



**Instructor Information:**

Dr. Travis E. Dorsch

**Office:** Family Life room 111B

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**Office Hours:** Monday 12:30pm-2:30pm, or by appointment

**Course description:**

This applied graduate seminar is designed to provide an introduction to research methods, including how to identify a research problem, review and evaluate research literature, and design and implement a research project. This class will introduce students to a range of research philosophies, designs, and strategies associated with qualitative and quantitative research, while allowing students to apply topics in classroom and real-world “lab” settings.

**Prerequisites:**

Graduate admission at USU

**Course Fees:**

There are no course fees associated with this course.

**Course objectives:**

1. **Gaining factual knowledge (terminology, classifications, methods, trends).** Students will be introduced to the major philosophies, research designs, and strategies of inquiry associated with qualitative and quantitative research in educational psychology.
2. **Learning to apply course materials (to improve rational thinking, problem solving and decisions).** Students will be asked to translate the concepts learned in class to lab assignments and their own research proposals.
3. **Develop skills in expressing oneself orally and in writing.** Students will present their ideas in written form on an end-of-semester research proposal, and orally in the form of an end-of-semester presentation and weekly in-class discussions.

**Course Materials:**

**Textbook**

Johnson, R. B., & Christensen, L. (2017). *Educational research: Quantitative, qualitative, and mixed approaches* (6<sup>th</sup> ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

### **Supplemental Course Readings**

PDFs of all supplemental course readings will be placed on Canvas. It is the student's responsibility to utilize hard copies or electronic copies of these readings throughout the semester. Supplemental readings are essential for student success in this course and will link directly to content in the textbook. Most weeks, students will be asked to read one chapter (in full or in part) from the textbook and one or two supplemental papers or chapters based on the module being covered in class. These readings should be done BEFORE class and will be used to guide in-class discussions, quizzes, real-world "lab" experiences, and end-of-semester research proposals.

### **Assignments:**

#### **Attendance (50 pts.)**

FIVE points will be given each day for attendance (10 total days). These points cannot be made up; however, if students have an extenuating circumstance, please contact the instructor.

#### **Discussion (100 pts.)**

Students will choose TWO readings over the course of the semester on which they will lead the group's in-class discussion (one book chapter and one paper). Twenty-five points are possible for each class discussion led, and each discussion should be approximately one hour. The remaining 50 points will be earned throughout the semester for participation in other in-class discussions. When leading a discussion, it is expected that students use an integrated strategy, incorporating PowerPoint (or similar), learning aids, handouts, group work/discussion, or whole-class activities. Avoid boring "lectures" or recaps of the reading; instead, make it informative AND fun!

#### **In-class Labs (90 points)**

THREE labs will be conducted during the semester. Each lab will be conducted during regularly scheduled class times in lieu of discussion. Lab assignments will be worth 30 points each and cannot be made up. Labs will be designed to apply learned material in "real world" settings over the course of the semester.

#### **Quizzes (70 pts.)**

SEVEN quizzes will be given over the semester. Quizzes will consist of questions based on readings and class discussions. Quizzes will be worth 10 points each and makeup quizzes will not be permitted.

#### **Research Proposal (140 pts.)**

Students will craft an executable qualitative research proposal based on a research topic germane to their own area of study. In crafting the proposal, students should conduct a thorough literature search of the topic area. After completing the literature search, students should prepare a 12-14 page proposal describing a hypothetical study that could be conducted in their area of interest. Proposals are worth 135 points and will not be accepted late. Proposals should have the following format:

**Introduction (20 points):** Provide a general overview of the topic. Define key terms and situate the topic within the existing literature (i.e., what do scientists already know about this topic and what do they have yet to learn?). Explicate the current gap that exists in the literature and discuss why the topic is important to researchers, practitioners, individuals, and families.

**Method (90 points):** Provide a thoughtful synopsis and justification of the qualitative or quantitative methods you propose to address your research question. In doing so, be sure to discuss the: (a) participants; (b) recruitment procedures; (c) data collection procedures; (d) data analysis procedures; and (e) a timeline for proposed activities.

