**Course Title**: Seminar: Research in Exceptional Child Education  

**Course Number and Prefix**: EXED 534  

**Course Discipline**: Exceptional Education  

**Professor**: Dr. Nedra Skaggs Atwell  

**Semester**: Spring 2008  

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**Office Hours**: As posted by appointment. Email me. I answer email daily Monday through Thursday.  

**Course Description**: This course enables students to become more skillful in reading interpreting, and conducting research with children with disabilities, parents, and teachers – an independent research project is required.  

**Course Rationale**: This course is designed to serve three purposes. First, it is intended to enable students to become familiar with significant research developments in the field in recent years. Within this process, students will also be able to identify unresolved issues in special education and researchable topics for practitioners. The course will also provide the basic tools by which students can become more skillful in reading, interpreting, and conducting research with exceptional children, parents, and teachers.  

**Prerequisites**: Instructor permission.  


**Outcomes and Objectives**: Students will be able to:  
- Identify recent data based research within a particular aspect of special education.  
- Develop the skills necessary to read and evaluate data
based research that use both group and single subject designs.

- Propose in journal article format a data based research study focused on a personal topic of interest.
- Recognize and describe issues related to experimental validity.

Course Objectives are based on Kentucky’s Teacher Standards and indicators cited below.

**Standard I: Demonstrates Professional Leadership**
- Participates in professional organizations and activities.
- Writes and speaks effectively.
- Contributes to the profession knowledge and expertise about teaching and learning.

**Standard II: Demonstrates Knowledge of Content**
- Analyzes sources of factual information for accuracy.

**Standard IX: Engages in Professional Development**
- Applies to instruction the knowledge, skills, and processes acquired through professional development.

**Standard X: Demonstrates Implementation of Technology**
- The extent to which the teacher:
  - Uses the computer to do word processing, create databases and spreadsheets, access electronic mail and the Internet, make presentations, and use other emerging technologies to enhance professional productivity and support instruction.

**Dispositions**
- The teacher realizes that subject matter knowledge is not a fixed body of facts but is complex and ever evolving and seeks to keep abreast of new ideas and understandings in the field.
- The teacher respects students as individuals with differing personal and family backgrounds and various skills, talents and interests.
- The teacher is sensitive to community and cultural norms.
- The teacher values the use of educational technology in the teaching and learning process.
- The teacher respects the privacy of students and
The teacher is willing to consult with other adults regarding the education and well being of his/her students and to work with other professionals to improve the overall learning environment for students.

- The teacher understands how participation supports commitment, and is committed to the expression and use of democratic values in the classroom.
- The teacher is a thoughtful and responsive listener.
- The teacher is committed to seeking out, developing, and continually refining practices that address the individual needs of students.

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<th>Critical Performance</th>
<th>Individual Research Project</th>
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<td>Instructional Methods</td>
<td>Include but are not limited to the following:</td>
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<td>· Web-based Instruction</td>
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<td>· Discussion</td>
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<th>KERA Elements</th>
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<th>Course Topics</th>
<th>The following topics are meant to guide reading and preparation for class. They are subject to change. All topics will begin with a national focus and include Kentucky specific information.</th>
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<td>· Educators as Researchers</td>
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<td>· Research and the Scientific Method</td>
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| Class Policies | 1. Please do not procrastinate on assignments since you have the due dates well in advance. Your grade will be docked by 10% for each day an assignment is late. This is an effort to be fair to students who have their assignments at the proper time.  
2. The dates listed in the syllabus are the dates by which the assignment must be postmarked.  
3. All assignments must be (1) emailed to Dr. Atwell; list the course and contents in the subject line. OR (2) mailed by the US Postal Service to Dr. Atwell at Western Kentucky University. List the course number and contents on the outside of the envelope. Make sure you write your name on all products. You can find the address in the upper section of this syllabus.  
4. Check your WKU email at least three times a week.  
5. All papers must be typed, double-spaced and grammatically correct. Number all pages, except the title page.  
6. Extra credit to improve grades will not be granted. Put your full efforts into completing the course requirements as presented. Work cannot be redone.  
7. Students requesting an incomplete for any reason must contact the instructor to ask for an incomplete, which may or may not be granted, depending on the instructor’s judgment regarding the circumstances of the student’s request.  
According to the Graduate Catalog, p.13, ”A grade of ‘X’ (incomplete) is given only when a... |
A relatively small amount of work is not completed because of illness or other reason satisfactory to the instructor. “An ‘X’ received by a student will automatically become an “F” unless removed within [twelve (12)] weeks of the next full term (summer excluded). The grade of ‘X’ will continue to appear as the initial grade on the student’s transcript, along with the revised grade.

