# **Graduate School of Education**

# Program: Special Education Spring Semester, 2012

Course title: EDSE 590, Special Education Research, Section 665

Credit Hours: 3

**Meetings:** Mondays, 7:30-10:00 PM, January 23<sup>rd</sup> – May 14<sup>th</sup>, 2012

Location: George Mason Arlington Campus, FH 308

Instructor: Dr. Sharon N. E. Ray

Office: 102B Finley Hall (Fairfax Campus)

Office Hours: Mondays by appointment and before and after class

**Phone:** (703) 993-5247

Email: <a href="mailto:sray4@gmu.edu">sray4@gmu.edu</a> <a href="mailto:sray4@gmu.edu">\*\*\*Best Contact Method!\*\*\*</a>

# Course Description from University Catalog:

Describes fundamental concepts and practices in educational research in special education. Covers specific applications of educational research methods to problems in special education. Emphasizes review and critique of special education research, and applied classroom research for teachers.

#### **Student Outcomes**

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Identify and understand different models of educational research suitable for different research purposes in special education
- Describe and discuss basic theories and methods of quantitative experimental and quasi-experimental research in special education
- Describe and discuss basic theories and methods of survey research in special education
- Describe and discuss basic theories and methods of single-subject research in special education
- Describe and discuss basic theories and methods of qualitative research in special education
- Describe and implement teacher applications of classroom research to address specific classroom problems.

#### **Professional Standards:**

Relationship of Courses to Program Goals and Professional Organizations

EDSE 590 is part of the George Mason University, Graduate School of Education, and Special Education Masters Degree Program. The program aligns with the standards for teacher licensure established by the Council for Exceptional Children, the major special education professional organization in the United States. As such the curriculum for the course includes competencies for teaching students with disabilities from preschool through grade 12. The CEC Standards are listed on the following web site:

http://www.cec.sped.org/ps/perf\_based\_stds/common\_core\_4-21-01.html

# **Nature of Course Delivery**

Learning activities include the following:

- 1. Class lecture, discussion, and participation
- 2. Videotapes and other relevant media presentations
- 3. Study and independent library research
- 4. Applications with relevant hardware and software
- 5. Application activities
- 6. Class presentations of papers and research projects

# College of Education and Human Development Statement of Expectations

The Graduate School of Education (GSE) expects that all students abide by the following:

- ✓ Students are expected to exhibit professional behavior and dispositions. See <a href="http://gse.gmu.edu/">http://gse.gmu.edu/</a> for a listing of these dispositions.
- ✓ Students must follow the guidelines of the University Honor Code. See <a href="http://www.gmu.edu/catalog/apolicies/#TOC\_H12">http://www.gmu.edu/catalog/apolicies/#TOC\_H12</a> for the full honor code. Be especially observant of proper documentation of source material in order to avoid plagiarism. See <a href="http://mason.gmu.edu/%7Emontecin/plagiarism.htm">http://mason.gmu.edu/%7Emontecin/plagiarism.htm</a> for guidelines.
- ✓ Students must agree to abide by the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing. See <a href="http://mail.gmu.edu">http://mail.gmu.edu</a> and click on Responsible Use of Computing at the bottom of the screen.
- ✓ Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with the GMU Office of Disability Services (OSD) and inform the instructor, in writing, at the beginning of the semester. See www.gmu.edu/student/drc or call 703-993-2474 to access the OSD.

- ✓ Students are expected to attend all classes, arrive on time, and stay for the duration of the class time. Two or more unexcused absences will result in no credit for this course.
- ✓ We will use person first language in our class discussions and written assignments (and ideally in your professional practice). Please refer to "Guidelines for Non-Handicapping Language in APA Journals" <a href="http://www.apastyle.org/disabilities.html">http://www.apastyle.org/disabilities.html</a>

#### Core Values Commitment

The College of Education & Human Development is committed to collaboration, ethical leadership, innovation, research-based practice, and social justice. Students are expected to adhere to these principles. <a href="http://cehd.gmu.edu/values/">http://cehd.gmu.edu/values/</a>

# **Additional Listing of Resources and Expectations:**

# George Mason University Email: https://mserver3.gmu.edu/

From this link, follow the directions for activating an email account. Every student is required to establish a GMU email account. Course email correspondence and other important university emails will be sent to GMU email accounts.

