Course Time & Location: TBA
Credits: 3 credit hours
Contact Information:
  • Zoom (link provided below)
Office: Human Services 211
Office Hours: T 11:00-12 PM
  (Or by Appointment)
Office Phone: 936-468-1306
SPAC Phone: 936-468-1304
Other Contact Information:
EMERGENCY Contact: (405) 293-3085
E-mail: ellishernm@sfasu.edu
(Please allow at least 24 hours for e-mail responses)

Dr. Nina’s Zoom Room information for scheduled and appointment office hours:
Join Zoom Meeting
https://sfasu.zoom.us/j/3288523539?pwd=ZFFQRHJkbk1BZU1DZWNUWk1teit6UT09
Meeting ID: 328 852 3539
Password: 490902

I. Prerequisites: Permission of major professor.

II. Course Description:
A master thesis is required for partial fulfillment of the degree. This reflects an original, scholarly contribution to the research literature relevant to school psychology and child and family issues. Students will work closely with the chair of their supervisory committee to formulate thesis ideas. Required of every candidate for the Doctor of Philosophy 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 must be acceptable to the Graduate School (Thesis Guide, a manual describing the "Procedure for the Preparation of Master's Thesis and Master Thesis," is available in the University Bookstore).

1 credit minimum/variable up to 6 credits; a minimum total of 12 credits.

At a minimum, students will enroll in three consecutive semesters/terms for the thesis proposal/prospectus and the thesis oral defense which must be scheduled in two different semesters/terms. Students must register for at least one credit each fall/spring semester and summer term; must maintain continuous enrollment until the thesis is successfully defended, corrected/adjusted according to the committee’s will, and submitted to the Office of Research and Graduate Studies; and must accumulate a minimum of 12 credit hours.
SPSY 5133 Thesis Writing is classified as thesis (as opposed to lecture, seminar, lab, practicum), meaning that the only focus of the credit is the independent, but guided work on the master thesis. For each credit hour, students should expect to spend at least 45 hours/15 weeks fall or spring semesters or 45 hours/10 weeks summer term.

Candidates are required to maintain contact with the committee chair EVERY enrolled long semester and summer term. The format of the thesis must be acceptable to the SFA Office of Research and Graduate Studies. Please refer to the most current version of the School Psychology Handbook for specific information.

**Intended learning Outcomes/Goals/Objectives (Program/Student Learning Outcomes):**

- Students must formally contact the thesis chair at least twice each semester/term to document engagement and to report progress
- Adhere to all Office of Research and Graduate Studies’ deadlines ([http://www.sfasu.edu/graduate/83.asp](http://www.sfasu.edu/graduate/83.asp))
- Apply for Graduation prior to the semester in which you plan to schedule the thesis oral defense ([http://www.sfasu.edu/graduate/109.asp](http://www.sfasu.edu/graduate/109.asp))
- Prepare the thesis in a format that is consistent with APA style and format; see the SFASU School Psychology Program Thesis Handbook (most current version) for margins and other format requirements
- Complete the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) training ([http://www.sfasu.edu/researchcompliance/107.asp](http://www.sfasu.edu/researchcompliance/107.asp)) on the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs website. CITI training may be completed prior to the Proposal meeting.
- Comprehensive literature review
- Develop of a problem-based, research question(s)
- Develop a proposal/prospectus document, generally consisting of the first three chapters of a five or more chapter format: Introduction; Review of the Literature; Research Design & Methodology
- Schedule the formal proposal/prospectus presentation; present/defend the proposal/prospectus; accept and refine the proposal/prospectus based on the chair and committee comments and requests; revise the proposal/prospectus; submit the revised and polished document within two weeks following the oral defense
- Preparation of the IRB application. Submit the applicable CITI Training Completion Certificate with your IRB application ([http://www.sfasu.edu/researchcompliance/103.asp](http://www.sfasu.edu/researchcompliance/103.asp))
- With submission of the proposal/prospectus and IRB approval, begin data collection and analyses
- Develop a comprehensive and coherent discussion section
- Complete thesis manuscript
- Schedule the formal oral defense of thesis; present/defend the thesis; accept and refine the thesis based on the chair and committee comments and requests; revise
the thesis; submit the revised and polished document according to Office of Research and Graduate Studies’ deadlines for graduation

**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.

**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 decision-making; 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.
II. Course Assignments, Activities, Instructional Strategies, use of Technology:

1. The Thesis should be prepared in a format that is consistent with the APA style and format. Thesis Guide specifications should be used for margins, etc.

