



RDG 689 *Beginning Literacy Curriculum, Assessment, and Program Evaluation (Independent Study)*

COURSE SYLLABUS: Summer II 2025

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Instructor: Dr. Melanie Loewenstein, Ph.D

University Email Address: Melanie.Loewenstein@etamuc.edu

Preferred Form of Communication: e-mail

Communication Response Time: Two Days

COURSE INFORMATION

Materials – Textbooks, Readings, Supplementary Readings

American Psychological Association. (2009). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th Ed.). Washington, DC: Author.

Additional required readings will be available through the Waters Library at no cost or will be provided by the Instructor.

Course Description

Independent Study in Reading. One to four semester hours. Individualized instruction/research at an advanced level in a specialized content area under the direction of a faculty member. May be repeated when the topic varies. Prerequisite: Consent of department head.

Independent Study Topic: Beginning Literacy Curriculum, Assessment, and Program Evaluation

Course Description:

This doctoral course explores early literacy development through critical analysis of theory, research, curriculum, and policy. Students examine foundational and contemporary studies, evaluate widely used literacy programs, and analyze the contributions of influential scholars. Emphasis is placed on connecting theory to practice and promoting equitable literacy outcomes. The course culminates in the development of a research-informed personal philosophy of early literacy.

Student Learning Outcomes

1. **Critically examine and synthesize classic and contemporary research studies** that have shaped early literacy curriculum, instruction, and related educational policies at the state and federal levels.
2. **Analyze and communicate the contributions of an eminent scholar in beginning literacy** by synthesizing their major research publications and articulating the scholar's impact on theory, practice, and the field of beginning literacy.
3. **Synthesize key theories of early literacy development and connect them to effective instructional practices** for reading and writing in the early years, demonstrating an understanding of their research base and practical implications.
4. **Articulate a coherent, research-informed personal philosophy of literacy** that reflects critical self-reflection, scholarly insight, and a commitment to equitable literacy instruction for all learners.
5. **Evaluate and compare widely used beginning literacy curriculum programs** through a critical analysis of their alignment with literacy theories, empirical research, and their capacity to support equitable literacy outcomes for diverse learners.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Course Assignments	Assignment Descriptions
#1 Classic and Contemporary Research Log: Annotated Bibliography and Reflection	Students will complete a classic research log containing classic and contemporary research that has influenced literacy curriculum and instruction and state and federal policies. Reflect on the current and/or potential influence of the research on current curriculum and instruction practices. Must have a minimum of 10 citations.
#2 Eminent Scholar Presentation	Each student will select major research publications by an eminent scholar in the area of beginning literacy. The students will compile a PowerPoint presentation that reflects the major accomplishments of this scholar in the field of literacy. Additional information regarding specific requirements will be provided by the Instructor at a later date.
#3 Beginning Literacy Curriculum Program Critical Analysis Chart	Each student will select 5 widely used beginning literacy curriculum programs and conduct a critical, theory- and research-informed analysis. Students will evaluate the curriculum's alignment with contemporary literacy theories, evidence-based practices, and its potential to promote equitable literacy development for all learners.
#4 Personal Literacy Position Statement	The purpose of this assignment is to synthesize your learning from the course into a comprehensive and research-informed Personal Literacy Statement that reflects your evolving beliefs about beginning literacy development and instruction. This culminating task challenges you to integrate foundational theories, contemporary research, and insights from course readings, discussions, and professional experience into a coherent stance that will inform your work as a literacy scholar, educator, and leader.

Minimal Technical Skills Needed

Students should have basic knowledge of MS Office including Word, PowerPoint and Excel documents. The use of Leo Mail is required for communication with the professor and other students. The use of the Learning Management System (LMS) D2L is important to success in the course. Tutorials and support are available to learn these skills. Students should be able to do basic research including library database and internet searches for documents and publications.

Instructional Methods

This web-based course provides a resource base to develop the proposal, carry out research and successfully defend the dissertation. While all work is individualized and developed in consultation with the chair, it is expected of the student to take initiative, be aware of all deadlines, and communicate regularly with the chair.

Student Responsibilities or Tips for Success in the Course

Students will be required to log into the course daily and use University email to communicate with the chair regularly. All established deadlines and product expectations are to be submitted within D2L for instructor feedback and guidance.

GRADING

Major Assignments:	Grades
Classic and Contemporary Research Log: Annotated Bibliography and Reflection	100
Eminent Scholar Presentation	100
Beginning Literacy Curriculum Program Critical Analysis Chart	100
Personal Literacy Position Statement	100

Final grades in this course will be based on the following

scale:

A=90%-100%

B=80%-89%

C=70%-79%

D=60%-69%

F=59%-or Below

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

LMS

All course sections offered by Texas A&M University-Commerce have a corresponding course shell in the myLeo Online Learning Management System (LMS). Below are technical requirements

LMS Requirements:

<https://community.brightspace.com/s/article/Brightspace-Platform-Requirements>

LMS Browser Support:

https://documentation.brightspace.com/EN/brightspace/requirements/all/browser_support.htm

YouSeeU Virtual Classroom Requirements:

<https://support.youseeu.com/hc/en-us/articles/115007031107-Basic-System-Requirements>

ACCESS AND NAVIGATION

You will need your campus-wide ID (CWID) and password to log into the course. If you do not know your CWID or have forgotten your password, contact the Center for IT Excellence (CITE) at 903.468.6000 or helpdesk@tamuc.edu.

Note: Personal computer and internet connection problems do not excuse the requirement to complete all course work in a timely and satisfactory manner. Each student needs to have a backup method to deal with these inevitable problems. These methods might include the availability of a backup PC at home or work, the temporary use of a computer at a friend's home, the local library, office service companies, Starbucks, a TAMUC campus open computer lab, etc.

COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

If you have any questions or are having difficulties with the course material, please contact your Instructor.

The syllabus/schedule are subject to change.

Technical Support

If you are having technical difficulty with any part of Brightspace, please contact

Brightspace Technical Support at 1-877-325-7778. Other support options can be found here:

<https://community.brightspace.com/support/s/contactsupport>

Interaction with Instructor Statement

The instructor normally responds to student questions within 2 days. Email is the preferred method of communication. The instructor has provided a cell phone number for students to call for more detailed or urgent communication.

COURSE AND UNIVERSITY

PROCEDURES/POLICIES Course Specific

Procedures/Policies

Assignment/Deliverables Policy

Assignment due dates are individualized for each student. All paper submissions should be submitted as a Word, PDF, or PPT. Video presentations should be accessible to the instructor for full review.

Late Work

Notify the instructor if additional time is needed to complete an assignment as soon as possible.

Syllabus Change Policy

The syllabus is a guide. Circumstances and events, such as student progress, may make it necessary for the instructor to modify the syllabus during the semester. Any changes made to the syllabus will be announced in advance.

University Specific Procedures

Student Conduct

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. The Code of Student Conduct is described in detail in the [Student Guidebook](http://www.tamuc.edu/Admissions/oneStopShop/undergraduateAdmissions/studentGuidebook.aspx).

<http://www.tamuc.edu/Admissions/oneStopShop/undergraduateAdmissions/studentGuidebook.aspx>

Students should also consult the Rules of Netiquette for more information regarding how to interact with students in an online forum:

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/netiquette>

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TAMUC Attendance

For more information about the attendance policy please visit the [Attendance](#) webpage and [Procedure 13.99.99.R0.01](#).

<http://www.tamuc.edu/admissions/registrar/generalInformation/attendance.aspx>

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/academic/13.99.99.R0.01.pdf>

Academic Integrity

Students at Texas A&M University-Commerce are expected to maintain high standards of integrity and honesty in all of their scholastic work. For more details and the definition of academic dishonesty see the following procedures:

[Undergraduate Academic Dishonesty 13.99.99.R0.03](#)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/undergraduates/13.99.99.R0.03UndergraduateAcademicDishonesty.pdf>

[Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty 13.99.99.R0.10](#)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/graduate/13.99.99.R0.10GraduateStudentAcademicDishonesty.pdf>

AI Use in Course

Texas A&M University-Commerce acknowledges that there are legitimate uses of Artificial Intelligence, ChatBots, or other software that has the capacity to generate text, or suggest replacements for text beyond individual words, as determined by the instructor of the course.

Any use of such software must be documented. Any undocumented use of such software constitutes an instance of academic dishonesty (plagiarism).

Individual instructors may disallow entirely the use of such software for individual assignments or for the entire course. Students should be aware of such requirements and follow their instructors' guidelines. If no instructions are provided the student should assume that the use of such software is disallowed.

In any case, students are fully responsible for the content of any assignment they submit, regardless of whether they used an AI, in any way. This specifically includes cases in which the

AI plagiarized another text or misrepresented sources.

13.99.99.R0.03 Undergraduate Academic Dishonesty

13.99.99.R0.10 Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty

Students with Disabilities-- ADA Statement

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

Office of Student Disability Resources and Services

Texas A&M University-Commerce

Gee Library- Room 162

Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835

Fax (903) 468-8148

Email: studentdisabilityservices@tamuc.edu

Website: [Office of Student Disability Resources and Services](http://www.tamuc.edu/campusLife/campusServices/studentDisabilityResourcesAndServices/)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/campusLife/campusServices/studentDisabilityResourcesAndServices/>

Nondiscrimination Notice

Texas A&M University-Commerce will comply in the classroom, and in online courses, with all federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination and related retaliation on the

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basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age, genetic information or veteran status. Further, an environment free from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression will be maintained.

Campus Concealed Carry Statement

Texas Senate Bill - 11 (Government Code 411.2031, et al.) authorizes the carrying of a concealed handgun in Texas A&M University-Commerce buildings only by persons who have been issued and are in possession of a Texas License to Carry a Handgun. Qualified law enforcement officers or those who are otherwise authorized to carry a concealed handgun in the State of Texas are also permitted to do so. Pursuant to Penal Code (PC) 46.035 and A&M-Commerce Rule 34.06.02.R1, license holders may not carry a concealed handgun in restricted locations.

For a list of locations, please refer to the [Carrying Concealed Handguns On Campus](#) document and/or consult your event organizer.

Web url:

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/34SafetyOfEmployeesAndStudents/34.06.02.R1.pdf>

Pursuant to PC 46.035, the open carrying of handguns is prohibited on all A&M Commerce campuses. Report violations to the University Police Department at 903- 886-5868 or 9-1-1.

COURSE OUTLINE / CALENDAR

The course is divided into modules that are open all semester. Generally, each module provides support and examples for each step of the dissertation from Prospectus to Final Defense. Student should access any module needed depending upon their progress towards completion and any established timeline.

Mental Health and Well-Being

The university aims to provide students with essential knowledge and tools to understand and support mental health. As part of our commitment to your well-being, we offer access to Telus Health, a service available 24/7/365 via chat, phone, or webinar. Scan the QR code to download the app and explore the resources available to you for guidance and support whenever you need it.



The Counseling Center at A&M-Commerce, located in the Halladay Building, Room 203, offers counseling services, educational programming, and connection to community resources for students. Students have 24/7 access to the Counseling Center's crisis assessment services by calling 903-886-5145. For more information regarding Counseling Center events and confidential services, please visit www.tamuc.edu/counsel

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