Units 1 - 3</b> Available from February 17 midnight to February 18 at 10:00 pm
2/24	<b>Begins PPT Units 4 ~ 6</b> <b>Chapters 11, 12, 13, 14</b>	Discussion #3 ends 2/24 at 11:59 pm	
3/3	<b>Chapters 11, 12, 13, 14</b>		
3/10	<b>Chapters 11, 12, 13, 14</b>	Discussion #4 ends 3/10 at 11:59 pm	
3/17	SPRING BREAK – NO CLASSES		
3/24	TEST 2		<b>Units 4 - 6</b> Available from March 24 midnight to March 25 at 10:00 pm
3/31	<b>Begins PPT Units 7 ~ 9</b> <b>Chapters 15, 16, 17, 18 &amp; 22</b>		
4/7	<b>Chapters 15, 16, 17, 18 &amp; 22</b>		
4/14	<b>Chapters 15, 16, 17, 18 &amp; 22</b>		

4/21	<b>Chapters 15, 16, 17, 18 &amp; 22</b>	Discussion #5 ends 4/21 at 11:59 pm	
4/28	<b>Chapters 15, 16, 17, 18 &amp; 22</b>	Mixed Methods Article Critique Assignment Due 4/28 by 11:59 pm	
5/5	<b>Chapters 15, 16, 17, 18 &amp; 22</b>		
5/12	FINAL EXAM		<b>Units 7 - 9</b> Available from May 12 midnight to May 13 at 10:00 pm