**Discussion (20 points):** In highlighting the potential benefits of the research, share why the research findings will further our interdisciplinary understanding in your topic area, add to the literature base in a new and innovative way, and spur follow-up research in related fields. Additionally, discuss any potential real-world application(s) of the findings/interpretations.

**References (10 points):** Be sure to list all sources in APA format at the end of the proposal.

All proposals should be written in APA style (<http://www.apastyle.org/learn/tutorials/basics-tutorial.aspx>) and must be submitted in hardcopy and electronic format prior to the due date.

Academic honesty is expected and any indication of cheating will be dealt with per the USU Student Code: <http://www.usu.edu/student-services/student-code/article6.cfm>.

### **Research Presentation (50 pts.)**

Students will give a 15-minute presentation outlining their research proposals. Through qualitative and/or quantitative research methodology(ies), students will propose an empirically sound investigation and present the proposed research to the class. Presentations are worth 50 points and cannot be made up. Points will be assigned as follows:

**Introduction (10 points):** Demonstrate thorough understanding of: (a) the topical literature in your chosen area of study; (c) current gaps that exists in that literature; and (d) the importance and appropriateness in addressing these gaps via your proposed research method(s)

**Method (20 points):** Provide a thoughtful synopsis of the methods you will employ in conducting your study. In doing so, be sure to thoroughly describe the: the: (a) participants; (b) recruitment procedures; (c) data collection procedures; (d) data analysis procedures; and (e) a timeline for proposed activities

**Discussion (10 points):** Share why the research will: (a) further interdisciplinary understanding of your topic area; (b) add to the literature base; and (c) spur the innovation of future research or applied programming in related areas

**Professionalism (5 points):** In presenting to the class, look, sound, and act like an expert. This means: (a) being well-dressed and prepared; (b) being concise but thorough in your presentation style; and (c) handling questions thoughtfully and accurately

**Engagement (5 points):** Elicit a genuine interest from class members in your project.

### **Course grading:**

<b>Assignment</b>	<b>Value</b>	<b>Points</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Grade</b>
Attendance	50	470-500	94% and above	A
Discussion	100	450-469	90 – 93.9%	A-
Labs	90	435-449	87 – 89.9%	B+
Quizzes	70	420-334	84 – 86.9%	B
Research Proposal Manuscript	140	400-19	80 – 83.9%	B-
Research Proposal Presentation	50	385-399	77 – 79.9%	C+
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>500</b>	370-384	74 – 76.9%	C
		350-369	70 – 73.9%	C-
		335-349	67 – 69.9%	D+
		300-334	60 – 66.9%	D
		000-299	59% and below	F

## **Policies and Reminders:**

### ***Late Work***

Late work due to procrastination will not be accepted. Late work due to University-related travel or legitimate personal/family emergencies may be accepted at the instructor's discretion. If late work is accepted, it is expected that it will be turned in within one week of the original due date unless other arrangements have been made with the instructor. The due date and time associated with quizzes, presentations, the topic paper, and exams are stated clearly below. If you have questions regarding due dates please email the instructor prior to the due date.

### ***Students with Special Needs***

Students with ADA-documented physical, sensory, emotional or medical impairments may be eligible for reasonable accommodations. Veterans may also be eligible for services. All accommodations are coordinated through the Utah State University Disability Resource Center (DRC) in Room 101 of the University Inn, (435)797-2444 voice, (435)797-0740 TTY, (435)797-2444 VP, or toll free at 1-800-259-2966. Please contact the DRC as early in the semester as possible. Alternate format materials (Braille, large print, digital, or audio) are available with advance notice.

### ***Communication***

Students will receive course announcements via Email. I also welcome all feedback from students in the course. My office hours are listed at the top of the syllabus or you can email me anytime at [Travis.Dorsch@usu.edu](mailto:Travis.Dorsch@usu.edu). I will make an effort to respond to student emails within 24 hours on weekdays, and I will check email occasionally on weekends. If it is urgent, please indicate this in the subject heading! If you experience a legitimate emergency (according to my standards) that will prevent you from completing required coursework on time, I expect you to communicate with me at the earliest reasonable opportunity. Please state the nature of the emergency, and when you expect to turn in the coursework.

