**EDUC 709**  
Seminar in Applied Investigations

| Program Course Information: | **PROGRAM:** M.Ed. Program in School Counseling  
**EDUC 709 SECTION 001 HOURS:** 3.0 semester hours  
**COURSE TITLE:** Seminar in Applied Investigations  
**DAYS:** Mondays 9-11:50 a.m.  
**ROOM:** Peabody 010  
**INSTRUCTOR:** Holly Kayler Sopko, Ph.D., NCC  
hsopko@email.unc.edu  
**office hours Monday after class or by appointment**  
**DATE SYLLABUS REVISED:** October 2013  
**REQUIRED TEXT**  
**REQUIRED READINGS**  
**RECOMMENDED TEXTS**  
**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** This course is designed to examine designs, methods, procedures, and statistical analysis that can be used to address research questions of interest in school counseling and related disciplines serving children in schools and communities. This seminar will address issues of applied investigations encompassing the identification of research problems, the development of designs, methods and procedures for conducting research, and the statistical tools to analyze and interpret data. The issues reviewed will include consideration of designs and models focused on the individual child, intact and randomized groups, as well as population-based survey methodology. |

**UNC-CH School of Education Conceptual Framework:**  
**Preparing Leaders in Education**  
The School of Education is committed to the preparation of candidates who can assume leadership roles in the field of education. Such preparation is accomplished through the coherent integration of the abilities and predispositions of candidates, the knowledge and abilities of faculty, and the contextual elements of academic and field settings. Candidates accept their professional responsibilities and focus their expertise and energy on supporting Birth-12 student development and learning. They must work to maintain a meaningful involvement in activities within schools and in partnership with parents and the community.  
The growth and development of candidates is promoted through curriculum, instruction, research, field experiences, clinical practice, assessments, evaluations, and interactions with faculty and peers. All of these elements work together to build a solid foundation for exemplary practice in education, creating educational practitioners who are prepared to better serve children, families and schools, as well as business and agencies of government within North Carolina, across the nation and throughout the world.
Preparation of educational leaders for today's society is based in values of equity and excellence that assure our candidates' and their students' future success. Attending to the challenge of promoting both equity and excellence is imperative. To address only one of these goals would, on the one hand, sacrifice those put at risk by social and cultural hierarchies in society or would, on the other hand, fail to press for the highest possible levels of accomplishment. Equity and excellence must be pursued concurrently to assure that all students are well served and that all are encouraged to perform at their highest level.

Within the School of Education, equity is seen as the state, quality, or ideal of social justice and fairness. It begins with the recognition that there is individual and cultural achievement among all social groups and that this achievement benefits all students and educators. Equity acknowledges that ignorance of the richness of diversity limits human potential. A perspective of equity also acknowledges the unequal treatment of those who have been historically discriminated against based on their ability, parents' income, race, gender, ethnicity, culture, neighborhood, sexuality, or home language, and supports the closure of gaps in academic achievement. Decisions grounded in equity must establish that a wide range of learners have access to high quality education in order to release the excellence of culture and character which can be utilized by all citizens of a democratic society.

Within the School of Education, excellence is seen as striving for optimal development, high levels of achievement and performance for all and in all that is done. In preparatory programs across grade levels, curriculum and instruction furthers excellence when it moves a learner as effectively as possible toward expertise as a thinker, problem solver and creator of knowledge. Excellence entails a commitment to fully developing candidates, not only academically but also in moral and political senses.

In a Democratic Society

The preparation of exemplary practitioners in education to meet the challenges of equity and excellence is best accomplished through preparation for a democratic society. Democracy around the globe is an ideal, one with the potential to meet the needs, recognize the interests and establish the rights of all citizens. Education is a necessary foundation for this ideal, and both must be subscribed to and participated in by all.

School of Education Conceptual Framework Principles

The School of Education is committed to diverse, equitable, democratic learning communities. As a result, candidates are expected to acquire and apply the knowledge, skills and dispositions that prepare them to support the development and education of all students.

