**Department of Human Services**
**EPS 589 Thesis Research**
**Fall 2019**

**Instructor(s):**
 **Luis Aguerrevere Ph.D.**
 **Nina Ellis-Hervey Ph.D.**
 **Daniel McCleary Ph.D.**
 **Robbie Steward Ph.D.**
 **Jillian Dawes, Ph.D.**

 **Course Time & Location: TBA     Credits: 3 credit hours**

 **Contact Information:**
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**Prerequisites:**  12 semester hours graduate education and permission of major professor.

## I.  Course Description:

Required of every candidate for the Masters of Arts with emphasis in a school psychology degree, the thesis is a significant contribution of research/scholarship that reflects the beliefs undergirding the degree program as scholar-practitioner, responsible and disciplined inquiry in the candidate's major area of study, and an authentic contribution to the body of literature in School Psychology. The format of the thesis is approved by the thesis chair and committee and must be acceptable to the Graduate School (Thesis Guide, a manual describing the "Procedure for the Preparation of Master's Thesis and Doctoral Dissertations," is available in the University Bookstore).

**Thesis Proposal Preparation**

The thesis proposal should be prepared in a format that is consistent with the APA style and format. The proposal should address the following topics, in the exact order as shown below. Thesis Guide specifications should be used for margins, etc. The Thesis Proposal Approval Form is to serve as a cover sheet.

## II.  Intended learning Outcomes/Goals/Objectives (Program/Student Learning Outcomes):

The mission of the College of Education is to prepare competent, successful, caring, and enthusiastic professionals dedicated to responsible service, leadership, and continued professional and intellectual development.

The goals of this course are closely aligned to those of the College of Education (COE), which is to prepare competent, successful, caring and enthusiastic professionals dedicated to responsible service, leadership, and continued professional and intellectual development.  As a preliminary step in this process the knowledge obtained in this course will enable candidates to develop the requisite knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary for admission into the COE Teacher Certification Program.

The Master of Arts program in School Psychology at Stephen F. Austin State University is dedicated to producing ethical, responsible, and competent school psychologists who employ scientific knowledge and methods of problem solving. The program's philosophy of education holds that one learns best by engaging in practice. The mission of our program is to apply behavioral science knowledge and methods to the assessment and treatment of learning, behavior, and psychosocial problems in regular and special education populations in the public schools.

- Familiarity with the university and American Psychological Association standards, policies and requirements associated with thesis and dissertation development (http://www.sfasu.edu/graduate/108.asp);
- Completion of all tasks that will result in the submission of the Thesis Proposal Approval Form
- (http://www.sfasu.edu/graduate/documents/thesis-approval.pdf);
- Understand the psychological-emotional-behavioral adjustments involved in the development and writing of theses; and
- Successful completion of three-chapter thesis.

**Intended Learning Outcomes/Goals/Objectives: NASP Training and Practice Domains:**
- Domain 9: Research and Program Evaluation
  School psychologists have knowledge of research design, statistics, measurement, varied data collection and analysis techniques, and program evaluation sufficient for understanding research and interpreting data in applied settings.
- Domain 10: Legal, Ethical, and Professional Practice
  School psychologists have knowledge of the history and foundations of school psychology; multiple service models and methods; ethical, legal, and professional standards; and other factors related to professional identity and effective practice as school psychologists.

**Program Learning Outcomes:**
The following lists the program learning outcomes addressed in this course as identified in the course matrix for your degree program:
- Familiarity with various models of successful thesiss in the field of psychology;
- Enhancing critical thinking skills in review and critique of literature;
- Enhancing research skills;
- Enhancing technical writing skills;

- Developing specialty in knowledge and application within the field of study;
  Enhancing ability to make effective use of feedback in scholarship activity;
  Knowledge of the process of publication.

