

**EDUC 426: Educational Inquiry for Equity**  
**Course Syllabus – Spring 2025**  
**Tuesdays & Thursdays: 12:00 – 1:50pm**  
**Section: 27314 D**  
**THH 114**  
**4 units**

**INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Patricia Burch**

**Office Hours and Contact Information:**

Office Hours: By appointment

USC Email: [pburch@usc.edu](mailto:pburch@usc.edu)

Personal Zoom Meeting Room: <https://uscrossier.zoom.us/j/9893807124>

**IT Help:** Brightspace Help for Students

**Hours of Service:** 24 hours a day, 365 days a year

**Contact Info:** Call 213-740-5555 and choose option 2.

Send an email to [Brightspace@usc.edu](mailto:Brightspace@usc.edu).

**The mission of the USC Rossier School of Education** is to prepare leaders to achieve educational equity through practice, research and policy. We work to improve learning opportunities and outcomes in urban settings and to address disparities that affect historically marginalized groups. We teach our students to value and respect the cultural context of the communities in which they work and to interrogate the systems of power that shape policies and practices. Through innovative thinking and research, we strive to solve the most intractable educational problems. The mission of the USC Rossier School of Education is to prepare leaders to achieve educational equity through practice, research and policy. We work to improve learning opportunities and outcomes in urban settings and to address disparities that affect historically marginalized groups. We teach our students to value and respect the cultural context of the communities in which they work and to interrogate the systems of power that shape policies and practices. Through innovative thinking and research, we strive to solve the most intractable educational problems.

**PURPOSE**

This course is part of the Education and Society Minor. The Education and Society minor seeks to examine education and its role in society: the purposes, forms and history of education and schooling, the provision of equitable opportunities for all, and the development of engaged citizenship for more just societies through education.

This course introduces students to the skills and knowledge required to be competent consumers and producers of education research. Educational research is essential to

educational theory and practice. Students are constantly exposed to educational research in other courses in the education minor and in the media. This course is intended to be practically useful to students' future in education both as practitioners and researchers as well as informed and productive members of society.

This course is guided by a skills-based approach that will support students in learning how to conduct inquiry. Understanding and applying the scientific method in educational research offers students the opportunity to develop a more systematic understanding of themselves and specific educational experiences in a given context. Students design a quantitative, qualitative or mixed methods educational study related to a researchable topic of interest. Research proposals can be used to advance educational, research, or career interests.

“The scientific method is the only authentic means at our command for getting at the significance of our everyday experiences of the world in which we live...scientific method provides a working pattern of the way in which and conditions under which experiences are used to lead ever onward and outward.”

— John Dewey, *Experience and Education*

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Demonstrate understanding of the components and considerations of educational research;
- Distinguish between quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods approaches to research;
- Describe the major steps in educational research;
- Identify and compare educational literature and types of research;
- Critique educational research;
- Design educational research, including:
  - Select and define a research topic;
  - Articulate the significance of the research;
  - Review, analyze, and summarize related literature;
  - Formulate research questions and/or hypotheses;
  - Delineate procedures to conduct the study, including data collection and analysis;
  - Provide rationale for a research design.

## COURSE NOTES

- No specific prerequisites or corequisites apply.
- A letter grade is awarded.
- Class sessions are in-person.
- This course is web-enhanced through LMS. All course materials (syllabus, lecture slides, quizzes, supplementary materials, etc.) can be found on the LMS. Major assignments will be submitted through the LMS, as indicated in the syllabus.
- There are no specific technological proficiencies, hardware, or software required for the course. Students should have access to a word processor and the ability to make slide shows (e.g. PowerPoint, Google Slides, Keynote) or infographics (e.g. Canva, Visme, Piktochart, Google Charts) to complete several of the course assignments. It is highly preferable for students to submit assignments in Microsoft Word format.

- This course is highly collaborative and will involve peer review of research plans. Students are expected to engage fully in in-class collaborative activities.
- Students are required to meet individually with the instructor at least once during the semester for individualized instruction related to the development of student research plans. Instructor will provide multiple opportunities for 1:1 meetings.
- For ad hoc meetings with the instructor, Zoom Video Conferencing and/or telephone will be used.

## **REQUIRED READINGS AND SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS**

1. Mills, G. & Gay, L. (2016). *Educational research: Competencies for analysis and applications (11<sup>th</sup> edition)*. Boston: Pearson.

**NOTE:** This course uses and recommends only the 11<sup>th</sup> edition of the textbook above. Do not purchase previous or international editions. These are not updated or complete, and some may be missing up to three chapters and 110 pages.

2. Supplemental readings are available on the LMS and/or ARES.
3. The course LMS site contains other resources and materials listed on the daily schedule.

## **CLASS TIME**

Class time for the course is 3 hours and 20 minutes, weekly. Contact time will be met by a combination of lecture, discussions, group work, presentations, and in class activities. The course will integrate a workshop model design, based on research that clearly demonstrates that learning is enhanced when working actively as opposed to listening passively (as in a lecture). The class meets once a week during the spring semester for a total of 15 weeks. Students are expected to prepare for class by doing all the readings and completing all required tasks before attending class.

