WED 561

Research Methods

Fall 2014
Off-Campus Delivery

SYLLABUS

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Office Hours: Tues, Thurs (2 p.m. – 5 p.m.); and by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

“Research Methods” is a required course for all students pursuing the Master of Science in Education Degree with a major in Workforce Education and Development. The overall purpose of the course is to introduce basic vocabulary, concepts, and methods of educational research. Students learn the language of research, various methods for conducting research, how to identify and synthesize research literature, how to plan a research study that improves the practice of education or training, and how to formally report research findings. The more specific purpose is for students to develop a sample research proposal.
SYLLABUS

Many students have misunderstandings about the nature of WED 561, often resulting in their taking the course in the last semester of their graduate program. Then, if the paper isn’t finished during the semester, students may have to register for an additional semester.

Students are encouraged to take the course during the first half of their graduate program. One is not expected to have a research problem identified before taking the course. Rather, part of the course instruction is designed to assist students in the systematic identification of a research topic. Students should also be aware that the development of a research problem and proposal and the evolution of a research study is best conducted over a period of several semesters rather than being concentrated in a final, hectic semester.

OBJECTIVES:

Upon the completion of the course, students will:

1. Understand basic concepts and definitions of educational research
2. Select a tentative research problem that will be subsequently developed into a research proposal
3. Know and use library reference sources and services
4. Develop Chapter One of the research paper
5. Develop Chapter Two of the research paper
6. Develop Chapter Three of the research paper

TEXTBOOK:


SCHEDULE:

IMPORTANT: To follow is a tentative schedule of activities that students must complete each week. The course schedule is based on a course week that begins on a Friday and ends on a Thursday. Each Friday, the instructor will post as an announcement the assignment that must be completed and submitted to the instructor via the Desire to Learn course drop box by the following Thursday. In addition to the assignment, students will be expected to read the assigned chapter from the textbook, and any other
readings provided by the instructor. Students may also be required to discuss various issues/questions posed by the instructor or other students on the course discussion board.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date Range</th>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Homework/Dates</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aug 18 – Aug 21</td>
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<td>Orientation and expectations for course</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aug 22 – Aug 28</td>
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<td>Chapter 5</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Complete Assignment 1 provided by instructor</td>
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<td>Aug 29 – Sep 4</td>
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<td>Chapter 6</td>
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<td>Completed Assignment 2 provided by instructor</td>
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<td>Sep 5 – Sep 11</td>
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<td>Chapter 7</td>
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<td>Complete Assignment 3 provided by instructor</td>
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<td>Sep 12 – Sep 18</td>
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<td>Chapter 8</td>
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<td>Complete Assignment 4 provided by instructor</td>
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<td>Sep 19 – Sep 25</td>
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<td>Chapter 9</td>
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<td>Complete Assignment 5 provided by instructor</td>
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<td>Sep 26 – Oct 2</td>
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<td>Chapter 10</td>
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<td>Complete Assignment 6 provided by instructor</td>
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<td>Oct 3 – Oct 9</td>
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<td>Chapter 11</td>
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<td>Complete Assignment 7 provided by instructor</td>
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<td>Oct 10 – Oct 16</td>
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<td>Chapter 12</td>
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<td>Complete Assignment 8 provided by instructor</td>
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<td>Oct 17 – Oct 23</td>
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<td>Chapter 13</td>
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<td>Complete Assignment 9 provided by instructor</td>
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<td>Oct 24 – Oct 30</td>
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<td>Chapter 14</td>
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<td>Complete Assignment 10 provided by instructor</td>
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<td>Oct 31 – Nov 6</td>
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<td>Chapter 15</td>
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<td>Complete Assignment 11 provided by instructor</td>
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SYLLABUS

- Nov 7 – Nov 13  Chapter 16
  Complete Assignment 12 provided by instructor
- Nov 14 – Nov 20  Chapter 17
  Complete Assignment 13 provided by instructor
- Nov 21 – Nov 27  No Assignment (Thanksgiving Break)
- Nov 28 – Dec 4  Complete Assignment provided by instructor
- Dec 5 – Dec 11  Semester Ends

*Note: This is a tentative schedule of topics to be covered. The order and/or topic areas may be changed at the discretion of the instructor with proper notification to students.

