Education 695 is designed to serve as a first introduction to the design and practice of educational research. The course readings and lectures will examine fundamental issues of research design and practice from a variety of methodological perspectives — qualitative, experimental, and non–experimental multivariate methods.

Upon completion of this course you will be able to

- Appreciate the complexity of the issues that are faced by educational researchers, and understand how different methodological traditions approach these issues;
- Critically analyze research literature and evaluate the evidence on which generalizations are made in the published literature; and,
- Use appropriate reasoning to synthesize a body of literature.

We will, by necessity, use some basic math along the way in order to better understand the statistical concepts we will be studying, but please note that our primary focus will be on developing a conceptual understanding of qualitative and quantitative research methods. Since educational research is usually a group activity, there will be some group work during the course. You will be encouraged to collaborate during and outside of class periods on course projects described in detail below.

Course Requirements

Class Participation. As in any graduate course, students and faculty need to be co-owners of the class and collectively responsible for its quality and outcomes. I will take responsibility for the overall design and direction of the course and for the academic requirements, but the course will be facilitated as an inquiry in which all participants hold themselves and each other accountable for a strong and rich intellectual enterprise and dialogue.

Your attendance is essential to a successful collective experience. The format of the class requires that each person come prepared to take an active role in class. This means not only having read the assigned materials, but also being prepared to discuss the salient issues, questions, and problems emerging from the readings, to utilize your knowledge and professional experiences in addressing the readings and any class activities. Class
participation also involves opening oneself to challenge and to be challenged by the ideas and topics of the session. The quality of your class participation is worth 20% of your final grade.

Article/Paper Critiques. You will be asked to provide critical evaluations of a published article in the field, and of a fellow student’s literature review. Descriptions of how to conduct the critiques will be provided in class. These will be worth 30% of your grade.

1. The first critique will be of Steele & Aronson (1995). This should be approximately 8 pages, double-spaced. This is due October 13th.

2. You will also critique another group’s final paper. These will be submitted to the student and the instructor on December 8th. These papers will be no more than two pages each, single-spaced.

Literature Review. The intent of this assignment is to give you a chance to prepare your own analysis of a research issue in postsecondary education. This paper must consist of a review of the literature on an empirical research question in the field, on the topic of your choice. This paper will be written in groups of three to four students each, and should be approximately 25 pages (double-spaced), excluding references and appendices. I will provide you with feedback throughout the process.

1. A brief description of the topic is due in class October 6th. Please feel free to meet with me individually as you develop your topic.

2. The final paper is due in class on December 1st. Copies will be provided for the instructor and three students in the course to read prior to the presentations (40% of grade).

Presentation. Each student will make a formal presentation to the class about the paper they have written and the major analytical issues that the paper addresses. These will be approximately 10 minutes each, with 10 minutes for questions and comments, similar to an academic conference. Presentations will be December 8th (10% of grade).

Policies on Late Papers, Missed Classes, and Other Bad Behavior

Late papers are accepted, with a penalty of half a grade, regardless of reason. The grade penalty is non-negotiable, although petitions for sympathy may be considered at the instructor’s discretion. Missed classes will hurt the class participation grade, also regardless of reason. Students who miss four class sessions will need to withdraw from the course. The instructor has a thing about plagiarism and proven academic misconduct will result in both failure of the course and a report to the dean’s office. Students who do none of these things will have a special place in my heart, but imperfect students may be approved on a case-by-case basis.
Citations

I despise APA (American Psychological Association) citation format, but it dominates the field and needs to be learned. All papers must be submitted using APA (5th edition) citations. You may buy the APA Publication Manual, one of many briefer substitutes, or use one of many internet resources, such as http://apaguide.net.

Course Texts


Additional Readings

The remainder of the course readings are available electronically through University Reserves. They are also available for purchase in a coursepack through Excel. If you use reserves, download and print these articles at your own convenience. You may find it useful to have the readings bound or otherwise organized for the course.

Reading Packet: http://www.umich.edu/~bastedo/readings/ed695.fall2006.pdf

Course Schedule

*Part I: Understanding Quantitative Research*

**September 8: Introduction to the Course and Statistics Review**

Jaeger, Chapters 1-4

**September 15: Conceptual Issues in Quantitative Research**

Jaeger, Chapters 5-6


**September 22: Using Research Databases**

Special Guest Star: Marija Freeland, Education Librarian

Special Location: Instructional Lab, 4th Floor, Undergraduate Library

Fink, Chapter 1

**September 29: Statistical Inference and Estimation**

Jaeger, Chapters 7-9


FAQ: [http://www.stanford.edu/group/diversity/faq.htm](http://www.stanford.edu/group/diversity/faq.htm)

**October 6: Testing Hypotheses**

Jaeger, Chapters 10-12


*Topic Description Due*

**October 13: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)**

Jaeger, Chapters 13-14


*Article Critique Due*
**October 27: Linear Regression & Factor Analysis**

Jaeger, Chapter 15


**Interlude: Writing Literature Reviews**

**November 10: Literature Reviews and Presentations**

Fink, Chapters 2-4 (skim for review), Chapter 5 (pp. 185-200)


**Part II: Understanding Qualitative Research**

**November 17: Qualitative Research Designs**

Merriam, Chapters 1-3


**December 1: Interpreting Qualitative Research**

Merriam, Chapter 10


**December 8: Paper Presentations**

Revised: August 11, 2006