

University of North Georgia  
College of Education  
Course Syllabus



**EDD 7100: Research Inquiry  
Fall 2022**

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**Course Overview**

The main objective of this course is to prepare doctoral students for their dissertation research and develop foundational knowledge and skills that they will utilize as practitioner/scholars in their respective areas of interest. Course content will emphasize the ways in which various bodies of scholarly literature can inform our understanding of colleges and universities, as well as the complex social and cultural forces that shape student learning experiences, faculty and staff decision-making processes, and educational pathways.

The course will unfold in three sections. The first section will focus on the creation of initial research questions, literature reviews, and problem statements through a continuous interrogation of epistemology. The second section will explore the concept of theory, introduce different theoretical traditions, encourage engagement with commonly employed theories in the field of higher education, and consider how theory can meaningfully inform research design and data analysis. The third section will provide an overview of quantitative and qualitative research methods - along with their assumptions, strengths, and weaknesses - in preparation for subsequent methodology coursework.

This course includes scaffolded writing assignments that are designed to culminate in a manageable draft of the dissertation's initial chapter. Comparisons of viable theoretical frameworks and methodologies will allow students to consider different options for their dissertation research. Students will also read their colleagues' drafts in peer review workshops.

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Through these workshops, students can offer and receive feedback from informed perspectives grounded in different areas of scholarly expertise, develop feedback skills necessary for professional engagement, and reflect on their own writing.

### **Course Materials**

No texts are required for the course. All materials, including articles, book excerpts, and other assorted readings, are posted on the Desire to Learn (D2L) website.

### **Desire 2 Learn**

The University System of Georgia's D2L Help Center provides assistance through their "knowledge base" via internet and phone support:

Web Address: <http://d2lhelp.view.usg.edu>

Phone: 855-772-0423

The D2L Help Center is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

### **Course Requirements**

No prerequisite courses in the field of higher education are required for this class.

As a student in a graduate-level course, you will be challenged to complete the following tasks:

- summarize and interpret theoretical and empirical readings;
- discuss complex ideas with colleagues;
- demonstrate beginning proficiency with different research methods;
- apply concepts to writing assignments that encourage creativity and engagement with existing literature; and
- adapt writing to communicate research to individuals inside and outside academia.

### **Learning Activities**

**1. *Module participation via D2L discussion posts*** is essential each week. Thoughtful responses to reading assignments and dialogue among students/professors/guest speakers are critical to the utility of the course. You will frequently be asked to prepare materials in advance for use during module discussions. Attendance and participation will be reflected in your final grade.

**2. *Elements of research*** that are intended to serve as initial drafts towards the first chapter of your dissertation. The proposal will unfold in six stages:

- Research Questions
- Outline of Literature Review
- Problem Statement
- Purpose and Significance Statements
- Comparison of Two Theoretical Frameworks
- Comparison of Two Methodological Frameworks

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**3. *Peer feedback*** will be provided for several stages of the research proposal. At various points of the semester, students will provide feedback on their colleagues' research questions, problem statements, purpose statements, significance statements, and APA citations.

### **Course Objectives**

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

1. advance a problem statement and research questions that can be examined through responsible and ethical empirical investigation;
2. collect and analyze existing research studies for the purposes of writing a literature review;
3. explain the importance of theory to empirical research;
4. identify theoretical frameworks pertinent to twenty-first century higher education research topics;
5. articulate the ontological and epistemological assumptions associated with various quantitative and qualitative research methods;
6. outline the strengths and weaknesses of different research methods;
7. establish a grounding in research design, theory, and methodology that can serve as a baseline for future research methods and dissertation coursework; and
8. develop writing, research, and editing skills germane to doctoral-level research and writing.

The UNG Teacher Education Program course objectives are aligned with the College of Education Conceptual Framework (CoE CF). In terms of the CoE CF, we prepare professionals who embrace access to education, health, and wellness through commitment to integrity in intellectual engagement, research-based teaching and learning, advocacy, and service.

