Course: Thesis Research and Writing  
Course #: SLP 599 (3 credits)  
Prerequisite: By permission of the instructor  
Classroom: None  
Semester: Fall 2015  
Dates/Times: TBA  
Synchronous Chat Times: Mondays (contact instructor by 8-19 by email to set chat times)  
Instructor: Jean Neils-Strunjas, Ph.D., Professor, CCC-SLP  
Office Hours: By appointment or Tues or Thurs 1:00-5:00 PM  
Course Description: 3 Hours (repeatable max of 6 hrs.)  
Faculty supervised research project on a topic related to speech-language pathology.  
Method of Instruction: Instruction will be provided through a combination of synchronous online classes utilizing Blackboard, Adobe Connect Software, reading assignments, and online learning activities. You are also required to schedule and attend individual meetings with your thesis or research mentor advisor.  

Table 1: Contact List:

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<tr>
<th>Resource</th>
<th>Contact/email</th>
<th>Phone</th>
<th>Office Location &amp; Office hours</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Course Instructor</td>
<td>Jean Neils-Strunjas, PhD/CCC-SLP</td>
<td>O-270-745-8998</td>
<td>Office: 104C Academic Complex</td>
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<td></td>
<td><a href="mailto:jean.neils-strunjas@wku.edu">jean.neils-strunjas@wku.edu</a></td>
<td>C-859-640-1709</td>
<td>Office Hours: By appointment or Tues or Thurs 1:00-5:00 PM</td>
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<td>Tech Support</td>
<td>IT Helpdesk Online Service</td>
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Academic Integrity Policy: Each student is expected to abide by the WKU Honor code as written in the WKU student handbook. Violations will result in a grade of zero.
**ADA Statement:** In compliance with the Americans and Disabilities Act appropriate accommodations will be made for any student with an identified disability. The student must present the official university notification letter outlining the necessary accommodations to the course instructor. The letter can be secured from the WKU Office of Disability Services:
Student Success Center
Downing University Center A-200

**The Learning Center:** The learning center provides free supplemental education programs for all currently enrolled WKU students.
The Learning Center
Downing University Center A-330
270-745-6254

**Course Objectives & Overview:**

The overall purpose of the course is to support you in your independent completion of a master’s thesis or a research project at Western Kentucky University. A thesis is a self-directed, formal (student) project with guidelines developed by the Graduate School for all graduate students at WKU. Therefore, unlike other courses, you will develop your own project and set your own deadlines and timeline. You are solely responsible for completion of the thesis according to the WKU guidelines. Enrollment in this course will not guarantee completion of your thesis. Only you can do that! Although the thesis demands specialized knowledge and skill, most students find that the thesis or research project is the most rewarding part of their education.

**Research**

- Processes used in research and the integration of research principles into evidence-based clinical practice

**Clinical Skills and Processes**

- Oral and written or other forms of communication
- Prevention, evaluation, and intervention of communication disorders and swallowing disorders
- Interaction and personal qualities, including counseling, collaboration, ethical practice, and professional behavior
- Effective interaction with patients, families, professionals, and other individuals, as appropriate
- Delivery of services to culturally and linguistically diverse populations
- Application of the principles of evidence-based practice
- Self-evaluation of effectiveness of practice
Specific Goals:

1. Students will demonstrate basic knowledge of the thesis requirements at Western Kentucky University
https://www.wku.edu/graduate/students/thesis/index.php
2. Students will demonstrate knowledge of the philosophy of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) and research with human subjects by completion of CITI training
https://phrp.nihtraining.com/users/login.php and following all IRB guidelines when conducting and reporting research.
https://www.wku.edu/compliance/irb_procedure.php
3. Students will collaborate effectively with their research mentor or advisor.
4. Students will apply writing techniques to the thesis process
https://www.wku.edu/writingcenter/resources_thesis_writers.php
5. Students will compare quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods research designs for conducting research and identify appropriate data analysis methods for their project.
6. Students will apply research findings to evidenced-based practice using the American Speech-Language Hearing website.

Supplemental Resources
1. APA: The Easy Way! (Updated for APA 6th edition) Kindle Edition by Peggy M. Houghton (Author), Timothy J. Houghton (Author), Michele M. Pratt (Author, Editor)
http://www.amazon.com/dp/B004A14PWE/ref=rdr_kindle_ext_tmb
2. Free: Useful reference with link for APA style and video tutorials” Welcome to the Purdue OWL
https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/
3. ASHA – American Speech Language Hearing Association http://asha.org/
4. NSSLHA – National Student Speech Language Hearing Association
http://www.nsslha.org/default.htm
   Read: The NSSLHA journal article Blanchet, P. (2015) Apprentice: A Model for Mentoring Students in Research in Communication Sciences and Disorders (you will need to go to the NSSLHA journal website to access this article)
5. NIH Protecting Human Research Participants:
https://phrp.nihtraining.com/users/login.php