The School of Education uses the following unit principles, applicable at all program levels, to identify the knowledge and skills that are central to preparation of candidates. It is the School of Education's goal that candidates will become leaders supporting and promoting the development, teaching and learning of all students in multiple contexts.

1. Candidates possess the necessary content knowledge to support and enhance student development and learning.
2. Candidates possess the necessary professional knowledge to support and enhance student development and learning, including meeting student needs across physical, social, psychological, and intellectual contexts. Candidates incorporate a variety of strategies, such as technology, to enhance student learning.
3. Candidates possess the necessary knowledge and skills to conduct and interpret appropriate assessments.
4. Candidates view and conduct themselves as professionals, providing leadership in their chosen field, including effective communication and collaboration with students and stakeholders.
### SOE Conceptual Framework Dispositions

Certain dispositions are essential to prepare leaders who support equity and excellence in education within a democratic society. Dispositions are beliefs that foster commitments, leading to actions within educational environments with students, colleagues, families, and communities. Candidates strengthen these dispositions as they think deeply, reflect critically and act responsibly in their professional practice. These dispositions are interconnected with knowledge and skills; specific dispositions connect to and exemplify unit principles, facilitating their enactment in particular programs.

1. Candidates will exhibit behavior that demonstrates a belief that all individuals can develop, learn, and make positive contributions to society.
2. Candidates will exhibit behavior that demonstrates a belief that continuous inquiry and reflection can improve professional practice.

### Preparing School Counselors

The M.Ed. program in School Counseling at the University of North Carolina is predicated on the Strengths-Based School Counseling (SBSC) model that asserts that the school counselor’s primary role is to promote and advocate for positive youth development for all students and for the environments that enhance and sustain that development. The SBSC approach characterizes positive youth development as nurturing and enhancing empirically-identified student strengths or competencies rather than focusing on student weaknesses and problem areas. SBSC provides a framework to guide the practice of school counseling in the 21st century that is both compatible with and operationalizes many of the features of the ASCA National Model for School Counseling Programs. Strengths-based school counselors employ a variety of direct (e.g., counseling, classroom guidance) and systemic (e.g., consultation, advocacy) level interventions to promote culturally relevant student development in the academic, personal/social, and career domains. The strengths-based perspective identifies the counselor as a school leader who works with students, teachers, administrators, parents, and other members of the community and promotes strengths-enhancing environments for all students. SBSC is guided by six principles listed below.

#### The Six Guiding Principles of Strengths-Based School Counseling

**Promote Context-Based Development for All Students**

Contemporary developmental theorists and researchers emphasize the influential and interactive role that context (e.g., culture) and environment play in human development. Thus, school counselors should acknowledge and seek to incorporate contextual factors in their efforts to facilitate positive development for all students.

**Promote Individual Student Strengths**

Strengths-Based School Counseling focuses on helping students build on or further enhance their current culturally-relevant strengths and competencies as well as develop additional ones that have been shown to be associated with positive development.

**Promote Strengths-Enhancing Environments**

Strengths-enhancing environments are associated with positive youth development; therefore, an important function of the school counselor is to actively promote these types of environments through leadership, collaboration, advocacy and other system-level interventions.

**Emphasize Strengths Promotion over Problem Reduction and Problem Prevention**

Rather than placing the school counselor in a reactive mode of functioning by focusing on problem prevention and remediation, Strength-Based School Counseling focuses on promoting positive development which allows the school counselor to assume a more proactive role and serve a much larger number of students.

**Emphasize Evidence-Based Interventions and Practice**

Adhering to the premise that research knowledge provides the most reliable source of guidance in determining appropriate and effective interventions, the strengths-oriented school counselor is committed to evidence-based practice.
**Emphasize Promotion-Oriented Developmental Advocacy at the School Level**
In Strengths-Based School Counseling, school counselor’s advocacy efforts will focus primarily on lobbying for system policies and environments that enhance development for all students and secondarily on identifying and removing barriers. The school counselor’s advocacy is concerned with assuring access, equity, and educational justice for all students.

### Course Objectives:
This course is designed for students to be able to a) read the research literature critically, and b) formulate research studies consistent with their professional interests.

