

**Michigan State University  
College of Education  
Department of Educational Administration**

**EAD 995, Section 001  
RESEARCH PRACTICUM  
Fall 2014**

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**Meetings**

Wednesday, 4:10 – 7:00 pm, 224 Bessey Hall and Individual Faculty-Student Consultations

**Course Purposes and Learning Outcomes**

The Research Practicum, required of all doctoral students in the College of Education, is the final course in the research sequence. EAD 995, Section 001, is designed specifically for doctoral students in HALE.

The purposes of the Research Practicum are:

- To guide students toward preparation of a dissertation proposal
- To enable students to engage in a research experience within a community of scholars.

The course is intended as a time of intensive work and major progress on your dissertation proposal. The expected course outcome for each student is a solid, full draft of the dissertation proposal of at least 7,000 words. This draft should reflect much progress in regard to the student's level of precision and confidence in thinking about the topic, its significance, and the best way to do the research. The draft of the proposal is a provisional statement, likely to be amended, in consultation with the student's advisor in advance of presentation for approval to a dissertation committee, and then again in response to suggestions from committee members. However, although further work is likely after conclusion of the course, students are expected to produce, by the end of the course, a solid, full draft of the dissertation proposal which is ready for further refinement in consultation with the advisor, as needed, in preparation for a proposal meeting.

Students typically enroll in EAD 995 near or at the end of their course work, which is usually Year Three for full-time students but may be later for those enrolled part-time. Approval to enroll in EAD 995 requires that the student provide evidence to the advisor of sufficient preparation for the course and the opportunity to make significant progress on a dissertation proposal.

## General Structure and Learning Strategies for the Course

### **Individual Reading**

Students will engage in three kinds of reading: (1) Students will select pieces and read extensively every week in their own topical areas of work in order to help them develop their proposals. (2) In addition to the individual reading in which each course participant is involved, there will be some reading assignments for everyone in the course to help students learn more about proposals. (3) All course participants will read the work regularly shared by colleagues in the course, in order to offer useful feedback.

### **Process Writing and Presentations**

Students will be engaged in active writing throughout the semester. There will be several kinds of writing expected throughout the semester:

- ***Class writing assignments:*** These assignments will help students refine the various parts of their proposals and make appropriate progress toward a full proposal.
- ***Individual Writing and Presentations:*** Class members will present their emerging ideas and progress to other class members several times throughout the semester. A student's presentations to the course colleagues will include parts of the proposal and raise particular challenges or questions with which the student is grappling and around which feedback will be helpful. In preparation for these presentations several times throughout the semester, students will prepare something in writing to which other students will respond. This written piece may take various forms, such as, for example, a statement of the research problem, questions, and rationale; an outline of a conceptual framework; a draft of the literature review; or an emerging draft of the full proposal. Each piece to be shared and discussed should have a short introductory memo, highlighting for the readers the particular points or questions the authors would like the readers to consider and discuss. Presenters must post their material for class colleagues to read by the end of Saturday prior to the Wednesday class session of the presentation.
- ***Typed Feedback Comments:*** Students will prepare feedback comments (at least a paragraph but the feedback can be more) in response to the individual writing presentations by the other colleagues. These comments should be suggestions, praise, explanations of concerns raised by the writing, or questions for the author. Two copies of these written comments should be brought to class on the day of the piece to be discussed; one set is given to the colleague presenting and one to the instructor.

### **Preparation of a Full Proposal**

At the end of the course, each student will be expected to submit a draft dissertation proposal of at least 7,000 words. This draft should reflect much progress across the semester in regard to the level of precision and confidence expressed in thinking and writing about the problem and research question(s), the significance of the study, the literature review, and the design of the research. The draft of the proposal is a provisional statement, likely to be amended, in consultation with the student's advisor in advance of presentation for approval to a dissertation committee, and then again in response to suggestions from committee members. However, although further work is likely to be needed after conclusion of the course, students are expected to produce a solid, full draft of the dissertation proposal which is ready for further refinement in consultation with the advisor, as needed, in preparation for a

proposal meeting.

