College of Education and Human Development
PhD in Education

Spring 2022
EDUC 998: Doctoral Dissertation Proposal
CRN: 75393—3 Credits

Meeting Day: Monday
Meeting Dates: 1/24/22 to 5/2/22
Meeting Time: 4:30- 7:10 PM
Meeting Location: Online-- Join Zoom Meeting
https://gmu.zoom.us/j/4754127616

Instructor: Anastasia Kitsantas, Ph.D.
Office Location: online
Office Hours: By appointment, (please email).
Phone: email best contact
Email address: akitsant@gmu.edu

❖ **Note:**This syllabus may change according to class needs.

Prerequisites
Admission to candidacy in PhD program; successful completion of doctoral qualifying exam; and EDRS 810, 811, and 812 or their equivalents.

University Catalog Course Description
Work on research proposal that forms basis for doctoral dissertation, under guidance of dissertation chair and doctoral committee. Notes: May be repeated, but no more than 6 credits of EDUC 998 may satisfy doctoral degree requirements. Offered by School of Education. May be repeated within the degree for a maximum 12 credits.

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

Course Delivery Method
Group discussions, guest speakers, individual and small group meetings with the instructor, student presentations. Some sessions will be online.

Learner Outcomes or Objectives
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.

Technical Requirements
To participate in this course, students will need to satisfy the following technical requirements:
- High-speed Internet access with standard up-to-date browsers. To get a list of Blackboard's supported browsers see: Browser support (https://help.blackboard.com/Learn/Student/Getting_Started/Browser_Support#supported-browsers). To get a list of supported operation systems on different devices see: Tested devices and operating systems (https://help.blackboard.com/Learn/Student/Getting_Started/Browser_Support#tested-devices-and-operating-systems)
- Students must maintain consistent and reliable access to their GMU email and Blackboard, as these are the official methods of communication for this course.
- It is strongly recommended that students use a headset microphone for use with the web conferencing tool.

Expectations
- *Technical Competence*: Students are expected to demonstrate competence in the use of all course technology. Students who are struggling with technical components of the course are expected to seek assistance from University technical services.
- *Technical Issues*: Students should anticipate some technical difficulties during the semester and should, therefore, budget their time accordingly.
- *Netiquette*: Because discussions are a critical aspect of this course, it is important that you plan to log on in a space free from distractions and are able to turn on audio as required during conversations. The expectation is that cameras will be on for the duration of the class.

Required Text
Professional writing style is a very important component of the dissertation. Since the format is complex, master it early and do not wait until the dissertation completion.

American Psychological Association (2019). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (7th ed). American Psychological Association. https://doi.org/10.1037/0000165-000 ISBN-13:9781433832154

Kinesiology Concentration Option
American Medical Association (2020). AMA manual of style: A guide for authors and editors (11th ed). Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/jama/9780195176339.003.0003 ISBN-13: 978-0190246556

Recommended Readings (Writing)
These readings are very general and may (or may not) helpful for your own dissertation process. However, you may find some useful suggestions or encouragement in some of these books.

Becker, H. S. (2007). *Writing for social scientists: How to start and finish your thesis, book or article.* (2nd ed.). Chicago Press.

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

Goodson, P. (2017). *Becoming an academic writer: 50 exercises for paced, productive and powerful writing.* Sage.

Locke, L., Spirduso, W., & Silverman, S. (2013). *Proposals that work: A guide for dissertations and grant proposals* (6th ed.). 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 University Press.

Machi, L. A. & McEvoy, B. T. (2016). *The literature review: Six steps to success.* Corwin Press.

Ogden, E. H. (2006). *Complete your dissertation or thesis in two semesters or less.* Rowman and Littlefield.

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

Silvia, P. J. (2007). *How to write a lot: A practical guide to productive academic writing.* American Psychological Association.

Single, P. B. (2010). *Demystifying dissertation writing: A streamlined process from choice of topic to final text.* Stylus.

Terrell, S. R. (2015). *Writing a proposal for your dissertation: Guidelines and examples.* Guilford Press.

