GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

EDUC 998 001
Doctoral Dissertation Proposal (3 credits)
Spring, 2014
Mondays, 4:30 – 7:10

Gary Galluzzo
West 2202
ggalluzz@gmu.edu
703.993.2567
Office hours: M/W/Th 2:30 – 4 and by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Prerequisites: Successful defense of Comprehensive Final Portfolio; advancement to candidacy.

Description: The purpose of this seminar is to provide information and support for students as they develop dissertation proposals for the Ph.D. in Education program.

In the seminar, students:
1. Develop and refine ideas for their doctoral dissertation,
2. Write drafts of their proposal, leading to the final document.
3. Establish a doctoral dissertation committee.

Throughout the seminar, students should share their writing with their dissertation committee chair and incorporate his or her feedback into subsequent drafts.

University Policies and Resources for Students

*   **Honor Code**: Students must adhere to the guidelines of the George Mason University Honor Code [See http://oai.gmu.edu/honor-code/].

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

*   **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, and program will be sent to students solely through their Mason email account **(masonlive.gmu.edu)**.

*   **Counseling 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/].

- **Exceptional Needs**: 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/].

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

- **Writing Support**: 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/].

- **Professional Dispositions**: Students are expected to exhibit professional behaviors and dispositions at all times.

- **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. http://cehd.gmu.edu/values/

For additional information on the College of Education and Human Development, Graduate School of Education, please visit our website [See http://gse.gmu.edu/]

NATURE OF COURSE DELIVERY:

Presentations, guest speakers, group discussions, individual meetings with the instructor, formal student presentations.

LEARNER OUTCOMES:

With support from this class in addition to students' dissertation advisors and committees, students will complete and successfully defend their doctoral dissertation proposals, as approved by their dissertation committees.

PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS:

This course is intended to help students meet a portion of Standard 6 of the Ph.D. in Education program:

Students will demonstrate ability to conduct, report, and defend original research in their individual specialization area.

This standard is evaluated in Assessment 6, Independent Research Skills, and is administered at the Final Comprehensive Portfolio, Doctoral Dissertation Proposal Defense, and Doctoral Dissertation Defense.

REQUIRED READING AND REFERENCE:

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

> **APA format is a very important component of the dissertation**. Since the format is complex, master it early and do not wait until the dissertation process. If you begin writing using APA format, you will not have to go back and correct errors later.

Online Dissertation Guide:

Use downloads for models of university format for, e.g., front matter or chapter titles:

http://thesis.gmu.edu

Other Readings, Web Links, and Bulletin Board on Blackboard

https://mymasonportal.gmu.edu/webapps/portal/frameset.jsp

RECOMMENDED READING (STYLE):
Strunk, W., & White, E.B. (2000). *The elements of style* (4th ed.). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

> A standard manual on style, with emphasis on clear, concise writing.

RECOMMENDED READINGS (PROPOSAL WRITING)

These readings may be too general to be particularly helpful for your own dissertation process; nevertheless, you may find some useful suggestions or encouragement in some of these books.

Bolker, J. (1998). Writing your dissertation in fifteen minutes a day. Boston: Owl Press.

Locke, L., Spirduso, W., & Silverman, S. (2007). *Proposals that work: A guide for dissertations and grant proposals* (5th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Krathwohl, D.R., & Smith, N.L. (2005). *How to prepare a dissertation proposal: Suggestions for students in education & the social and behavioral sciences.* Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press.

Machi, L.A. & McEvoy, B.T. (2008). *The Literature Review: Six Steps to Success*. Thousand
Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Mauch, J., & Park, N. (2003). *Guide to the successful thesis and dissertation: A handbook for
students and faculty* (5th ed.). New York: Dekker.

Ogden, E.H. (2006). *Complete Your Dissertation or Thesis in Two Semesters or Less*. Lanham,
MD: Rowman and Littlefield.

Rudestam, K.E., & Newton, R.R. (2007). *Surviving your dissertation: A comprehensive
guide to content and process* (3rded.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Single, P.B. (2010). *Demystifying Dissertation Writing: A Streamlined Process from Choice of
Topic to Final Text.* Sterling, VA: Stylus.

Consider also Joseph Levine, *Writing and Presenting your Thesis or Dissertation*. Available at:
http://www.learnerassociates.net/dissthes/

RECOMMENDED READING (METHODOLOGY)

Bickel, R. (2007). *Multilevel analysis for applied research: It's just regression!* New York:
Guilford.

Buckingham, A., & Saunders, P. (2004). *The survey methods workbook.* Malden, MA: Polity
Press.

Creswell, J.W. (2004). *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative
and qualitative research* (2nd ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Creswell, J.W., & Plano Clark, V.L. (2006). *Designing and conducting mixed methods research.*
Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Dillman, D.A., Smyth, J.D., & Christian, L.M. (2008). *Internet, mail, and mixed-mode surveys:
The tailored design method* (3rd ed.). Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.

Dimitrov, D. M. (2008) *Quantitative research in education: Intermediate and advanced
methods***.** Oceanside, NY: Whittier Publications.

