

HIED/EDAD 80080: Dissertation Preparation Seminar
Kent State University
Summer 2011

Tuesday, 4:00-7:00 pm • White 105 • 03credits

Instructor:

Dr. Susan V. Iverson, assistant professor
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Appointments can be made by contacting me via email.

“things take longer than they do”
said Egon Guba to Judith Meloy,
in “Writing the Qualitative Dissertation” (2002)

Syllabus

Catalog Description:

Gain an in-depth understanding of the dissertation-writing process. Complete a dissertation proposal. S/U grading.

Course Description: The purpose of this seminar is to coach and support advanced doctoral students as they draft their dissertation proposals.¹ The seminar format will allow students to discuss design decisions for their systematic inquiry, share work in progress, and receive feedback from peers and the instructor. This course will also introduce the student to issues such as how to develop and articulate a focused dissertation topic, structure a dissertation proposal, conduct a literature review, prepare for the ethics of fieldwork and submit a proposal to the Institutional Review Board, and explicate a study’s design.

Required texts:

Creswell, J.W. (2009). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*, 3rd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. ISBN: 978-1-4129-6557-6.

Other readings:

Boote, D.N. & Beile, P. (2005). Scholars before researchers: On the centrality of the dissertation literature review in research preparation. *Educational Researcher*, 24(6), 3-15.

¹ Of note, successfully completing the course is not the equivalent of and does not supplant the proposal defense process. Each student must work individually with his/her chair and committee members (either concurrent with, or subsequent to the completion of, the course) to finalize one’s proposal for defense.

Borg, S. (2001). The research journal: A tool for promoting and understanding researcher development. *Language Teaching Research*, 5(2), 156-177.

Required style guideline:

Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 6th ed. (2010). Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association. [2nd printing, October 2009]. ISBN-10: 1-4338-0561-8]

Recommended:

Bolker, J. (1998). *Writing your dissertation in 15 minutes a day*. New York: Owl Books.

Butin, Dan W. (2010). *The education dissertation: A guide for practitioner scholars*. Corwin Press. ISBN: 978141290441.

Cone, J.D. & Foster, S.L. (1993). *Dissertations and theses from start to finish*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Kiernan, V. (2005). *Writing your dissertation with Microsoft Word: A step-by-step guide*. Mattily Publishers. ISBN 0976186802

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

Lamott, Anne. (1994). *Bird by bird: Some instructions on writing and life*. New York: Pantheon Books.

Roberts, C.M. (2004). *The dissertation journey: A practical and comprehensive guide to planning, writing, and defending your dissertation*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Rudestam, K.E. & Newton, R.R. (2001). *Surviving your dissertation: A comprehensive guide to content and process*, 2nd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

van Leunen, Mary-Claire. (1992). *A handbook for scholars: A complete guide to the mechanics of scholarly writing*, 2nd ed. Oxford University Press.

Course Requirements:

1. **ATTENDANCE & PARTICIPATION:** Students are expected to attend each class session and be an *informed and active participant* in this class—please come to class on time and prepared to share your work and critical insights for your peers. If a student must miss a session, it is his/her responsibility to contact the instructor in advance and make any compensatory arrangements for the absence.

- **Topical Assignments** Students will be assigned to draft and bring to class elements of the proposal (i.e. purpose statement, research questions) to share with peers,

on which to give and receive feedback, and to submit to instructor. These topical assignments are intended to be building blocks toward the final proposal.

2. **RESEARCH PROPOSAL** The major product of this course is a final draft of a dissertation proposal. This proposal will include an introduction, with statement of problem, purpose, significance, research questions, theoretical perspective (as applicable), a review of the literature, and the methods (further parameters will be provided). While the complete proposal is due at the end of the course, draft writing will be completed and components of the proposal will be submitted throughout the term.
 - a. **MOCK PROPOSAL DEFENSE:** Each student will prepare and deliver a 10-15 minute presentation on his/her dissertation proposal. This exercise is designed to familiarize students with and develop skills needed for the proposal defense.
3. **PEER REVIEW:** Each student will be required to review another student's literature review chapter and provide careful and thorough feedback to the author. Additionally, peer-to-peer review, orally and in writing, will be provided in class on various aspects of the proposal.
4. **RECOMMENDED:** Students are encouraged to keep a **RESEARCHER JOURNAL** throughout the proposal writing (dissertation) process. Borg notes the benefits of a researcher journal for reflective process as well as a product that "can deepen researchers' understanding of their work" (p. 170). Your researcher journal might include: reflections on your efforts to develop each piece of your proposal, questions that emerge, potential directions or explorations (taken and abandoned), ideas spurred by a reading, fears and anxieties, revelations and achievements, as well as research design decisions. Students will be assigned to complete at least one entry as a topical assignment. For writing prompts, see <http://dissprep.wikispaces.com/Research+Journal>

