GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY  
College of Education and Human Development  

SYLLABUS  

EDSE 842 (.001/.657): Applications of Research Methodology in Special Education  

Spring, 2011  

Professor  
Kelley S. Regan, Ph.D.  
Assistant Professor  
kregan@gmu.edu  
703-993-9858  

Office Hours  
Krug Hall, Rm. 110E  
Tuesdays, 4:00 – 6:00  
Thursdays, 3:00 - 4:15  
or by appointment  

Time, Date & Room  
Tuesdays, 7:20 pm - 10:00 pm  
Innovation 129  

Course Description  
Provides knowledge and skills in the application of research methodology in special education. Topics include methods for conducting survey research, experimental and quasi-experimental research, research involving correlation and regression, and qualitative research. Emphasizes application to specific issues in special education research.  

Student Outcomes:  

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

1. Describe the strengths and limitations of single subject research designs in special education research.  
2. Describe basic procedures involving single subject research designs.  
3. Evaluate previous research that has employed single subject research methodology.  
4. Design future special education research using single subject methodology.  
5. Describe the strengths and limitations of qualitative research designs in special education research.  
6. Evaluate previous research that has employed qualitative research methodology.  
7. Design future special education research using qualitative methodology.  
8. Describe the strengths and limitations of survey research designs in special education research.  
9. Evaluate previous research that has employed survey research methodology.  
10. Design future special education research using survey methodology.  
11. Describe the strengths and limitations of group-experimental research designs in special education research.  
12. Describe basic procedures involving group-experimental research designs.
13. Evaluate previous special education research that has employed group-experimental research methodology.

Graduate School of Education Statements of Expectations

Student Expectations

- Students must adhere to the guidelines of the George Mason University Honor Code [See http://academicintegrity.gmu.edu/honorcode/].

- Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with the George Mason University Office of Disability Services (ODS) and inform their instructor, in writing, at the beginning of the semester [See http://ods.gmu.edu/].

- Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing [See http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/1301gen.html].

- Students are responsible for the content of university communications sent to their George Mason University email account and are required to activate their account and check it regularly. All communication from the university, college, school, and program will be sent to students solely through their Mason email account.

- Students must follow the university policy stating that all sound emitting devices shall be turned off during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.

- Students are expected to exhibit professional behaviors and dispositions at all times.

Campus Resources

- The George Mason University Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) staff consists of professional counseling and clinical psychologists, social workers, and counselors who offer a wide range of services (e.g., individual and group counseling, workshops and outreach programs) to enhance students’ personal experience and academic performance [See http://caps.gmu.edu/].

- The George Mason University Writing Center staff provides a variety of resources and services (e.g., tutoring, workshops, writing guides, handbooks) intended to support students as they work to construct and share knowledge through writing [See http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/].
Course Materials:

There is not a selected text required for this course. Recommended texts for reference are suggested in the syllabus. Required reading materials include identified research articles to be obtained via the George Mason database and/or Blackboard postings.

Nature of Course Delivery:

1. Class lecture, discussion, and participation.
2. Media and relevant multimedia presentations.
3. Study and independent library research.
5. Group presentations of current literature of special education research
7. On-line; e.g., Discussion Board, Blackboard, readings

Evaluation:

1. Class attendance and participation in discussion and group activities
2. Written method sections
3. Group presentation
4. Mid-term and Final exam

Late Assignment Policy: All assignments must be submitted on or before the assigned due date. In fairness to students who make the effort to submit work on time, 5% of the total assignment points will be deducted each day from your grade for late assignments.

Task Stream and Signature Assignment(s):

There are no signature assignments for this course or any necessary submissions to Taskstream.