Fowler, F. (2008). *Survey research methods* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

George, D., & Mallery, P. (2006). *SPSS for Windows step by step: A simple guide and
reference, 14.0 update* (7th ed.)*.* Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Hinkle, D., & Wiersma, W., & Jurs, S. (2003). *Applied statistics for the behavioral sciences* (5th
ed.). Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Kreuger, R.A., & Casey, M.A. (2000). *Focus groups: A practical guide for applied research.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Kvale, S. (2008). *InterViews: Learning the craft of qualitative research interviewing.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Marshall, C., & Rossman, G. (2010). *Designing qualitative research* (5th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Maxwell, J. A. (2005). *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Raudenbush, S.W., & Bryk, A.S. (2001). *Hierarchical linear models: Applications and data analysis methods* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Salkind, N.J. (2007). *Statistics for people who (think they) hate statistics* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Sue, V.M., & Ritter, L.A. (2007). *Conducting online surveys.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Todman, J.B., & Dugard, P. (2001). *Single-case and small-n experimental designs: A practical guide to randomization tests.* Mahway, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Vaughn, S., Schumm, J.S., & Sinagub, J. (2005). *Focus group interviews in education and psychology.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Weiss, R.S. (1994). *Learning from strangers: The art and method of qualitative interview studies.* New York: The Free Press.

Wingraf, T. (2001). *Qualitative research interviewing: Biographic narrative and semi-structured methods.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Yin, R.K. (2008). *Case study research: Design and methods* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

For other methodological references, check the website of Sage Publications, at www.sagepub.com

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

This seminar is designed to assist students in developing a dissertation proposal. In attempting to meet this specific purpose, several classes will be devoted to GMU, CEHD, and Human Subjects Review requirements.

A. Requirements

Each student will be required to develop a twenty-minute Powerpoint presentation describing the intended dissertation. This presentation, which can be based upon the idea paper developed for

the Comprehensive Final Portfolio review, is designed to elicit constructive feedback from the instructor, class members, the student's advisor and committee members. The paper will be presented to the class informally, and should address:

- Background, significance of problem (Chapter 1)
  - Describe background and importance of topic
  - Statement of problem
  - Research questions

- Relevant literature (Chapter 2)
  - General summary of relevant literature
  - Specific research most relevant to topic.

- Methodology (Chapter 3)
  - Design
  - Intended data collection procedures
  - Intended data analysis procedures

APA format is required of the idea paper.

Individual Meetings

Each student will meet individually or communicate electronically with the instructor twice during the semester. During these meetings, students should present drafts, report on progress to date, and be prepared to raise any questions or issues the student considers relevant. Meetings will be approximately 30 minutes in length.

Dissertation Proposal

Following presentation of the idea paper, students should consider and incorporate, as appropriate, the suggestions and recommendations of the class -- along with individual meetings with the professor, and interactions with the dissertation committee -- into their dissertation proposal. This proposal will also be presented in class. The presentation should be about 20 minutes in length, followed by questions/group discussion. PowerPoint or equivalent presentation format is recommended.

Professional Courtesy

Professionalism, collegiality, and courtesy are expected of all students. Students are expected not only to develop their own proposal, but also to provide positive and professional support for other students, in the spirit of a community of scholars. Students are expected to attend all scheduled meetings, provide thoughtful and constructive input for other students, and communicate regularly with student colleagues on the class Blackboard site. All students are expected to attend and contribute to all idea paper presentations and proposal presentations.

B. Performance Based Assessments

The formal assessment for completion of this course is the Doctoral Proposal Defense, as approved by the student's dissertation committee.

C. Criteria for Evaluation

Students receive a final grade of S (Satisfactory), IP (In Progress), or F (Failure). A grade of S is given when the student completes course requirements and successfully defends the dissertation proposal to the student's dissertation committee. Students who have successfully defended their proposal during the semester are still required to attend and lend support to other students presenting their proposals in subsequent class meetings. If this seminar concludes before the proposal is approved by the student's committee, the grade of IP is given. The grade will be changed to S once the proposal is successfully defended. EDUC 999 (Doctoral Dissertation) credits can not be taken unless EDUC 998 is completed with a grade of S. The grade of F may be given in cases of significant inattendance or lack of professional cooperation.

General Outline of Dissertation Proposals

The following suggested outline describes the basic ingredients of a dissertation proposal and their sequence in a proposal (alternatives are possible -- talk with your dissertation committee chair about how best to present your argument).

1. Introduction
   General statement of problem
   Background of the problem
   Significance of the problem
   Specific Statement of the Problem
   Hypotheses/research questions

2. Theory, literature review

3. Method
   Participants/Subjects and Setting
   Research design
   Data sources; dependent variables/measures; instrumentation (where relevant)
   Procedures (data collection)
   Data analysis
   Anticipated results (where relevant)
   Limitations
   Importance

Reference list
Appendices, if appropriate, e.g. a scale, instrument, etc.
Proposed Timeline

TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE:

Date	Topic
1/27	Introductions/Class Organization Writing the Dissertation Proposal
2/3	Variations on Proposals
2/10	Human Subjects Review Board
2/17	Library Research: Anne Driscoll Johnson Center Library, 228 Writing with APA Format University Dissertation Format
2/24	Idea Paper Presentations
3/3	Idea Paper Presentations
3/10	University Spring Break—No Class
3/17	Dissertation Formatting: Sally Evans Please watch prior to class: http://www.apastyle.org/learn/tutorials/basics-tutorial.aspx
3/24	Individual meetings (tentative)
3/31	Individual meetings (tentative)
4/7	Individual meetings (tentative)
4/14	Individual meetings or Work on presentations
4/21	Proposal presentations
4/28	Proposal presentations
5/5	Proposal presentations