

## **EDCI 685 Research Methods Spring 2007**

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William G. Holliday, Professor, Room 2226, Benjamin Building, Department of Curriculum and Instruction, University of Maryland at College Park, office hours, Thursday 2:00 PM to 4:00 PM. (other hours by appointment).

Meeting place: Benjamin Building, Room 0114, section: 0101

Email me at [holliday@umd.edu](mailto:holliday@umd.edu) rather than leaving a message on my office phone, or telephone (number provided in class) me at home in emergencies. (My practice is to always return phone calls.)

Leave messages and your telephone number.

Email or phone me and leave a message before 10:30 AM on class meeting days, that you anticipate being absent or late.

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### **A. General Course Information**

Assignments must be presented on time and in a professional manner, and written in your own words. They must be verbally coherent, precise, concise, convincing and consistent with the guidelines specified in class. Each paper should be written at the graduate level of university competency in terms of the teachings of this course. University of Maryland (College Park) policies apply to student conduct.

You must submit all assignments in non-electronic paper form (except where noted in this document or as arranged), on time and in reasonable condition to receive a passing course grade. Exceptions with prior notification and approval will be considered. If late assignments are accepted and graded, students will not have an opportunity to rework their assignment and will receive lower assignment grades because of the fairness issue to other students submitting papers on time. Generally, late assignments are not accepted beyond seven days, 4:30 PM, on the seventh day. Deadlines for assignments will be presented in class.

In compliance with and in the spirit of the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA), I would like to work with you if you have a documented disability that is relevant to your work in this course. If you wish to discuss academic accommodations, you need to contact me by the end of the second class period.

Your participation is a vital aspect of this course. Please bring to my attention ahead of time any conflict between class meeting times and other University recognized commitments (e.g., religious observations), so that additional arrangements can be made. In this regard, you need to contact me by the end of the second class period in order to make such arrangements.

The University of Maryland, College Park has a nationally recognized Code of Academic Integrity, administered by the Student Honor Council. This Code sets standards for academic integrity at Maryland for all undergraduate and graduate students. As a student you are responsible for upholding these standards for this course. It is very important for you to be aware of the consequences of cheating, fabrication, facilitation, and plagiarism.

For more information on the Code of Academic Integrity or the Student Honor Council, please visit <http://www.shc.umd.edu>.

I will provide written feedback at intervals throughout the course based on the quality of your contributions in class and the thoughtfulness of your written work. I will also take into account your own assessment of your professional development as it relates to this course.

Grades are calculated using points in the following manner, and in accordance to University of Maryland policy. Grades generally are calculated as follows: A = 100 to 90, B = 89 to 80, C = 79 to 70, D = 69 to 60, F = 59 and below.

Value of assignments:

Introduction to educational research including basic statistics test (open-book) = 30 %, Two in-class research papers (open-book) = 20 %, Explain and assess popular theoretical critiques = 20 %, and an action teacher research project = 30 %

#### B. Goal of course

A goal of this course is to serve as a preparation for students enrolled in our departmental graduate program. The course focuses on fundamentals of research methods—qualitative and quantitative, an introduction to descriptive and inferential statistics link to varying research approaches, applying learned fundamentals by engaging and reporting on an action research project, understanding how to assess critiques of theoretical positions used by some educators, the importance of asking and applying pivotal scholarly questions (such as “Where is the scientific evidence and how was it derived?”) and learning how to engage in research and reporting your work in research and practitioner outlets. This graduate course represents an introduction to these domains. The course is officially described as “EDCI 685: Research Methods; (3 credits). The interpretation and conduct of research in curriculum and instruction.”

C. Some reading materials will be supplied and others will be suggested. Required text: Educational Research: An Introduction (2003, seventh edition) by M. D. Gall, J. P. Gall, and W. R. Borg, Pearson Education, Inc. (ISBN 0-321-08189-7)

#### D. Details

The introductory research test (30 % of your final grade) will employ a short-answer/essay, open-book format and cover concepts identified in class. Sample items will be provided. Only legible papers will be graded.

The two in-class paper assignments will be based on two research papers. You are to provide an expanded abstract (400 to 500 words, each) of each paper, during class time. A copy of each article will be provided to support your effort. Only legible papers will be graded.

A set of theoretical critiques will be provided to the class. These embedded issues are related to research and to current theories used by some educators including researchers. The chosen critiques cover popular research-based issues seldom critically discussed in schools or at universities yet are far reaching and often assumed to be valid. The class will divide into groups of varying sizes. The class will read each set of assigned critiques. Each group will prepare a presentation to the class and present a class presentation followed by a stimulating class discussion. Whether students agree with each authors' critique is irrelevant. The class needs to ask the scientific research question in their future studies and other professional work, "Where is the evidence and how was it derived?" A short paper will be due at 4:30 PM on the day of each student's presentation. Each student will submit a short paper rather than one paper from each group. Presentation and discussion-time requirements will be described in class. This portion of the course will be graded by the instructor with student peers listening and interacting with presenters.

Each student will engage in an action research project with a focus on curriculum and/or instruction. Printed proposals must be submitted by 4:30 PM, Thursday, March 15, a basic requirement of this assignment. The research must be complete and ready for presentation (20 % of final grade) by May 3. The action research paper (10 % of final grade) is due on May 3. Each member of the class will present an action research paper in class followed by a stimulating class discussion, May 3 and 10. A short paper will be due at 4:30 PM on the day of each student's presentation. Presentation and discussion time requirements will be described in class. This portion of the course will be graded by the instructor with student peers listening and interacting with presenters. Students in the class will complete a form assessing each presentation, in terms of the following criteria: Apparent preparation, and presentation effectiveness. This data will be considered by the instructor.

The final class will be a review of what has been learned during the semester and application of the learned material to teaching and scholarly work.