EDUC 770 Master’s Seminar in Educational Specialties
Instructor: Robert Ives

**IMPORTANT:** These course details are subject to change without notice. Students must refer to the course site for current assignment details, course policies, and additional information. Please refer to the online syllabus in your course site for additional policies and information concerning this class.
Meet the Instructor

Robert Ives

Bob Ives received his PhD in special education from the University of Georgia, his MEd in secondary education from the University of St. Thomas, and his BA in psychology/mathematics/sociology from Rice University. Bob joined the special education faculty at the University of Nevada, Reno in 2002. He teaches undergraduate and graduate classes in assessment, research methods (quantitative, single subject, mixed methods), and disabilities in mathematics. Bob’s research interests and publications are in the same areas. He has also taught mathematics and Shakespeare courses to secondary students with mild cognitive disabilities. He is cofounder and codirector of the Research in Romania program, which gives students the annual opportunity to learn about, and conduct, educational research in Romania. Bob was awarded a Fulbright Fellowship in 2008, which funded a semester of research and teaching in Romania.

Dr. Kathy Obenchain

Course Author

Kathryn Obenchain is an associate professor in EDS (Educational Specialties) specializing in K–12 social studies education. She teaches undergraduate and graduate courses in social studies education, civic education, as well as general courses for EDS. Dr. Obenchain’s research interests are in civic education and civic literacy, both in the United States and newly emerging democracies. She is particularly interested in how students see themselves as active participants in society and how formal and informal school structures prepare students as active, informed democratic citizens. She is co-founder and co-director of “Research in Romania,” co-teaching education research courses and conducting research during the summer in Cluj-Napoca, Romania.

Dr. Obenchain earned both an MS in social studies education and a PhD in curriculum and instruction from Purdue University in West Lafayette, Indiana. She earned an undergraduate degree in history from Hanover College in Hanover, Indiana. She is a veteran secondary social studies teacher, having taught U.S. History, World Civilizations, American Government, and World Geography.

Course Description

Trends and issues in educational research, policy, and practice that affect classroom teachers. Assists students in understanding and utilizing scholarly literature in the field of education. Prerequisite: Admission to a master’s degree program in the College of Education or by consent of the advisor or instructor.
Purpose of this Course and its Relationship to COE Framework

This is the first course for new graduate students in Educational Specialties. The purpose of this course is to introduce these new graduate students to graduate study and to explore current trends and issues in education.

This course meets the four goals of the College of Education Framework in the following ways:

- **Possesses a Love of Learning:** Pursuing graduate study should be about a love of learning and a desire to improve education in one’s own classroom and beyond.
- **Strong Fund of Knowledge:** Through this course, students will increase their fund of knowledge as they examine local, regional, national, and international educational issues through an exploration of the scholarly literature. In addition, this course will increase students’ knowledge of graduate education expectations.
- **Reflective Practice:** Each experience in this course will require the student to explore the question of “why,” including why they make certain instructional decisions; why certain issues take on a national presence and others do not.
- **Democracy and Pluralism:** The very purpose of K–12 education in the United States is citizenship education—preparing citizens to live and participate in a democratic republic in an increasingly diverse society. Examining issues that promote or inhibit this goal, as well as the role of the classroom teacher in valuing democracy and pluralism through his or her teaching and continued professional development is a central part of this course.

Graduate Expectations

This is a graduate course, so expect to commit several hours each week to the readings in preparation for successful participation in class activities and discussion, as well as successful completion of the assignments. A three-credit course requires a minimum of forty-five “contact” hours; preparation for those contact hours is additional. Given that the course is spread over ten weeks, to be successful in the course, expect to spend an average of four to five hours each week working through the learning module and required postings. Reading, note-taking, and preparation will require several additional hours each week. These hours are not “seat time”; they correlate to the intellectual time invested. It will be important for you to budget your time wisely. I do not expect you to post on the discussion boards every day. However, I do expect that you will devote four to five hours each week on the discussion board, reading what others have posted and making your own contributions. This is similar to the “time” you would spend attending a live class session (remember, we have condensed a fifteen-week class into ten weeks). I suggest setting aside two blocks of time for this work. In addition, you will need to prepare adequately for discussion participation and assignments and this requires daily reading. I suggest setting aside two to three hours a day, four days a week for reading, rereading, taking notes, library research, etc.
Pedagogy

The pedagogical stance in this course is heavily influenced by the work of Pablo Freire and will be primarily taught using a “problem-posing” stance rather than a “banking education” stance as described below by Freire (1970).

