

George Mason University
Graduate School of Education
Ph.D. in Education
EDRD 832, Trends and Issues in Literacy, 3 credits
Spring 2012, Mondays, 4:30 – 7:10 p.m. in Enterprise Hall 77

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Prerequisites

EDUC 800, EDRS 810, or permission of instructor

Catalog Description

This course explores emerging trends and issues related to literacy research methods, processes, practices, and policies. Students analyze literacy research and develop a research proposal on a topic of personal interest.

Course Description

This course is a foundational course for doctoral students who have selected Literacy as a specialization or minor in the Ph.D. in Education program. Other Ph.D. in Education students may enroll with instructor permission. Emerging topics and issues are approached through multiple research designs prevalent in the field of literacy. Topics include emerging issues related to literacy research methods, processes, and practices. The course has a strong emphasis on research methodologies in the domain of literacy, so knowledge about foundational theories of literacy and literacy processes is assumed. Students will study a common core of literature and will also design their own *research* proposal on a topic of personal interest. The class will be held in a seminar format.

Course Outcomes

Students will

1. Develop an understanding and appreciation of a few current research methodologies that encompass current trends and issues in the field of literacy.
2. Prepare a research proposal in an area of research interest that fits within a specific research methodology.
3. Lead others in study and discussion of a research methodology related to a trend and/or issue in literacy.
4. Participate in class discussion with questions and ideas derived from the readings and pertinent to class topic.

Course Expectations

1. The completion of all readings assigned for the course is assumed. Because the class will be structured around discussion, it is imperative that students keep up with the readings and participate in class.
2. Class attendance is expected. If, due to an emergency, students will not be in class, they must e-mail or call the instructor.
3. The university requires that all pagers and cell phones be turned off before class begins (*Note*: This includes all types of text messaging!).
4. It is expected that assignments will be turned in on time (the beginning of the class in which they are due). However, it is recognized that graduate students occasionally have major inconveniences that prevent work completion. If such a situation arises, students should speak to the instructor in a timely fashion.

Nature of Course Delivery

This course utilizes a seminar in a face-to-face format. Seminars will include instructor- and student-led discussions, reflective activities, and student presentations that will take place during class meetings as well as online. Students are required to complete all class readings prior to each session so as to engage in active dialogue and sharing of ideas. Learning activities will also include independent library research and study.

Required Texts

Duke, N. K. & Mallette, M.H. (2004). *Literacy Research Methodologies*. ISBN. 1-59385-059-X (pbk.)
 Wepner, S. B., & Gambrell, L. B. (2006). *Beating the odds: Getting published in the field of literacy*. Newark, DE: International Reading Association. ISBN 978-0-87207-589-4 (pbk.)

Additional Readings. Required readings of research articles are
<https://mymasonportal.gmu.edu/webapps/portal/frameset.jsp>

Assignment Descriptions

1. Participation & Questions on Readings (15 points)

Active participation and engagement is imperative for optimal learning. Preparation for and participation in in-class and peer-feedback activities will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

The student

- (a) Completes readings and activities prior to class as is evidenced by the ability to discuss the concepts examined in the texts and reading materials.
- (b) Is actively involved in in-class experiences as is evidenced by (1) participation in all activities, (2) engagement in discussions which are informed by required readings and demonstrate reflection on those readings, and (3) contribution of two to three questions that inquire about content of reading materials or applications to practice and research.

- (c) Supports the participation and learning of classmates by providing specific and constructive feedback during peer-feedback activities (see Course Schedule)

Each of these criteria will be assessed on a 5-point scale.

- 5 = Student *consistently* demonstrated the criterion throughout the semester.
- 4 = Student *frequently* demonstrated the criterion throughout the semester.
- 3 = Student *intermittently* demonstrated the criterion throughout the semester.
- 2 = Student *rarely* demonstrated the criterion throughout the semester.
- 1 = Student *did not* demonstrate the criterion throughout the semester.

2. Seminar Facilitator (30 points)

Students will facilitate a 90-minute seminar on one of the research methodologies in the main textbook (i.e., Duke & Mallette, 2004). They will also use the articles(s) assigned for the literacy methodology (*Note: All chapters and articles are listed on the schedule under the date the readings are due*).

Student leaders are expected to:

- (a) Introduce the research methodology or approach by presenting relevant background information using audio and/or visual aids (Power Point is preferred; if you want to use other visual aids please discuss with the instructor).

- (b) Facilitate a discussion on the textbook chapter *and* accompanying articles.