Required Videos available online:
1. Purdue OWL: APA Formatting: Reference List Basics
https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL8F43A67F38DE3D5D
2. The Art of Stress-Free Productivity: David Allen at TEDxClaremontColleges  
   https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CHxhjDPKfbY

3. Youtube video: Theoretical Framework  
   https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VkiKK8sj_bs

**Funding Sources:**
WKU research: See https://www.wku.edu/studentresearch/about.php

**Student Government Association (SGA) Scholar Development Grant**
http://www.wku.edu/sga/
These $250 grants can offset expenses for conducting academic research, purchasing tangible items to support academic endeavors, and travel to professional conferences to present academic research. All WKU students are welcome to apply. Students may apply multiple times throughout the year; however, there is a maximum amount of $500 per student per academic year. Applications may be picked up in the SGA office in Downing University Center 130.

**Graduate Student Research Grant**
http://www.wku.edu/graduate/aid/
All WKU graduate students are welcome to apply for these grants to be used on acquiring materials and assistance for creative scholarship. Students may apply for no more than three Student Research Grants per degree totaling $750.

**The Thesis & Research Process**- Complete the following during the Fall Semester:
   a. Obtain CITI Training & NIH certificate to conduct human research.
   b. Review timeline for thesis incorporating the WKU requirements.
   c. Develop a calendar of due dates for required tasks and submit to your advisor.
      i. Plan to submit to College Reader (Dr. Vijay Golla) before the due date—may or may not need to resubmit.
   d. Discuss idea with mentor and analyze theses and papers that are similar.
   e. Select committee members (consider including a committee member for proof reading, references, form etc.)—Defense needs to be the first week in April
   f. Complete literature review
g. Consider using a bibliography App or software program (Easybib, Endnote, Refworks, Zotero).

h. Develop an outline for the literature review with topic sentences.

i. Write hypothesis or research questions depending on the project.

j. Apply for IRB approval
   i. Check deadlines
   ii. Fill-out forms
   iii. Note requirement for student project that is not a thesis and that is not published may fall under class project.

k. Collect data (consider very carefully how long it might take to collect data and alter hypothesis or research questions if necessary).

l. Analyze data—use tables, graphs, bar charts, statistics (e.g. t-tests)

m. Schedule thesis defense

Meeting Topics & Assignments (Recommended Schedule subject to change at the discretion of the instructor and/ or thesis advisor/mentor):

August 24: Overview of syllabus, introductions.
Assignment due: Print or have syllabus available electronically.

August 31: Collaboration in the research process (advisor, local and national community, fellow students). Discuss Blanchet (2015) article. Discuss Introduction to the literature review.
Assignments due: 1) Meet with advisor. 2) Watch Purdue OWL: APA Formatting: Reference List Basics prior to class and be ready to discuss; 3) Read Blanchet P. (2015). Apprentice: A Model for Mentoring Students in Research in Communication Sciences and Disorders

Sept 7: No Class Labor Day

Sept 14: Students report review of 2 WKU theses and 2 papers related to student’s own research topic. Assignments due: 1) Review 2 theses from WKU; 2) Read two papers related to your thesis topic; and, 3) Watch The Art of Stress-Free Productivity: David Allen at TEDxClairemontColleges prior to class and be ready to discuss.


Sept 28: No Class. Students continue to develop their own literature review building review to 50 peer-reviewed articles. Submit your IRB proposal for OCT 1st deadline.

Oct 5: Fall break

Oct 12: Students present hypothesis or research questions depending on the project.

Assignments: 1. Write your research questions and or hypothesis; 2. Watch the YouTube video: Theoretical Framework prior to class and be ready to discuss.

Oct 19: No Class

Oct 26th: Present Pp on Method of data collection

Assignment: Students write a 2-page summary of your method of data collection and prepare an informal Pp to share with the class.

Nov 2nd: Practice data collection with another student who will play the role of participant. Administer all forms, tests, questionnaires, and interventions. Provide feedback on feasibility and participant experience. Students share data collection form with class.

Assignment: Gather all data collection materials (tests, questionnaires, etc.) develop a protocol; develop a data collection form.

Nov 9th: Present data from 5 research participants.

Assignment: Collect data from 5 research participants and complete 5 data collection forms.

Nov 16th: Discuss quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods research designs for conducting research. Students identify appropriate data analysis methods for their project.

Assignment: Write a one-page summary of your method of statistical analysis; continue to collect data for your individual project.
Nov 23rd: No Class-independently collect data.

Nov 30th: Last Class Present data collected to date. Assignment: Complete all data collection; Schedule thesis defense for Spring semester.