EDU 600: Research Methods Syllabus

Site Overview
Here’s how to find what you need in this course site, in the left hand links:

- **Announcements**: Always look for new announcements every time you come to class. Here I will post important updates and notices, reminders, interesting news items, and other information.

- **Syllabus—Start here**: The syllabus is here; just select Next in the upper right or a particular item in the menu at the left (which you can switch to below if preferred).

- **Weekly Agendas**: This course has 6 2- or 3-week topics, in three modules. Each topic has a folder containing the agenda, or things to do, including the learning objectives, readings and other materials, discussion assignment, and other assignments. If you aren’t sure what’s happening when, look at the weekly agendas. It’s all there.

- **Discussions**: Here's where you will interact with your classmates and me. There is at least one forum for each week. Specific discussion assignments are listed in the weekly agenda.

- **Chapters & Resources**: Here you will find the course textbook, articles, and related resources.

- **Library Guide**: has relevant library resources to assist you with your Final Review.

- **Turn In Assignments**: Unless stated otherwise in the agenda, turn in all assignments here. Please be sure to use proper naming conventions and required extensions (usually .doc, .pdf, .xls, .jpg, etc.). If you do not follow the guidelines and I cannot download and view your file, it may be considered late. The assignments are connected to the gradebook. After I grade your assignments, you can view the grade, any comments, and the commented-on rubrics I send back via My Grades. [Please do not submit via email.]

- **Tools**: Access a variety of course tools including email.

- **My Grades**: Check your progress throughout the semester here. After I grade your assignments, you can view the grade, any comments, and any files I send back via My Grades. Be sure to check promptly so that if you have concerns or a paper was lost in the ether it can be addressed immediately.

- **Student Services**: Information about student services available online throughout USM, including technical support, tutoring, library access, advising, and much more.

- **Blackboard Support**: If you have problems with BB, you can peruse the company’s documentation. For technical support, please contact the USM Help Desk (see Student Services).

Whenever you see a table of contents, you can have it at the left or the bottom of the page, or hide it. Just change it with the upper left buttons. I like mine at the bottom (also makes it easier to print if you must do so). The TOC will be helpful if you don’t want to go through the materials linearly.

Course Description
EDU 600: Research Methods

The central focus of the course is the study of the concepts, principles, and methods of educational
research. Special emphasis is given to the study of the scientific method of problem solving and the systematic review of educational research literature. The primary goal of the course is to strengthen student's critical thinking and reasoning skills to become better consumers of educational research. Another goal of the course is to strengthen student's skills as a competent communicator of educational research results, and to strengthen their skills at planning educational research.

Instructor Contact Information

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FAX: 207/780–8094
Office hours by appointment, in person in Portland, Gorham or Windham; online via Skype or iChat; FaceTime; or other technologies.

Learning Goals/ Outcomes, Objectives and ISLLC Standards

Goals/Outcomes
At the conclusion of this course, you will have:

- a fundamental understanding of the scientific method of inquiry
- a fundamental understanding of the nature of educational research
- the ability to identify, locate, use and organize library sources to explore educational problems
- a basic understanding of qualitative and quantitative research, qualitative data, and statistical techniques
- the ability to critically review qualitative and quantitative primary research articles
- knowledge and skills valuable for your career and as a life–long learner.
- [List your own personal goals for this course!]

Learning objectives
During this course...

- You will critically review six primary research articles in an area of interest.
- You will critically analyze, synthesize, and evaluate research articles in small and large group discussions.
- You will critically analyze, synthesize, and evaluate research articles in two 2–page article critiques.
- You will create visual displays of data from a test report.
- You will discuss topics related to educational research in small and large group discussions.

ISLLC Standards

**Standard 1:** Promotes a vision of learning. B. Collect and use data.

**Standard 2:** Promotes school culture, instructional program, and staff growth. A. Culture of collaboration, trust, learning, and high expectations. F. Develop the instructional leadership capacity of staff. H. Promotes the use of the most effective and appropriate technologies to support teaching and learning.

**Standard 3:** Manages a safe, effective learning environment. E. Ensure teacher and organizational time is focused to support quality instruction and student learning.
Standard 4: Collaborates with school and community. A. Collect and analyze data and information pertinent to the educational environment.


Standard 6: Responds to wider political, social, cultural context. C. Assess, analyze, and anticipate emerging trends and initiatives.

Text, Readings and Multimedia

All required readings will be posted here in Blackboard, including the primary course text. Most weeks, there will be 1 or more text chapters (PDF) to read along with related videos (Flash video, which should open within your web browser; the link is typically to a .zip file, but it opens in your browser). Other readings (rtf, Word, PDF, etc.) and websites will also be required. Optional occasional synchronous sessions via Elluminate will require installing the Elluminate client; see Elluminate in the left menu for more information.