Consider also Joseph Levine, *Writing and presenting your thesis or dissertation.* Available at: http://www.learnerassociates.net/dissthes/

Recommended Review (Basic Research Methods)

Creswell, J. W. (2012). *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research* (4th ed.). Prentice Hall.

Creswell, J. W., & Plano Clark, V. L. (2006). *Designing and conducting mixed methods research* (2nd ed.). Sage.

Johnson, R. B., & Christensen, L. (2017). *Educational research: Quantitative, qualitative, & mixed approaches* (6th ed.). Sage.

Maxwell, J. A. (2012). *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach* (3rd ed.). Sage.

Course Performance Evaluation
Students are expected to submit all assignments on time in the manner outlined by the instructor. Please note that the formal assessment for completion of this course is the Doctoral Proposal Defense, as approved by the student's dissertation committee. All assignments are pass/fail.

Assignments
Throughout the semester, exercises and assignments are geared towards helping you, the students, to: (1) identify your own area of research; (2) critically evaluate relevant empirical research; (3) develop a workable research question and/or set of hypotheses; and (4) to select andexplain appropriate methodological approaches relevant to the questions generated.

Structured Abstract, Proposal Outline, and Proposal Draft
Each student will draft a structured abstract, an outline, and a first draft of the dissertation proposal chapters. These assignments are designed to help students move forward with writing

their final dissertation proposals. Completion of the assignments will enable feedback to be provided from the instructor, class members, and the student's advisor and committee members.

Writing Reflections
Developing consistent writing habits is an important part of being a productive scholar in academia. At the beginning of the course, you will set writing goals and develop a plan for attaining those goals. Throughout the course you will reflect on those goals, and your progress toward them, and revise your plan as needed.

Committee Selection & Status Update
Each student is expected to be in communication with their dissertation chair either electronically or in person throughout 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. The student will be expected to provide an update on these discussions during the class as evidence of progress toward dissertation proposal completion.

Dissertation Proposal Presentation (Research Methods)- project based assessment
Students will give a formal 10-15 minute oral presentation of their research methods (with PowerPoint slides and relevant handouts) and receive feedback from the instructor and classmates to assist the student with refining their ideas. As the student nears completion of the dissertation proposal, students should consider and incorporate the suggestions and recommendations of the dissertation chair along with any relevant information from individual meetings with the instructor and interactions with the dissertation committee into their dissertation proposal.

Assignment Weighting

Structured Abstract	10
Proposal Outline	10
Proposal Draft	25
Writing Reflections (2)	20
Committee Selection & Status Update	10
Dissertation Proposal Presentation	25
Total	100

Grading Policies
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.

 If this seminar concludes before the proposal is approved by the student's committee, the **grade of IP** is given and students need to maintain continued enrollment in EDUC 998 credits. EDUC 999 (Doctoral Dissertation) credits cannot be taken unless EDUC 998 is completed with a grade of S. The grade will be changed to S once the proposal is successfully defended. The **grade of F** may be given where there is a lack of participation or completion of coursesrequirements, poor attendance, or absence of professional cooperation.

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.

Class Schedule

TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE

Date	Topic	Work Due
1/24	Introductions/Class Organization	
1/31	Writing a Dissertation: Content of the Proposal • Ch 1: Purpose of your research study, concept map research questions • Ch2: The literature review process, organizing the literature • Ch3: Research methods (sample design, independent & dependent variables)	Research Questions
2/7	Writing with APA Format & University Dissertation Format Library Research: Guest Speaker Anne Melville	
2/14	Human Subjects Protections: Office of Research Integrity & Assurance-- Guest Speaker Goal Setting & Time Management	Structured Abstract
2/21	Writing Day	Writing Reflection: Goal setting and planning
2/28	Individual Meetings	
3/7	Individual Meetings	Initial outline of chapters 1, 2, & 3
3/14	Spring Break	
3/21	Dissertation Formatting: Guest Speaker Sally Evans	
3/28	Developing a Project Management Plan • Research study timeline (including IRB approval) • Funding (competitions & deadlines) • Graduation (adhering to university deadlines) • Dissemination (professional conferences, 3-minute thesis competition) • Job Interviews	Committee Selection & Status Update
4/4	Writing Day	Writing Reflection: Reflect and adjust
4/11	Individual Meetings	
4/18	Proposal Presentations	
4/25	Proposal Presentations	
5/2	Proposal Presentations	Proposal Draft

Note: Faculty reserves the right to alter the schedule as necessary, with notification to students.