- **Proposal Draft:** This should include as many parts of the proposal (outlined under full proposal below, as possible).
  - **Due: November 1**
  
- **Final Proposal:** By the end of the semester, each student will submit a draft of the full proposal (no deferred grades will be given). The draft must include the following components of a proposal: problem statement; research question(s); rationale for the importance of the study; literature review; conceptual or theoretical framework; and research design, including sample, data collection strategies, data analysis plan, and statement of limitations.
  - **Due: December 3**

### **Community of Scholars**

An important part of the course is the Community of Scholars formed by the students and instructor working together in the course. This scholarly research community will provide targeted feedback as well as support and encouragement to each participant. The work of the Community of Scholars will involve regular interactions at each class session in which the class instructor and student colleagues will give guidance and suggestions to strengthen each scholar's emerging proposal. The practice of providing feedback helps the recipient to improve the proposal and work out challenges in the design; at the same time, the process of thinking about others' emerging work and offering feedback is very useful to you as a scholar, since that process often will lead you to new ideas about your own work.

### **Individual Meetings with the Course Instructor**

In addition to the collaborative work and feedback in which we will engage in our learning community, some weeks during the semester will be allocated for individual student meetings with the instructor. These meetings will enable students to discuss specific questions or issues with which they are grappling. In preparation, each student should send the instructor an email memo of approximately one page at least 48 hours prior to the meeting, as well as proposal material to be discussed. This memo should highlight and provide background on the issues that the student would like to discuss.

### **Interactions with the Advisor**

Students are expected to work closely with their advisor during the semester. Please note: It is essential that you keep your advisor well-informed of the work you are doing in order to ensure that the advisor is in agreement with the direction in which you are moving. While the class instructor and course members give guidance and suggestions, you must be sure your advisor is kept aware of decisions you are making as you shape your proposal. As explained below, the grade for the course is determined by the course instructor in consultation with the advisor.

### **Course Evaluation**

The course grade is based on the following components:

#### **Active Participation in the Course**

- Students are expected to participate actively in the various course activities described above (including attending class sessions, completing written process assignments, presenting to class colleagues, providing written feedback to class colleagues, and meeting individually with the

course instructor). Since the success of the research community depends on the presence and active participation of all course members, it is imperative that students attend class, come thoroughly prepared to engage constructively, and provide regular written feedback to course colleagues. Students are expected to attend all class sessions; more than two absences will lower the portion of the course grade based on active participation. In the event of an unavoidable absence, participants are expected to notify the instructor prior to the class session and to make arrangements with a colleague to get notes on any information shared or to obtain anything distributed in class. Active participation counts as 40% of the course grade. The instructor of record will be responsible for assessing acceptable levels of participation, based on the level and quality of a student's involvement in each aspect of the course.

### **Complete Written Dissertation Proposal Draft**

- To successfully complete this course, students must submit an acceptable draft of a dissertation proposal consisting of at least 7000 words. This proposal must include a clear and coherent statement of the problem and research question(s), the significance of the study, the literature review, and a plan for data collection and analysis.
- The evaluation of the proposal draft will constitute 60% of the course grade. For purposes of grading, student performance on the proposal will be evaluated jointly by the instructor of record and the student's advisor. At the end of the semester, the advisor will review the proposal the student has developed in EAD 995 using the grading rubric for the course (below). The EAD 995 instructor of record will consult with the student's advisor regarding alignment of the proposal with the rubric.

### **Other important issues regarding student work and assessment:**

- Please note that neither "deferred" nor "incomplete" grades will be possible in this course. Students will receive a grade on the basis of work completed at the end of the semester.
- Special care should be taken to ensure that the highest standards of academic integrity are followed. Specifically, please take care that proper attribution is given if you are making references to or using quotations from others' work. Additionally, while students should seek feedback from others about their writing, the actual product should be an author's own work.
- In all written work, the student should cite relevant scholarly literature. Always use APA style guidelines, use double-spacing, and, when appropriate, include a title page, appropriate pagination, and a reference list. All written work should be proof-read and should always be clear, succinct, free of grammatical mistakes, and free of jargon and gender-biased language.
- All work should be completed on time, since much of this course depends on interaction and feedback among class members, and staying on course with one's own work is necessary to ensure the final product is ready by the end of the semester. Participation in this course is a professional activity, and involves responsibilities and deadlines similar to those in a workplace setting.

## Course Grading Rubric

- **Students performing at a 4.0 level:**
  - Provides a clear and coherent statement of the problem that is grounded in the appropriate literature.
  - Submits a systematic and coherent review of the literature that supports a clear statement of the problem and identifies and describes a conceptual or theoretical framework, when appropriate.
  - Outlines a research design that aligns with the statement of the problem, including attention to context, research design, participants, data collection, and data analysis.
  - Actively participates in the review and feedback of the work of fellow students in the class.
  
