

# EDRS 602 Methods of Research

## Syllabus

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<b>Course: EDRS 602-54</b>	<b>Name: Methods of Research</b>
<b>Instructor: Lihua Xu, Ph.D.</b>	<b>Email: lxu@wcu.edu</b>
<b>Location: Kingston, Jamaica</b>	

### **TEXTBOOKS:**

Required: Leedy, P., & Ormrod, J. (2016). *Practical research: Planning and Design* (11<sup>th</sup> ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson.

Other supplemental readings provided by the instructor on Blackboard

### **PURPOSE:**

This course is designed to give you greater insight into the nature of research in the field of education. The general approach will be to consider technical and methodological issues at length through discussion and critique of published articles, presented papers, and theses/dissertations.

You cannot understand the process of inquiry without some methodological and technical competence. Methodological competence, however, is empty without an understanding of the basic nature and intent of scientific investigation. The emphasis of this course will be on the basic foundation of the educational research process. The dynamic interplay between educational theory and research will be stressed with the intent of developing the skills of critical analysis required of enlightened consumers of research in the field of education.

### **COURSE STRUCTURE**

A majority of the coursework will be devoted to discussing and applying readings to the projects, generative discussions, and hands-on activities. It is your responsibility to complete required readings prior to discussing the concepts. Blackboard is used to facilitate discussion, promote interaction, distribute and archive course materials and related resources, and to manage assignments and course-related communication.

### **OBJECTIVES:**

This course is devised to develop your understanding of educational research as an approach to problem solving through a comprehensive review of the research process. You may focus on research within your chosen field of specialization. Specifically, at the conclusion of the course you should:

- define and delimit a research problem;

- recognize and describe the nature and purpose of qualitative, historical, descriptive, correlational, causal-comparative (ex post facto) and experimental research designs;
- identify potential sources of invalidity found in different research designs;
- complete human subjects research compliance training via WCU institutional review board
- describe methods of collecting educational research data;
- critically analyze research reports in the literature and suggest ways to improve research design, measurement procedures, and methods of data collection;
- complete and effectively write up a proposal for a research study that is grounded in theory and related to one's interests.

***ADDITIONAL COURSE INFORMATION:***

All students, regardless of race, gender, culture, and/or handicap, will be given equal opportunities to succeed in this class. Students are encouraged to develop a study related to their area of study and their specific cultural/gender interest.

The professor reserves the right to change the schedule, assignments, and/or evaluation criteria throughout the semester. Any changes will be announced to the class with sufficient notice to prepare for changes. It is your responsibility to keep informed about discussion topics and assignments. If in doubt, please check with the professor. Any changes which are made will be posted to the website.

***CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK STATEMENT***

The mission of the professional education programs at Western Carolina University is to prepare highly effective and ethical graduates that are inspired to be lifelong learners, engaged in the community, and empowered to become leaders who strive to transform the future.

***CLASS REQUIREMENTS:***

During the course you will be expected to:

- work in groups on assignments and project
- seriously consider the concepts, models, and problems;
- complete the library utilization exercises;
- critique and discuss with your group research reports related to your professional interests;
- design hypothetical research studies;
- develop a high quality research proposal or professional development project that demonstrates your mastery of the course content; and
- participate in online synchronous meetings.
- complete quizzes

***EVALUATION:***

Assessment tools in this course are consisted of short quizzes, article critique, and a research proposal. You will be expected to complete all the assignments. These assignments are to be turned in on the appropriate dates. Each assignment is designed to develop or reinforce your

research abilities. Group work is strongly recommended for the success in this class. Group size can be four in maximum.

### **Descriptions of the major assignments:**

Participation – It is imperative that each student participates to the fullest extent – so that all can maximize their learning potential. Participation scores will be an aggregate mark based on attendance, engagement, as well as satisfactory completion of formative assessment tasks.

Quiz – four short quizzes in multiple choice format and short answer responses check your understanding and application of specific research concepts and skills. Quizzes will be graded.

Final Exam – Article Critique – you will evaluate and critique a published journal article of your choice for its rigor and quality in the areas including but not limited to literature, research questions/hypotheses, sample selection, measurements and data collection procedures.

Research Proposal – as a group, you will decide a research question, and develop a plan to investigate the question. In doing so, you review research literature, choose a research site, sample study participants, and collect descriptive data or implement an intervention. The proposal will be broken into small pieces and to be completed in class. Research proposal is to be submitted in the Blackboard.