Banking Education

“Education...becomes an act of depositing, in which the students are the depositories and the teacher is the depositor. Instead of communicating, the teacher issues communiqués and makes deposits which the students patiently receive, memorize, and repeat” (p. 53).

Problem-Posing Education

“In problem-posing education, [students] develop their power to perceive critically the way they exist in the world with which and in which they find themselves; they come to see the world not as a static reality, but as a reality in process, in transformation” (p. 64).

- “Banking education (for obvious reasons) attempts, by mythicizing reality, to conceal certain facts which explain the way humans beings exist it the world; problem-posing education sets itself the task of demythologizing.
- “Banking education resists dialogue; problem-posing education regards dialogue as indispensable to the act of cognition which unveils reality.
- “Banking education treats students as objects of assistance; problem-posing education makes them critical thinkers.
- “Banking education inhibits creativity and domesticates...Problem-posing education bases itself on creativity and stimulate true reflection and action upon reality” (p. 65).


Since we will rely heavily on Freire’s concept of problem-posing education, and will rarely go into a “banking” model of education, you need to make sure you are prepared for online class discussions by reading and reflecting on the material assigned. Online participation will center on discussions of the readings and your understandings and questions about the content and application of the course materials. While this is a course focused on research in general, there are considerable opportunities to explore the theories and research applicable to your area of interest. Much of this work will be done during online discussions where you will be encouraged to pose questions, critique the readings, and bring your own interpretations into the dialogue.

Overall, the readings for the course are varied and theoretical. Many of the concepts, vocabulary, and possibly the entire genre of academic writing may be difficult. It is important that you evaluate your reading skills and adjust accordingly:

- Take notes and refer to them often—throughout the entire course. I highly recommend using a double-entry journal format with your notes and quotes (with page numbers) on one side of your paper and questions on the other. You will have
to use APA formatting even on the discussion board postings and you do not want to have to search for page numbers, etc.

- Reread the readings—we will never leave a reading behind—you will find yourself using most of the readings for the rest of the semester.
- Search for additional information about the authors and concepts presented. What is their area of study? Where do they work? I would be sure to Google and YouTube search most authors before you read their work.
- Reread-reread-reread (with your notes beside you).

---

**Course Objectives**

Students will

- demonstrate a practical and theoretical understanding of key educational research areas and the larger paradigms related to educational inquiry;
- demonstrate an understanding of research related to current critical educational issues;
- demonstrate the ability to use basic library research skills;
- access and use scholarly literature for the purpose of understanding, developing, and defending a position on a substantive educational issue;
- identify and distinguish among types of scholarly sources/publications (e.g., research, theory, policy, practitioner/applied);
- present a research-based synthesis and evaluation of a critical educational issue;
- demonstrate an understanding of key educational organizations and organizations specific to students’ disciplines;
- choose areas of inquiry that are of personal and professional interest, as well as of educational importance;
- develop a disposition to serve as an “agent for social change” and develop an understanding of the knowledge and skills required to be an effective leader for educational change; and
- develop the skills and disposition that contribute to future growth as a leader and developing scholar in education, intent on continued study and reflection.

---

**Required Texts and Materials**

**Textbooks**


**Electronic Reserve**

The textbooks will be supplemented by other material: book chapters, journal articles, online reports, etc. These readings will be provided via electronic course reserve. You can find these readings by clicking on the “Electronic Reserves” button on the course menu.