- **Students performing at a 3.5 level**
  - Provides a clear and coherent statement of the problem that is grounded in the appropriate literature and at least one of the following:
    - Submits a systematic and coherent review of the literature that supports a clear statement of the problem and identifies and describes a conceptual or theoretical framework, when appropriate.
    - Outlines a research design that aligns with the statement of the problem, including attention to context, research design, participants, data collection, and data analysis.
  - Participates in the review and feedback of the work of fellow students in the class in a limited way in either amount of feedback provided or the number of students provided with feedback.
  
- **Students performing at a 3.0 level:**
  - Provides a clear and coherent statement of the problem that is grounded in the appropriate literature, and has elements of both of the following but both require further development to be acceptable within an approved proposal:
    - A systematic and coherent review of the literature that supports a clear statement of the problem and identifies and describes a conceptual or theoretical framework, when appropriate.
    - A research design that aligns with the statement of the problem, including attention to context, research design, participants, data collection, and data analysis.
  - Participates in a very limited way in the review and feedback of the work of fellow students in the class.
  
- **Student performing at a level less than 3.0**
  - Does not provide a clear and coherent statement of the problem that is grounded in the appropriate literature.
  - Demonstrates little evidence of a systematic and coherent review of the literature that supports a clear statement of the problem.
  - Provides little or no evidence of a research design that aligns with the statement of the problem
  - Demonstrates little or no active participation in review and feedback of the work of other students in the class.

## EAD 995 Course Outline

### SEPTEMBER 3

**Topics:**           **Introductions**  
                          **Course Overview**  
                          **Overview of Students' Research Problems**  
                          **Framing Researchable Questions**

**Meeting:**        Research Community In-Person Meeting

**Assignment:**

- Be prepared to explain (a five minute explanation) the research problem and question(s) that will be basis of your proposal. Your comments should address: What do you want to study? Why are the topic and research questions significant and of potential interest to others? How do you anticipate doing the work?

### SEPTEMBER 10

**Topics:**           **Individual Priorities in Preparing the Proposal**

**Meeting:**        Individual Consultations with Instructor

**Assignments:**

- Prepare a memo (approximately 2 pages) that presents your research problem and specifies the specific priorities that you believe will be most helpful for you to address in order to develop the proposal (e.g., refining the framing of your research problem and researchable question(s), further developing a literature review, exploring theoretical perspectives that can inform the conceptual framework of your study, designing and pilot testing data collection instruments). This memo will help you keep in mind the specific areas in which you need to place special focus as the class proceeds, and will help the instructor support your progress.
- Arrange a meeting with Ann Austin to discuss your problem and priorities for the course.
- Read Dr. C.J. Porter's dissertation proposal entitled *Notions of Self, Interactions with Others: A Grounded Theory Study of the Identity Development in Black Undergraduate Women*.
- Read Gina Vizvary's dissertation proposal entitled *Power and Authority in University Governance: The Politics of the Milton Friedman Institute Dispute*
- Pursue individual reading to advance your thinking about your proposal.

## **SEPTEMBER 17**

**Topics:**           **Components of a Dissertation Proposal**  
**Students' Presentations of their Research Problems**

**Meeting:**        Research Community In-Person Meeting

### **Assignments:**

- Prepare a two-page statement of your research problem, which should include: three propositions that frame the problem (as explained in the class on Sept 3); the researchable question(s) you will answer in the dissertation; a statement of the significance of the problem and question(s); and a statement of how you expect to conduct the study. Post this statement by Saturday before class.
- Read the statements posted by the Community Members and make notes about your feedback and questions that you can raise in class discussion.
- Pursue individual reading and writing to advance your thinking on your proposal.

## **SEPTEMBER 24**

**Topics:**           **Purposes and Structures of a Literature Review**  
**Research Paradigms**  
**Dissertation Structures and Elements**

**Meeting:**        Research Community In-Person Meeting

### **Assignments:**

- Read: Kennedy, M. M. (April, 2007). Defining a literature review, *Education Researcher*, 36: 3, 139-147.
- Choose a HALE dissertation and read through it, taking note of its structure and argument. Be ready to discuss the structure of the dissertation in class.
- Pursue individual reading and writing to advance your proposal.

## **OCTOBER 1**

**Topics:**           **Progress on Your Research Problem, Research Questions, and Literature Review**

**Meeting:**        Individual Consultations with Instructor

### **Assignments:**

- Prepare and send a memo to the instructor at least 48 hours before your meeting to highlight the issues and questions you would find useful to discuss.

- Pursue individual reading and writing to advance your proposal.

