



EDF 6481
Foundations of Educational Research
84806 795
Fall 2026

Instructor Name

Lang

University Course Description

Analysis of major types of educational research designs, including experimental, correlational, ex post facto and case studies.

Course Requisites

Prerequisite(s):

Corequisite(s):

Course Format

In this course, you will complete one module per week. All assessments are due on Sunday each week unless otherwise indicated. To succeed in this course, you may want to budget your time accordingly:

- Reading/watching videos/interactive presentations: 2+ hours per module
- Group Forum: 1+ hour per module
- Masterclass Activity: 2+ hours per module
- Quiz: 1 hour per module

You can expect to average about 7 to 10 hours per week on this course, but of course, that might vary depending on your individual background.

Student Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, you will be able to:

1. Formulate clear and specific research questions.
2. Analyze and synthesize literature to address research questions.
3. Leverage search engines, library resources, and reference materials to effectuate targeted searches.
4. Describe and distinguish various types of research methodologies.
5. Identify, translate, and critique components of published research literature.
6. Explain relationships between types of variables.
7. Use statistical tools to test hypotheses and interpret the significance of quantitative data.
8. Tailor your research strategy to address a specific audience.

Course Objectives

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Required Texts and/or Readings and Course Materials

Fraenkel, Wallen, & Hyun (2026). *How to design and evaluate research in education (12th)*. McGraw Hill, NY.

How to Succeed in this Course

Be an active participant. Look for your own examples, explore topics in the library, have study and discussion groups, immerse yourself in the topic.

Budget your time well. If you are taking 15 hours, working 40 hours a week, raising 3 kids, and planning to run for Student Government President. My advice – schedule in study time, mark it in your calendar, and be disciplined. This is the age of electronic education, so stay realistic about having time to incubate on the topic.

Generally, a lecture class meets 4 hours a week plus you would have study time, writing, and even travel time. In this distance course, you can plan approximately:

- Reading/watching videos: 2 hours per module
- Practice Activity: 1 hour per module (these are optional, but highly recommended)
- Group Forum: 1 hour per module
- Masterclass Activity: 2 hours per module
- Quiz: 1 hour per module.

You can expect to average about 8 to 10 hours per week on this course, but of course that might vary depending on your individual background.

Avoid procrastination. There will be a penalty for activities submitted after the dates given on the course calendar. The only exceptions are illness, family crisis, and course delivery problems.

Grading Scale

Grade	Scale	+ and - are used
Grading Scale (%)		
90-100	A	
80 – 86	B	
70 – 79	C	
60 – 69	D	
0 – 59	F	

Grade Categories and Weights

Assessment	% or grade
Assessment	Percent of Final Grade

Assessment	% or grade
Group Forum Discussions	25%
Master Class Discussions	45%
Quizzes	20%
Final Assessment	10%

Major Topics and Course Schedule

Week #	Module Topics and Activities	Deliverables
1	Module 1: Becoming a Critical Consumer of Research • Textbook Reading: Introduction to Research • Interactive Presentation: Introduction to Educational Research • Practice Activity	• Learner Introduction Discussion Board • Master Class Discussion – Consider Your Audience • Module 1 Quiz

2	Module #2: The Research Problem • Textbook Reading: The Research Problem • Interactive Presentation: Researchable Questions • Practice Activity Module #3: Literature Reviews • Textbook Reading: Locating and Reviewing the Literature • Interactive Presentation: Locating and Reviewing the Literature	• Group Forum Discussion Board – Identifying and Evaluating Research Questions • Master Class Discussion – Clarifying Your Questions • Module 2 Quiz • Module 3 Quiz
3	Module #4: Developing a Search Strategy • Textbook Reading: Locating and Reviewing the Literature • Articles • Interactive Presentation: Search Strategy • Practice Activity 1 & 2	• Group Forum Discussion Board – Electronic Search Database Identification Part 1 & 2 • Master Class Discussion – Putting it All Together • Module 4 Quiz