**Student Learning Outcomes (National Association of School Psychologists NASP):**
- School psychologists demonstrate knowledge and skills relevant for professional practices and work characteristics in their field.
- School psychologists ensure that their knowledge, skills, and professional practices reflect understanding and respect for human diversity and promote effective services, advocacy, and social justice for all children, families, and schools.
- School psychologists have knowledge of varied methods of assessment and data collection methods for identifying strengths and needs, developing effective services and programs, and measuring progress and outcomes.
- School psychologists have knowledge of research design, statistics, measurement, varied data collection and analysis techniques, and program evaluation methods sufficient for understanding research and interpreting data in applied settings.
- School psychologists demonstrate skills to evaluate and apply research as a foundation for service delivery and, in collaboration with others, use various techniques and technology resources for data collection, measurement, analysis, and program evaluation to support effective practices at the individual, group, and/or systems levels.
- School psychologists have knowledge of the history and foundations of school psychology; multiple service models and methods; ethical, legal, and professional standards; and other factors related to professional identity and effective practice as school psychologists.
- School psychologists demonstrate skills to provide services consistent with ethical, legal, and professional standards; engage in responsive ethical and professional decisionmaking; collaborate with other professionals; and apply professional work characteristics needed for effective practice as school psychologists, including respect for human diversity and social justice, communication skills, effective interpersonal skills, responsibility, adaptability, initiative, dependability, and technology skills.

**III. Course Assignments, Activities, Instructional Strategies, use of Technology:**
1. Review of the university and APA guidelines for thesis.
2. Documentation of completion and 80% passing score on the online Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) training (http://www.citiprogram.org/) on the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs website. The date of the passing score/documentation should occur within the semester of enrollment in EPS 589.
3. Review of selected successful Thesis Exams with critiques that address the issue of diversity within the body of knowledge.
4. Identification of a content area with designated thesis chair that will guide the review of the literature.
5. Selection of the Thesis Committee. The student must submit verification of Thesis Committee paperwork completed and signed by each member: three (3) program faculty

members, one (1) non-program, department faculty member, and one (1) non-department faculty member.

6. Comprehensive review of the literature that results in an overview of the literature that establishes a clearly defined rationale for the study leading to the development of a focused research question.
7. The development of a problem-based, research question.
8. Working with the Chair and selected committee members in the development and approval of the thesis proposal that will include of the first three chapters of the thesis.
9. Attending to committee members' feedback and timely submission of the final manuscript to the Committee members and Graduate Office.
10. Students are expected to exhibit professionalism through the process. Attached is a rubric to define the expectations as a professional and expert in a body of knowledge.

## IV. Evaluation and Assessments (Grading)

Prior to initiating the Comprehensive Oral Thesis Defense the Written Comprehensive Assessment must be completed, scored, and approved by the Thesis Director (see-attached rubric).

Because this is a pass/fail course and the research project is expected to be completed within two semesters, students are cautioned to consider this timeframe in choice of research design and in the overall semester enrollment. The thesis and student's performance on the final oral examination must be approved by a positive vote of **at least three-fourths of the voting examiners.**

## VI.  TEXT AND MATERIALS
**Required Texts:**
- Cone & Foster (2006) *Dissertations and Theses from Start to Finish: Psychology and Related Fields 2nd Edition.* Washington DC: American Psychological Association
- American Psychological Association (2009). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th ed.). Washington, DC.

## VII. Course Evaluations:
Part of the academic culture and student responsibility is to engage in the course evaluation process, which provides faculty members with opportunity to receive students' feedback about points of strengths and areas for improvement.   Near the conclusion of each semester, students in the Perkins College of Education electronically evaluate courses taken within the PCOE. Evaluation data is used for a variety of important purposes including:  1. Course and program improvement, planning, and accreditation; 2. Instruction evaluation purposes; and 3. Making decisions on faculty tenure, promotion, pay, and retention.  As you evaluate this course, please be thoughtful, thorough, and accurate in completing the evaluation.  The PCOE faculty body is committed to excellence in teaching and continued improvement.  Therefore, your response is critical!

In the Perkins College of Education, the course evaluation process has been simplified and is completed electronically through MySFA.  The instructor will be able to view the names of students who complete the survey, all ratings and comments are confidential and anonymous, and will not be available to the instructor until after final grades are posted.

## VIII.   Student Ethics and Other Policy Information:

Attendance: Regularly scheduled face-to-face contact and submission of completed required paperwork as determined by Thesis Chair/Instructor are required.  Enrolled students should have no less than bi-weekly contact with the Thesis Chair during the semester of enrollment.  This contact may be direct meeting during office hours, e-mail communication, providing update, or telephone communication.

## Students with Disabilities

To obtain disability related accommodations, alternate formats and/or auxiliary aids, students with disabilities must contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS), Human Services Building, and Room 325, 468-3004/468-1004 (TDD) as early as possible in the semester.  Once verified, ODS will notify the course instructor and outline the accommodation and/or auxiliary aids to be provided.  Failure to request services in a timely manner may delay your accommodations.  For additional information, go to http://www.sfasu.edu/disabiltiyservices/.

## Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is a responsibility of all university faculty and students.  Faculty members promote academic integrity in multiple ways including instruction on the components of academic honesty, as well as abiding by university polity on penalties for cheating and plagiarism.

Definition of Academic Dishonesty

Academic dishonesty includes both cheating and plagiarism.  Cheating includes but is not limited to (1) using or attempting to use unauthorized materials to aid in achieving a better grade on a component of a class; (2) the falsification or invention of any information, including citations, on an assigned exercise; and/or (3) helping or attempting to help another in an act of cheating or plagiarism.  Plagiarism is presenting the words or ideas of another person as if they were your own.  Examples of plagiarism are (1) submitting an assignment as if it were one's own work that has been purchased or otherwise obtained from an Internet source or another source; and (3) incorporating the words or ideas of an author into one's paper without giving the author due credit.

Please read the complete policy at http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic_integrity.asp

## Withheld Grades *Semester Grades Policy (A-54)*

Ordinarily, at the discretion of the instructor of record and with the approval of the academic chair/director, a grade of WH will be assigned only if the student cannot complete the course work because of unavoidable circumstances.  Students must complete the work within one calendar year from the end of the semester in which the WH is assigned, or the grade

automatically becomes an F.  If students register for the same course in future terms, the WH will automatically become an F and will be counted as a repeated course for the purpose of computing the grade point average.

According to the specifications indicated above, where indicated, a grade of WH will serve as a holding grade until the final grade is assigned about submission of the manuscript and a successful Oral Defense in the presentation of a committee of faculty.

Continuous enrollment is required and grades of WH shall be assigned <u>each semester</u> until a faculty committee-approved oral defense is completed.

During the semester of the approved oral defense, the instructor of record shall complete the grade change form to change the WH to the letter grade that reflects the quality of the final written product and the oral defense.

**Acceptable Student Behavior**
Graduate student behavior should not interfere with the instructor's ability to conduct the class or the ability of other students to learn from the instructional program (see the Student Conduct Code, policy D-34.1)**.**  Unacceptable or disruptive behavior will not be tolerated.  Students who disrupt the learning environment may be asked to leave class and may be subject to judicial, academic or other penalties.  This prohibition applies to all instructional forums, including electronic, classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc.  The instructor shall have full discretion over what behavior is appropriate/inappropriate in the classroom.  Students who do not attend class regularly or who perform poorly on class projects/exams may be referred to the Early Alert Program.  This program provides students with recommendations for resources or other assistance that is available to help SFA students succeed.

> **To complete Certification/Licensing Requirements in Texas related to public education, you will be required to:**
> 1. Undergo criminal background checks for field or clinical experiences on public school campuses; the public school campuses are responsible for the criminal background check; YOU are responsible for completing the information form requesting the criminal background check; the completed information form is due _____ .  If you have a history of criminal activity, you may not be allowed to complete field or clinical experiences on public school campuses.  At that point, you may want to reconsider your major while at SFASU.
>
> 2. Provide one of the following primary ID documents:  passport, drivers license, state or providence ID cards, a national ID card, or military ID card to take the TExES exams (additional information available at www.texes.ets.org/registrationBulletin/ <http://www.texes.ets.org/registrationBulletin/>).  YOU must provide legal documentation to be allowed to take these mandated examinations that are related to

certification/licensing requirements in Texas.  If you do not have legal documentation, you may want to reconsider your major while at SFASU.

3. Successfully complete state mandated a fingerprint background check.  If you have a history of criminal activity, you may want to reconsider your major while at SFASU.

**LiveText**

LiveText is the data management system used by the Perkins College of Education (PCOE) for program improvement and to assess and monitor compliance to national accreditation standards. All Perkins College of Education majors and Secondary Education students are required to purchase a LiveText account, either through the University Bookstore or at [www.livetext.com](http://www.livetext.com) . This is a ONE-TIME purchase, and the account will be used throughout your undergraduate, graduate, or doctoral program of study.  Required program assignments, designated by instructors and program coordinators, and must be submitted within your LiveText account. Successful completion of this course and your degree requirements are dependent on the submission of all required LiveText assignments.

