

EDUC 400: Senior Research Seminar Trinity College Fall 2019

Meeting Time: Mondays 1:15-3:55 PM

Meeting Place: Goodwin Woodward Hall, Room L

Instructor: Professor Daniel Douglas

Office Hours: Tuesdays: 11am-1pm/2pm-5pm, or by appointment.

Office Location: Seabury N-033

Email: daniel.douglas@trincoll.edu

Phone: (860) 297-2348

Course objectives:

The senior seminar fulfills the senior exercise requirement for all Education Studies majors. The course is designed to guide students through the design and execution of an independent research project. In the seminar we focus on refining a researchable question, collecting and analyzing data, and presenting research findings orally and in writing. The weekly seminar provides a forum for students' research activities and support for the research process. As such, we will only use a portion of each course period for lectures or in-class activities. The rest of each session will be devoted to discussing your independent projects.

Readings:

There is no assigned text for this course. I will provide hard copies or e-copies of the required readings at least one week in advance. I do recommend a few texts that students can consider purchasing, one each related to qualitative methods, quantitative/survey methods, and two on research writing:

Qualitative:

Silverman, David. 2010. *Doing Qualitative Research*. London. Sage.

Quantitative:

Fowler, Floyd J. 2009. *Survey Research Methods*. London: Sage.

Writing:

Becker, Howard. 2007. *Telling About Society*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Graff, Gerald, & Birkenstein, Cathy. 2014. *They Say, I Say: The Moves that Matter in Academic Writing*

I also recommend that students make use of the repository of prior students' senior research projects. That is available at https://digitalrepository.trincoll.edu/educ_etd/. Throughout the semester, we will look at examples of student work and use them as guides to aspects of our own.

Disability Policy

Trinity College is committed to creating an inclusive and accessible learning environment consistent with the Americans with Disabilities Act. If you have approval for academic accommodations, please notify faculty during the first two weeks of the semester or a minimum of 10 days prior to needing your accommodations. Please be sure to meet with me privately to discuss implementation.

If you do not have approved accommodations, but have a disability requiring academic accommodations, or have questions about applying, please contact Lori Clapis, Coordinator of Accessibility Resources at 860-297-4025 or at Lori.Clapis@trincoll.edu.

Plagiarism Policy

Please refer to the Trinity College Student Integrity Contract, specifically the section on Intellectual Honesty.

Class Participation Policies

1. On a regular basis, you should engage and participate in class discussion. Your engagement must always be respectful of your peers and your professor. You will be alerted once. Subsequently, points will be deducted from your class participation grade.

1 point per violation

2. Unless otherwise stated, no cellphones or laptops should be used in class. You will be alerted once. Subsequently, points will be deducted from your class participation grade.

1 point per violation

3. Our class is neither early nor late. No sleeping is permitted in class. You will be notified once. If it continues, you may be dismissed from class. It will also affect your class participation.

1 point per violation

4. The topics discussed in this class are of general interest. Still, there is to be no private conversations or chatting in class. You will be notified once. If behavior continues, it will affect your participation grade. Private chatting and conversations will negatively affect your class participation grade.

1 point per violation

5. You are allowed two unexplained absences. Each subsequent absence will result in a significant deduction from your class participation grade.

5 points per violation

6. Lateness functions like absence, and is drawn from the same bank as item number 5 above. Leaving early counts in the same way as does arriving late. Three Late Arrivals = 1 Unexplained absence.

5 points per violation

How will I be graded in this course?

The following are the elements of the course that contribute to your grade.

Assignment/Expectation	Description	Point Value (out of 100)
Research Progress Reports and Peer Reviews	Early in the semester, students will complete and share weekly progress reports on their research, data collection, and writing process 2-3 paragraphs each, uploaded to Moodle	15
Peer Reviews	Once we begin sharing memos, progress reports will be replaced by peer review of classmates' writing 2-3 paragraphs each, uploaded to Moodle	
Class Participation	Students must attend and participate in seminar discussions and activities	15
CITI Certification/IRB Protocol	All students will obtain CITI Certification. Students whose research requires IRB approval must secure IRB approval.	5
Revised Research Plan Memo	Students will revise their research plans and provide an outline for the rest of their project	5
Literature Memo	Students will summarize 1-2 key articles for their literature review in a 1-page memo	5
Methods Memo	Students will summarize their research methods in a 1-page memo	5
Preliminary Presentation Slides	Students will submit a draft of their public presentation slides	5
Preliminary Draft	Students will combine their revised research plan, literature draft, and methods draft, along with a preview of their findings into a 5-7 page draft of their paper	5
Public Presentation	Students will each deliver a 10-minute presentation of their research projects to peers and invited guests. Students will nominate a guest evaluator several weeks in advance	10

Final Paper	Students will incorporate feedback from their public research presentation into their final paper to be submitted by December XX	30
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Notes on Grading:

- Late assignments will be penalized 10% each day they are late with exceptions granted only for documented excuses or family emergencies.
- All seminar participants are welcome and strongly encouraged to submit their final project to the online repository. However, anyone who wants to be eligible for honors in Ed Studies **must** deposit their final paper in the repository.