#### 1. Intellectual Engagement

- a. Critical thinking and creative problem-solving in theory and practice
- b. Active engagement in reflective practice
- c. Professional collaboration and communication
- d. Commitment to on-going professional development

#### 2. Research Based Teaching and Learning

- a. Content literacy
- b. Data driven decision-making
- c. Student centered teaching and learning
- d. Technological literacy
- e. Immersion in the learning community through field experience and clinical practice

#### 3. Advocacy and Service

- a. Promote social justice and human rights for the individual and in communities
- b. Leadership
- c. Ethical practice
- d. Professional accountability

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The Council for Advancement of Standards in Higher Education, the National Policy Board for Educational Leadership (reflected in the UNG mission) includes the following standards:

#### Standard 1. Mission, Vision, and Core Values

Doctoral students in the UNG College of Education will display professional knowledge, skills and dispositions that reflect a commitment to developing and supporting inclusive cultures of academic excellence in student-focused environments that include quality education, service, inquiry, and creativity.

#### Standard 2. Ethics and Professional Norms

Doctoral students in the UNG College of Education model understandings of the professional ethics, and the implications for organizations associated with care and service and education of diverse populations.

#### Standard 3. Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment

Doctoral students in the UNG College of Education display knowledge and competency in the design, implementation and evaluation of standards-based professional programming.

#### Standard 4. Communities of Care and Support

Doctoral students in the UNG College of Education display knowledge and competency in the design, implementation and evaluation of environments that support the cognitive, social-emotional, and health and wellness needs of students in adult learning environments.

#### Standard 5. Professional Development

Doctoral students in the UNG College of Education display commitment to on-going professional development in their respective fields through association and leadership in professional organizations and personal and political advocacy.

#### Standard 6. Cultural Responsiveness

Doctoral students in the UNG College display knowledge and skills in design and support of collaborative, equitable, and inclusive service organizations.

#### Standard 7. Operations and Management

Doctoral students in the UNG College of Education display knowledge and competency in the design, implementation and evaluation of transparent effective and efficient processes that support organizational goals in education and health services.

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As a result, doctoral candidates completing this course will be able to demonstrate the following:

<b>Course Objectives</b>	<b>Learning Activities</b>	<b>CoE CF</b>	<b>CASHE, NPBEL, NAHQ</b>
1. Advance a problem statement and research questions that can be examined through responsible and ethical empirical investigation	1. D2L Discussion Posts 2. Research Proposal 3. Peer Feedback	1abcd 2abcd 3d	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7
2. Collect and analyze research studies for the purpose of writing a literature review	1. D2L Discussion Posts 2. Research Proposal 3. Peer Feedback	1abcd 2abcd	1, 3, 5
3. Explain the importance of theory to empirical research	1. D2L Discussion Posts 3. Peer Feedback	1abcd	1, 3, 5, 7
4. Identify theoretical frameworks pertinent to twenty-first century higher education research topics	1. D2L Discussion Posts 2. Research Proposal 3. Peer Feedback	1abcd 2abd	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7
5. Articulate the ontological and epistemological assumptions associated with various quantitative and qualitative research methods	1. D2L Discussion Posts 3. Peer Feedback	1abcd	1, 3, 5
6. Outline the strengths and weaknesses of different research methods;	1. D2L Discussion Posts 3. Peer Feedback	1abcd	1, 3, 5
7. Establish a grounding in research design, theory, and methodology that can serve as a baseline for future research methods and dissertation coursework	1. D2L Discussion Posts 2. Research Proposal 3. Peer Feedback	1abcd 2abcd 3d	1, 3, 5, 7
8. Develop writing, research, and editing skills germane to doctoral-level research and writing	1. D2L Discussion Posts 2. Research Proposal 3. Peer Feedback	1abcd 2abcd 3d	1, 3, 5

### **Grading through “Authentic Assessment”**

A doctoral degree provides an opportunity to identify areas of personal interest, engage in original research, and demonstrate mature critical thinking skills on complex topics that rarely have easily identifiable “right” or “wrong” answers. To wit, the superficial and stratified forms of grading that transpire in undergraduate coursework do not make conceptual sense.