**IX. Other Relevant Course Information:**

Based on university policy, continuous enrollment in thesis and thesis hours is required until the total number of hours has been completed.  Consequently, it is important that students enroll in the number of credits that most accurately reflect the anticipated time commitment and task completion.  In the School Psychology Masters program a minimum of 6 hours to thesis and in the doctoral program a minimum number of 9 hours must be committed to thesis; however, failure to engage in successful completion of the thesis with an oral defense of the manuscript will require enrollment in additional credits of independent study until completion.  Students who are unable to complete the thesis within the 6- and/or 9-credit rule WILL be required to enroll in a number of credits that exceed the total number of program-required credits.  When a WH is assigned, the final grade, determined by the Chair of the thesis with contribution from the selected committee, will not be assigned until after the successful Oral Defense and submission of the feedback-based manuscript.

The Thesis Chair and Committee are to serve only as guides in manuscript organization, clarifying research design, analyses, and in raising critical questions about 'holes' in the organization, interpretation of data, and reasoning reflected in the manuscript. Enrollment is graduate programs assumes effective written communication.  Although the Chair shall assist in typical editorial feedback for overall manuscript improvement and compliance to APA-style guidelines, the responsibility for attending to issues related to grammar, sentence structure, and paragraph organization resides solely with students.  Students are strongly encouraged to consult with the writing skills center to attend to persisting issues in this domain for which faculty are not responsible.

By the date indicated in the current Graduate Bulletin, the candidate must submit to the Graduate School:

1. Four copies of the thesis in final form, incorporating all suggestions and corrections by the candidate's Advisory Committee;
2. A completed Application for Thesis Examination, which should be submitted at least two weeks before the proposed date of the Oral Defense;
3. Receipt for payment of fees to the University library for binding, shipping and microfilm reproduction.

**English Proficiency.** A candidate for the Masters degree must be able to use spoken and written English to the satisfaction of the Advisory Committee. The student deficient in such usage must take additional course work or other steps the Advisory Committee recommends.
Application for the M.A. in School Psychology must be filed in the Graduation Office by the deadline indicated in the current Graduate Bulletin. A student must be formally registered at SFA for the semester or summer session in which the degree is conferred.

**Manuscript Grading Rubrics**

*Name:*

*Technical requirements    /10*

|  | Below Expectations (1) | (2) | Meets Expectations (3) | (4) | Exceeds Expectations (5) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Technical Usage** | 1. Inappropriately chooses lay terminology when technical terminology is appropriate. 2. Uses technical terminology incorrectly. |  | 1. Generally makes the appropriate choice of lay language or technical language. 2. Uses technical terminology correctly. |  | 1. Technical language or lay language is appropriately selected. 2. Usage is precise, appropriate, parsimonious and enlightening. |
| **Grammar** | 1. Grammatical errors substantially detract from the communication. |  | 1. Grammatical errors are minimal and do not detract from the communication. |  | 1. The document is free of grammatical errors. |
| **Mechanics** | 1. Spelling, punctuation, or format errors are abundant. |  | 1. Minimal spelling, punctuation, or format errors. |  | 1. No spelling, punctuation, or format errors. |
| **References** | 1. Inappropriate references. 2. Many errors in the form of citations in |  | 1. Citations are appropriate, although not ideally matched |  | 1. Citations are appropriate to the content of the paper in breadth, depth, |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **either the body or the reference section.**<br>**3. Many references in the body not cited in the reference section and vice versa.** | | **to the content of the paper.**<br><br>**2. A few incorrect citations are noted in either the body or the reference section.**<br>**3. A few citations in the body do not match those in the reference section.** | | **and currency.**<br>**2. Citations are correctly cited in both the body and the reference section.**<br>**3. Citations match in the body and in the reference section.** |

*Content* **/20**

| | Below Expectations (1) | (2) | Meets Expectations (3) | (4) | Exceeds Expectations (5) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Content/Focus** | **1. Sources of ideas are inadequately documented.**<br>**2. No evidence of purpose or direction. Unclear theme.**<br>**3. Tables, figures and Appendices are not used correctly.**<br>**4. Ideas are not coherent in all the sections.**<br><br>**5. There is no link between the sections of the manuscript** | | **1. Sources of ideas are mostly documented, some inferences needed.**<br><br>**2. Purpose and direction discernable. Theme is clear and partially limited.**<br>**3. Tables and figures and Appendices are used correctly but are not explained in text**<br>**4. Ideas are coherent but are not related to the hypotheses, results and conclusions.**<br><br>**5. There is a link between the sections of the manuscript but there is limited** | | **1. Sources of ideas clearly documented for further research.**<br>**2. Clear purpose and direction. Theme captures readers attention and sustains the paper.**<br>**3. Tables and figures and Appendices are used correctly**<br>**4. Ideas are coherent and are related to important areas of the study.**<br><br>**5. There is a link between the sections of the manuscript and explanation about this link.** |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | explanation about this link. | | |