### Course Standards (Addressed): 2009 CACREP Common Core Curricular Experiences

**CACREP CORE STANDARD 8: RESEARCH AND PROGRAM EVALUATION**—studies that provide an understanding of research methods, statistical analysis, needs assessment, and program evaluation, including all of the following:

- a. the importance of research in advancing the counseling profession;
- b. research methods such as qualitative, quantitative, single-case designs, action research, and outcome-based research;
- c. statistical methods used in conducting research and program evaluation;
- d. principles, models, and applications of needs assessment, program evaluation, and the use of findings to effect program modifications;
- e. the use of research to inform evidence-based practice; and
- f. ethical and culturally relevant strategies for interpreting and reporting the results of research and/or program evaluation studies.

In addition to the common core curricular experiences outlined in Section II.G, programs must provide evidence that student learning has occurred in the following domains:

### RESEARCH AND EVALUATION

**I. Knowledge**
1. Understands how to critically evaluate research relevant to the practice of school counseling.
2. Knows models of program evaluation for school counseling programs.
3. Knows basic strategies for evaluating counseling outcomes in school counseling (e.g., behavioral observation, program evaluation).
4. Knows current methods of using data to inform decision making and accountability (e.g., school improvement plan, school report card).
5. Understands the outcome research data and best practices identified in the school counseling research literature.

**J. Skills and Practices**
1. Applies relevant research findings to inform the practice of school counseling.
2. Develops measurable outcomes for school counseling programs, activities, interventions, and experiences.
3. Analyzes and uses data to enhance school counseling programs.

### 2009 Program Area Standards

II.C.2. Knows how to design, implement, manage, and evaluate programs to enhance the academic, career, and personal/social development of students.
II.H.2. Selects appropriate assessment strategies that can be used to evaluate a student’s academic, career, and personal/social development.

### Disability Services Information:
If you have a medical condition/disability that may require reasonable accommodation to ensure equal access to this course, please contact the Department of Disability Services at 962.8300, on the internet at [http://disabilityservices.unc.edu/eligibility/index.html](http://disabilityservices.unc.edu/eligibility/index.html) or via email at disabilityservices@unc.edu

### Honor Code Information:
The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill has had a student-administered honor system and judicial system for over 100 years. The system is the responsibility of students and is regulated and governed by them, but faculty share the responsibility. If you have questions about your responsibility under the honor code, please bring them to your instructor or consult with the office of the Dean of Students or the Instrument of Student Judicial Governance. This document, adopted by the Chancellor, the Faculty Council, and the Student Congress, contains all policies and procedures pertaining to the student honor system. Your full participation and observance of the honor code is expected. If you require further information on the definition of plagiarism, authorized vs. unauthorized collaboration, unauthorized materials, consequences of violations, or additional information on the Honor Code at UNC, please visit [http://honor.unc.edu](http://honor.unc.edu).

### Policy on Prohibited Harassment and Discrimination:
The University’s Policy on Prohibited Harassment and Discrimination (http://www.unc.edu/campus/policies/hasrassanddiscrim.pdf) prohibits discrimination or harassment on the basis of an individual’s race, color, gender, national original, age, religion, creed, disability, veteran’s status, sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression. Appendix B of this Policy provides specific information for students who believe that they have been discriminated against or harassed on the basis of one or more of these protected classifications. Students who want additional information regarding the University’s process for investigating allegations of discrimination or harassment should...
Activities and Assignments:

1. **Article Critique**
   This assignment is designed to help you understand how to read research articles. The critique will be written on one of the article below. The paper should be 3-5 pages. See attached description for more details.

2. **Protection of Human Subjects Certification**
   Go to https://research.unc.edu/offices/human-research-ethics/researchers/training/.htm. Complete the CITI Ethics Training for Human Subjects Research with a Social/Behavior Focus. Turn in your certificate of completion.

3. **Annotated Bibliography**
   In this assignment you will bring research and practice together. Choose a specific client issue or population of interest. Make sure that the topic is related to the personal/social domain. Include a minimum of 8 references (at least 5 of which MUST BE empirical articles). See the attached description for more details. The graduated submission schedule (see Course Schedule) is strongly encouraged but not required.
   a. Begin the document with a brief (less than 1 page) description of your client issue or population.
   b. Each annotation should be 125-200 words.
   c. Summarize your findings in a brief narrative and a clear, concise, informative table.
   See attached description for more details.