### Attendance
Class participation is imperative. Your success depends on active participation and organization. If you do not understand or miss an assignment, **it is your responsibility to get any material from your peers and contact the professor.**

### Disability Accommodations
Students with disabilities who require accommodations (academic adjustment and/or auxiliary aids or services) for this course must contact the Office for Student Disability Services. The OFSDS telephone number is 270-745-5004 V/TDD. Please DO NOT request accommodations directly from the professor without a letter of accommodation from the Office for Student Disability Services.

Criminal check, TB test and a health screening is required prior to any work in the schools. Additional information is available in Tate Page Hall 408.

### Plagiarism
You can find the following information in the WKU Handbook, 16th ed., p. 59.
To represent ideas or interpretations taken from another source as one’s own is plagiarism. Plagiarism is a serious offense. The academic work of students must be their own. Students must give the author(s) credit for any source material used. To lift content directly from a source without giving credit is a flagrant act. To present a borrowed passage after having changed a few words, even if the source is cited, is also plagiarism.

### Assignments
**Midterm and Final Exams**
Your midterm and final exams will be posted on Course Info. You will be expected to sign and adhere to a professional honor code. Your midterm must be postmarked or in my office by **February 19.** Your final must be postmarked or in my office by **May 2.** Each exam is worth **75 points.**
Research Question
Each student must complete a research project during this class. Identifying and delineating the project by a careful development of the research question is vital. Chapter 3 in your text will be very helpful as you develop the question.

You must submit and get approved your research question by February 8. This part of the assignment is worth 50 points.

Literature Review
Each student must complete a literature review as part of their research project. Chapter 4 of your text will assist you with the development. This is a labor intensive part of the process. Be sure to allow yourself enough time. You must submit the literature review by March 1. This part of the assignment is worth 100 points.

This will enable you to receive feedback prior to your research activity. You will need to incorporate the feedback into your final research project write up.

Individual Research Project
Each individual student will examine their educational practice and identify one area they want to improve. Individuals will research how to address the issue and conduct a classroom investigation.

To conduct the research students will:
- Develop a research question.
- Review related literature.
- Design and plan research methods.
- Conduct research.
- Write a research report.

In the process, students will:
- Utilize technology to gather and disseminate information;
- Articulate the social, political, legal and ethical issues
related to the problem addressed in the paper;
• Discuss the outcomes/benefits of the research;
• Prepare a properly formatted and technically correct research report.

Your project will have the following components:
• Introduction
  o Statement of the problem.
  o Purpose of the study.
  o Research questions.
• Methods
  o Subjects.
  o Research design.
  o Procedures.
• Results
  o Data collected.
• Summary
  o Implications of what you discovered.

The paper will be graded using the following criteria:
• Ideas: Depth & relevance-40 points
• Development: Clear direction and purpose-30 points
• Coherence: Transitions, logic, & unity-30 points
• Variety: Originality & imagination-30 points
• Research: Utilization of resources/references-50 points
• Conventions: Word usage, spelling, syntax/semantics, punctuation/capitalization -20 points.

PAPERS WILL ONLY BE ACCEPTED WHICH UTILIZE THE APA FORMAT

Students must this to pass the class. The paper is worth 200 points and is due April 25.

Webpage
Each student will be expected to complete the personal web page in the Student Tools section of this course. Be sure to include your picture and list at least three links. This assignment is worth 30 points. This page needs to be completed for review by February 1.
**Discussion Boards**
Questions will be posted on the discussion board for all members of the class to respond. You have a Discussion board Rubric in the Course Information Section of the class. You should post no more than three times per each discussion board. Be sure to read your peers responses. You will find the questions and responses a lively and interesting part of this course. The date listed with each question is the last date the Discussion Board will be open for discussion. Discussion questions will be posted for sessions on 2/3, 2/28, 3/20 and 4/24. All class members will be expected to prepare and participate fully. *This assignment is worth a total of 120 points.*

**Grading and Evaluation**
The course grade will be calculated as follows:
- Midterm Exam: 75 Points
- Final Exam: 75 Points
- Web Page: 30 Points
- On Line Discussions: 120 Points
- Individual Research Paper: 200 Points
- Literature Review: 100 Points
- Research Question: 50 Points
- Total Points Possible: 650 Points

**Grading Scale**
- A = 585-650 points
- B = 520-584 points
- C = 455-519 points
- D = 390-454 points
- F = 389 and Below