**Additional Readings**

Additional readings in the course will be identified by you. These course readings will come from current texts and scholarly journals of general educational interest and journals specific to the particular areas of emphasis of students in the course (e.g., students with mild/moderate disabilities, TESOL, gifted education, emergent literacy). Relevant journals include, but are not limited to, the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>American Educational Research Journal</th>
<th>Journal of Science Teacher Education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bilingual Research Journal</td>
<td>Journal of Teacher Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Childhood Education Journal</td>
<td>Language Arts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Educational Forum</td>
<td>Mathematics Education Research Journal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational Leadership</td>
<td>Mathematics Teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational Researcher</td>
<td>Mathematical Thinking and Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational Studies in Mathematics</td>
<td>Multicultural Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equity and Excellence in Education</td>
<td>Reading Research Quarterly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exceptional Children</td>
<td>Reading Teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus on Learning Problems in Mathematics</td>
<td>Research in the Teaching of English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Journal of Mathematical Education in Science and Technology</td>
<td>School Science and Mathematics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intervention in School and Clinic</td>
<td>Science and Children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journal for Research in Mathematics Education</td>
<td>Science Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy</td>
<td>Social Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journal of Learning Disabilities</td>
<td>Teaching Children Mathematics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journal of Literacy Research</td>
<td>Teaching Mathematics in the Middle School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Journal of Mathematical Behavior</td>
<td>TESOL Quarterly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journal of Mathematics Teacher Education</td>
<td>Theory and Research in Social Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journal of Research in Science Teaching</td>
<td>Yearbook of the National Council of</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Meaningful participation in the online class sessions is required and will be assessed via the weekly discussion board postings. This is an online course and is not self-paced. There are specific tasks, readings, and assignments due each week. Your consistent, informed, and positive participation through discussion and questions will tell me that you are involved in this experience and developing as a professional educator and leader. It will also affect your ability to succeed on course assignments.

ProctorU Required Materials

You will be required to complete at least one proctored exam in this course. All students will take their proctored exams through ProctorU, an external service that allows students to complete their required supervised exams online from any location.

To take your exam through ProctorU, specific hardware is required. You are responsible for meeting these technical requirements:

- A reliable computer running Windows XP (or higher) or Mac OS X (or higher).
- A webcam with 640x480 video pixel resolution or higher. Webcams built into laptops or computer monitors are usually sufficient.
- Headphones or working speakers connected to the computer.
- A working microphone connected to the computer. A webcam with a built-in microphone is recommended.
- A web browser with Adobe Flash Player installed. Flash Player 10 is recommended.
- A reliable, high-speed Internet connection (minimum 768 Kbps download speed / 384 Kbps upload speed).

The authority to allow remote access—video and screen-sharing connections—to the computer by one of ProctorU’s proctors. (The proctor will walk you through this authorization process.)

Consistent Class Participation

Meaningful participation in the online class sessions is required and will be assessed via the weekly discussion board postings. This is an online course and is not self-paced. There are specific tasks, readings, and assignments due each week. Your consistent, informed, and positive participation through discussion and questions will tell me that you are involved in this experience and developing as a professional educator and leader. It will also affect your ability to succeed on course assignments.
# This Semester at a Glance