4. **Action Research Project: Promote a Personal-Social Strength**
   Promoting students’ strengths is a crucial role of the school counselor. For this assignment, you will choose and design one of the following types of research projects, designed to promote personal-social strengths of students at your internship site. Choose one of the following research designs: 1) single-subject study, 2) program evaluation, or 3) qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods research project. Use your Strengths Based School Counseling text to inform your research design. See attached description for more details.

5. **Presentation of Action Research Project**
   Your Action Project Research (including your Annotated Bibliography) will contain information that could be helpful to other counselors and educational stakeholders, so it is important for you to disseminate your findings. You will present a poster presentation of your research in class on April 21. Faculty, students, and staff in the SOE will be invited to attend. Also, since you are currently in internship, you are expected to share your findings with the counselors and other stakeholders at your site as well and provide evidence of same. Evidence may include video or audio recording of your presentation, pre/post-presentation data, or evaluative feedback.

Requirements:

**Attendance**: Class attendance is expected. Students are allowed one absence without penalty: plan to use this absence the Monday of your site placement’s Spring Break. All other absences will result in the deduction of 2 points from the final grade. Students are expected to arrive to class on time. Three tardy arrivals will be considered one absence. Students are responsible for obtaining any missed class notes, materials, or assignments. All assignments are due according to the schedule, absences are not an excuse for not turning in an assignment by the due date.

**Participation**: Because this course relies heavily upon the on-going experience of class members with one another in understanding in-class applied research practice, every effort should be made to attend all classes and to prepare assignments as instructed. Graduate students are expected to be responsible
for regular and punctual class attendance. Because research may only become useful to the extent that it is put into practice, students are expected to participate fully in class discussions and in applied research practice of class topics. Bring a copy of your textbook and readings to each class meeting as they will be used in activities.

Active participation is essential and will be evaluated in the following way:

*Excellent (9-10 points)* – Proactive participation: leading, originating, informing, challenging contributions that reflect in-depth study, thought, and analysis of the topic under consideration as well as a demonstrated ability to listen to and build upon the ideas of others.

*Satisfactory (6-8 points)* – Reactive participation: supportive, follow-up contributions that are relevant and of value, but rely on the leadership and study of others, or reflect opinion rather than study, thought, and contemplation.

*Minimally Acceptable (3-5 points)* – Passive participation: present, awake, alert, attentive, but not actively involved.

*Unsatisfactory (0-2 points)* – Uninvolved: absent, present but not attentive, sleeping, irrelevant contributions that inhibit the progress of the discussion.

**Assignments:** It is the student’s responsibility to turn in assignments at the beginning of class on the schedule date per the course schedule. Five percent will be deducted if an assignment is turned in after the beginning of class, and ten percent will be deducted for each calendar day an assignment is late. Please contact me as soon as possible if you will not be able to turn in an assignment on time.

**Student Performance Evaluation Criteria and Procedures**

- Attendance and Participation = 10 pts
- Article Critique = 10 pts
- Protection of Human Subjects Certification: 5 pts
- Annotated Bibliography: 20 pts
- Action Research Project: 40 pts (proposal 10 pts, part 1-15 pts, part 2-15 pts)
- Action Research Presentations = 15 pts (class 8 pts, feedback from your site 7 pts)

(100-94 is an H, 93-88 is a P, 87-80 is an L, below 80 is an F or incomplete)

**Confidentiality:** We may occasionally deal with very personal and sensitive matters. It is imperative that we engage in a respectful dialogue, even when we disagree. Please remember that any personal information revealed during class time is confidential and should be confined to the class.

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<td>Qualitative Designs; Mixed Methods</td>
<td>Ch 9-13 (you will be assigned 1 Ch)</td>
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<td>Action Research Project Meetings</td>
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<td>Accountability in Counseling; Using Excel to Analyze and Report Data</td>
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