### ***Grievance Process***

Students who feel they have been unfairly treated may file a grievance through the channels and procedures described in the Utah State University Student Code:

<http://catalog.usu.edu/content.php?catoid=6&navoid=1080&hl=%22grievance%22&returnto=search>

### ***Emergency Preparedness***

In the case of an emergency, classes will be notified to evacuate by the sound of an emergency alarm system or by a building representative. In the event of a disaster that may interfere with standard notification procedure, use common sense to evacuate as the situation dictates (i.e., in an earthquake when shaking ceases or immediately when a fire is discovered). In such an event, turn off computers and take any personal items with you. Elevators should not be used; instead, use the closest stairway.

### ***Academic Dishonesty***

The Instructor of this course will take appropriate actions in response to academic dishonesty, as defined in the University's Student Code (<http://www.usu.edu/student-services/student-code/article6.cfm>). Acts of academic dishonesty include but are not limited to:

1. Cheating: (a) using or attempting to use or providing others with any unauthorized assistance in taking quizzes, tests, examinations, or in any other academic exercise or activity, including working in a group when the instructor has designated that the quiz, test, examination, or any other academic exercise or activity be done "individually"; (b) depending on the aid of sources beyond those authorized by the instructor in writing papers, preparing reports, solving problems, or carrying out other assignments; (c) substituting for another student, or permitting another student to substitute for oneself, in taking an examination or preparing academic work; (d) acquiring tests

or other academic material belonging to a faculty member, staff member, or another student without express permission; (e) continuing to write after time has been called on a quiz, test, examination, or any other academic exercise or activity; (f) submitting substantially the same work for credit in more than one class, except with prior approval of the instructor; or (g) engaging in any form of research fraud.

2. Falsification: altering or fabricating any information or citation in an academic exercise or activity.
3. Plagiarism: representing, by paraphrase or direct quotation, the published or unpublished work of another person as one's own in any academic exercise or activity without full and clear acknowledgment. It also includes using materials prepared by another person or by an agency engaged in the sale of term papers or other academic materials.

**Course Calendar:**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Readings (pages)</b>	<b>Assignments</b>
08/29	- Course Introduction - Introduction to Educational Research	Johnson & Christensen (2016) pp. 2-28	<b>Sign up for Readings</b>
09/05	<b>NO CLASS – DR. DORSCH TRAVELING</b>		
09/12	- Planning a Research Study	Johnson & Christensen (2016) pp. 79-121 Blaikie (2000)	
09/19	<b>LAB 1 - Research Design</b>		
09/26	- Measurement and Assessment	Johnson & Christensen (2016) pp. 155-221 Reynolds et al (2010)	<b>Lab 1 Due Quiz 1</b>
10/03	- Approaches to Quantitative Research	Johnson & Christensen (2016) pp. 316-415 Ryan & Golden (2006)	<b>Quiz 2</b>
10/10	Approaches to Qualitative Research	Johnson & Christensen (2016) pp. 416-465 Dwyer et al (2009)	<b>Quiz 3</b>
10/17	- Sampling and Validity Concerns	Johnson & Christensen (2016) pp. 251-314 Whittmore et al (2001)	<b>Quiz 4</b>
10/24	<b>LAB 2 - Data Collection</b>		
10/31	- Quantitative Data Analysis	Johnson & Christensen (2016) pp. 495-564 Tabachnik & Fidell (2009)	<b>Lab 2 Due Quiz 5</b>
11/07	- Qualitative Data Analysis	Johnson & Christensen (2016) pp. 565-602 Sparkes & Smith (2009)	<b>Quiz 6</b>
11/14	- Ethical Considerations	Johnson & Christensen (2016) pp. 122-154 Morrow (2009)	<b>Quiz 7</b>
11/21	<b>NO CLASS - THANKSGIVING</b>		<b>Research proposal (Due MONDAY 11/26 by 5:00pm)</b>
11/28	<b>LAB 3 – Submitting an IRB</b>		
12/05			<b>Lab 3 Due  Research proposal presentations</b>