4	Module #5: Research Concepts • Reading: Variables and Hypotheses • Interactive Presentation: Research Concepts • Practice Activity Module #6: Sampling • Textbook Reading: Sampling • Interactive Presentation: Sampling • Practice Activity	• Master Class Discussion – Research Myths • Module 5 Quiz • Master Class Discussion – Eelworms, Bullet Holes, and Geraldine Ferraro • Module 6 Quiz
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5	Module #7: Descriptive Statistics • Textbook Reading: Descriptive Statistics • Interactive Presentation: Descriptive Statistics • Practice Activity	• Master Class Discussion – The Mother of All Statistical Debates • Module 7 Quiz
	Module #8: Correlation and Causality • Reading: Descriptive Statistics • Interactive Presentation: Descriptive Statistics • Practice Activity	• Group Forum Discussion Board – Correlation Riddles • Master Class Discussion – Correlation and Causality Confusion in Media • Module 8 Quiz
6	Module #9: Inferential Statistics • Textbook Reading: Inferential Statistics • Articles • Interactive Presentation: Inferential Statistics • Practice Activity	• Group Forum Discussion Board – Comfort in Working with Persons with Disabilities • Master Class Discussion – What do foolish shoppers do at Christmas? • Module 9 Quiz

7	Module #10: Qualitative Research • Textbook Reading: The Nature of Qualitative Research • Interactive Presentation: The Nature of Qualitative Research • Practice Activity	• Group Forum Discussion Board – Promoting Connectedness • Master Class Discussion – Promoting Connectedness • Module 10 Quiz
8	Module #11: Ethnographic Research • Textbook Reading: Ethnographic Research • Interactive Presentation: Ethnographic Research • Practice Activity	• Group Forum Discussion Board – Lessons on Effective Teaching from Middle School ESL Students • Master Class Discussion – Ethnographic Immersion • Module 11 Quiz
9	Module #12: Historical Research • Textbook Reading: Historical Research • Interactive Presentation: Historical Research • Practice Activity	• Group Forum Discussion Board – Historical Methods for Teaching ESL Students • Master Class Discussion – The Contextual Effects of Socioeconomic Status on Student Achievement Test Scores by Race • Module 12 Quiz

10	Module #13: Meta-analysis and Literature Reviews • Articles • Practice Activity Module #14: Summing Up – Final Assessment	• Master Class Discussion – Searching for Literature Reviews and Meta-Analyses • Final Assessment – Practical Understanding of the Literature

USF Core Syllabus Policies

USF has a set of central policies related to student recording class sessions, academic integrity and grievances, student accessibility services, academic disruption, religious observances, academic continuity, food insecurity, pregnancy and related conditions, and sexual harassment that **apply to all courses at USF**. Be sure to review these online:

<https://www.usf.edu/provost/faculty-success/resources-policies-forms/core-syllabus-policy-statements.aspx>

Student Recordings

Florida Statute 1004.097 Free Expression on Campus

Students may, without prior notice, record video or audio of a class lecture for a class in which the student is enrolled for their own personal, educational use (USF Policy 10-048). A class lecture is defined as a formal or methodical oral presentation as part of a university course intended to present information or teach enrolled students about a particular subject. Recording class activities other than class lectures, including but not limited to lab sessions, student presentations (whether individually or part of a group), class discussion, clinical presentations such as patient history, academic exercises involving student participation, test or examination administrations, field trips, private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty member is prohibited. Recordings may not be used as a substitute for class participation

and class attendance and may not be published or shared without the written consent of the faculty member. Failure to adhere to these requirements may constitute a violation of the USF Student Conduct Code.

Course Policies: Grades

If there are adjustments because of schedule, Canvas errors, or unexpected difficulties, the points for each grade will simply be adjusted proportionally after dropping an activity or quiz. Even though the grade of A, B, and C are listed below, it is possible to get a D, or F but that is unusual for graduate courses. Also, if your points are on the cusp of a grade between "A and B" or "B and C", all rounding will be towards the higher grade, but you will receive a "-" or "+" indicating the points were barely over or below the criteria.