2. Review of the university and APA guidelines for Thesis: Chapter 1 (Introduction); Chapter 2 (Literature Review); Chapter 3 (Methodology); Chapter 4 (Results); Chapter 5 (Discussion).

3. 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.

4. Review of selected successful Thesis Exams with critiques that address the issue of diversity within the body of knowledge.

5. Identification of a content area with designated Thesis chair that will guide the review of the literature.

6. 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 faculty member.

7. 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.

8. The development of a problem-based, research question.

9. Submission of the IRB application and attending to requested revisions.

10. Data Collection and analyses (Chapter 4).

11. Developing a comprehensive and coherent discussion section (Chapter 5)

12. Completion of all five chapters and successful defense of thesis during the Oral Examination.

13. Attending to committee members’ feedback and timely submission of the final manuscript to the Committee members and Graduate Office.

III. 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 and one other member of the candidate’s thesis committee (see-attached rubric).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Requirement</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>September 2nd</td>
<td>Meet with Chair to develop milestones</td>
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<tr>
<td>September 30th</td>
<td>Milestone 1 due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 31st</td>
<td>Milestone 2 due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 30th</td>
<td>Milestone 3 due</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. TEXT AND MATERIALS
Required Texts:

VI. Readings (Required and recommended—including texts, websites, articles, etc.):

Required Texts and Software: None

VII. Course Evaluations:

“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. Please know that the PCOE faculty 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. Although 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: Found at http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/

Important course related policies:

Course Grades (Including WH), Policy 5.5

Final Course Grade Appeals by Students, Policy 6.3

Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities, Policy 6.1

Appeal Procedure Relating to the Provision of accommodations for students with Disabilities, Policy 6.6

Class Attendance, Policy 6.7

Code of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity, Policy 10.4

***Other other SFA Policy Information

Class Attendance and Excused Absence: Policy 6.7

Regular, punctual attendance, documented participation, and, if indicated in the syllabus, submission of completed assignments are expected at all classes, laboratories, and other activities for which the student is registered. Based on university policy, failure of students to adhere to these requirements shall influence the course grade, financial assistance, and/or enrollment status. The instructor shall maintain an accurate record of each student’s attendance and participation as well as note this information in required reports (including the first 12 day attendance report) and in determining final grades. Students may be excused from attendance for reasons such as health, family emergencies, or student participation in approved university-sponsored events. However, students are responsible for notifying their instructors in advance, when possible, for excusable absences. Whether absences are excused or unexcused, a student is still responsible for all course content and assignments. Students with accepted excuses may be permitted to make up work for up to three weeks of absences during a semester or one week of a summer term, depending on the nature of the missed work. Make-up work must be completed as soon as possible after returning from an absence.
Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities: Policy 6.1 and 6.6
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, 936-468-3004 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/disabilityservices/

Student Academic Dishonesty: Policy 4.1
Abiding by university policy on academic integrity is a responsibility of all university faculty and students. Faculty members must promote the components of academic integrity in their instruction, and course syllabi are required to provide information about penalties for cheating and plagiarism, as well as the appeal process.

Use of AI in any form, including applications such as ChatGPT, are strictly prohibited in the completion of class papers, assignments, tests, or any activity which is part of the student's grade.

Definition of Academic Dishonesty
Academic dishonesty includes both cheating and plagiarism. Cheating includes, but is not limited to:
- using or attempting to use unauthorized materials on any class assignment or exam;
- falsifying or inventing of any information, including citations, on an assignment;
- 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 one’s own. Examples of plagiarism include, but are not limited to:
- submitting an assignment as one's own work when it is at least partly the work of another person;
- submitting a work that has been purchased or otherwise obtained from the Internet or another source;
- incorporating the words or ideas of an author into one's paper or presentation without giving the author credit.

Penalties for Academic Dishonesty
Penalties may include, but are not limited to, reprimand, no credit for the assignment or exam, re-submission of the work, make-up exam, failure of the course, or expulsion from the university.