*This is a suggested outline only. The instructor may change the topics or schedule as needed.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week/Dates</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings/Required Preparation for Participation/Assignments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theme</strong></td>
<td><strong>What Is Graduate School in Education Like and What Is the Purpose?</strong></td>
<td><strong>Work Focuses on Understanding How a Graduate Experience Is Different from and Undergraduate Experience</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week 1:</strong></td>
<td>Introduction to Graduate Education in EDS</td>
<td><strong>Readings/Preparation:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 2–7</td>
<td>Introduction to Scholarly Writing: Research and Theory; Books, Journals, Public and Private Sources</td>
<td>• Noddings, chapters 1, 2&lt;br&gt;• Pan, chapters 3, 4, 6&lt;br&gt;• E-reserve readings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Work Focuses on Examining and Understanding the Predominant Paradigms that Influence Theory, Research, and Practice in Education</strong></td>
<td><strong>Assignments:</strong>&lt;br&gt;• Discussions&lt;br&gt;• Plagiarism Quiz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theme</strong></td>
<td><strong>What Is the Role of Theory in Education?</strong></td>
<td><strong>Work Focuses on Examining and Understanding the Predominant Paradigms that Influence Theory, Research, and Practice in Education</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week 2:</strong></td>
<td>Introduction to Theoretical Perspectives and Inquiry Paradigms</td>
<td><strong>Readings/Preparation:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 9–14</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Noddings, chapters 3, 6, 7&lt;br&gt;• E-reserve readings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Work Focuses on Examining and Understanding the Predominant Paradigms that Influence Theory, Research, and Practice in Education</strong></td>
<td><strong>Assignments:</strong>&lt;br&gt;• Discussions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week 3:</strong></td>
<td>Introduction to Positivism and Postpositivism</td>
<td><strong>Readings/Preparation:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 16–21</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Noddings, chapters 5, 8, 9&lt;br&gt;• E-reserve readings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Work Focuses on Examining and Understanding the Predominant Paradigms that Influence Theory, Research, and Practice in Education</strong></td>
<td><strong>Assignments:</strong>&lt;br&gt;• Discussions&lt;br&gt;• Abstracts of Articles</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Week 4: September 23–28 | Introduction to Postmodernism, Poststructuralism, Critical Theory, and Constructivism | **Readings/Preparation:**  
- Noddings, chapters 4, 10, 11  
- E-reserve readings  
**Assignments:**  
- Discussions |
|---|---|---|
| **Midcourse Exam: September 30–October 4** | **Theme**  
- What Issues Are Important to Each of Us in Education?  
- Work Focuses on an In-Depth Examination of an Educational Problem/Issue Chosen by Each Student |
| Week 5: September 30–October 5 | Introduction to Writing a Review of the Research Literature: Why, For Whom, and When  
Finding A Topic to Explore  
Translating the Topic to an Issue or Problem for Exploration | **Readings/Preparation:**  
- Pan, chapters 1, 2, and 11  
- Find at least ten peer-reviewed articles (at least seven must be research studies) about a topic of interest to you and be prepared to discuss how they are influencing your topic choice. |
| Week 6: October 7–12 | Writing a Literature Review: Evaluating Resources for Your Literature Review and Creating an Organizational Plan | **Readings/Preparation:**  
- Pan, chapters 5 and 7  
- E-reserve readings  
- Find and read at least fifteen additional peer-reviewed empirical research studies that you believe you could use in your literature review.  
- Prepare an outline/organizational plan for your literature review. The outline should contain a narrative introductory paragraph at the beginning and at least a topic sentence for each section of the outline.  
**Assignments:**  
- Discussions  
- Annotated Bibliography of Articles |
| Week 7: October 14–19 | Writing a Literature Review: Creating a First Draft | **Readings/Preparation:**  
- Pan, chapters 8–10  
- Prepare a solid rough draft of your literature review. This means that there should be narrative for every section of the review.  
- Note any gaps, repetition, etc., in your literature review. Find additional references as needed.  
**Assignments:**  
- Discussions  
- PowerPoint |
|---------------------|-----------------------------------------------|---|
| Week 8: October 21–26 | Writing a Literature Review: Moving from a Draft to a Final Version | **Readings/Preparation:**  
- Pan, chapters 12 and 13  
**Assignments:**  
- Discussions  
- Literature Review: Draft for Feedback |
| Week 9: October 28–November 2 | Writing a Literature Review: Moving to a Final Version | **Assignments:**  
- Discussions |
| Week 10: November 4–9 | Writing a Literature Review: How to Share your Work with Another Audience and Class Reflection | **Readings/Preparation:**  
- Be prepared to discuss findings from your literature review in light of the theory and research examined, as well as potential implications for practice.  
**Assignments:**  
- Discussions  
- Literature Review: Final Version |