## *Interest/Communication/Creativity* /10

| | Below Expectations (1) | (2) | Meets Expectations (3) | (4) | Exceeds Expectations (5) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Reasoning** | 1. Presentation is illogical, disordered. 2. Inferences are unsupported by evidence. 3. Ideas are presented without attention to synthesis. | | 1. Logical, orderly presentation is apparent. 2. Inferences are supported by evidence. 3. Effort is made to synthesize ideas from different sources. | | 1. The writing is logical, orderly, internally consistent, and well developed. Elegant. 2. Inferences are well supported by evidence. 3. Ideas are well synthesized, following an established outline. |
| **Communication** | 1. Word choice is inappropriate. Informal, stilted, arcane, or idiosyncratic. 2. Incoherent organization fails to lead to the intended conclusion. 3. Lack of awareness of readers perspective. 4. Poorly formed sentences and | | 1. Word choice is acceptable for the intended audience. 2. Generally good although obvious organization. 3. Shows awareness of readers perspective. 4. Sentences and paragraphs relate to each other, though connections are occasionally remote or obscure. 5. Original writing | | 1. Words are well chosen. Scholarly expository style 2. Organization is so excellent as to be unnoticed. 3. Appreciation of readers perspective is obvious. 4. Writing is flowing and easy to follow. 5. Limited quotations and paraphrasing well |

| | paragraphs, with many awkward passages. 5. Heavy reliance on quotations or paraphrasing. | | supported with occasional quotations, paraphrasing. | | integrated with original writing. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|

**Professionalism Assessment Instrument**

For each observation, please complete the professionalism assessment instrument below by marking the appropriate box in each row.

Candidate Name:_____ Committee Member: _____

| Component | Exceeds | Meets | Does Not Meet |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Demonstrates punctuality and professional attendance** | Shows dedication by arriving early and staying late as needed | Has regular attendance and contact | Excessive absences and late arrivals/early departures |
| **Works positively with committee members and other professionals** | Open and responsive to recommendations for revision and suggestions | Follows through on recommendations for revision and suggestions | Rejects or ignore recommendations for revision and suggestions |
| **Presents self professionally and appropriately** | Always presents professionally | Most of the times presents professionally, but is sometimes inappropriate | Seldom presents professionals |
| **Demonstrates collaboration with committee members** | Respects others; participates in discussion; values other perspectives | Participates in collaboration | Does not participate and may have a negative attitude |
| **Is organized and prepared meetings** | Takes initiative and asks for feedback | Assignments are on time and meet minimum standards | Products are late or incomplete |
| **Interacts ethically in the research process** | Consistently maintains confidentiality and respects the research process in standards | Maintains confidentiality and respects and responds positively to feedback for correction | Engages in gossip; derides requirements and standards |
| **Uses appropriate language in and writing skills** | Set an example for correct grammar | Understands limitations in grammar and general writing; seeking support | Shows no awareness of written communication limitations and expects others to correct |

| **Models openness to multiple perspectives** | Models tolerance and acceptance by anticipating multiple perspectives and associated implications | Listens makes needed modifications as directed | Dismisses feedback; does not address viewpoints that are not congruent with personal viewpoints |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Shows enthusiasm an interest in expertise** | Maintains high engagement and interest in presenting materials | Is interested and interesting in teaching and learning | Shows little to no efficacy in organization and presentation of materials |

**Uses technology** Consistently uses Adheres to university Abuses or does not use **appropriately** computers and guidelines technology appropriately appropriately

STEPHEN F. AUSTIN STATE UNIVERSITY
APPLICATION FOR THESIS EXAMINATION

Name_____  Date  _____

Graduate Major School Psychology          Degree Sought Master of Arts

Title of Thesis:

This will certify that the above-named student has been approved to be examined over the above titled exhibition.

Date requested for the exam:  _____

Time: _____          Bldg. and Room:  _____

Signature of:

_____
Thesis Director     Signature     Date Approved


_____
Committee Member     Signature     Date Approved


_____
Committee Member     Signature     Date Approved


_____
Graduate School Representative   Signature     Date Approved