### ***SUBMITTING ASSIGNMENTS***

Final proposal should be typed, include your name, double-spaced, with 1” margins, and otherwise conform to the style specified in the 6th edition of the APA Publication Manual (American Psychological Association, 2009). This includes in-text citations and reference lists.

All homework assignments and major course assignments should also be completed using word processing software, such as Microsoft Word.

Assignments must be submitted electronically, following the deadlines provided in the syllabus and course calendar. Failure to complete and turn in any part of an assignment on time will result in the imposition of a 10% penalty for every day it is late. After 48 hours, no late assignments will be graded.

### ***ASSIGNMENT OF GRADES:***

The following scale will be utilized in determining final grades in the course. The guidelines are based on the differential emphasis placed on certain activities.

Assessments	Points
<b>Participation</b>	15
<b>In-class Quizzes (4)</b>	20
<b>Final exam</b>	30
<b>Research proposal</b>	35

**FINAL GRADE:** Numeric Average Grade

90 or above	A
80-89	B
70-79	C
<70	F

**Jamaican Relevancy.** Recognizing that limited resources are a common issue in Jamaican schools and classrooms, students in this class are encouraged to explore how teacher leaders can build leadership capacity in schools by involving all major stakeholders in attempts to address the needs of ALL students, but particularly those with mild disabilities (learning disabilities, ADHD, slow learners, poor readers, etc.). All Jamaican educators are faced with addressing the needs of a diverse and challenging group of students with multiple learning and emotional needs. Jamaican educators assuming roles as teacher leaders provide important support to other teachers, administrators, and community members. Students will be expected to implement strategies discussed in class and report the benefits and/or difficulties encountered when implementing these approaches in their schools and classrooms. The final evaluation for the class will include a question related specifically to whether the information presented during the course was ‘relevant to Jamaican schools.’

**Diversity Statement.** Throughout this professional education program diverse global content and culture is explored through class discussions, assignments and course readings. These activities provide a plethora of diverse perspectives on educational leadership.

**Course Evaluation.** In order to maintain accreditation with SACS-COC and the University Council of Jamaica, students are encouraged to complete course evaluations which help us to improve our classes and service. Evaluations are anonymous and instructors will only see the results after grades are entered. The following is the link to your course evaluation:

[https://wcu.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_5olAJSjBWZGjsMZ](https://wcu.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_5olAJSjBWZGjsMZ)

### **Blackboard Support**

The learning management system for this class is blackboard and can be found at: <http://wcu.blackboard.com>. Additional help with blackboard can be found at: [tc.wcu.edu](http://tc.wcu.edu), (828) 227-7487 or by visiting the Technology Commons located on the ground floor of the Hunter Library.

## **Accommodations for Students with Disabilities**

Western Carolina University is committed to providing equal educational opportunities for students with documented disabilities and/or medical conditions. Students who require reasonable accommodations must identify themselves as having a disability and/or medical condition and provide current diagnostic documentation to the Office of Disability Services. All information is confidential. Please contact the Office of Disability Services at (828) 227-3886 or in person at Suite 135 Killian Annex for an appointment.

## **BrainFuse**

BrainFuse is a free, online academic tutoring service for distance students. Please visit the link below for instructions on accessing this resource. <https://www.wcu.edu/apply/distance-online-programs/current-students/tutoring-support.aspx>

## **Library Resources**

Hunter Library provides students with access to group and individual study spaces and to thousands of information resources: print and electronic books, newspapers, and scholarly journal articles. These resources can be searched online and often accessed there (<http://library.wcu.edu>) or can be searched and located in the library building. Students in need of research or library support can get help online (<http://researchguides.wcu.edu/help>), from your subject specialist, Beth McDonough [bmcdono@wcu.edu](mailto:bmcdono@wcu.edu), or from the research guide: <http://researchguides.wcu.edu/Education> or <http://researchguides.wcu.edu/Counseling>

## ***ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY AND REPORTING PROCESS***

This policy addresses academic integrity violations of undergraduate and graduate students. Graduate students should read inside the parenthesis below to identify the appropriate entities in charge of that step of the process.