COURSE PRODUCTS:

- Assignments (each worth 20 points) ..............................260 points
- Research Proposal (Due Dec 4) ...................................100 points
- Discussion Attendance & Participation .......................... 40 points

GRADING SCALE:
A = 380 to 400 points
B = 360 to 379 points
C = 340 to 359 points
D = 320 to 339 points
F = Below 320 points

ATTENDANCE AND MAKE-UP POLICY:

Interaction with your instructor and students is an integral part of the learning process. Therefore, your participation in online discussion is required. Failure to post a discussion question to the discussion board by the Thursday due date will result in a deduction of 10 discussion attendance & participation points for each infraction up to no more than 40 pts lost. If it is absolutely necessary to be absent, it is important that you notify your
instructor prior to the assignment due date. Any missed discussions or assignments may be made up at a later date if the student has been given advance approval by the instructor. Students failing to officially withdraw before the official drop date will receive a failing grade "F" for the course.

LATE WORK POLICY:

All assignments are required to be submitted to the instructor by the posted due date. Any assignments that are turned in after the due date, without prior approval from the instructor, will be reduced by 5 points for every day late. Any discussion question that is posted after the due date will receive a 10 point deduction up to no more than 40 points. Please note that you must receive a B (360 pts) or higher to meet the requirements for the Master of Science degree in Workforce Education and Development.
Overview

As a partial requirement for this course, you will develop and submit in written form a research proposal by the due date previously listed. The purpose of this assignment is to develop a draft manuscript of the final research project that you will be required to submit in order to complete the requirements for the Master’s degree. Therefore, you should prepare your research proposal in approximately the same format as the final research project. The proposal must be a minimum of 25 double-spaced pages in length and must include a minimum of 30 referenced citations to be considered acceptable. Deviations will result in a reduction of points.

The Department of Workforce Education and Development gives each student the option of completing a research paper or a graduate project to satisfy the final research requirement. Therefore, you will need to decide which alternative you wish to pursue. Before making a decision, you must meet with your faculty advisor to discuss these alternatives thoroughly to ensure that the alternative you choose is BEST for you!

Your decision regarding which alternative you will complete as a final research product for the Master’s degree will dictate the type of research proposal you will submit during this class. Provided on the pages to follow are the general guidelines for each of the alternatives. Carefully read the guidelines pertaining to the alternative you have chosen and develop your research proposal following the listed specifications.

NOTE: Your proposal should be free of errors in grammar and punctuation, and should follow APA and SIU graduate school guidelines. Any error in these areas will result in a reduction of points.
**RESEARCH PAPER**

**Directions:** Prepare a three chapter research proposal in accordance with the outline shown below. You must follow APA formatting guidelines.

**Title Page**
Your research proposal must begin with a title page consisting of a running head, the title of the proposal, your name and institutional affiliation. (Refer to the APA manual for proper formatting)

**Table of Contents**
Follow the title page with the table of contents. (Refer to the APA Manual for proper formatting)

**Chapter I – Introduction**
1. **Background**
Write your reasons for considering this research project. Not always do projects spring from students past experiences; but it is entirely possible, and quite probable, many do. This part is something like a tiny preface to the proposal. Therefore, you must exercise care not to write the statement of the problem here. Neither should you give any justification for the study here, because the actual problem has not been stated. You should begin by mentioning the experiences (and possibly frustrations) of other people because of ignorance, handicaps, or an inability to cope with situations out of which they grew. The background gives the origin; not the definition of the problem.

2. **Statement of the Problem**
This should be a very carefully worded statement that clearly states the problem to be solved. While the title should correctly identify the general area of the research, this section gives a more detailed or precise identification of exactly what is to be undertaken in this study.

