EDCI 6506: Reading Research Seminar I  
Fall 2007  
R 4:00–6:50 p.m.  
MCB Room 201

Instructor: Heidi Anne Mesmer, Ph D.  
Office: 318 War Memorial  
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Office Hrs: Mon. 1:30 to 4:30 & by appointment

Virginia Tech Core Values: Virginia Tech is a comprehensive land grant university that serves the state, national, and international communities by providing its students with exceptional academic experiences. As such Virginia Tech has seven core values which will serve as guiding principles in this course:

- Freedom of inquiry
- Mutual respect
- Lifelong learning
- A commitment to diverse and inclusive communities
- Ut Prosim. (That I May Serve) is Virginia Tech’s motto
- Personal and institutional integrity.
- A culture of continuous improvement.

Catalog Description: Graduate Catalog description for 6505 & 6506: Issues related to conducting and reporting research on the reading process and reading pedagogy. Includes the critical review of classical and contemporary research and an initiation to the process of conducting reading research. Special attention is given to the analysis and classification of major research paradigms. Prerequisites: doctoral standing.

Designed to familiarize students with research in reading and the course is taught as a seminar involving discussion, collaborative analysis, and joint inquiry.

COURSE OBJECTIVES AND STUDENT OUTCOMES: Upon successful completion of this course each student is expected to:

a. Describe the historical eras of reading research from the 1950s to the present.

b. Appreciate the role of research as a mechanism for understanding literacy problems.

c. Describe the forms of and standards for rigorous research.

d. Explain various theoretical models of the reading process.
c. Examine key research and theory informing current understandings of literacy development.

f. Critically read and analyze various forms of scholarship including primary research (experimental, quasi-experimental, correlational, longitudinal, qualitative), secondary research (meta-analyses, research syntheses), and theoretical work.

g. Read, analyze, synthesize, and present the research of an influential reading scholar in a well-organized scholarly paper.

h. Present information about an influential reading scholar in a paper presentation and a poster session.

TEXTS AND SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS: The reading materials listed below will provide a focus for the course and information useful for class discussions, activities and projects.


Selected research articles focusing on the student’s chosen literacy research.

OPTIONAL:

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND EXPECTATIONS:

1. **Attendance and Participation:**
   Consistent attendance is a minimal requirement for this course. Students will attend all classes on time and remain in class for the entire instructional time. Excessive absences cause students to miss essential instruction and will be reflected in participation grades.

   Each week students will come to class having read assigned readings and completed other assignments. Participation will be indicated by INFORMED CONTRIBUTIONS. In an effort to develop future literacy scholars, this doctoral level seminar will encourage discussions that are supported by relevant research and theory.

2. **Readings and Primary Reviewer Responsibilities**

   **Readings** Students will be responsible for reading all assigned texts. Although time may not permit for all material to be covered in class, students will be held responsible for all course material.

   **Primary Reviewer Responsibilities** Each week, 1 student will be assigned as the primary reviewer for a given reading selection. The primary reviewers will write a 200-300 word summary of each piece that they are asked to review and will prepare 3-5 questions and/or talking points for the class. The primary reviewer will be responsible for reading their summaries and leading the discussion of that piece. The summaries will encapsulate the major points of the piece and will be free of personal opinions. The questions and talking points will expand upon individual interpretations.
3. **Research Paper**

The major assignment for this class will be a 20-page paper examining a line of focused research produced by one influential literacy scholar. Portions of this assignment will be submitted and graded throughout the semester. The culmination of this project will be a symposium in which each student presents his/her paper.

Part 1—A bibliography of 7-10 peer-reviewed, research studies authored by one literacy researcher.

Part 2—Summaries of each research study in a carefully written paper.

Part 3—An integrated paper detailing the major themes of the findings in the research of one literacy researcher.

Part 4—An oral presentation given to the class supported by PowerPoint slides AND a professionally produced research poster.

**GRADING CRITERIA**

**Weight Given to Assignments**

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<th>Research Summaries</th>
<th>Attendance</th>
<th>Research Project</th>
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<td>Bibliography</td>
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<td>Weight</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Summaries of Research</td>
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**Grading Scale**

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<th>Descriptive Criteria</th>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>excellent work that surpasses typical expectations</td>
<td>93%</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>good work that clearly meets expectations</td>
<td>85%</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>satisfactory work that usually meets expectations</td>
<td>77%</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>unsatisfactory work that does not meet expectations</td>
<td>69%</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>unsatisfactory work that is incomplete, does not meet expectations, or reflects little thought or care</td>
<td>65% or lower</td>
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Course assignments will be evaluated using specific rubrics supplied to the students. This is a 5000, doctoral level course requiring extensive reading and writing, as doctoral courses do. Standards for this course are high and students should consider their semester obligations as they decide to continue their enrollment in this course.

COURSE POLICIES:

Assignments: Students will turn in assignments at the beginning of the class period on the due date. Absent students must send in course assignments. Late assignments will be accepted a maximum of 1 class period late and late assignments will have point deductions. As with all graduate work, the professional expertise and judgment of the course instructor will be instrumental in assigning grades. All assignments must be completed for a passing grade to be received.

Incomplete: A grade of Incomplete is only given for extenuating circumstances only. Please inform the instructor as soon as possible if you have such a circumstance. Do not wait until the end of the semester or until after you have failed to turn in several assignments to ask for an Incomplete.

Assignment Formatting: All assignments should be typed, double-spaced, using standard 12-point font. Assignments should reflect Standard English punctuation, usage, grammar, and spelling. Students with extreme difficulties in these areas will be asked to seek writing support. Proofread your work by having someone read it or by reading it out loud.

Citations: All papers and citations will rely on the 5th edition of the American Psychological Association’s Style guide. Guidelines can be found in the APA style guide manual or by referencing any of the following websites.
http://webster.commnet.edu/apa/index.htm
http://library.uww.edu/GUIDES/APACITE.htm
http://www.lib.usm.edu/research/guides/apa.html

Quotations: In accordance with APA’s guidelines direct quotations are to be used rarely and only when the nature of the quote cannot be otherwise duplicated in primary reviewer summaries.

University policies

It will be the practice of the instructor to conform to university policies in the following areas:

Religious and Ethnic Holidays
If you will need to miss class due to a religious or ethnic holiday, please inform the instructor. A Listing of 2007 dates as maintained by our office may be found, http://www.registrar.vt.edu/dates/religious_ethnic_holidays.php

Honor Code
The policies and procedures regarding the Virginia Tech honor code can be found at http://www.honorsystem.vt.edu/.
All student work must be pledged with the following statement:
"I have neither given nor received unauthorized assistance on this assignment."
Students with Disabilities
Any student with special needs or circumstances should inform the instructor as soon as possible. The policies regarding students with disabilities can be found at

Responding to Disruptive or Threatening Behavior:
Procedures for dealing with disruptive or threatening student behavior will be in accordance with A Faculty Guide to Responding to Disruptive or Threatening Behavior, found at
http://www.dos.vt.edu/images/FacultyGuide%20fall%2006.pdf

Assisting Distressed Student:
Faculty guidelines as prepared by Cook Counseling Center may be found on their website,
http://www.ucc.vt.edu/referringstudents.htm

IMPORTANT UNIVERSITY DATES AND DEADLINES
Add Deadline August 24, 2007
Drop Deadline September 28, 2007
Course Withdrawal Policy
Deadline (Undergrads & Grads) November 30, 2007
Final Grades Due December 15, 2007 (Midnight)