Grades of "Incomplete"

An Incomplete grade ("I") is exceptional and granted at the instructor's discretion only when students are unable to complete course requirements due to illness or other circumstances beyond their control. The course instructor and student must complete and sign the "I" Grade Contract Form that describes the work to be completed, the date it is due, and the grade the student would earn factoring in a zero for all incomplete assignments. The due date can be negotiated and extended by student/instructor as long as it does not exceed two semesters for undergraduate courses and one semester for graduate courses from the original date grades were due for that course. An "I" grade not cleared within the two semesters for undergraduate courses and one semester for graduate courses (including summer semester) will revert to the grade noted on the contract.

Campus Free Expression

It is fundamental to the University of South Florida's mission to support an environment where divergent ideas, theories, and philosophies can be openly exchanged and critically evaluated. Consistent with these principles, this course may involve discussion of ideas that you find uncomfortable, disagreeable, or even offensive.

In the instructional setting, ideas are intended to be presented in an objective manner and not as an endorsement of what you should personally believe. "Objective" means that the

idea(s) presented can be tested by critical peer review and rigorous debate, and that the idea(s) is supported by credible research.

In this course you may be asked to engage with complex ideas and to demonstrate an understanding of the ideas. Understanding and engaging with an idea does not require you to believe it or to agree with it.

Course Policies: Technology and Media

Netiquette Guidelines

1. Act professionally in the way you communicate. Treat your instructors and peers with respect, the same way you would do in a face-to-face environment. Respect other people's ideas and be constructive when explaining your views about points you may not agree with.
2. Be sensitive. Be respectful and sensitive when sharing your ideas and opinions. There will be people in your class with different linguistic backgrounds, political and religious beliefs or other general differences.
3. Proofread and check spelling. Doing this before sending an email or posting a thread on a discussion board will allow you to make sure your message is clear and thoughtful. Avoid the use of all capital letters, it can be perceived as if you are shouting, and it is more difficult to read.
4. Keep your communications focused and stay on topic. Complete your ideas before changing the subject. By keeping the message on focus you allow the readers to easily get your idea or answers they are looking for.
5. Be clear with your message. Avoid using humor or sarcasm. Since people can't see your expressions or hear your tone of voice, meaning can be misinterpreted.

Email and Discussion Board Guidelines

1. Use the subject line effectively by using a meaningful line of what your email or discussion is about.
2. Keep your emails and postings related to the course content. You should not post anything personal on a discussion board, unless is requested by the instructor.
3. Any personal, course or confidential issues should be directly communicated to the instructor via email. The discussion boards are public spaces; therefore, any issues should not be posted there.

Course Policies: Student Expectations

Health and Wellness

Your health is a priority at the University of South Florida. We encourage members of our community to look out for each other and to reach out for help if someone is in need. If you or someone you know is in distress, please make a referral at www.usf.edu/sos so that the Student Outreach & Support can contact and provide helpful resources to the student in distress. A 24-hour licensed mental healthcare professional, offered through the counseling center, is available by phone at 813-974-2831, option 3. Please remember that asking for help is a sign of strength. In case of emergency, please dial 9-1-1.

Title IX Policy

USF is committed to fostering a safe and respectful learning environment, free from sex discrimination and sexual harassment, in accordance with Title IX and USF Policy 0-004. If a student shares an experience of sexual harassment, sexual assault, stalking, or relationship violence with a USF employee (including faculty), that employee will notify the Title IX Office. This allows the Title IX Office to send the student an email with information about support resources and options—if it is safe to do so. Students are not required to respond to this email. The Title IX Office is a private resource. Information is shared only on a need-to-know basis to provide students with support measures. To speak to a confidential resource, students may contact USF Center for Victim Advocacy at 813-974-5757. Confidential resources do not notify the Title IX Office unless the student requests it. For more information about Title IX, available resources, or to make a report, please visit www.usf.edu/title-ix.

Course Hero / Chegg Policy

The USF Policy on Academic Integrity specifies that students may not use websites that enable cheating, such as by uploading or downloading material for this purpose. This does apply specifically to Chegg.com and CourseHero.com – almost any use of these websites (including uploading proprietary materials) constitutes a violation of the academic integrity policy.