Requirements

1. Class attendance and participation in discussion and group activities.
2. Four written method sections, using single-subject, qualitative, survey, and group-experimental or quasi-experimental methodology. 5-7 page max., double –spaced, for each proposal (NOT including title page, abstract, and references), APA (6th ed.) format. Subheadings should ordinarily include the following:

   • Background literature (brief)
   • Purpose statement
   • Research Questions
   • Method
     o Participants
     o Setting
     o Materials/Instrument
• Procedures
  o Data Sources
• Data analysis
• Anticipated results/Discussion
• References

**Evaluation (see rubrics)**

1. Attendance/participation: 15 points
2. Method sections: 40 points (4 @ 10 points each)
3. Midterm & Final: 30 points (15 points each)
4. Presentation: 15 points
   100 points

**Grading Scale:**

A+ 97 – 100 points
A 93 – 96 points
A-90-92 points
B+ 87 – 89 points
B 83 – 86 points
B- 80 – 82 points
C 79 points and below

**Required Access to Course Blackboard Site (9.1)**
Blackboard will be used to post important information for this course. Plan to access the Bb site several times per week; announcements and resources are posted on the Bb site in between class sessions. You are responsible for accessing the materials – for printed copies, etc. prior to class. [http://mymason.gmu.edu](http://mymason.gmu.edu). Your user ID and password will remain the same. Click the Login tab. Your Login and password is the same as your George Mason e-mail login. Once you enter, select EDSE 842 course.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings Due For This Class</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 1, 1/25</td>
<td>Introduction/Organization: Pretest; research traditions; common</td>
<td>Odom, Brantlinger, Gersten, Horner, Thompson, &amp; Harris (2005)</td>
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<td>methodological concerns; nomothetic vs ideographic methods; causation;</td>
<td>Cook, Tankersley, &amp; Landrum (2009)</td>
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<td>internal and external validity; dependent and independent variables;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>the problem of induction;</td>
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<td>Regan, Mastroperi, &amp; Scruggs (2005)</td>
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<td>Week 3, 2/8</td>
<td><em>Single-subject research II.</em> Applications and issues; research</td>
<td>Horner, Carr, Halle, McGee, Odom, &amp; Wolery (2005)</td>
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<td>synthesis.</td>
<td>Lane, Kalberg, &amp; Shepcaro (2009)</td>
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<td><strong>Guest presenter: Dr. Anna Evmenova</strong></td>
<td>Evmenova, Graff, Kinas Jerome, Behrmann (2010)</td>
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<td>Scruggs, Mastroperi, &amp; Regan (2005)</td>
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<td>Week 5, 2/22</td>
<td><em>Qualitative research designs.</em> Internal and external validity.</td>
<td>Seo, Brownell, Bishop, &amp; Dingle (2008)</td>
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<td><strong>Method section I due.</strong></td>
<td>Buckley (2005) chapter (pp.7-36)</td>
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<td>Scruggs, Mastroperi, &amp; McDuffie (2007)</td>
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<td>Week 6, 3/0</td>
<td><em>Qualitative research designs II.</em> Applications, data analysis</td>
<td>McDuffie &amp; Scruggs (2008)</td>
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<td>Brainling, Jiminez, Klinger, Pugach &amp; Richardson (2005)</td>
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<td>Week 7, 3/08</td>
<td>NVIVO 8 demonstration</td>
<td>Prepare for Mid-Term</td>
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<td><em>Qualitative research designs III. Midterm exam.</em></td>
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<td>Week 8, 3/22</td>
<td><em>Survey research.</em> Methods. <strong>Method section II due.</strong></td>
<td>Cutler &amp; Graham (2008)</td>
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<td>Week 9, 4/05</td>
<td><strong>Survey research II.</strong> Applications, synthesis;</td>
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<td>Week 10, 4/12??</td>
<td><strong>Group-experimental research.</strong> Assumptions of ANOVA; threats to validity; random assignment.</td>
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<td>Note: Dr. Regan out of town.</td>
<td>Praisner (2003)</td>
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<td>Week 11, 4/19</td>
<td><strong>Group-experimental research II.</strong> Experimental and quasi-experimental designs. <strong>Method section III due.</strong></td>
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<td>Gersten, Fuchs, Compton, Coyne, Greenwood, &amp; Innocenti (2005)</td>
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<td>Week 12, 4/26</td>
<td><strong>Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) Conference</strong></td>
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<td>Week 13, 5/3</td>
<td><strong>Group-experimental research III.</strong> Quasi-experimental designs: comparative designs for pre-existing groups.</td>
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<td>Mastropieri &amp; Scruggs (2009)</td>
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<td>Simpkins, Scruggs, &amp; Mastropieri (2009)</td>
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<td>Week 14, 5/10</td>
<td><strong>Group-experimental research IV.</strong> Ceiling and floor effects; one within-one-between designs; multiple statistical tests; crossover designs. <strong>Guest presenter: Dr. Sheri Berkeley</strong></td>
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<td>Berkeley (TBD)</td>
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<td>Finals Week 5/17</td>
<td><strong>Method section IV due. Final exam due.</strong></td>
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**Required Readings**