Student Appeals
A student who wishes to appeal decisions related to academic dishonesty should follow procedures outlined in Academic Appeals by Students (6.3).

Withheld Grades: Policy 5.5
At the discretion of the instructor of record and with the approval of the academic unit head, 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 they receive a WH, or the grade automatically becomes an F, except as allowed through policy [i.e., Active Military Service (6.14)]. If students register for the same course in future semesters, the WH will automatically become an F and will be counted as a repeated course for the purpose of computing the grade point average.

Student Code of Conduct: Policy 10.4
Interference or disruption of students, faculty, administration, staff, the educational mission, or routine operations of the university is prohibited. Such activity includes, but is not limited to, behavior in a classroom or instructional program that interferes with the instructor or presenter’s
ability to conduct the class or program, or the ability of others to profit from the class or program. To remain in the vicinity of activity that is disrupting normal university functions when requested to leave by a university official is prohibited. Bystanders, if their presence incites or adds to the disruption, as well as more active participants in the disruptive activity, may be in violation of this policy as well. Engaging in physical violence of any nature against any person. This includes fighting; assaulting; battering; using a knife, gun, or other weapon; or acting in a manner that threatens or endangers the physical health or safety of any person or causes a reasonable apprehension of such harm.

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 at SFA.

SFASU values students’ mental health and the role it plays in academic and overall student success. SFASU provides a variety of resources to support students mental health and wellness. Many of these resources are free, and all of them are confidential.

On-campus Resources:
SFASU Counseling Services
www.sfasu.edu/counselingservices
3rd Floor Rusk Building
936-468-2401

SFASU Human Services Counseling Clinic
www.sfasu.edu/humanservices/139.asp
Human Services Room 202
936-468-1041

Crisis Resources:
Burke 24-hour crisis line 1(800) 392-8343
Suicide Prevention Lifeline 1(800) 273-TALK (8255)
Crisis Text Line: Text HELLO to 741-741

Additional Information:

EXTRA CREDIT
Students will have the opportunity throughout the semester to earn extra points to be added to the final grade. These opportunities will be offered at the instructor’s discretion.

POSTING GRADES
Grades will be posted on D2L. When grades are posted, an announcement will be posted on D2L indicating the grades for that assignment or exam have been posted. Please do not e-mail or call inquiring if grades are posted until this announcement is posted. To protect student confidentiality, students’ performance cannot be reported or even discussed over the phone, e-mail, or instant message.

IX. Other Relevant Course Information: The instructor reserves the right to change the syllabus as necessary. You are responsible for keeping up with all changes to the syllabus and for all information presented during class, regardless of whether or not you attended class.
Manuscript Grading Rubrics

Name:

**Technical requirements** /10

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Below Expectations (1)</th>
<th>Meets Expectations (3)</th>
<th>Exceeds Expectations (5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Technical Usage</strong></td>
<td>1. Inappropriately chooses lay terminology when technical terminology is appropriate.</td>
<td>1. Generally makes the appropriate choice of lay language or technical language.</td>
<td>1. Technical language or lay language is appropriately selected.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Uses technical terminology incorrectly.</td>
<td>2. Uses technical terminology correctly.</td>
<td>2. Usage is precise, appropriate, parsimonious and enlightening.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grammar</strong></td>
<td>1. Grammatical errors substantially detract from the communication.</td>
<td>1. Grammatical errors are minimal and do not detract from the communication.</td>
<td>1. The document is free of grammatical errors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. Spelling, punctuation, or format errors are abundant.</td>
<td>1. Minimal spelling, punctuation, or format errors.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mechanics</strong></td>
<td>1. Inappropriate references.</td>
<td>1. Citations are appropriate, although not ideally matched to the content of the paper.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Many errors in the form of citations in either the body or the reference section.</td>
<td>2. A few incorrect citations are noted in either the body or the reference section.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Many references in the body not cited in the reference section and vice versa.</td>
<td>3. A few citations in the body do not match those in the reference section.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>References</strong></td>
<td>1. Citations are appropriate to the content of the paper in breadth, depth, and currency.</td>
<td>1. Citations are correctly cited in both the body and the reference section.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Citations are correctly cited in both the body and the reference section.</td>
<td>3. Citations match in the body and in the reference section.</td>
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</table>

