**RUTGERS**

THE STATE UNIVERSITY
OF NEW JERSEY

**18:820:700:01 Dissertation Preparation and Research Spring 2024 (S/C)**
**Credits: 3**
**Level: Graduate**
**Tuesdays, 2:00-4:45 p.m. GSAPP 340**

**Course Instructor: Elisa S. Shernoff, PhD; elisa.shernoff@rutgers.edu**
**Office Hours: Tuesdays 11:45-12:45**

**Description:** This course offers group guidance, supervision, and support for students at every stage in the dissertation process. In addition to an overview of the GSAPP dissertation process, the course will include didactic information on selected topics related to dissertations (i.e., prewriting strategies, scholarly writing, conducting a literature review, research design and methodology, writing research questions, APA style, IRB). Assignments are student-driven and dissertation specific. The course also includes weekly goal setting, discussion of progress in meeting goals, and troubleshooting barriers to meeting goals in a supportive environment.

**Required Text**

American Psychological Association. (2020). Publication manual of the American Psychological Association (7th ed.).

The APA Manual Is Also Available through the Rutgers Bookstore

Bring the APA publication manual to class weekly, there will be activities yoked to the manual. Selected articles and resources are also uploaded in Canvas.

**Assignments and Evaluation**

**1. Attendance (12 points) and Participation (12 points)**

**Attendance and class participation are a major part of this class**. You are expected to attend all classes each week. Only two excused/unexcused absences are permitted. Missing more than two classes will result in a 5-point deduction for each additional day of absence from your final grade point.

Students who arrive to class more than 10 minutes after the class has started are considered late and will be marked absent if they arrive more than 30 minutes after class has started.  After three late arrivals, an unexcused absence will be marked in your record.

The only excused absences are those which are serious or required (e.g., personal medical emergencies or serious illness/injury; death or serious illness in the family; military duties; jury duty).  They will require some form of documentation.

This is an in-person class. The expectation is that students will attend in person, unless there is a change made by the university and/or the instructor, which would be announced to the students in a timely fashion. If you are not physically in the class, you will be considered absent. Please notify me before class if you are unable to attend class.

**Participation is based on verbal contributions during class, staying engaged, and participating in individual consultations with the instructor**. I will include other factors, including remaining in class during its scheduled time, being prepared, and keeping cell phones and computers off during class lectures, activities, and discussions. I will provide hard copies of slides.

**Absence Due to Religious Observances:** It is University policy to excuse, without penalty, students who are absent from class because of religious observance and to allow the make-up of work missed because of such absence. Required out-of-class activities shall ordinarily not be scheduled on those days when religiously observant students refrain from participating in secular activities. Absences for reasons of religious obligation shall not be counted for purposes of reporting.

Students are advised to provide timely notification to instructors about necessary absences for religious observances and are responsible for making up the work or exams according to an agreed-upon schedule.

**2. Select Assignments and Due Dates (5 points) - Due No Later that Week 6 (2/20/24)**

What do you want to accomplish on your dissertation this semester? What assignments are most useful to help you reach your goals? What is the timeline for completing assignments?

Review options for assignments in the Possible Assignment Document to help you identify realistic assignments that meet your goals and writing preferences.

Please insert your selected assignments and due dates no later than 2/20/24 at 2:00 pm using the Dissertation Progress and Assignments School Clin Excel file (Assignment Selections Worksheet).

**3. Submit Personalized Assignments (Ungraded)**

Students will submit their personalized assignment to the instructor via email **at the start of class** based on the due dates they selected. I will provide written feedback on each assignment submitted. Requests for extensions must occur at least four days in advance of the due date via email, otherwise the late policy will apply.

Please practice using APA Style (7th Edition) for your personalized assignments. Please be particularly attentive to APA style guidelines related to point of view, word choice, bias, citations, quotations, and editorializing.

**4. Tracking Dissertation Progress Weekly (36 points) – Weeks 2 through 13**

Use the [Dissertation Progress and Assignments School Clin Excel file](#) (See Module 1 in Canvas) to identify weekly goals for the course (Weeks 2-13) and to summarize progress in meeting those goals.

**Progress in meeting goals will be completed at the start of class (2:00 pm) and new goals must be uploaded before the end of class (4:45 pm) to receive credit**. **No points will be assigned outside of those time parameters**. Set <u>challenging goals</u> that are specific and measurable. Stretch yourself so you can get the most out of the course. We will use this document to communicate regarding your goals and progress in the course. [See Rubric Weekly Goal Setting](#) for additional information

**5. APA Style Competency Exam (25 points) - Week 12 (4/9/24)**

APA style is required in the social sciences and for production of a dissertation. There will be an in-class competency open book/open notes exam to demonstrate your competence with the Publication manual of the American Psychological Association (7th ed.). If you believe you have already met the competencies associated with APA style, please contact the instructor.