# George Mason Patriot Web: <a href="https://patriotweb.gmu.edu/">https://patriotweb.gmu.edu/</a>

A self-service website for students, faculty, and staff of George Mason University. There is a wealth of useful links, information, and online forms on this website including program of studies details, application for graduation, request for transfer of credit, and internship application.

#### TaskStream Submission

\*Note: Every student registered for any EDSE course as of the Fall 2007 semester is required to submit required assignments to TaskStream (regardless of whether a course is an elective, a one time course or part of an undergraduate minor). TaskStream information is available at <a href="http://gse.gmu.edu/programs/sped/">http://gse.gmu.edu/programs/sped/</a>. The required assignment for this course (Research Application or Research Review Project) must be submitted to TaskStream (<a href="https://www.taskstream.com">https://www.taskstream.com</a>) at the end of this course. Failure to submit the assignment to TaskStream will result in reporting the course grade as Incomplete (IN). Unless this grade is changed, upon completion of the required submission, the IN will convert to an F nine weeks into the following semester.\*

APA Formatting Guidelines: <a href="http://www.psywww.com/resource/apacrib.htm">http://www.psywww.com/resource/apacrib.htm</a>
This website is offered as a companion to the APA style manual. It should not be considered a substitute for directly consulting the APA manual, 6<sup>th</sup> edition for standard procedures of applying APA style. Additional APA style help URLs are available on the GSE library URL.

Academic Integrity: Students in this course are expected to exhibit academic integrity at all times. It is essential that all students submit their own work, especially with the technical information and skills taught within this course. To that end, plagiarism is a violation of academic integrity, as well as the ideas and principles of this class. Plagiarism is the intentional or unintentional use of others' ideas, words, data, figures, pictures, sequence of ideas, or arrangement of materials without clearly acknowledging the source (based on the Mason Honor Code online at: <a href="http://mason.gmu.edu/~montecin/plagiarism.htm">http://mason.gmu.edu/~montecin/plagiarism.htm</a>). The instructor reserves the right to submit your work to turnitin.com, a plagiarism detection service, for an integrity assessment as needed. Students who commit plagiarism of any form (eg. whether it be copying test answers, using someone else's exact words in a written assignment, etc.) will be given an "F" as their course grade and the matter will be reported to the Dean of the Education School and the GMU Honor Council.

Advising contact information: Please make sure that you are being advised on a regular basis as to your status and progress through your program. You may wish to contact Jancy Templeton, GMU Special Education Advisor, at <a href="mailto:itemple1@gmu.edu">itemple1@gmu.edu</a> or 703-993-2387. Please be prepared with your G number when you contact her.

# **Texts and Readings:**

# **Required Texts**

McMillan, J. (2007). *Educational research: Fundamentals for the consumer* (6<sup>th</sup> ed.). Boston: AB Longman.

American Psychological Association. (2010). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th ed.). Washington, DC: Author.

Other readings relevant to special education research applications will be assigned by the instructor as indicated by the needs and interests of the class.

# **Required Access to Course Blackboard Site**

The George Mason Blackboard system will be used as an integral part of this course. It is important to access Blackboard several times a week between class sessions to check posted updates and messages. Additionally, class handouts will be posted on Blackboard for upcoming classes. The first night of class all handouts will be provided. After the first night, all handouts will be posted by Friday evening before Monday's class. Students are responsible for downloading these handouts or printing hard copies for use in class from the second class onwards. You can access Bb at <a href="http://courses.gmu.edu">http://courses.gmu.edu</a>.

\*\*Starting January 30<sup>th</sup>, be sure to come to class prepared with the week's electronic copies of materials or hard copies (whichever works best for you)!\*\*

It is recommended that students retain copies of all course products to document their progress through the GSE ED/LD program. Products from this class can become part of your individual professional portfolio used in your portfolio classes that documents your satisfactory progress through the GSE program and the CEC performance based standards.

- The use of electronic devices that produce sound or otherwise interfere with the learning of others (i.e., cell phones, pagers, etc.) is prohibited during class. Please turn these devices off or to vibrate before the start of class.
- Computers may be used to take notes during class, but they may not be used for internet exploration or other non-class activities during class time.