GRADING: This seminar is graded as S/U. The following are required for "Satisfactory" completion of the course:

- Attendance, active participation, and Topical Assignments
- Draft Literature Review (ch 2)
- Peer Review Feedback on ch2
- Draft research design (ch 3)
- Mock proposal defense
- Final Proposal (ch 1-3)

[Successful defense of the dissertation proposal is solely determined by the student's full doctoral committee.]

General Information:

Course Information and Communications: This course is supported by [wikispaces.com](http://dissprep.wikispaces.com), a "shared notebook on the web." The instructor and students can post materials to <http://dissprep.wikispaces.com>. All students must create a *free* account, "join" the course page, and post at least an introductory message.

Electronics: Please remember to turn off cell phones and other electronic devices prior to class. This discussion-based seminar is a time to turn toward each other with our affect and intellect, and turn away from the screens and virtual spaces that can distract and fragment us.

Accommodation: University policy 3342-3-18 requires that students with disabilities be provided reasonable accommodations to ensure their equal access to course content. If you have a documented disability and require accommodations, please contact the instructor at the beginning of the semester. Please note, you must first verify your eligibility for academic accommodation through Student Accessibility Services; they can be reached at 330-672-3391 and are located on the ground floor of the DeWeese Center. FMI about your rights and responsibilities, see <http://www.registrars.kent.edu/disability/Current/StudentHandbook/RightsReas.htm>

Statement of Inclusion: Kent State University, as an equal opportunity educational institution, encourages an atmosphere in which the diversity of its members is understood and appreciated; an atmosphere that is free of discrimination and harassment based on identity categories. Thus, all members of the university are expected to join in creating a positive atmosphere in which individuals can learn and work, an environment that is sympathetic, respectful and supportive. (See “University Policy Register”)

The instructor of this course is committed to teaching equitably and inclusively, addressing the needs, concerns, and interests of each and every student, regardless of age, gender/sexual identity, race/ethnicity, class, sexual orientation, religion, English language experience, or disability.

Academic Integrity: As members of the community of higher education, we are all subject to the standards of academic integrity. Students are subject to the Code of Student Conduct. Using another person’s words, thoughts or ideas without proper attribution is plagiarism and a form of academic dishonesty. Academic dishonesty is a violation of University policy. All students must become familiar with and abide by the University’s policy on academic integrity, which prohibits cheating and plagiarism. For more information about University policy see The University Policy Register at <http://imagine.kent.edu/policyreg/> Further, I direct your attention to the APA style manual for a statement on plagiarism and a helpful example of how to paraphrase. Finally, Indiana University offers a useful guide regarding plagiarism: <http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/pamphlets/plagiarism.shtml>

Course Schedule:

Note: This schedule is subject to change and revisions.

DATE	TOPICS	ASSIGNED READINGS
Week 1: May 24	Course Overview Introduction to each other and our research interests What is a proposal and what are chapters 1-3?	Creswell, ch. 1, 6 Draft purpose statement
Week 2: May 31	Review of Literature and Significance What's the problem?	Creswell, ch. 2; Boote & Beile article Revised purpose statement with topical outline for your study
Week 3: June 7	Introduction, Purpose, Research Questions	Creswell, ch. 3, 5, 7 Submit Lit Review map/chart (see Creswell, p. 46, exercise #1) w/ statement of significance
Week 4: June 14	Researcher Reflexivity No class	Borg article; journal entry
Week 5: June 21	Writing Strategies, use of theory (cont'd), and Ethical Considerations	Creswell, ch. 4 Lit Review (draft ch2) due
Week 6: June 28	Ethical Considerations (cont'd) and protection of human subjects	Peer review feedback due Draft IRB application
Week 7: July 5	No class Methods: Quantitative, Qualitative, & Mixed	Creswell, ch. 8, 9, 10 Revise IRB application

Week 8: July 12	Individual appointments, re: research purpose, questions, design	
Week 9: July 19	Presenting your research, defending your proposal	Research design (draft ch3) due
Week 10: July 26	TBA	
Week 11: August 2	Presentations	
Week 12 August 9	Presentations	

NOTE: Portions of this syllabus are adapted from ideas shared by Drs. Dan Butin and Stephen Maio, Cambridge College; and Dr. Mary Madden, University of Maine.

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