Students, faculty, staff, and administrators of Western Carolina University (WCU) strive to achieve the highest standards of scholarship and integrity. Any violation of the Academic Integrity Policy is a serious offense because it threatens the quality of scholarship and undermines the integrity of the community. While academic in scope, any violation of this policy is by nature, a violation of the Code of Student Conduct and will follow the same conduct process (see Article VII.B.1.a.). If the charge occurs close to the end of an academic semester or term or in the event of the reasonable need of either party for additional time to gather information timelines may be extended at the discretion of the Department of Student Community Ethics (DSCE).

### **I. General:**

This policy addresses academic integrity violations of undergraduate and graduate students.

Students, faculty, staff, and administrators of Western Carolina University (WCU) strive to achieve the highest standards of scholarship and integrity. Any violation of this policy is a serious offense because it threatens the quality of scholarship and undermines the integrity of the community.

Instructors have the right to determine the appropriate academic sanctions for violations of the Academic Integrity Policy within their courses, up to an including a final grade of “F” in the course in which the violation occurs.

## **II. Definitions:**

1. Cheating – Using, or attempting to use, unauthorized materials, information, or study aids in any academic exercise.
2. Fabrication – Creating and/or falsifying information or citation in any academic exercise.
3. Plagiarism – Representing the words or ideas of someone else as one’s own in any academic exercise.
4. Facilitation – Helping or attempting to help someone to commit a violation of the Academic Integrity Policy in any academic exercise (e.g. allowing another person to copy information during an examination).

## **III. Undergraduate and Graduate Academic Integrity Process:**

1. Within five (5) business days of the instructor’s knowledge of the alleged violation of the Academic Integrity Policy, s/he will inform his/her department head (or associate Dean of the graduate school when applicable) in writing of the allegation and proposed sanction(s).
2. Within ten (10) business days of the instructor’s knowledge of the alleged violation of the Academic Integrity Policy, the instructor will inform the student of the allegation, including the proposed sanction(s), in writing. In the written notification, the instructor will inform the student of his/her right to request a meeting with the instructor. During the meeting, the instructor shall complete the Academic Integrity Violation Faculty Resolution Form. If the student does not request a meeting with the instructor within five (5) business days of receipt of the written allegation(s), the student shall be deemed to have mutually resolved the matter and shall be bound to the sanction(s) outlined by the instructor in the written allegation. If the student does not request a meeting, the alleged violation of the Academic Integrity Policy shall not be subject to further review and/or appeal.
3. Within five (5) business days of meeting with the instructor, the student shall either appeal the decision to the department head or mutually resolve the matter by accepting the allegation and proposed sanction(s). No action by the student within five (5) business days of the meeting with the instructor shall constitute a mutual resolution and waiver of the student’s rights to appeal pursuant to the Academic Integrity Policy. If the student does not respond within five (5) business days of meeting with the instructor, the alleged violation of the Academic Integrity Policy shall not be subject to further review and/or appeal.
4. Within five (5) business days of receiving a student’s appeal, the department head must schedule a meeting with the student. The instructor may be present during the meeting. During the meeting, the department head shall complete the Academic Integrity Violation Department Head Resolution Form. Only information submitted during the meeting with the student, or in the meeting between the instructor and the student, may be considered by the department head. The evidentiary standard for making a decision shall be preponderance of the evidence. The department head may agree or disagree with the allegation(s) of the instructor. The department head may