# **Assessment of Course Requirements:**

Requirements of this course include readings, from your textbook and professional journal articles, and activities, which include in-class individual and group work, as well as independent assignments outside of class. The goal of all work for this course is to increase your knowledge and skills in educational research to assist you in becoming a more informed consumer of research about the special education field in general and about evidence-based practices in special education specifically.

The signature assignment for this course is the research application or research review assignment that will assist you in applying your literature review, research analysis, critical thinking, and professional writing skills. Besides the signature assignment, there are several other forms of assessment implemented in this class, including both formative and summative evaluation measures. Students are expected to complete all forms of class assessment and final grading will be based on the cumulative points that students <u>earn</u> based on their performance on all course assessments. Student performance on assignments is expected to be both timely and of high quality.

Online submission of student work is required. All written assignments should be submitted through the Blackboard Digital Assignments tab. Assignments should not be submitted by email unless there is an emergency technical issue with Blackboard. Each assignment should be submitted by the start of class on the due date (7:30 PM). Assignments that are not submitted at the Blackboard

Digital Assignments Tab at the appropriate time <u>are late</u>. Late assignments will be accepted with a point deduction. All course assignments should be completed with graduate level use of content, grammar, spelling, and written expression clarity. If writing is an area of difficulty, you will need to visit the GMU Writing Center to work on these skills (<a href="https://writingcenter.gmu.edu">https://writingcenter.gmu.edu</a>).

Assignments submitted through Blackboard should be labeled with filenames that correspond to: <your first initial your last name abbreviated form of the assignment's name>. I will return graded assignments to you via the course Blackboard email. It is suggested that you download and save all returned assignments, as well as corresponding evaluations and comments. Below is example labeling for submission of all written assignments:

# SRayCITI – CITI Module Completion SRayART1 or SRayART2– Article Review & Critique SRayPAPER – Research Paper

	Course Requirements Evaluation			
Ass	signment	Points Earned/Total Points		
1.	Attendance & Participation (1 pt. per class meeting)	/15		
2.	CITI Module Completion	/10		
3.	Quantitative Article Review & Critique	/15		
4.	Qualitative Article Review & Critique	/15		
*5.	Research Paper	/30		
6.	Research Paper Poster Presentation	/15		
Tot	al # of points earned	/100		

<sup>\*</sup>Submission to Taskstream required.

Course evaluation and final grades will be calculated based on the below percentages calculated from each individual student's point score out of the possible 100 point total. Late assignments will be accepted in the following manner (except for the Research Paper Poster Presentation which will only be accepted on time):

- > 5% point deduction up to 1 week late
- ➤ 10% point deduction 1-2 weeks late
- 25% point deduction 2 weeks until the last class meeting

# Grading Scale:

A = 95-100%90-94% B+ = 87-89%B = 80-86%C+ = 77-79%

C = 70-76%

F = 69% and below

# **Course Assignment Details:**

# Attendance and Participation - Weekly (1 point per class for a total of 15 points)

Class attendance and participation are an important part of this class because of the specific and in depth information learned through the course. Attendance points are earned for each class to emphasize the importance of engaging in the learning activities and educational environment of the course. Students are expected to arrive on time; participate in all class discussions, presentations, and activities; come prepared with the day's assignment; and stay until the end of class. Attendance will be maintained through the artifacts students produce during class through group and individual work. For full attendance credit during each class, students must not only attend the full class session, but actively participate, work cooperatively, and turn in high quality class products. Partial attendance credit will be awarded any time a draft piece of the research project is not brought to class on the scheduled night. If you are unable to make any class sessions during the semester, please contact the instructor by phone or e-mail before the class session where you will be absent. In the rare event of an emergency or severe sickness, each student is given 1 "grace" absence without a point penalty, as long as the instructor is notified before the class session. In this case, it is still the student's responsibility to make arrangements to obtain notes, handouts, and lecture details from another student. Attendance points missed for more than one absence or any absence without instructor contact before class cannot be made up! Two or more unexcused absences will result in no credit for this course.