Furthermore, after you complete this doctoral program, professional assessment and feedback will be holistic and contextual, rather than based on a simplified numeric score. Grading in this class, therefore, will feature “authentic assessment” which simulates the detailed feedback you are likely to receive from your professional and academic colleagues. It will also encourage

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student collaboration, peer review, the continuous revision of writing, and a critical sensibility that questions existing knowledge in service of personal and professional development.

To achieve an “A” grade in this course, you will need to complete each assessment below and demonstrate a mastery of course material. At the doctoral level, “B” grades or lower are used to signify less than acceptable performance.

#### **Attendance Policy**

As a fully online program, and in alignment with [UNG’s Course Attendance policy](#), the Higher Education Leadership and Practice program has a program-wide policy for attendance and participation. The policy has three components:

1. Participation in online learning through module discussions and activities represents our program’s metric of tracking attendance.
2. In order to receive full attendance credit for a module, all required activities must be completed by the deadline set by the instructor. This may include original discussion posts, any required replies to peers, or other activities associated with the module. If a student fails to submit all required activities for a module, they will be marked absent for that period. Late or incomplete submissions will be considered as absences unless otherwise noted by the instructor.
3. A course absence represents non-participation in a module, as detailed above. Students are allowed two absences per course. A third absence will result in an administrative withdrawal from the course, with a grade of W prior to the midpoint of the term or a grade of WF after the midpoint of the semester.

Individual instructors may have attendance policies stricter than that of the program, as long as the policies are clearly stated and detailed in the course syllabus.

If a student is unable to successfully complete a semester due to a physical, mental, emotional, or psychological condition, they may request a [hardship withdrawal](#) through the Dean of Students.

#### **Assessment Weights**

Research Questions	10%
Problem Statements	10%
Literature Review Outline with Citations	10%
Purpose and Significance Statements	10%
Comparison of Two Theoretical Frameworks	20%
Comparison of Two Methodologies	20%
Class Participation	20%

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**Assessments**

Over the course of the semester, you will compose drafts of various elements for your dissertation. Below are the deadlines for each element:

**Deadlines**

Module 2	Peer Review Workshop on Research Questions
Module 5	Peer Review Workshop on Problem Statement
Module 6	Outline of Literature Review with APA References
Module 7	Peer Review Workshop on APA References
Module 10	Comparison of Two Theoretical Frameworks (3-4 pages)
Module 13	Peer Review Workshop on Purpose and Significance Statements
Module 14	Comparison of Two Methodologies (3-4 pages)

The writing assignments associated with the grant proposal are scaffolded in that they are designed to culminate in a manageable final paper. Four “peer review workshops” will be held during Module 2, Module 5, Module 7, and Module 13 so that students can offer advice and criticism from different perspectives, develop a routine of seeking feedback from their professional communities before publication, and reflect on their own writing.

**Communication Objectives**

The best way to reach me is by email at malanford@ung.edu or by cell phone at 850-320-1490. I typically respond to email requests within 24 hours from Monday to Friday. I am happy to receive text messages or phone calls at nearly any time, and I will return your text message and/or phone call as soon as possible. I will provide feedback for each of the assignments within one week of submission.

**Supplemental Syllabus**

Supplemental Syllabus Information concerning the following items can be found at <https://ung.edu/academic-affairs/policies-and-guidelines/supplemental-syllabus.php>

- \* Academic Exchange
- \* Academic Integrity Policy
- \* Academic Success Plan Program
- \* Campus Carry
- \* Class Evaluations
- \* Course Grades and Withdrawal Process
- \* Disability Services
- \* Disruptive Behavior Policy
- \* Inclement Weather
- \* UNG Alert
- \* UNG Institutional Values

This Supplemental Syllabus will provide the learner with technical support, accessibility policies and services, academic support and services, and institutional support and services.

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## **Interaction Plan: Learning through Conversation**

In seminars at the doctoral level, participants teach and learn from one another. Additionally, I believe strongly in the power of conversation to facilitate student learning. Therefore, group discussions about the readings will occur during every module. I have organized the readings so that they are thematically coherent, and I will generally encourage you to read the articles, book chapters, and other course artifacts in the order in which they are organized.