- also approve, overturn, or modify the sanction(s) proposed by the instructor. If the student does not attend the scheduled meeting with the department head, the matter will be heard in absentia and shall not be subject to further review and/or appeal.
5. Within five (5) business days of meeting with the department head, the student shall either appeal the decision to an Academic Integrity Board or mutually resolve the matter by accepting the allegation and proposed sanction(s). The student must submit an appeal to the academic Dean listed on the Academic Integrity Violation Department Head Resolution Form. No action by the student within five (5) business days of the meeting with the department head shall constitute a mutual resolution and waiver of the student's rights to appeal pursuant to the Academic Integrity Policy. If the student does not respond within five (5) business days of meeting with the department head, the alleged violation of the Academic Integrity Policy shall not be subject to further review and/or appeal.
  6. Within seven (7) business days of receiving a student's appeal, the appropriate academic Dean must schedule an Academic Integrity Board hearing with the student. The Academic Integrity Board shall consist of a minimum of two (2) currently enrolled students and/or faculty members (with a minimum of one faculty member). A faculty member will serve as chair of the board. The instructor may be present during the hearing. Only information submitted during the hearing, or in the meetings between the instructor/department head and the student, may be considered by the hearing board. The evidentiary standard for making a decision shall be preponderance of the evidence. The hearing board may agree or disagree with the allegation(s) of the instructor. The hearing board may also approve, overturn, or modify the sanction(s) proposed by the instructor and/or department head. If the student does not attend the scheduled hearing, the matter will be heard in absentia and shall not be subject to further review and/or appeal. Within ten (10) business days of the hearing, the appropriate academic Dean shall review pertinent records and send the student written notification of the decision of the Academic Integrity Board.
  7. Within five (5) business days of receiving written notification of the decision of the Academic Integrity Board the student may accept the findings and sanctions of the board or submit an appeal to the designated academic Dean. No action by the student within five (5) business days of the meeting with the department head shall constitute a mutual resolution and waiver of the student's rights to appeal pursuant to the Academic Integrity Policy. If the student does not respond within five (5) business days of meeting with the Academic Integrity Board, the alleged violation of the Academic Integrity Policy shall not be subject to further review and/or appeal.
  8. If the student elects to file an appeal of the decision of the Academic Integrity Board, she must submit a written appeal within five (5) business days of receiving written notification of the decision of the Academic Integrity Board to the designated academic Dean. An appeal to an academic Dean must be limited to the following grounds; 1) a violation or due process or 2) a material deviation from Substantive and Procedural Standards by the UNC Board of Governors (as set forth in the UNC Manual 700.4.1).
  9. If an appeal is heard by an academic Dean, s/he shall review pertinent records within ten (10) business days of receiving a valid appeal. The academic Dean may agree or disagree with the allegation(s) of the instructor. The academic Dean may also approve, overturn, or modify the sanction(s) proposed by the instructor, department head, and or Academic Integrity Board. Within five (5) days of making a decision,

the academic Dean shall provide the student with a written decision. The decision of the academic Dean shall be final.

10. The student must remain enrolled in the course related to the case, and may not be permitted to withdraw from the course related to the case, until all hearing timelines, notifications, and/or appeals have been completed.
11. Upon resolution of each level of the case (no matter the outcome), the instructor, department head, and academic Dean must provide the Department of Student Community Ethics with all materials and documents related to the case (i.e. course syllabus, materials in violation of the Academic Integrity Policy, Instructor Resolution Form, Department Head Resolution Form, Academic Integrity Board decision letter, academic Dean decision letter, etc...). The Department of Student Community Ethics shall serve as the repository for all records associated with allegations and violations associated with the Academic Integrity Policy.

#### **IV. Academic Integrity Board:**

The Academic Integrity Board shall consist of a minimum of two (2) currently enrolled students and/or faculty members (with a minimum of one faculty member). A faculty member will serve as chair of the board. Students and faculty members serving on boards for each college will be selected by each college Dean. The Department of Student Community Ethics will train all board members prior to their service on a hearing board. Each academic Dean will convene hearing boards as necessary, and will determine a faculty member to serve as chair prior to a hearing.

#### **V. Sanctions:**

The instructor, department head, Academic Integrity Board, and/or academic Dean may impose academic sanctions permitted by the institution (not to exceed receiving a grade of "F" for the course). The instructor, department head, Academic Integrity Board, and/or academic Dean may not permanently remove the student from the course or suspend/expel the student from a program or the University. Student behavior of the magnitude to warrant consideration for permanent removal from the course or suspension/expulsion from a program or the University must be referred to the Department of Student Community Ethics.

#### **VI. Habitual Violations of the Academic Integrity Policy:**

Upon receipt of materials associated with violations of the Academic Integrity Policy, the Department of Student Community Ethics will determine if a student has previous violations of University policies. Students with a prior record of violations, or who commits a gross and/or egregious violation of the Academic Integrity Policy, will be referred to the Department of Student Community Ethics for consideration of being subject to hearing proceedings as a habitual violator. Students with three or more violations of the Academic Integrity Policy will automatically be subject to hearing proceedings as a habitual violator. Students in this category are subject to course-related sanctions imposed by the instructor, department head, Academic Integrity Board, and/or academic Dean and University-level sanctions imposed by the Department of Student Community Ethics for habitual violations of University policies.



Additional information is available on the Student Success website under Student Community Ethics.