# CITI Module Completion – *Due February 20<sup>th</sup>* (10 points)

The CITI Module involves the completion of GMU Mandatory Training for Persons Conducting Research Using Human Subjects that is accessed at http://www.citiprogram.org. Seven learner modules in the Basic Course are required prior to conducting any research at Mason using human subjects. While your current research will be limited to work for course assignments, the awareness gained through the CITI modules are valuable for any researcher now and in the future. After completing the modules, copy the certificate of

completion document and paste it in a Word document, then submit this document via the Assignments Tab in Blackboard.

# <u>Qualitative and Quantitative Article Reviews & Critiques</u> – *Due March 5<sup>th</sup> and March 9<sup>th</sup>* (15 points each)

To demonstrate beginning competency in the skills needed for special education research and analysis, students will be asked to find, review, and critique one quantitative research article and also one qualitative research article, both from peer-reviewed special education journals. It is imperative that students become familiar with using professional journals in the field of special education to inform their professional practice and be proficient in understanding articles that use both quantitative and qualitative research methods. For the reviews, each student is asked to independently read one research article that implements quantitative data collection methods and analysis (these are articles collecting numerical data and using statistical analysis) and also one that utilizes qualitative research methods (discussion, narrative, etc.); identify each article's essential elements; and critique each article's ideas and design. The review/critiques should be written in APA format, and should include both title page and abstract. The reviews/critiques should be submitted via the Assignments Tab in Blackboard. The student will decide which type of article will be reviewed/critiqued first whether quantitative or qualitative. Whatever is chosen for the first review/critique, the other article type will be chosen for the second article review/critique submission. With both types of articles, each review and critique should be no longer than 5-6 pages and include the following elements:

# **Review Portion:**

- Title and author of article
- Brief explanation of research focus:
  - o Quantitative: specific research questions
  - o Qualitative: general problem statement
- Brief description of the article's literature review
- Overview of the method and design
  - o Quantitative: participants, instruments, and procedures
  - Qualitative: participants and settings/sites
- Summary of results
  - Quantitative: statistical explanations
  - Qualitative: narrative descriptions
- Brief discussion of any conclusions
- Reference page (at the very end of the entire paper)

# **Critique Portion:**

In your professional critique of the article, the following questions should be addressed:

- What? What did I learn from reading this article?
- So What? What was relevant about what I learned? Why is it important?
- Now What? Now that I have this information what does it mean to me?

Note: Do not provide a summary of what the article states.

Article Review & Critique Rubric				
Element	Points	Comments		
Title and author of article	/.5			
Brief explanation of research focus:	/2			
Quantitative: specific research questions				
<ul> <li>Qualitative: general problem statement</li> </ul>				
Brief description of the article's literature review	/1			
Overview of the method and design	/2			
<ul> <li>Quantitative: participants, instruments, and procedures</li> </ul>				
<ul> <li>Qualitative: participants and settings/sites</li> </ul>				
Summary of results	/2			
<ul> <li>Quantitative: statistical explanations</li> </ul>				
<ul> <li>Qualitative: narrative descriptions</li> </ul>				
Brief discussion of any conclusions	/1			
Reference page (at the very end of the entire paper)	/1			
What? - What did I learn from	/2			

reading this article?		
So What? - What was relevant about what I learned? Why is it important?	/2	
Now What? - Now that I have this information what does it mean to me?	/1	
Writing Style	/.5	
<ul><li> Grammar, spelling and clarity of expression</li><li> APA format</li></ul>		
TOTAL	/15	

# Research Paper - Due April 30<sup>th</sup> (30 points)

Completion of 1 of 2 options:

Option 1: Research application project Option 2: A research review project

# Option 1: Research Application Project

The research application project is designed to provide experience in designing, implementing, and evaluating an application-based project in special education. Students should design a project, which they can easily implement in their current school site that investigates a pertinent educational issue or practice. Any of the research designs covered in class are appropriate for the project. Be sure to have your research question and design approved by the instructor PRIOR to beginning implementation. The project should be completed in sections by the student throughout the course of the semester. Time will be provided weekly for students to share and get feedback on their project in Peer Review Groups. The final research application paper should be submitted via the Assignments Tab in Blackboard and should include the following:

- Title page
- Abstract
- Introduction
  - Quantitative: specific research questions need to be stated
  - Qualitative: general problem statement needs to be presented and clarified
- Review of the literature
  - Quantitative: extensive review of the previous research studies that have been done in this area

- Qualitative: brief review of the previous research studies that have been completed
- Research problem statement or questions
  - Quantitative: specific, narrow questions should be presented along with a hypotheses
  - o Qualitative: general, foreshadowed questions should be introduced
- Method and design
  - Quantitative: research design, participants, instruments, and procedures
  - o Qualitative: research design, participants, and settings/sites
- Results
  - o Quantitative: statistical explanations provided
  - Qualitative: narrative descriptions explained
- Discussion
- Conclusions
- References

Research Application Paper Rubric					
Element	Points	Comments			
Title page	/1				
Abstract	/2				
Introduction	/2				
Review of the literature	/3				
Research problem statement or questions	/4				
Method and design	/5				
Results	/4				
Discussion	/3				
Conclusions	/2				
References	/2				

Writing Style	/2	
<ul><li>Grammar, spelling and clarity of expression</li><li>APA format</li></ul>		
TOTAL	/30	

# Option 2: Research Review Project

The research review is geared at having students get extensive experience in reviewing literature found in both the virtual and physical library facilities. For this type of paper, a student can select a specific topic or intervention to investigate via the available research base. Ten original research studies on the specific topic of selection will be needed for this option and should come from peer-reviewed special education research journals. **Be sure to have your research topic approved by the instructor PRIOR to beginning your journal search.** The project should be completed in sections by the student throughout the course of the semester. Time will be provided weekly for students to share and get feedback on their project in Peer Review Groups. The final research review paper should be submitted via the Assignments Tab in Blackboard and should include the following:

- Title page
- Abstract
- Introduction
- General Topic presented as an area that has needed understanding, exploration, and research
  - Trends if any trends have been found on the topic during the research, they should be briefly outlined here
  - Thesis statement of perspective and reason for writing the review
  - Review criteria elements used in evaluating relevant literature are specified
- Literature Reviewed this section should be organized by the different studies reviewed
  - First study summary and discussion
  - Second study summary and discussion
  - Third study summary and discussion, etc. until all studies covered
- Comparative analysis highlights the similarities and differences between studies summarized in the literature reviewed

- Similarities (if any) between all studies presented, discussed, and evaluated
- Differences (if any) between all studies presented, discussed, and evaluated
- Conclusion/Summary brings closure to the review
  - o Key points throughout the review are summarized
  - Bigger Picture Relevance and role of research area to larger field of special education established
- References

Research Review Project Rubric				
Element	Points	Comments		
Title page	/1			
Abstract	/2			
Introduction	/2			
General topic	/5			
• Trends				
• Thesis				
Review criteria				
Literature reviewed	/7			
<ul> <li>First study – summary and discussion</li> </ul>				
Second study – summary and discussion				
Third study – summary and discussion				
<ul> <li>More studies – etc.</li> </ul>				
Comparative analysis	/5			
<ul> <li>Similarities (if any)</li> </ul>				
Differences (if any)				
Conclusion/Summary	/3			
Key points summarized				
Bigger Picture – Relevance and role of research area to				

larger field of special education established		
References	/3	
Writing Style	/2	
<ul><li>Grammar, spelling and clarity of expression</li><li>APA format</li></ul>		
TOTAL	/30	

# Research Paper Poster Presentation – Due May 7<sup>th</sup> or 14<sup>th</sup> (15 points)

As a culmination of the research paper (whether application or review) project, students will share their research via a clear and well-prepared poster presentation as they might at a professional conference. The presentation should encompass the major elements of a student's research paper, display information clearly and creatively, and be well-organized. To illustrate key content students can incorporate enlarged text, graphics, charts, and photos (as long as the student has a release for the photos). Students should be prepared to discuss their research and answer questions posed by class peers and the instructor during the poster presentation session. Students should also be prepared to give an overview of their project for the whole group by orally presenting to the group for 5 minutes, using their poster as their visual for their presentation.