PLEASE NOTE: There is no formal textbook for the course. The chapters for the course are the draft chapters for a book, Research Literacy: Method into Meaning, written by Jeff Beaudry and Lynne Miller (other instructors of this course at USM), and are provided (FREE) on Blackboard.

Also, there are instructional resources in the form of web links, Youtube videos, and multimedia products (referred to as Camtasia presentations). Please listen to each of these as they provide author’s commentaries on key concepts. Note that there may be references to dates or times that don't match this session, as these multimedia have been produced over the past two years. The textbook authors are working on updating the materials.

Assessments and Grading Policy

Assessments

You will be assessed on the following items. Further details about each assignment are in the weekly agenda when it is assigned.

- **Participation** in course: Read all assignments and participate all discussions. Initial responses to discussion must be posted by Friday of each week and final responses by Monday (or as listed in the weekly agenda). (10 pts)

- **Critique #1**: Critique of primary qualitative research article. Prepare a critique of 750 words or less of a qualitative article, using the critique template and APA formatting. (20 pts)

- **Critique #2**: Critique of primary experimental research. Prepare a critique of 1,000 words or less of an experimental article, using the critique template and APA formatting. (20 points)

- **Visual display of data**: Select a test report and create 2 visual displays of data from the report. (10 pts)

- **Interpretive Review** of peer reviewed primary research on chosen topic. This is the major course assignment, worked out throughout the entire semester. Choose a topic of interest and complete a review of six (6) primary research studies on that topic. 3000–4000 words, not counting reference list and matrix. (40 pts.)

Total: 100 points

Assignment guidelines

Please use .doc or PDF format for all assignments. Be sure to follow BB-recommended naming guidelines for all materials submitted, via Turn in Assignments or the discussion board.

All assignments are due at midnight on the date listed in the weekly agenda. Special arrangements must be made with me for make-up work or late assignments. Requests to submit work late must be made in writing prior to the due date.

All papers must be written according to standards in the Publication Manual for the American
Psychological Association (4th Ed.) and according to the guidelines provided. Review the APA Guidelines at OWL. One exception to APA style is that all papers must be single spaced.

Grading Policy for all assessments and final grade

- A 94 – 100%
- A- 90 – 93%
- B+ 87 – 89%
- B 84 – 86%
- B- 80 – 83%

Below 80% is unacceptable; work must be revised and resubmitted for evaluation.

Most assignments will be graded within a week of the due date. Rubrics will be provided for grading of the papers.

Final grades will be rounded. If you have a 93.50, you will get an A (94%). But if you have a 93.4999, you will get an A-. University policy states that all incomplete grades (INC) revert to a grade of failing (F) after one semester.

Discussion Guidelines

When I evaluate discussions, I look at three elements: quality, timeliness and quantity. All three are roughly weighted equally.

Quality

I want to see messages that add value to the discussion. In short, this means I am not a big fan of simple "I agree" posts.

So, how do you add value? Here are some ways:

1. Post an original answer to one of the questions.
2. Indicate whether you agree or disagree with what another person posted, and why. Consider using the 2x2 technique–give 2 instances why you agree with the content of the post and 2 instances why you disagree with it.
3. Ask another person a question.
4. War stories that relate to the topic are great. These can be from work, volunteering, education, your personal life, or elsewhere.
5. Relate a recent news event, article you have read, or such. Don't simply link to it; explain the relevance.
6. Come up with a scenario/example of how you might apply the materials.
7. At the end of the week, summarize the discussion for a particular question or an aspect of the critique.
8. At the end of the week, select a post by another participant that moved you, triggered an idea, or caused you to think about research in a different way. Answer the following in a final post to the discussion: "I appreciated ________’s comment on ________ because it made me...."

Timeliness

Research and experience shows that students get the most out of an online course by participating in the discussions early and following them as they evolve. Each of you has significant contributions you can make to the class. Thus, I would like you to begin involvement in discussions early in the week and contribute to them as the week goes on.

However, given the nature of most of our lives, weekends are prime times to do course work. Therefore, I suggest a couple of things:

- Read the material for the course the weekend before the course week so that you are prepared to join the discussions Tuesday.
Try to devote at least 15–30 minutes every day to reading and responding to posts; it will help. I know school/personal schedules may not always allow it, but it is a good goal to shoot for.

Quantity
The hardest of the three to address is quantity. First and foremost, I do not put a minimum nor maximum number of posts as a requirement. Some people can say a lot in a few posts, others break thoughts into more posts. Plus, giving a maximum can stifle people who may have a lot to add.