3. **Research Questions**
In this section, you simply state the major questions to be answered by your review of the literature. Your research questions should avoid questions that can be answered by a simple answer of yes or no (An investigator might be inclined to ask, “if a relationship exists between two factors.” A better approach would be to ask, “to what extent does a relationship exist between two factors?”

4. **Significance of the Problem**
In describing the significance of a problem, you should take care not to keep on defining it. This should have been done fully in the sections above, making for a more accurate
presentation of the significance or importance of the problem here. It is also a mistake to mix this section with the background of the problem. In preparing statements for the proposal, one should give careful consideration to the various sections and fit each into its proper place. The significance and/or justification should be stated simply and as convincingly as possible, because this is the where the student has the burden of defending and justifying the expenditure of time the study is likely to require. If the problem is important, and if the results are likely to be valuable, no doubt it will be worthy of consideration.

Chapter II – Review of the Literature

The primary purpose of the research paper is to review and synthesize research conducted and literature written in a field to gain a better understanding of a particular issue and to provide solutions to problems based on other researchers’ findings. Therefore, your review of the literature should consist of studies directly related to the problem you identified in your statement of the problem and significance of the problem sections. Remember, the ultimate goal is to provide an answer to your research question(s). Therefore, select your literature and write your review with this in mind.

To review the literature, you must read in your field to locate valuable data. Reading current literature first has advantages. From such an approach, you can develop a bibliography of what current investigators have read on the topic. Chances are, they have screened the literature and eliminated the less helpful studies.

Only original sources should be reviewed. Abstracts usually do not contain enough information about the procedures to allow a thorough evaluation of the study. Neither can you depend on a review done by another researcher. An organized approach to reviewing literature aids the researcher in locating information which will help the study.

*Chapter II must include a minimum of 30 references.

Chapter III – Conclusions and Recommendations

1. Conclusions
   In this section, you should summarize your findings from the review of literature and draw conclusions based on those findings. Specifically, you will readdress your research questions and offer answers supported by your synthesis of the research findings.

2. Recommendations
   It is not uncommon, in fact it is probable, that you will find gaps in the research where questions remain unanswered. In this section, you will explain the gaps and make recommendations regarding the types of research that should be conducted to fill those gaps and provide answers.
Reference List
Your research proposal must end with a list of the references included in your paper. You must reference a minimum of 30 publications to be acceptable. (Refer to the APA Publication Manual for proper formatting).
GRADUATE PROJECT

Directions: Prepare a three chapter research proposal in accordance with the outline shown below. You must follow APA formatting guidelines.

Title Page
Your research proposal must begin with a title page consisting of a running head, the title of the proposal, your name and institutional affiliation. (Refer to the APA manual for proper formatting)

Table of Contents
Follow the title page with the table of contents. (Refer to the APA Manual for proper formatting)

Chapter I – Introduction
1. Background
Write your reasons for considering this research project. Not always do projects spring from students past experiences; but it is entirely possible, and quite probable, many do. This part is something like a tiny preface to the proposal. Therefore, you must exercise care not to write the statement of the problem here. Neither should you give any justification for the graduate project here, because the actual problem has not been stated. You should begin by mentioning the experiences (and possibly frustrations) of other people because of ignorance, handicaps, or an inability to cope with situations out of which they grew. The background gives the origin; not the definition of the problem.

2. Statement of the Problem
This should be a very carefully worded statement that clearly states the problem to be solved. While the title should correctly identify the general area of the research, this section gives a more detailed or precise identification of exactly what is to be undertaken in this graduate project.

3. Significance of the Problem
In describing the significance of a problem, you should take care not to keep on defining it. This should have been done fully in the sections above, making for a more accurate presentation of the significance or importance of the problem here. It is also a mistake to mix this section with the background of the problem. In preparing statements for the proposal, one should give careful consideration to the various sections and fit each into its proper place. The significance and/or justification should be stated simply and as convincingly as possible, because this is the where the student has the burden of
defending and justifying the expenditure of time the project is likely to require. If the problem is important, and if the project is likely to be valuable, no doubt it will be worthy of consideration.