Professional Dispositions
Students are expected to exhibit professional behaviors and dispositions at all times. See
https://cehd.gmu.edu/students/polices-procedures/

Core Values Commitment
The College of Education and 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/.

GMU Policies and Resources for Students
Policies

- Students must adhere to the guidelines of the Mason Honor Code (see
  https://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/honor-code-system/).
- Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing (see
  http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/responsible-use-of-computing/).
- Students are responsible for the content of university communications sent to their Mason
  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 with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with
  George Mason University Disability Services. Approved accommodations will begin at the
  time the written letter from Disability Services is received by the instructor (see
  http://ods.gmu.edu/).
- Students must follow the university policy stating that all sound emitting devices shall be
  silenced during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.

Campus Resources
- Support for submission of assignments to Tk20 should be directed to tk20help@gmu.edu or
  https://cehd.gmu.edu/aero/tk20. Questions or concerns regarding use of Blackboard should
  be directed to http://coursessupport.gmu.edu/.
- For information on student support resources on campus, see
  https://ctfe.gmu.edu/teaching/student-support-resources-on-campus

**Notice of mandatory reporting of sexual assault, sexual harassment, interpersonal violence,
and stalking:** As a faculty member, I am designated as a "Non-Confidential Employee," and must
report all disclosures of sexual assault, sexual harassment, interpersonal violence, and stalking to
Mason's Title IX Coordinator per University Policy 1202. If you wish to speak with someone
confidentially, please contact one of Mason's confidential resources, such as Student Support and
Advocacy Center (SSAC) at 703-380-1434 or Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) at
703-993-2380. You may also seek assistance or support measures from Mason's Title IX
Coordinator by calling 703-993-8730, or emailing titleix@gmu.edu.

For information on student support resources on campus, see https://ctfe.gmu.edu/teaching/student-support-resources-on-campus

For additional information on the College of Education and Human Development, please visit our website https://cehd.gmu.edu/students/

SAFE RETURN TO CAMPUS GUIDANCE FOR STUDENTS ENROLLED IN CEHD COURSES

Both a Safe Return to Campus and Successful Learning Opportunities Depend on YOU.

All students are required to take the Safe Return to Campus Training prior to visiting campus: it is, however, recommended for all Mason students, even those who are enrolled in fully online classes. Training is available in Blackboard.

Students are required to follow the university's public health and safety precautions and procedures outlined on the university Safe Return to Campus webpage.

All students are required to be fully vaccinated by January 5, 2022, unless they received an approved exemption. You should also have uploaded your vaccine documentation to the Health Services Patient Portal by January 5.

The deadline to receive a booster and upload your documentation is February 15, 2022.

Everyone, even those who are fully vaccinated, must wear a face covering when inside university property (buildings and vehicles). If you're unvaccinated, you must wear a mask outside, as well, when at an event or if physical distancing can't be maintained. Read the full face covering policy here.

All students in face-to-face and hybrid courses must also complete the Mason COVID Health Check daily, seven days a week.
- You may not come to class if you receive a Yellow, Red, or Blue email response to the Mason COVID Health Check.
- You may only come to class if you receive a Green email response to the Mason COVID Health Check.
- You must quarantine and get tested if you receive a Blue email response, because you indicated that you recently traveled outside of the United States, are not fully vaccinated, or have not completed the required 7 to 10 day quarantine period for international travel.
- If you suspect that you are sick or have been directed to self-isolate, quarantine, or get testing do not go to class.
- Faculty are allowed to ask you to show them that you have received a Green email and are thereby permitted to be in class.

Disability Services: Students unable to participate in a course in the manner presented, either due to existing disability or COVID comorbidity risk, should seek accommodations through the Office of Disability Services.

Students may not, either individually or collectively, request permission to change the modality of a current course section due to COVID risks or concerns. If students are not comfortable with the modality of the course for which they are registered, they will need to register for a course offered in a different modality which better will accommodate their needs through the established drop/add process.