(b.1) Discussion Format: The discussion should be interactive, such that there are questions for your classmates, as well as activities to apply the core ideas you discuss and present. You are encouraged to alternate between lecture/presentation mode and question/discussion mode. *Please note:*

Presenting a summary of the articles/chapter with no audience participation is not conducive to active and deeper learning. Thus, if your ‘leadership’ is limited to lecture mode, you would not be satisfying the requirements of discussion and seminar leadership.

(b.2). Seminar Content: The seminar should include the main points on the research methodology presented, links to the empirical articles assigned, and ideas on potential applications of this methodology within the literacy domain. These three main components should alternate between presentation and question/discussion mode. If you wish, you can provide other articles that reflect the research methodology presented, but not to the exclusion of the articles assigned.

- (c) Prepare an outline to distribute to the class. *Note:* This is an ‘outline’ not a detailed summary of the chapter and articles. You should assume that your classmates would have read the chapter and articles, thus a detailed summary should not be needed, nor is required.

- (d) Close the seminar with a summary and some future questions and thoughts to explore.

Grading criteria will be provided and posted on Blackboard to guide your preparation of the seminar.

3. & 4. Research Proposal & Presentation (55 points) (40 points Written Research Proposal; 15 points Presentation)

Students will select an area of research within their interest or a current trend and/or issue in literacy and will write a research proposal. The research proposal will include two major sections: a literature review and a proposed study. The overall research proposal will include the following sections:

1. Problem Statement or Introduction: What is the problem the study will look at and why it is important?
2. A literature review that synthesizes research related to the topic and develops an argument for the proposed research. This literature review will be the basis for the proposed study.
3. Research questions or hypotheses.
4. Methodology (i.e., within the ones discussed in class or any other one used within the field of literacy): This section will include participants, measures and design of the research study.
5. Data analysis and Expected Results: Describe the type of data analyses you will use (briefly)
6. Limitations, conclusions and implications for future research.

The research proposal will be submitted as a final term paper, and it will be presented in a presentation at the end of the semester following APA presentation guidelines. Drafts of the literature review and research study will be shared with peers on assigned days for peer-feedback. The final research paper (literature review and research study) will be 15 to 17 double-spaced pages in length, excluding references. Research papers must adhere to the APA Publication Manual Guidelines. Additional guidelines and rubrics for the research proposal and presentation will be provided.

A rubric and guidelines will be provided and posted on Blackboard to guide your writing and presentation

Grading Scale

A = 95 – 100 A- = 90 – 94 B+ = 87 – 89 B = 83 – 86 B- = 80 – 82 C = 70 – 79 F = < 70

A+ is possible if work is of exceptional high quality and includes work beyond that required for the course.

Assignment	Due Date	Points
1. Participation & Questions on Readings	Ongoing	15
2. Seminar Facilitator	Day selected	30
3. Research Proposal	May 7	40
4. Research Presentation	April 30	15
Total		100

Written Assignments Expectations

Students will

5. Present ideas in a clear, concise, and organized manner. (Avoid wordiness and redundancy.)
6. Develop points coherently, definitively, and thoroughly.
7. Refer to appropriate authorities, studies, and examples to document where appropriate. (Avoid meaningless generalizations, unwarranted assumptions, and unsupported opinions.)
8. Use correct capitalization, punctuation, spelling, and grammar.

All written assignments prepared outside of class will be evaluated for content and presentation as graduate-level writing. The American Psychological Association, Sixth Edition (APA) style will be followed for all written work. All written work unless otherwise noted must be completed on a word

processor and should be proofread carefully. If students are not confident of their own ability to catch errors, they should have another person proofread their work.

George Mason University Policies and Resources for Students

- a. **Academic Integrity:** Students must follow the guidelines of the **University Honor Code**. See <http://academicintegrity.gmu.edu/honorcode/> for the full honor code.
- b. **Responsible Use of Computing & Electronic Devices:** Students must agree to abide by the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing. Regarding electronic devices (such as laptops, cell phones, etc.), please be respectful of your peers and your instructor and do not engage in activities that are unrelated to class. Such disruptions show a lack of professionalism and may affect your participation grade.
- c. **Mason Email** – 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, division, and program will be sent to students solely through their Mason email account. Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing [See <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/1301ge.html>]
- d. **Counseling and Psychological Services:** 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/>
- e. **Office of Disability Services:** 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/> or call 703-993-2474.
- f. The **Writing Center** 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/>.
- g. **University Libraries** provide numerous services, research tools, and help with using the library resources [See <http://library.gmu.edu/>].