**The exam will be uploaded in Canvas by 2:00pm on 4/9/2024 and must be emailed as an attachment to the instructor no later than 4:45 pm on 4/9/2024. If the exam is submitted later than that time/day, the late policy will apply (see page 4).**

**6. Complete CITI Training (10 Points) – By Week 15 (4/30/24)**

Human subject research requires a submission to the IRB. Any "independent" idea or project requires a student to submit an IRB application with them as Principal Investigator (PI). This is true for experimental research, secondary data analysis, or any project where a student has carved out a piece of a larger project. All IRB applications require students to show evidence that they completed [The Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI).](#)

[See Rubric CITI Training](#)

**Please email the course instructor with a copy of your CITI training certificate no later than 4/30/24 at 4:45 pm. Any certificates received after that time/day will be considered late (late policy will apply, see below).**

## Grades and Grading Policy

**\*\*Late Policy:** Due dates specified for the assignments are firm. Any assignment that is not submitted after the due date/time specified will be considered one day late, and one day will be added for each additional 24 hours until the assignment is submitted. A grade reduction of 5% per day will be given for late assignments.

**The final grade will be determined and computed based on the following:**

| | |
|---|---|
| 1. Participation and Attendance | 12 |
| 2. Attendance | 12 |
| 3. Select Assignments and Due Dates | 5 |
| 4. Tracking Dissertation Progress Weekly | 36 |
| 5. APA Style Competency Exam | 25 |
| 6. CITI Training | 10 |
| - - - - - - - - - - | |
| Maximum Point Total | 100 points |

**Course grading follows criteria established by Rutgers University**:

| Grade | Description | Numerical Equivalent |
|---|---|---|
| A | Outstanding | 90-100 (4.0) |
| B+ | Intermediate Grade | 87-89  (3.5) |
| B | Good | 80-86  (3.0) |
| C | Average | 70-79  (2.0) |
| F | Failure | 69 or below (0.0) |
| INC | Incomplete | |

## Classroom Culture

**Respect for Diversity and Commitment to Intersectionality:** I would like to acknowledge that we are all individuals with multiple sociocultural identities that intersect and shape our worldview through the lens of privilege and oppression. As your instructor I am committed to minimizing systemic forces of oppression within the classroom such as ableism, classism, racism, sexism, transphobia, and heterosexism in efforts to create a safe learning environment for all of us.

It is also my intent that students from all diverse backgrounds and perspectives be well-served by this course, that students' learning needs be addressed both in and out of class, and that the

diversity that students bring to this class is viewed as a resource, strength, and benefit. Your suggestions are encouraged and appreciated, and I ask that you join me in this commitment to foster respect for one another, enhance solidarity, and build community. https://gsapp.rutgers.edu/about-gsapp/diversity-equity-and-inclusion-dei/diversity-statement

**Statement on Disabilities:** Rutgers University welcomes students with disabilities into all University's educational programs. To receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, a student with a disability must contact the appropriate disability services office at the campus where you are officially enrolled, participate in an intake interview, and provide documentation https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/documentation-guidelines. If the documentation supports your request for reasonable accommodations, your campus's disability services office will provide you with a Letter of Accommodations to share with me. To begin, please complete the Registration form on the ODS web site https://webapps.rutgers.edu/student-ods/forms/registration

**Names and Pronouns:** Class rosters are provided with student's legal name. I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records.

**Person-First Language**: Please refer to the APA Publication Manual (7th Edition, Section 5.4) for guidelines related to using person first or identify first language when writing and speaking about individuals with disabilities and/or special needs (https://apastyle.apa.org/style-grammar-guidelines/bias-free-language/disability)

**Statement on Academic Integrity:** The University's academic integrity policy, to which this class will adhere, can be reviewed at: https://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/sites/default/files/pdfs/current.pdf All suspected infractions of academic integrity will be referred to the GSAPP Deans Office who will consult with the Rutgers Office of Student Conduct regarding disciplinary action.

**Use of AI Tools**: You are not allowed to use generative AI tools like ChatGPT for any work in this course, including both graded and ungraded work. Prohibited AI usage includes idea or text generation, writing or revising your work, development of media assets, or data analysis and presentation.

### Tentative Weekly Schedule (Topics will be added or adjusted as needed)

**Week 1 - January 16, 2024: Reviewing Course Goals, Expectations, and Syllabus**

Reviewing where students are in the dissertation process. Planning for the semester and goal setting - how to best accomplish your dissertation goals using lessons from research on goal theory. Establishing assignments, timelines, and due dates.

_____

**Week 2 - January 23, 2024: Dissertation Road Map**
Student goal setting. Overview of GSAPP procedures, timelines, process, and expectations for conducting a dissertation. Including securing a chair, timelines/procedures, elements of the dissertation proposal and process, roles of chair and other committee members. Panel discussion of GSAPP faculty and their role as chair.

_____

**Week 3 – January 30, 2024: Early Stages of Dissertation**

Student review of dissertation progress and new goal setting. Review the early stages of the dissertation, focusing your topic, moving from ideas to research questions, writing elements of the proposal, evaluating your writing. Panel discussion of GSAPP Alumni discussing the dissertation experience.

_____

**Week 4 - February 6, 2024: Prewriting Strategies**

Student review of dissertation progress and new goal setting. Resources on prewriting from Stacy Blackwell (Senior Director, Rutgers Learning Centers). Group Activity to identify prewriting strategies to enhance the writing process and address personal writing challenges.