## **DESCRIPTION AND ASSESSMENT OF ASSIGNMENTS**

### **A. Class Participation (10% of grade)**

This class relies on weekly attendance and active participation by students. Students are expected to complete and be able to discuss the readings assigned for each class period. Students are also expected to bring assigned deliverables to class and engage fully in class activities. One excused absence is allowed per term. Students are to notify the instructor via email before the absence and initiate contact to explore possible (not guaranteed) arrangements for missed content and make-up work. If you are going to miss a class, please make arrangements with a peer to share class notes.

### **B. Quizzes (20% of grade)**

The course will include two, short, multiple-choice, open-book quizzes that emphasize educational research competencies. The first quiz is due by the beginning of class, Session 8, and covers content from Mills & Gay, Chapters 1-11. The second quiz is due by the beginning of class, Session 12, and covers content from Mills & Gay, Chapters 12-16 and 19-20. The 2 quizzes will cover the following educational research topics: research problems, research plans, samples,

instruments, types of research, alternative research designs, analysis, and critiques. The quizzes will be located on the course Brightspace site and should be completed by 3:59 pm, the day of class, during the week assigned as due. Students are given the opportunity to complete each quiz twice, with the highest score for each quiz entered into the grade book. Review for a quiz will take place the week prior to the quiz due date. Each quiz will open immediately after the review session and stay open until the next class session. Questions related to specific quiz items can be discussed in class after the quiz closes. Please plan ahead for completion of the quizzes (no extensions).

**C. Midterm 1: Introduction of a Research Plan (15% of grade)**

The Introduction of a Research Plan should include a statement of the specific topic to be investigated in the study, a statement concerning the significance of the problem, a brief review of related literature, research gap and research questions. Include definitions of terms where appropriate. Your introduction should include the following subheadings and contain the following types of information:

- Statement of the Problem
  - Problem statement and necessary definitions
- Review of Related Literature
  - Review at least 5 key sources
  - Background and significance of the problem
  - Remember to synthesize around key themes. Do not serially summarize studies as you would do in an annotated bibliography.
- Research Gap
  - Identify what remains to be known about the research topic.
  - Establish the need for your proposed study.
- Research Questions
  - Identify 1-3 research questions.
  - List and number research questions. Sub-questions can be used, where appropriate.

As a guideline, 3-5 typed pages will generally be a sufficient length for this assignment. Of course, for a real study you would review not just 5 to 10 references but all relevant references, and the introduction would be correspondingly longer. See the class texts for examples of student-generated introduction to a research plan. This paper should be 3-5 pages and is due Session 6 (2/27/25) by 3:59pm. **Expect significant revisions based on instructor feedback.**

**D. Research Consultation Meeting (5% of grade)**

Meet with Dr. Burch or Alvin for a minimum of one 30-minute session to discuss and refine your research plan. Meetings take place between March 6-13 and March 20-April 8, 2025. Many scheduling options will be available. **Come to the meeting having read and digested feedback on the first midterm.** Come to the meeting prepared for finalizing the direction of your research study. Be patient as we identify a researchable topic! Trust the process. Additional research consultation meetings will be available throughout the semester, as needed.

**E. Midterm 2: Research Plan (20% of grade)**

Once you have identified your topic and examined pertinent literature, the next step in the research process is to develop a research plan that delineates the methods and procedures that you will use to carry out the study. Build on Midterm 1 by developing the remaining components of a research plan for a study you would like to conduct. Include the following:

- Research Questions
- Methods
  - Site
  - Participants
  - Instruments (qualitative and/or quantitative)
  - Design
  - Procedure
- Data Analysis
- Study limitations
- Time Schedule
- Application

The purpose of this assignment is to have you construct a brief research plan. Your plan should state the topic you plan to study and the research questions you plan to examine. It should also provide information about the methods you will employ to carry out your study, including information about the research site and participants (sample), instruments, procedures, data analysis, limitations, and a time schedule. It is not expected that your plan be extensive or technically accurate. In the course readings, you will learn ways to formulate each of the research plan's components. Feedback from your professor concerning your research plan will also help you identify and critique aspects of your plan. See the course texts for examples of student-generated research plans. This paper should be 6-10 pages and is due Session 10 (4/3/25), by 3:59 pm. **Expect significant revisions based on instructor feedback.**

#### **F. Final Research Proposal and Presentation (25% of grade)**

Combine the first and second midterms (REVISED) from this course into a unified research proposal. **Incorporate instructor feedback from the two midterms and revise accordingly.**

After the time schedule in the research plan, include a final section that describes when and where you may use this research proposal in the future (Application header of your proposal). This proposal could be adapted for multiple purposes. You could complete an independent study, apply to an undergraduate research program or fellowship, or use this design in future graduate study.