Students are *expected* to ask questions and actively participate. For each module, I would like you to respond to the discussion question and at least one of your colleague's discussions.

Here are some thoughts that I have adapted from a colleague who teaches at St. John's College. The college's style of pedagogy also captures how I think about teaching and learning:

**The Conversation:** My style of teaching and learning is often described as conversational. The conversation is cooperative, not competitive. We also speak of what we do as learning together through shared inquiry. We strive to build something together that is not the exclusive property of anyone. Discussion is meant to pursue questions that are of general interest to the participants.

The readings in each module are generally accompanied by a discussion question or two. Often, the discussion question will set the direction for the entire conversation. The success of our classes depends almost entirely on what the participants bring to the table. Contributions can be of many kinds: some will address the question directly; others will offer adjustments to the suggestions of their fellow participants. Students can raise their own questions. Sometimes, it is useful to reformulate a question or to ask for a clarification of someone's point. At times, it is appropriate to bring the conversation back to the text under discussion.

I expect, and encourage, a great deal of discussion and debate. Collegial debate demands that we have not only good speaking skills, but also good listening skills. Since all the views presented are assumed to be under construction, it is good to speak up when an idea is just beginning to take shape and not wait until it is fully worked out. Our work is concerned more with exploring interpretations than defending or attacking them.

**The Texts:** Readings are assigned for each of our class sessions. Our working assumption is that the reading has something to teach us. What, precisely, we are to learn from a reading is discovered by the participants working together with the instructor. Participants pursue their own questions and their own ways of reading the texts. I ask only that comments, observations, and questions return to the text for support and clarification. This commitment to the centrality of the text gives the conversation shape and keeps it from becoming diffuse.

**My Role:** My work is to assist with the learning of others while continuing to learn myself. I neither lecture nor do I merely facilitate conversations. I guide the conversation, sometimes steering it in a particular direction, sometimes reading and letting it take its own course, and occasionally steering it around an unexpected detour.



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## Reading Schedule

**All discussions for the following topics will be due on Sunday nights at 11:59pm**

### **Module 1 Introduction**

Berliner - Educational Research: The Hardest Science of All

Creswell - Philosophical, Paradigm, and Interpretive Frameworks

Specter - The Power of Nothing

### **Module 2 Research Questions**

Creswell - Research Questions and Hypotheses

Tierney - The Arc of Research

### **Module 3 Literature Review**

Eveleth - The Ethics of Sarcastic Science

Kelley - Reviewing Literature and Formulating Problems

Weinberger - The Geography of Knowledge

Wentzel - Developing and Nurturing Interesting and Researchable Ideas

### **Module 4 Epistemology**

Institute of Education Sciences - What Works Clearinghouse

Siegel - Epistemological Diversity and Education Research

Szadkowski - Interview with Simon Marginson

Zhao - What Works May Hurt

### **Module 5 The Problem Statement**

Creswell - The Introduction

### **Module 6 Understanding Theory**

Creswell - The Use of Theory

### **Module 7 Interrogating Theory**

Kezar - To Use or Not to Use Theory: Is That the Question?

### **Module 8 Grounded Theory**

Charmaz - The Power and Potential of Grounded Theory

Fram - The Constant Comparative Analysis Method Outside of Grounded Theory

### **Module 9 The Selection of Theory**

<No Required Readings>

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- Module 10    Research Designs and Theory Comparison Assignment**  
Creswell - The Selection of a Research Design  
Harwell - Research Design
- Module 11    Quantitative Research Methods**  
Creswell - Quantitative Methods  
Smart - Attributes of Exemplary Research Manuscripts  
Ferrare - Can Critical Education Research Be “Quantitative?”
- Module 12    Qualitative Research Methods**  
Creswell - Qualitative Methods  
Lincoln and Guba - Establishing Trustworthiness
- Module 13    The Purpose and Significance Statements**  
Creswell - The Purpose Statement
- Module 14    Methodology Comparison Assignment**  
<No Required Readings>

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