_____

**Week 5 - February 13, 2024: Developing Effective Writing Habits (NASP Convention)**

NASP Convention - no in person class. Student review of dissertation progress and new goal setting (logged before 4:45PM on 2/13).

**Assignments:**

1. Watch the video The real reason you procrastinate and note strategies you can use to stay focused on writing.

2. Identify at least one dissertation you could use as a model: Accessing Dissertations Completed by Rutgers Students and email to the course instructor no later than 4:45 pm on 2/13.

_____

**Week 6 – February 20, 2024: Scholarly Writing**

Student review of dissertation progress and new goal setting. Barriers and facilitators to scholarly writing. [Using technology to evaluate and enhance your scholarly writing](#). Mastering APA style with a focus on style and grammar.

**Assignment Due:** Select Assignments and Due Dates

_____

**Week 7 – February 27, 2024: Searching the Literature and Writing the Literature Review**

Student review of dissertation progress and new goal setting. Goals and structure of the literature review. Identifying research problems and gaps in the literature, searching for literature, and keeping the literature organized using [a Citation Management System](#).

_____

**Week 8 - March 5, 2024: Generating Research Questions and Hypotheses**

Student review of dissertation progress and new goal setting. Writing research questions and hypotheses. Considering differences in research questions based on research design and methods. Mid semester evaluation.

_____

🎉🎉🎉 **March 11ᵗʰ- RU Spring Break** 🎉🎉🎉
_____

**Week 9 – March 19, 2024: Mastering APA Style - Mechanics of Style**

Student review of dissertation progress and new goal setting. Mid semester feedback. Mastering APA style with a focus on mechanics of style. In class practice.

_____

**Week 10 – March 26, 2024: Mastering APA Style – Inclusive Language and Tables and Figures**

Student review of dissertation progress and new goal setting. Mastering APA style with a focus on inclusive language and formatting tables and figures. In class practice.

_____

**Week 11- April 2, 2024: Mastering APA Style – Citations and References**

Student review of dissertation progress and new goal setting. Mastering APA style with a focus on citations and references. In class practice.

_____

**Week 12 - April 9, 2024: APA Style Competency Exam**

APA Style Competency Exam

_____

**Week 13 - April 16, 2024: What Makes a Good Method Section**

Student review of dissertation progress and new goal setting. Key elements of a method section. Research methods and designs – quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods applied to dissertation.

_____

**Week 14 - April 23, 2024: IRB Procedures and Resources**

Student review of dissertation progress and new goal setting. IRB procedures and resources.

_____

**Week 15 – April 30, 2024: Writing Results and Discussion & Summer Goals**

Student review of dissertation progress and new goal setting. Writing analyses, results, and discussion. Summer commitments/goals.

**Assignment Due:** CITI Training

_____

<div align="center">

**Other Resources**

</div>

**APA Style**
https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/apa_style/apa_style_introduction.html

**Conducting and Writing the Power Analysis**
Cohen, J. (1988). *Statistical power analysis for the behavioral sciences* (2nd ed.). Routledge.

Cohen, J. (1992). Power primer. *Psychological Bulletin*, *112*, 155-159.

Faul, F., Erdfelder, E., Buchner, A., & Lang, A.-G. (2009). Statistical power analyses

using G* Power 3.1: Tests for correlation and regression analyses. *Behavior Research Methods*, *41*(4), 1149-1160.

**Data Analysis and Missing Data**

Schafer, J. L., & Graham, J. W. (2002). Missing data: our view of the state of the art. *Psychological Methods*, *7*(2), 147-177.

[Creating APA Figures in Excel](#)

[SPSS Primer/Tutorial](#)

**Publishing Your Dissertation**

[Publishing your dissertation](#)

[Seven steps to publishing in a scientific journal](#)

**Qualitative Research Methods**

Creswell, J. W., & Miller, D. L. (2000). Determining validity in qualitative inquiry. *Theory Into Practice*, *39*(3), 124-130

**Research Design, Methods, and Analyses**

Donders, A. R. T., Van Der Heijden, G. J., Stijnen, T., & Moons, K. G. (2006). A gentle introduction to imputation of missing values. *Journal of Clinical Epidemiology*, *59*(10), 1087-1091

[Leary, M. R. (1995). *Introduction to behavioral research methods* (2nd Ed.). Brooks/Cole.](#)

Leedy, P. D., & Ormrod, J. E. (2015). *Practical research: Planning & design* (11th Ed). Pearson.

Hosp, J. L. (2016). What school psychologists need to know about multilevel modeling. *Communique*, *44*(7), 4-6. http://www.nasponline.org/publications/

**Rutgers Dissertation Repository**

[Finding dissertations at Rutgers](#)

**Scale Development**

DeVellis, R. F. (1991). Guidelines in scale development. In *Scale development: Theory and applications* (pp. 51-91). Sage.

Giles, D. (2002). Scale design and construction. In *Advanced Research Methods in Psychology* (pp. 103-120). Routledge.

**Survey Methods**

[Writing survey questions](#)

[Seven tips for good survey questions](#)

[Bias in surveys](#)