**Content** /20

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Below Expectations (1)</th>
<th>Meets Expectations (3)</th>
<th>Exceeds Expectations (5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
### Content/Focus

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

### Interest/Communication/Creativity /10

<table>
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<th>Below Expectations (1)</th>
<th>Meets Expectations (3)</th>
<th>Exceeds Expectations (5)</th>
</tr>
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</table>

**Reasoning**

| 1. Presentation is illogical, disordered. | 1. Logical, orderly presentation is apparent. | 1. The writing is logical, orderly, internally consistent, and well developed. Elegant. |
| 2. Inferences are unsupported by evidence. | 2. Inferences are supported by evidence. | 2. Inferences are well supported by evidence. |
| 3. Ideas are presented without attention to synthesis. | 3. Effort is made to synthesize ideas from different sources. | 3. Ideas are well synthesized, following an established outline. |

**Communication**

<p>| 1. Word choice is inappropriate. Informal, stilted, arcane, or idiosyncratic. | 1. Word choice is acceptable for the intended audience. | 1. Words are well chosen. Scholarly expository style |
| 2. Incoherent organization fails to lead to the intended conclusion. | 2. Generally good although obvious organization. | 2. Organization is so excellent as to be unnoticed. |
| | 4. Sentences and paragraphs relate to | 4. Writing is flowing |
| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>readers perspective.</th>
<th>each other, though connections are occasionally remote or obscure.</th>
<th>and easy to follow.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4. Poorly formed sentences and paragraphs, with many awkward passages.</td>
<td>5. Original writing supported with occasional quotations, paraphrasing.</td>
<td>5. Limited quotations and paraphrasing well integrated with original writing.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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: ____________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Exceeds</th>
<th>Meets</th>
<th>Does Not Meet</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrates punctuality and professional attendance</td>
<td>Shows dedication by arriving early and staying late as needed</td>
<td>Has regular attendance and contact</td>
<td>Excessive absences and late arrivals/early departures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Works positively with committee members and other professionals</td>
<td>Open and responsive recommendations for revision and suggestions</td>
<td>Follows through on recommendations for revision and suggestions</td>
<td>Rejects or ignore recommendations for revision and suggestions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presents self professionally and appropriately</td>
<td>Always presents professionally</td>
<td>Most of the times presents professionally, but is sometimes inappropriate</td>
<td>Seldom presents professionally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrates collaboration with committee members</td>
<td>Respects others; participates in discussion; values other perspectives</td>
<td>Participates in collaboration values other perspectives</td>
<td>Does not participate and may have a negative attitude</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is organized and prepared meetings</td>
<td>Takes initiative and asks for feedback</td>
<td>Assignments are on time and meet minimum standards</td>
<td>Products are late or incomplete</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interacts ethically in the research process</td>
<td>Consistently maintains confidentiality and respects the research process in standards</td>
<td>Maintains confidentiality and respects and responds positively to feedback for correction</td>
<td>Engages in gossip; derides requirements and standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uses appropriate language in and writing skills</td>
<td>Set an example for correct grammar</td>
<td>Understands limitations in grammar and general writing; seeking support</td>
<td>Shows no awareness of written communication limitations and expects others to correct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Models openness to multiple perspectives</td>
<td>Models tolerance and acceptance by anticipating multiple perspectives and associated implications</td>
<td>Listens makes needed modifications as directed</td>
<td>Dismisses feedback; does not address viewpoints that are not congruent with personal viewpoints</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shows enthusiasm an interest in expertise</td>
<td>Maintains high engagement and interest in presenting materials</td>
<td>Is interested and interesting in teaching and learning</td>
<td>Shows little to no efficacy in organization and presentation of materials</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Uses technology Consistently uses Adheres to university Abuses or does not use appropriately computers and guidelines technology inappropriately appropriately
STEPHEN F. AUSTIN STATE UNIVERSITY
APPLICATION FOR THESIS EXAMINATION

Name_________________________________________ Date __________________

Graduate Major School Psychology Degree Sought: Doctorate of Philosophy

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:

______________________________ Signature __________________________ Date Approved ________________
Thesis Director

______________________________ Signature __________________________ Date Approved ________________
Committee Member

______________________________ Signature __________________________ Date Approved ________________
Committee Member

______________________________ Signature __________________________ Date Approved ________________
Graduate School Representative