You will make a 15-minute presentation of your research proposal. During the week of the presentation, students should bring a one-pager (e.g., document, flyer, poster) of their research plan, including Title, Problem, Purpose of Research, Research Questions, and Methods (Research Design, Sample, Site, Data Collection, Data Analysis). **As appropriate, incorporate peer feedback from the presentation into your final written proposal.**

The paper is worth 20% and the presentation is worth 5% of your final grade. The paper should be 10-15 pages and is due during finals week (5/8/25 by 11:59pm PST)

on the day of the course-scheduled final exam. For the date and time of the final exam for this course, consult the USC Schedule of Classes at [www.usc.edu/soc](http://www.usc.edu/soc).

**G. Reflection on Learning – (5% of grade)**

During finals week, we will engage in a synthesizing conversation in the LMS (Blog). You will be asked to reflect on your learning in Educational Inquiry, including: one key learning, why that learning is important to you, and how that learning might impact you moving forward. The blog posting will be available from 4/30/25 at 6:00am to 5/8/25 at 11:59pm PST.

**COMMON STANDARDS FOR ALL COURSE PAPERS**

It is preferred that papers are submitted, double-spaced, in Microsoft Word format. All papers should utilize common font and margin settings (such as Times New Roman 12-point fonts and 1-inch margins). Each paper should be consistent with the APA style manual and should reflect a writing style consistent with junior-level college work. Please use a title page for all assignment submissions.

*Bibliography & Citations* - Citations must be provided for ALL researched information. Any use of additional material, even as background, must be cited within the body of the paper and then again in the list of references. The citation format should consistently reflect the APA style manual.

**GRADING RUBRIC**

The following rubric provides a general guide as to how assignments in this course will be evaluated:

	Excellent	Acceptable	Unsatisfactory
<b>Depth of thought</b>	Shows evidence of depth of thought in preparation, organization, and clarity.	Evidence of depth of thought could be increased in some areas.	Lacks overall depth of thought, clarity, or preparation.
<b>Connection and reference to course readings and other relevant literature</b>	Assignment shows engagement with course readings and other relevant literature and integrates this in an appropriate manner.	Some parts lack connection to course readings or other sources, or they are not integrated in an appropriate way.	Fails to relate to course materials and other relevant literature.
<b>Completeness, adherence to guidelines</b>	All parts of the assignment are done completely and according to guidelines.	All parts of the assignments or presentation are done completely, however, lacks adherence to guidelines in some areas.	Assignment is not entirely complete, and/or shows marked lack of adherence to guidelines.

## GRADING BREAKDOWN

Students will earn grades based on the following assignments/components. Specific instructions for each assignment/component will be provided in class.

<b>Assignment</b>	<b>Points - % of Grade</b>	<b>Due Date/Week</b>
Class Participation	10	Weekly
Quizzes (10 points each, 2 quizzes)	20	Quiz 1 - March 20 Quiz 2 - April 17
Midterm 1: Introduction of a Research Plan	15	February 27
Research Consultation Meeting	5	March 24 - March 28
Midterm 2: Research Plan	20	April 3
Final: Research Presentation	5	April 24
Final: Research Proposal	20	May 8
Final: Reflection on Learning	5	May 8

Final course grades are assigned on the following scale:

94-100 % = A    80-83 % = B-    67-69 % = D+

90-93 % = A-    77-79 % = C+    64-66 % = D

87-89 % = B+    74-76 % = C    60-63 % = D-

84-86 % = B    70-73 % = C-    59 % and below = F

## ASSIGNMENT SUBMISSION POLICY

The quizzes should be completed by 3:59pm, the day of class. The quizzes are located on the LMS. Quizzes cannot be made up or reopened after closing. The two midterms and final should be submitted electronically in a word format on the course LMS site.

## NAMING SUBMITTED ASSIGNMENT FILES

**\* Please name all submitted files with the following:**

**EDUC 426\_Assignment Name\_Last Name**

**Example: EDUC 426\_Midterm 1\_Makori**

## ADDITIONAL POLICIES

Unfinished Work – Students must complete all assignments in order to earn a grade in

the course.

Late Work – Each presentation **must** be given on the day assigned. Late assignments will be accepted **only** with the instructor’s advance permission **and** under limited circumstances. Late papers submitted with advanced permission (with a reestablished due date) will not be docked points for lateness. If advance permission has not been granted or a reestablished due date has past, late papers will not receive full credit. In the event that a student submits a paper after the paper deadline (original or reestablished) *without* advanced permission, the following penalties will apply:

- A 10% reduction in the points earned per day late will be applied for each day after the due date.
- After 5 days late, a yellow flag may be sent to the student’s academic advisor.

Grievance Procedure - Occasionally, students are dissatisfied with some dimension of a course. In such cases, students should first provide a written argument in support of their position to the instructor and request a meeting with the instructor. All grade appeals on specific assignments must be made within one week of the return of the assignment.

Special Assistance - Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure that the letter is delivered as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30 a.m. 2 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday and can be reached at (213) 740-0776.

**Please see the Document tabs on the left for the Course Schedule and Policies and Support documents.**