Second, there may be a number of questions each week. I do not expect you to answer each of them, but to answer at least one or two of them and get involved in discussions with the rest. If everyone just answered the questions (essay style) we would not have an opportunity to learn a lot from each other.

So, perhaps a better name for this category would be "visible evidence of active participation in discussions," for that is what I expect to see.

Netiquette
Our text-based communication is vital in this course since it is the primary—and possibly only—way we will connect with each other. Please be careful and considerate in all your communications with each other and the instructors.

The online medium is poor at conveying tone. Consider what you are saying and remember that your intent might not be inferred by your readers (fellow students and instructors). Take a moment to re-read everything you write: assume that it will be taken in the worst possible light. And extend courtesy to others: assume the most charitable light possible. Both of these will make communication easier and far more civil.

Use emoticons to provide the context of facial expression. A simple smile :) goes a long way in telling readers that your statement is meant in a friendly way. A wink ;-) tells us you are joking about something and prevents misunderstanding.

You can also indicate emotions and gestures with text. Some people use * or :: to indicate these, such as ::smile:: or *frustrated*

If you feel angry or frustrated, give yourself time before submitting a response, possibly even over night. If you aren't sure how something will come across, ask someone else to read it over and give you feedback. Always re-read or preview messages in the discussion board or email before sending them.

Adaptations and Accommodations
Students who require adaptations of accommodations because of a disability are asked to contact me as soon as possible. For information, you may also contact the Office of Academic Support for Students with Disabilities, Luther Bonney, 2nd floor, (780–4706.) Students who encounter difficulty with the course for any reason are encouraged to communicate directly with the instructor. For assistance with writing or study skills, you are encouraged to contact the University Learning Center at the Portland Campus (780–4228). Help is also available through the Counseling Center, 106 Payson Smith (780–4050) and the Office of Academic Support for Student with Disabilities, Luther Bonney, 2nd Floor (780–4706).

Schedule
Here is the overall schedule for the course. The first day of each week is Tuesday. Major assignments are listed here; each week, online discussions will also take place. Complete information about each week is in Weekly Agendas. Almost everything is already here in BB, but I reserve the right to change the week's plan prior to that Tuesday. Any changes made after Tuesday (such as additional resources) will be listed in announcements.

You must do the weekly reading as soon as each week begins in order to participate in the discussions; you might want to start it the weekend before. Discussion must wrap up on Monday so that new conversations can begin and, when your written critiques are due, you have time to write your final version based on the discussion. This schedule varies slightly for campus breaks.
Weeks 1 & 2 Aug 29 – Sept 12: Introduction to Research
- Choose topic for final review

Week 3, 4, & 5 Sept 13 – Oct 3: Qualitative Research
- Teen Zines article critique (discussion)
- Online teaching article critique (discussion; paper due Sat Oct 1 8am)

Weeks 6 & 7 Oct 4 – 17: Descriptive Quantitative Research
- Visual display of data

Weeks 8 & 9 Oct 18 – 31: Experimental, Quasi-experimental, Group Comparison, and Single Subject Research
- Experimental article critique (discussion; paper due Sat Nov 5 8am)
- Turn in 6 articles for final review for approval, Oct 31 midnight

Weeks 10, 11, & 12 Nov 1 – 21: Correlational Research, Mixed Methods, Action Research
- Correlational article critique (discussion)
- Matrix due Nov 21, midnight

Thanksgiving Break Nov 22 – 27

Weeks 13, 14 & 15 Nov 28 – Dec 16: Research Reviews, Ethics, & Course wrap-up
- Final Review is due Monday Dec 12, midnight

### Calendar (hidden)

**Availability:** Item is not available.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fall/Spring</th>
<th>Summer</th>
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| **Critique 1**
  discuss week 4, sign up by Tuesday
due Week 5, Saturday 8am | **Critique 1**
  discuss week 2, sign up by Tuesday
due Week 3, Saturday 8am |
| **Visual display**
due Week 7, Monday midnight | **Visual display**
due Week 3, Monday midnight |
| **6 articles**
due Week 9, Monday midnight | **6 articles**
due Week 4, Monday midnight |
| **Critique 2**
  discuss week 9, sign up by Tuesday
due Week 10, Saturday 8am | **Critique 2**
  discuss week 4, sign up by Tuesday
due Week 5, Saturday 8am |
| **Matrix**
due Week 12, Monday midnight | **Matrix**
due Week 5, Monday midnight |
| **Final**
due Week 14, Monday midnight | **Final**
due Week 7, Friday midnight |