College of Education & Human Development

Core Values

The College of Education & Human Development is committed to the following five values: collaboration, ethical leadership, innovation, research-based practice, and social justice. Students are expected to adhere to these principles. <http://cehd.gmu.edu/values/> For other information regarding the College of Education and Human Development, please visit <http://cehd.gmu.edu/>

EDRD 832: Course Schedule

Date	Class Topics	Assignments & Readings Due
Class 1 January 23	Case Study Research: An in-depth look at adolescent literacy	Duke & Mallette : Chapter 2, Barone <i>Multilingual Language and Literacy...</i> Owodally <i>Spotlighting Social Class...</i> Payne-Bourcy & Chandler-Olcott
Class 2 January 30	Correlation & Multiple Regression : Associations with Reading Experience and Prediction of Comprehension	Duke & Mallette : Chapter 3, Stanovich & Cuningham <i>Print Exposure...</i> Cunningham & Stanovich <i>Predicting Reading Comprehension...</i> Cutting & Scarborough
Class 3 February 6	Ethnographic Research: Literacy through Cultural Lens	Duke & Mallette : Chapter 6, Purcell-Gates <i>Contexts Matter...</i> Dooley & Assaf <i>Genres, Contexts & Literacy Practices...</i> Perry [Student-led discussion #1]
February 13	No class	Reading Day: Topic selection for research proposal; Begin paper outline
Class 4 February 20	Experimental & Quasi-Experimental Design: Reading Engagement & Reading Instruction Online session : Blackboard Discussion	Duke & Mallette : Chapter 7, Vellutino & Schatschneider <i>The Role of Instruction in Learning to Read...</i> Foorman et al. <i>Increasing Reading Comprehension & Engagement...</i> Guthrie, Wigfield, Barbosa.. <i>Rethinking Reading Comprehension Instruction...</i> McKeown, Beck & Blake
Class 6 February 27	Formative & Design Experiments: Comprehension Instruction for ELLs & Technology in Literacy	Duke & Mallette : Chapter 8, Reinking & Bradley <i>A formative experiment investigating...</i> Reinking & Bradley <i>Teaching argument and explanation ...</i> Klein & Rose [Student-led discussion # 2]
Class 7 March 8	Instrumentation: Assessing Affect and Motivation for Reading	Duke & Mallette : Chapter 10, Henk & McKenna <i>Children's attitudes towards reading...</i> McKenna, Kear & Ellsworth <i>Assessing the Experience of Autonomy...</i> Roth, Assor et al. [Student-led discussion # 4]
	Surveys: Reading in Middle School	Duke & Mallette : Chapter 13, Baumann & Bason <i>«Just plain reading »...</i> Ivey & Broaduss

	Verbal Protocols: Strategies for Internet Reading <i>Peer & Instructor Feedback</i>	[Student-led discussion # 5] Duke & Mallette : Chapter 14, Pressley & Hilden <i>Strategies for internet reading...</i> Zhang & Duke [Student-led discussion # 6 (Verbal Protocols, option 1)] <i>Draft of paper outline.</i>
Class 8 March 12	<i>Spring Recess—No class</i>	
Class 9 March 19	Neuroimaging: Brain activity during reading	Duke & Mallette : Chapter 12, Fletcher, Simos, Papanicolaou, & Denton <i>Brain activation profiles during the early stages...</i> Simos, Fletcher, Foorman et al. <i>Dyslexia-specific brain activation ...</i> Simos, Fletcher, Bergman et al. [Student led discussion # 6 (Neuroimaging, option 2)]
Class 10 March 26	Publishing in the field: Getting started <i>Peer Feedback</i>	Wepner & Gambrell (2006): Section I: Chapters 1, 2 & 3. <i>First Draft of Literature Review & Research Questions</i>
Class 11 April 2	Writing for journals & other outlets <i>Peer Feedback</i>	Wepner & Gambrell (2006): Section II: Chapters 4, 5 & 6. <i>Draft of Revised Literature Review & Research Questions</i>
Class 12 April 9	Writing books and edited volumes <i>Peer Feedback</i>	Wepner & Gambrell (2006): Section III: Chapters 7 & 8. <i>First Draft of Proposed Study</i>
April 16	<i>AERA—No class</i>	
Class 12 April 23	Responding to Revise-and-Resubmit and Rejection Decisions <i>Peer Feedback</i>	Wepner & Gambrell (2006): Section IV: Chapters 9 & 10. <i>Draft of Revised Proposed Study</i>
Class 13 April 30	Research Proposal Presentations	<i>Student Presentations</i>
Class 14 May 07		Research Proposal (Term Paper), 4:30, May 7th