### **OCTOBER 8**

**Topic:** Progress on Your Research Problem, Research Questions, and Literature Review

**Meeting:** Individual Consultations with Instructor

**Assignments:**

- Prepare and send a memo to the instructor at least 48 hours before your meeting to highlight the issues and questions you would find useful to discuss.
- Post an outline of your literature review by October 8.
- Pursue individual reading and writing to advance your proposal.

### **OCTOBER 15**

**Topics:** Student Presentations of Literature Reviews  
Conceptual and Theoretical Frameworks  
Factors guiding Design Choices (unit of analysis, sampling, overall design)

**Meeting:** Research Community In-Person Meeting

**Assignments:**

- Prepare a 10-minute Powerpoint presentation that gives an overview of the structure and argument of your literature review.
- Review and prepare written memos in response to the literature reviews of two colleagues. Bring two copies to class of your memo. The class will discuss and give feedback on each literature review draft and Powerpoint presentation.
- Pursue individual reading and writing to advance your proposal.

### **OCTOBER 22**

**Topics:** Session I: Student Presentations on Conceptual/Theoretical Frameworks and Design Choices

**Meeting:** Research Community In-Person Meeting

**Assignments:**

- Prepare a five-page statement of your conceptual/theoretical framework and design and methodology plans and why they are appropriate for your study. Post this to the class D2L site

by Saturday before the class session.

- Present a 10-minute Powerpoint presentation based on your five-page statement. Colleagues will be assigned several statements to review and will prepare short written feedback and questions. In class, we will discuss each overview and offer suggestions. Half the class will present on October 22 and half of October 29.
- Pursue individual reading and writing to advance your proposal.

### **OCTOBER 29**

**Topics:** Session II: Student Presentations of Conceptual Frameworks and Design Choices

**Meeting:** Research Community In-Person Meeting

**Assignments:**

- Class discussions of colleagues' conceptual framework and design plans will continue.
- Pursue individual reading and writing to advance your proposal.

### **NOVEMBER 5**

**Topics:** Session I: Progress Reports and Discussion of First Full Drafts

**Meeting:** Research Community In-Person Meeting

**Assignments:**

- Prepare your first full draft of the proposal. Post this draft to the website by Saturday, November 1, and include a cover memo highlighting issues or questions to which you would like the Research Community to respond. Prepare to discuss your draft with the class. (We will focus on half the class on November 5 and the other half on November 12.)
- Read the memos and drafts posted by research community colleagues and come prepared to offer feedback. We will identify lead readers for each draft who will prepare written comments. Each student will prepare written comments on half the proposals.
- Pursue individual reading and writing to advance your proposal.

### **NOVEMBER 12**

**Topics:** Session II: Progress Reports and Discussion of First Full Drafts

**Meeting:** Research Community In-Person Meeting

**Assignments:**

- Read the memos and drafts posted by those whose work will be the focus of discussion on November 12. Come prepared to offer feedback. Each student will prepare written feedback on half the proposals.
- Pursue individual reading and writing to advance your proposal.

### **NOVEMBER 19**

**Topic:**           **Individual Progress on Proposal**

**Meeting:**

- No in-person class meeting. Individual consultations with the instructor as needed. This week is the meeting of the Association for the Study of Higher Education (ASHE), which some Research Community members will be attending.

**Assignment:**

- Work on refining the proposal, using feedback offered by Research Community members in the previous two class sessions.

### **NOVEMBER 26 (Thanksgiving Week)**

**Topic:**           **Individual Progress on Proposal**

**Meeting:**

- No in-person class meeting. Individual consultations with the instructor as needed.

**Assignment:**

- Work on refining the proposal, using feedback offered by Research Community members in the previous two class sessions.

### **DECEMBER 3**

**Topic:**           **Final Seminar and Student Presentations**

**Meeting:**        Research Community In-Person Meeting

**Assignments:**

- Final proposal due in electronic form (posted to the website) and 2 hard paper copies due in class. Please note that no “Incomplete” or “Deferred” grades will be given. The final proposal will be evaluated by the instructor and the student’s advisor.
- Prepare a 15-minute Powerpoint presentation as well as a short handout that synthesizes the proposal. Powerpoints and outlines are often used in proposal meetings. Students will present their finished proposals to the Research Community.

**DECEMBER 10**

**Topic:**           **Next Steps toward Proposal Approval  
Celebration!**

**Meeting:**       Ann Austin's Home (4350 Tacoma Blvd, Okemos, MI)