Campus Closure: If the campus closes or class is canceled due to weather or other concerns, students should check Blackboard, Mason email, or the Mason website for updates on how to continue learning and information about any changes to events or assignments.

Participation and Make-up Work: CEHD instructors will work with students to find reasonable opportunities to make up class work or assignments missed due to documented illness. Begin by contacting your instructor for guidance. For further assistance, students may contact their program and the CEHD Office of Student and Academic Affairs (cehdsaa@gmu.edu).

Technology Requirements:
- Activities and assignments in CEHD courses regularly use the Blackboard learning system. Students are required to have regular, reliable access to a computer with an updated operating system (recommended: Windows 10 or Mac OSX 10.13 or higher) and a stable broadband Internet connection (e.g., cable modem, DSL, satellite broadband) with a consistent 1.5 Mbps [megabits per second] download speed or higher.
- Additionally, CEHD course activities and assignments may regularly use webconferencing software (e.g., Blackboard Collaborate or Zoom). In addition to the requirements above, students are required to have a device with a functional webcam and microphone. In an emergency, students can connect through a telephone call, but video connection is the expected norm.

Course Materials and Student Privacy:
- All course materials posted to Blackboard or other course site are private; by federal law, any materials that identify specific students (via their name, voice, or image) must not be shared with anyone not enrolled in this class.
- Video recordings of class meetings that include audio or visual information from other students are private and must not be shared.
- Live Video Conference Meetings (e.g. Collaborate or Zoom) that include audio or visual information from other students must be viewed privately and not shared with others in your household.
- Some/All of your CEHD synchronous class meetings may be recorded by your instructor to provide necessary information for students in this class. Recordings will be stored on Blackboard [or another secure site] and will only be accessible to students taking this course during this semester.

Testing with LockDown Browser:
CEHD courses may require the use of LockDown Browser and a webcam for online exams. The webcam can be built into your computer (internal webcam) or can be the type of webcam that plugs in with a USB cable (external webcam). Information on installing and using LockDown Browser may be found here.

You will need the following system requirements for online exams:
- Windows: 10, 8, 7
- Mac: OS X 10.10 or higher
- iOS: 10.0+ (iPad only)
- Must have a compatible LMS integration
- Web camera (internal or external) & microphone
- A reliable internet connection

- Prior to your first exam, you must install LockDown Browser following the step-bystep instructions linked above.

To ensure LockDown Browser and the webcam are set up properly, do the following:
- Start LockDown Browser, log into Blackboard and select your course.
- Locate and select the Help Center button on the LockDown Browser toolbar.
- Run the Webcam Check and, if necessary, resolve any issues or permissions your computer prompts.
- Run the System & Network Check. If a problem is indicated, see if a solution is provided in the Knowledge Base. Further troubleshooting is available through the ITS Support Center.
- Exit the Help Center and locate the practice quiz.
- Upon completing and submitting the practice quiz, exit LockDown Browser.

When taking an online exam that requires LockDown Browser and a webcam, remember the following guidelines:
- Ensure you're in a location where you won't be interrupted.
- Turn off all other devices (e.g. tablets, phones, second computers) and place them outside of your reach.
- Clear your desk of all external materials not permitted — books, papers, phones, other devices.
- Before starting the test, know how much time is available for it, and that you've allotted sufficient time to complete it.
- Remain at your computer for the duration of the test. Make sure that your computer is plugged into a power source, or that battery is fully-charged.
- If the computer or networking environment is different than what was used previously with the Webcam Check and System & Network Check in LockDown Browser, run the checks again prior to starting the test.

To produce a good webcam video, do the following:
- Do not wear a baseball cap or hat with a brim that obscures your face.
- Ensure your computer or tablet is on a firm surface (a desk or table). Do NOT have the computer on your lap, a bed, or any other surface where the device (or you) are likely to move.
- If using a built-in (internal) webcam, avoid tilting the screen after the webcam setup is complete.
- Take the exam in a well-lit room and avoid backlighting, such as sitting with your back to a window.
- Remember that LockDown Browser will prevent you from accessing other websites or applications; you will be unable to exit the test until all questions are completed and submitted.