Professionalism Policy

Per university policy and classroom etiquette; mobile phones, iPods, etc. must be silenced during all classroom and lab lectures. Those not heeding this rule will be asked to leave the classroom/lab immediately so as to not disrupt the learning environment. Please arrive on time for all class meetings. Students who habitually disturb the class by talking, arriving late, etc., and have been warned may suffer a reduction in their final class grade.

Turnitin.com

In this course, turnitin.com may be utilized. Turnitin is an automated system which instructors may use to quickly and easily compare each student's assignment with billions of web sites, as well as an enormous database of student papers that grows with each submission. Accordingly, you may be expected to submit all assignments in both hard copy and electronic format. After the assignment is processed, as instructor I receive a report from turnitin.com that states if and how another author's work was used in the assignment. For a more detailed look at this process visit <http://www.turnitin.com>.

Netiquette Guidelines

- Act professionally in the way you communicate. Treat your instructors and peers with respect, the same way you would do in a face-to-face environment. Respect other people's ideas and be constructive when explaining your views about points you may not agree with.
- Be sensitive. Be respectful and sensitive when sharing your ideas and opinions. There will be people in your class with different linguistic backgrounds, political and religious beliefs or other general differences.
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End of Semester Student Evaluations

All classes at USF make use of an online system for students to provide feedback to the University regarding the course. These surveys will be made available at the end of the semester, and the University will notify you by email when the response window opens. Your participation is highly encouraged and valued.

Food and Drink Policy (for in-campus sessions only).

Please adhere to the firm policy of no beverages (other than bottled/capped water), food, tobacco products, or like items in the classroom. Your understanding of the necessity for this policy and cooperation will be greatly appreciated. This policy will be strictly enforced.

Learning Support and Campus Offices

Academic Accommodations

Students with disabilities are responsible for registering with Student Accessibility Services (SAS) in order to receive academic accommodations. For additional information about academic accommodations and resources, you can visit the SAS website.

[SAS website for the Tampa campus and Sarasota-Manatee Teachout site.](#)

[SAS website for the St. Pete campus.](#)

Academic Support Services

The USF Office of Student Success coordinates and promotes university-wide efforts to enhance undergraduate and graduate student success. For a comprehensive list of academic support services available to all USF students, please visit the [Office of Student Success website](#).

Canvas Technical Support

If you have technical difficulties in Canvas, you can find access to the Canvas guides and video resources in the “Canvas Help” page on the homepage of your Canvas course. You can also contact the help desk by calling 813-974-1222 in Tampa or emailing help@usf.edu.

[USF IT Services](#)

Center for Victim Advocacy

The [Center for Victim Advocacy](#) empowers survivors of crime, violence, or abuse by promoting the restoration of decision making, by advocating for their rights, and by offering support and resources. Contact information is available online.

Counseling Center

The Counseling Center promotes the wellbeing of the campus community by providing culturally sensitive counseling, consultation, prevention, and training that enhances student academic and personal success. Contact information is available online.

[Counseling Center website for the Tampa campus and Sarasota-Manatee Teachout site.](#)

[Counseling Center website for the St. Pete campus.](#)

Tutoring

The Tutoring Hub offers free tutoring in several subjects to USF undergraduates. Appointments are recommended, but not required. For more information, email asctampa@usf.edu.

[Tutoring website for the Tampa campus and Sarasota-Manatee Teachout site.](#)

[Tutoring website for the St. Pete campus.](#)

Writing Studio

The Writing Studio is a free resource for USF undergraduate and graduate students. At the Writing Studio, a trained writing consultant will work individually with you, at any point in the writing process from brainstorming to editing. Appointments are recommended, but not required. For more information or to make an appointment, email: writingstudio@usf.edu.

[Writing studio website for the Tampa campus and Sarasota-Manatee Teachout Site.](#)

[Writing studio website for the St. Pete campus.](#)

Student Ombuds Office

Florida Statute 1006.51 and Florida Board of Governors Regulation 6.011 require that all public institutions provide ombuds services to students. The Student Ombuds Office at USF is a confidential, impartial, informal, and independent resource for students experiencing challenges related to the university. Ombuds can help students safely explore options, clarify processes, and consider next steps. [Learn more or make an appointment at usf.edu/student-ombuds.](https://usf.edu/student-ombuds)