WED 594

Advanced Research Methods

Spring 2014

Thursdays 6:00 - 8:30 p.m. Pulliam Hall Rm. 204c

SYLLABUS

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Office Hours: Mon 2 – 5 p.m. and Thurs 1 - 4 p.m.; and by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

“Advanced Research Methods” is a required course for all students pursuing the Doctor of Philosophy Degree with a major in Workforce Education and Development. The overall purpose of the course is to introduce 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.

OBJECTIVES:

Upon the completion of the course, students will:

1. Understand 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. Understand how to develop Chapter One of the thesis/dissertation
5. Understand how to develop Chapter Two of the thesis/dissertation
6. Understand how to develop Chapter Three of the thesis/dissertation
7. Know APA rules and guidelines related to writing formal research reports
SYLLABUS

8. Understand how to develop Chapter Four of a thesis/dissertation
9. Understand how to develop Chapter Five of a thesis/dissertation

REQUIRED TEXT:


SUGGESTED TEXT:


SUGGESTED READINGS:


**SCHEDULE:**

- **Jan. 16** Orientation and expectations for course
- **Jan. 23** Chapter 1 & 2 Discussion Topics: Definitions, Procedures and Types of Research
- **Jan. 30** Chapter 3 Discussion Topics: Formatting the Research Report
- **Feb. 6** Chapter 4 Discussion Topics: Historical Research
- **Feb. 13** Library Presentation
- **Feb. 20** Chapter 5 Discussion Topics: Assessment, Evaluation, and Survey
- **Feb. 27** Chapter 5 (continued) Discussion Topics: Assessment, Evaluation, and Survey
- **Mar. 6** Mid-Term
- **Mar. 13** No class (Spring Break)
- **Mar. 20** Chapter 8 Discussion Topics: Qualitative Research
- **Mar. 27** Chapters 9 & 10 Discussion Topics: Methods and Tools of Research
- **Apr. 3** Chapter 6 Discussion Topics: Experimental Research
- **Apr. 10** Chapter 7 Discussion Topics: Single-Subject Research
- Apr. 17  Student Presentations of Research Proposals
- Apr. 24  Student Presentations of Research Proposals
- May 1   Student Presentations of Research Proposals
- May 8   Final Exam

*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:
- Midterm Exam (Mar. 6) .................................100 points
- Final Exam (May 8) ........................................100 points
- Research Proposal – Written (May 8) .................100 points
- Class Attendance and Participation .....................100 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 attendance in class is required. Failure to attend will result in a reduction of class attendance and participation points. If it is absolutely necessary to be absent, it is important that you notify your instructor prior to the class meeting. Any missed tests, presentations 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.
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.
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 proposal that you will be required to submit in order to complete the dissertation prospectus. Therefore, you should prepare your research proposal in approximately the same format as the final research proposal. The proposal must be a minimum of 25 double-spaced pages in length and must include a minimum total of 30 referenced citations to be considered acceptable. Deviations will result in a reduction of points.

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 the manuscript form of APA and SIU graduate school guidelines. Any error in these areas will result in a reduction of points.
THESIS/DISSERTATION PROPOSAL

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 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.

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.

   **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 20 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 30 publications to be acceptable. (Refer to the APA Publication Manual for proper formatting).
RESEARCH PROPOSAL
GUIDELINES
(Oral)

On a date assigned, you will be required to deliver an oral presentation of your research proposal to the class. The oral presentation should last no more than 20 minutes, followed by 10 minutes for questions and feedback. The performance on the presentation will be incorporated into the class participation grade. The primary purpose of the presentations is to provide constructive criticism on the proposal and prepare you for the dissertation prospectus. Students should come prepared and organized to deliver the presentation. Visual aids and/or handouts are strongly encouraged.