http://www.cec.sped.org/content/NavigationMenu/Publications2/exceptionalchildren/

http://www.cec.sped.org/content/NavigationMenu/Publications2/exceptionalchildren/


*Most articles are available on-line and/or via Blackboard courses 9.1. Read PDF versions whenever possible. For each research article, be prepared in class to discuss each of the following:

- What was the **purpose** of the investigation?
- What were the **research questions**?
- What, if applicable, the **dependent variable(s)** and **independent variable(s)**?
- Who were the **participants**?
- What were the **data sources**?
- What **materials** were employed?
- What were the **research procedures**?
- What were the **data analysis** procedures?
- What **conclusions** were drawn?
- What were the **limitations** of the investigation?
- How could you **replicate and extend** this study (e.g., for your dissertation)?

For non-research, methodological papers, be prepared in class for each of the following:

- What is the **purpose** of the article?
- What are the **major points** under each subheading?
- How can the article be **summarized**?
- How is this article **useful** in planning/designing research?

**Recommended Resources**


**RUBRIC FOR MID-TERM AND FINAL EXAMINATIONS (30 points total)**

For each open-ended test item:

**Exemplary response** (2 points): Provides direct and thorough response to question, defines relevant terms, and provides specific examples or instances of the concepts being discussed. Answer is directly reflective of lecture, readings, activities, or assignments, or other material of direct relevance to class.

**Adequate response** (1.5 point): Provides direct and relevant response to question, provides accurate information directly relevant to class readings, notes, or activities. May provide less information, less elaboration, or a less thoughtful overall response than an exemplary response.

**Marginal response** (1 point): Provides some relevant information, but does not demonstrate overall a clear or complete understanding of the relevant concepts.

**Inadequate response** (.5 - 0 points): Weak response that does not appear to reflect course content or activities. May include inaccurate information.
METHOD SECTION ASSIGNMENT (4 @ 10 points each)

This course requires students to write four research method sections employing single subject, qualitative, survey, and group-experimental/quasi-experimental research methodology (5 – 7 page maximum, double-spaced, NOT including title page, abstract, and references). Each paper should employ APA format and contain sections similar to the following:

Introduction, brief literature review (1-2 page)
  Purpose
  Research questions
Method (3-4 pages)
  Research design
  Participants and setting
  Materials
  Data sources; dependent variables
  Procedures (proposed methods for data collection)
  Data analysis
(Anticipated) Results (where relevant) (1 page)
Discussion

RUBRIC FOR METHOD SECTION ASSIGNMENTS

Exemplary paper (10 points): Appropriate topic, clearly and directly written, thorough description of participants, data sources, and procedures. Adequate design, analysis, and general understanding/interpretation of the relevant methodology; good writing style, free of mechanical or stylistic errors, appropriate and correct use of APA format.

Adequate paper (9-8 points): Good overall paper, lacking in one or two of the criteria for an exemplary paper. Not entirely clear and thorough, and/or may have neglected specific components relevant to the relevant methodology; minor writing style or APA format errors may be present.

Marginal paper (7 points): Overall, acceptable but with one or more significant problems. Contains some useful information, but may have substantial problems with the evaluation, writing style/APA format, or unclear or inappropriate description of methodology.

Inadequate paper (1-6 points): Paper with substantial problems in important areas such as writing, description of participants, data sources, procedures, data analysis, or overall thoughtfulness. Contains little or no information of value to the field of education.

Unacceptable/no paper (0 points): Paper with no value whatsoever relative to the assignment, or no paper turned in at all.