Chapter II – Review of the Literature

The primary purpose of the graduate project is to review and synthesize research conducted and literature written in a field to gain a better understanding of a particular issue and to develop a product that will solve the problem. For example, you may have identified a training or educational need in your work environment or school that requires the development of a new or revised training program or curriculum. In order to produce a product that will satisfy the need and solve the problem, you will need to review the literature and identify the materials and procedures most appropriate for your situation. Therefore, your review of the literature should consist of studies directly related to the problem you identified in your statement of the problem and significance of the problem sections. Remember, the ultimate goal is to provide documented evidence that the materials and procedures you have selected in include in your product have solved similar problems in the past. Therefore, select your literature and write your review with this in mind.

To review the literature, you must read in your field to locate valuable data. Reading current literature first has advantages. From such an approach, you can develop a bibliography of what current investigators have read on the topic. Chances are, they have screened the literature and eliminated the less helpful studies.

Only original sources should be reviewed. Abstracts usually do not contain enough information about the procedures to allow a thorough evaluation of the study. Neither can you depend on a review done by another researcher. An organized approach to reviewing literature aids the researcher in locating information which will help the study.

*Chapter II must include a minimum of 30 references.

Chapter III – The Product

Provide a detailed description of the product materials and procedures involved with implementing the product.

Reference List

Your research proposal must end with a list of the references included in your paper. You must reference 30 or more publications to be acceptable. (Refer to the APA Publication Manual for proper formatting).
THESIS

Directions: Prepare a three chapter research proposal in accordance with the outline shown below. You must follow APA formatting guidelines.

Title Page
Your research proposal must begin with a title page consisting of a running head, the title of the proposal, your name and institutional affiliation. (Refer to the APA manual for proper formatting)

Table of Contents
Follow the title page with the table of contents. (Refer to the APA Manual for proper formatting)

Chapter I – Introduction
1. Background
Write your reasons for considering this research project. Not always do projects spring from students past experiences; but it is entirely possible, and quite probable, many do. This part is something like a tiny preface to the proposal. Therefore, you must exercise care not to write the statement of the problem here. Neither should you give any justification for the study here, because the actual problem has not been stated. You should begin by mentioning the experiences (and possibly frustrations) of other people because of ignorance, handicaps, or an inability to cope with situations out of which they grew. The background gives the origin; not the definition of the problem.

2. Statement of the Problem
This should be a very carefully worded statement that clearly states the problem to be solved. While the title should correctly identify the general area of the research, this section gives a more detailed or precise identification of exactly what is to be undertaken in this study.

3. Research Questions or Hypotheses
In this section, you simply state the major questions to be answered or hypotheses to be confirmed by a careful analysis of all data collected. If a research question is stated, you should avoid questions that can be answered by a simple answer of yes or no (An investigator might be inclined to ask, “if a relationship exists between two factors.” A
better approach would be to ask, “to what extent does a relationship exist between two factors?”

In some instances, particularly when the research involves an experimental design, it is more appropriate to state a hypothesis or a series of hypotheses than research questions. The hypothesis is a tentative statement (not a question) of generalizations reached by the student after considering certain observations or facts related to a problem.

4. **Significance of the Problem**
   In describing the significance of a problem, you should take care not to keep on defining it. This should have been done fully in the sections above, making for a more accurate presentation of the significance or importance of the problem here. It is also a mistake to mix this section with the background of the problem. In preparing statements for the proposal, one should give careful consideration to the various sections and fit each into its proper place. The significance and/or justification should be stated simply and as convincingly as possible, because this is where the student has the burden of defending and justifying the expenditure of time the study is likely to require. If the problem is important, and if the results are likely to be valuable, no doubt it will be worthy of consideration.