Paper Presentation Rubric				
Element	Points	Comments		
Overall Content	/2			
<ul> <li>Summary of key research</li> </ul>				
paper points included				
Comprehensive in nature				
Posterboard	/5			
<ul> <li>Varied types of information included (Narrative, data, charts, etc.)</li> </ul>				
<ul> <li>Visual clarity</li> </ul>				
Creativity and appeal				
Research Discussion/Question Answering	/3			
<ul> <li>Engages peers in active discussion about the</li> </ul>				

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research project  • Knowledgeably answers questions related to the projects' research question and surrounding details  • Acknowledges limitations of		
the research project		
Oral Presentation	/3	
<ul> <li>Most pertinent research paper points highlighted</li> </ul>		
Adequate voice projection		
Eye contact made with audience		
Detail Elements	/2	
<ul><li>Grammar, spelling and clarity of expression</li><li>APA format</li></ul>		
	/4.5	
TOTAL	/15	

TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE			
Date	Topics	Assignments Due	
1/9	EDSE 792 Final Portfolio Class Session		
1/16	Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday		
1/23	Syllabus and Course Expectations		
	Research Project Brainstorm		
1/30	Chapter 1: Introduction to Educational Research	<ul><li>Read Text Chapter</li><li>1</li></ul>	
2/6	Chapter 2: Research Problems	<ul><li>Read Text Chapter</li><li>2</li></ul>	
2/13	Chapter 3: Locating & Reviewing     Literature	<ul><li>Read Text Chapter</li><li>3</li></ul>	
	Project Approvals	➢ Bring: An outline identifying your research problem, hypothesis, and variables for your research paper (Application) or An outline identifying your topic area, thesis, and criteria for evaluating literature (Research Review)	
2/20	Chapter 4: Participants and Sampling	<ul><li>Read Text Chapter</li><li>4</li><li>Due: CITI Module</li></ul>	
2/27	Chapter 5: Foundations of Educational Measurement	Read Text Chapter 5	

	TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE			
Date		Topics	<b>A</b>	Assignments Due Bring: Draft of Introduction (Both Paper Types)
3/5	•	Chapter 6: Data Collection Techniques	\ \ \ \	Read Text Chapter 6 Due: 1 <sup>st</sup> Article Review & Critique
3/12	•	Chapter 7: Nonexperimental Quantitative Research Design	>	Read Text Chapter 7
				Bring: Draft of full literature review section (Application) or draft of approx. half the literature reviewed summary section (Research Review)
3/19	•	Chapter 8: Experimental Research Designs	A A	Read Text Chapter 8  Due 2 <sup>nd</sup> Article Review & Critique
3/26	•	Chapter 9: Understanding Statistical Inferences	>	Read Text Chapter 9
			<b>A</b>	Bring: Draft of methods section (Application) or draft of full literature reviewed summary section (Research Review)

TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE		
Date	Topics	Assignments Due
4/2	Spring Break	
4/9	Chapter 10: Qualitative Research Design, Data Collection, and Analysis	<ul><li>Read Text Chapter</li><li>10</li></ul>
		<ul> <li>Bring: Draft of Results Section (Application) or Draft of Comparative Analysis Similarities/Differ ences section (Research Review)</li> </ul>
4/16	AERA Conference – Project Work Week	
4/23	Chapter 11: Mixed-Method Designs	<ul><li>Read Text Chapter</li><li>11</li></ul>
		<ul><li>Bring: Full Rough draft of paper (Both Paper Types)</li></ul>
4/30	Chapter 12: Action Research	<ul><li>Read Text Chapter</li><li>12</li></ul>
		<ul> <li>Due: Research         Paper (upload to         TaskStream as         well as submit to         instructor via         Blackboard)</li> </ul>
5/7	Chapter 13: Action Research Discussion & Conclusions	<ul><li>Read Text Chapter</li><li>13</li></ul>
	First Half of Research Paper Poster Presentations	<ul><li>Due Posters for Poster Presentations (if it</li></ul>

TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE		
Date	Topics	Assignments Due
		is your night to present)
5/14	Second half of Research Paper Poster Presentations	> Due Posters for Poster Presentations (if it
	Course Evaluations	is your night to present)
5/18	EDSE 792 Final Portfolio Submission	

# NOTE:

- \* This syllabus may change according to class needs.
- \* If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability or if you have emergency medical information to share with instructor or need special arrangements, please call and/or make an appointment with instructor as soon as possible.