Research Project Criteria

- 1) Does the author pose a thought-provoking, researchable question (or hypothesis) and explain its significance to educational studies?
- 2) Does the author connect the question to the existing research literature (secondary sources) and move beyond into new territory?
- 3) Does the author identify and use the most appropriate primary sources and research methods for this study?
- 4) Does the author present a clear and insightful thesis that directly addresses the research question (or hypothesis)?
- 5) Is the author's thesis persuasive, and supported with convincing evidence and analysis?
- 6) Is the author's essay/presentation well-organized, and does it include sufficient background for audiences unfamiliar with the topic?
- 7) Does the author cite sources in an acceptable format so that future readers may easily locate them? [Relevant for the final paper, not the presentation.]
- 8) Does the author follow ethical guidelines for research?

Working groups: In an effort to connect students studying similar topics or students using similar methods, I have created working groups based on your junior plans and will encourage you to work with your working group on literature review and methods issues.

Methods Groupings

Mixed Methods:

Qualitative:

Area Groupings

High School to College:

Non-Traditional Education Settings:

Research Funding

Student Research Expense Funds:

The Ed Studies Program has reserved up to \$100 per senior to pay for documented expenses needed to complete your thesis research, and additional funds may be requested for special circumstances. Past students have used research expense funds for:

- reasonable incentives for interview participants
- hourly stipends paid to other students to help translate or conduct additional interviews
- essential books or materials that are not available through the Trinity Library
- curriculum materials for research projects involving classroom learning

To request funds, discuss your plan in advance with the Educ 400 instructor, then submit a short written explanation and paper receipt for reimbursement. Requests will be processed by the Ed Studies Administrative Assistant, and it usually takes at least 3 weeks to receive your check. Paying for expenses with cash is usually the best strategy. If you pay with a credit or debit card, Trinity also requires a copy of the charge on your online or monthly statement, and redacting other data on that page is acceptable. If needed, you also can ask an Ed Studies faculty member to charge your expense to their credit card, and they will be reimbursed directly. To pay an hourly stipend to a Trinity student worker, the Ed Studies Director and Administrative Assistant usually need to submit a payroll authorization form.

Weekly Topic Outline

Meeting Week	Topic	Reading(s) and Activities	Assignments Due
September 9	Research Topic and Questions	Syllabus Review Junior Plans Revisited	CITI Certification (5) Research Progress Report

September 16	Reviewing the Literature	Wayne Booth. "From Topics to Questions." Chapter 3 in <i>The Craft of Research</i> . Discussion of Literature Memo Assignment Presentation by Rob Walsh	Revised Research Plan (5)
September 23	Collecting Interview Data	David Silverman. "Collecting Your Data" Chapter 12 in <i>Doing Qualitative Research</i> . Activity: Interviewing each other Updates on your progress.	Research Progress Report #1 (3)
September 30	Collecting Survey Data I – Question Design	Floyd Fowler. "Designing Questions to be Good Measures." Chapter 6 in <i>Survey Research Methods</i> Activity: Survey Question Design in Groups How to do a Peer Review?	Literature Memo (5)
October 7	Collecting Survey Data II – Evaluating Instruments	Floyd Fowler. "Evaluating Survey Questions and Instruments." Chapter 7 in <i>Survey Research Methods</i> Activity: Evaluating a survey Discussion of Peer Reviews.	Peer Review #1 (3)
October 21	Analyzing Interview Data	David Silverman. "Developing Data Analysis" Chapter 13 in <i>Doing Qualitative Research</i> . Updates on your progress.	Research Progress Report #2 (3)
October 28	Quantitative Analysis Part I – Descriptive Statistics	Workshop on Data Preparation and Descriptive Analysis Using Stata Stata Analysis Activity Writing a Methods Section.	Methods Memo (5)

November 4	Writing Your Research Part I	Battle & Barnes. Academic Writing Flowchart Discussion of Peer Reviews.	Peer Review #2 (3)
November 11	Writing Your Research Part II	Findings Updates.	Research Progress Report #3 (3)
November 18	Research Meeting	One-on-one meetings Discussion of Presentations	
November 25	Wrapping Up	How to write an effective conclusion? Battle & Barnes. Academic Writing Flowchart Presentation Construction	Preliminary Presentation Slides (5)
December 2	Workshop II	Mock Presentations	Preliminary Draft (5)
December 9	Public Presentations		Final Presentation (10)