5. **Limitations and Delimitations**
   After the problem has been stated, there may be cause for adding limiting factors in the study. However, the statement of the problem and the definition of it may be sufficient. Many limitations unforeseen at first may be discovered as one studies the problem and its scope. The limitations of available resources may narrow a study. The amount of source material may be so voluminous that the study would be more accurate and valuable to cover a selected area rather than a broad area. Regardless, the section on limitations and delimitations allows the researcher to present the procedure used for determining the scope of the study.

6. **Definition of Terms**
   To the investigator, certain terms used in the proposal may have specific meaning that are not apparent to those who will read the proposal or the research report. For this reason, it is often necessary to define certain terms in the manner that they are considered by the investigator. The investigator has the privilege of defining any given term in a certain manner for purposes of the study, provided that this specific meaning is clearly defined in the preliminary part of the research.

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**Chapter II – Review of the Literature**

One of the most important steps in organizing and completing research is searching the literature related to the problem. Reading is done to help define and limit the problem, to get ideas of how others have approached similar problems, to develop hypotheses, and to discover what previous research is available.
Once the problem has been stated and you are planning the investigation, the reading changes to more specific topics. You should look for new approaches to the problem, to others who identified similar or like problems. Knowing what others have done helps you avoid weaknesses of other studies and can save you from “re-inventing the wheel”. Reading must be done critically.

To review the literature, you must read in your field to locate valuable data. Reading current literature first has advantages. From such an approach, you can develop a bibliography of what current investigators have read on the topic. Chances are, they have screened the literature and eliminated the less helpful studies.

Only original sources should be reviewed. Abstracts usually do not contain enough information about the procedures to allow a thorough evaluation of the study. Neither can you depend on a review done by another researcher. An organized approach to reviewing literature aids the researcher in locating information which will help the study.

*Chapter II must include a minimum of 15 references.

Chapter III – Methods and Procedures

1. Definition of Study Population and Sampling Procedures
In this section, the investigator describes the study population from which data is collected. The methods used in identifying a sample (that is truly representative of the total population) are included in this section.

2. Measures
It is important that you describe the instrument(s) you will use to collect the data. If you will be using an existing instrument, you must provide details regarding evidence of its validity and reliability with populations similar to yours. If you will be developing your own instrument, then you must explain the process that you used to establish its validity and reliability.

3. Procedure
In this section, you should describe step-by-step the procedures you will complete to collect the data from your subjects. Each step should be stated in simple but definite terms. Not only should the researcher tell what is going to be done, but also how it is to be done. The procedures should provide enough detail so that any person reading your proposal could replicate your study.

4. Data Analysis
This section describes the type of statistical analysis that will be used to answer the research questions or test the hypotheses. There are many types of analyses. However,
few are appropriate for any given research design. Therefore, you must be careful when selecting a statistical analysis to be certain that the analysis you choose is appropriate for your study.

Reference List
Your research proposal must end with a list of the references included in your paper. You must reference a minimum of 15 publications to be acceptable. (Refer to the APA Publication Manual for proper formatting).

Emergency Procedures:
Southern Illinois University Carbondale is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for study and work. Because some health and safety circumstances are beyond our control, we ask that you become familiar with the SIUC Emergency Response Plan and Building Emergency Response Team (BERT) program. Emergency response information is available on posters in buildings on campus, available on the BERT’s website at [www.bert.siu.edu](http://www.bert.siu.edu), Department of Public Safety’s website [www.dps.siu.edu](http://www.dps.siu.edu) (disaster drop down) and in the Emergency Response Guidelines pamphlet. Know how to respond to each type of emergency.

Instructors will provide guidance and direction to students in the classroom in the event of an emergency affecting your location. **It is important that you follow these instructions and stay with your instructor during an evacuation or sheltering emergency.** The Building Emergency Response Team will provide assistance to your instructor in evacuating the building or sheltering within the facility.