Department of Secondary Education and Educational Leadership

SEED 5395 – Comprehensive Synthesis Seminar
Spring 2024

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Course Time: fully on-line  
Office Hours: MW 10:30-12:30, 1:45-2:15  
Credits: 3

I. Course Description:

Capstone course of graduate program in secondary education. Investigation of student knowledge in the areas of instruction and learning; curriculum practice and theory; educational research; and, historical, philosophical, cultural foundations of education. To be taken during the semester of graduation.

SEED 5395 Comprehensive Synthesis Seminar (3 credits; fully online) spans 15 weeks and contains extensive written content that includes the same information acquisition and demonstrable skills that are required of students in a face-to-face classroom; the time requirement for students engaging in online modules is approximately 3 hours or more per week. Students are required to read texts and/or foundational articles, complete writing intensive work that will evaluate their comprehension and ability to think critically about education as well as participating in critical discussions with peers. Students will produce a paper or project as a culminating experience that synthesizes the student learning outcomes for the course. For every hour the student spends engaging with the content, he/she spends at least 2 hours completing associated activities and assessments outside of class.

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

University Core Values
In the College of Education at Stephen F. Austin State University, we value and are committed to the following core values, which are reflected in course assignments:

• Academic excellence through critical, reflective, and creative thinking
• Life-long learning
• Collaboration and shared decision-making
• Openness to new ideas, to culturally diverse people, and to innovation and change
• Integrity, responsibility, diligence, and ethical behavior, and
• Service that enriches the community.

Program & Student Learning Outcomes
The student will be able to write four comprehensive examination papers that demonstrate his/her ability to:

• develop and adapt instruction and assessment based on the needs of diverse students.
• effectively manage a diverse learner-centered classroom.
• implement and modify instruction for all students incorporating technology as appropriate.
• understand the purpose of education and philosophical perspectives including professional, legal and ethical issues.
• use strategies and methods for reading and literacy in various content areas.

This course aligns with other Secondary Education courses in that it seeks to contribute to the academic base essential for the development of professional educators who are well-grounded in the current knowledge and research in the field of teaching and learning.

III. Course Assignments, Activities, Instructional Strategies, use of Technology:

DISCUSSION BOARDS (25 pts each)
Each candidate will participate in 1-2 discussion boards in each module. The discussion boards provide a place for you to interact with classmates and with the instructor about the course content. The discussion boards are like face to face class time; once they are closed, the discussion is over. Therefore, you will not receive credit for late discussion board postings.

In order to receive full credit, you must:
• post an original response to each discussion board topic and respond to at least two other students’ postings.
• log on to D2L and participate in each topic on at least two of the dates that the topics are active. If you only participate on one day, you will not receive full credit. Please plan accordingly.
• post thoughtful, articulate responses. Avoid Facebook-style responses: “I like this” and “I agree!” It’s fine to like or to agree with something, but please explain why.
• Use proper grammar and spelling. While the discussion boards are not as formal as a written paper, you should still communicate professionally. Please avoid texting language like “LOL” and “l8er.” If your posts contain many spelling and/or grammatical errors or unprofessional language, you will lose a letter grade.

REFLECTIONS (25 pts each)
Each candidate will submit reflections that answer the prompts in select modules. These provide a means for self-reflection about the role of the educator in the bigger educational system. Candidates will submit their work through D2L in the Dropbox.

COMPREHENSIVE PROJECT (450 pts)
Each candidate will complete a project that synthesizes the knowledge and experiences of their graduate program. Candidates will choose ONE of four options:
• Curriculum Development
• Professional Development
• Review of Legislation and Educational Policy
• Community Engagement
Specific guidelines and requirements for the essays are provided in the course.

In order to pass the “comps,” each candidate must earn a passing grade on this project. **Failure on this project constitutes failure of the comprehensive exam.**

**IV. Evaluation and Assessments (Grading):**

The professor ultimately determines the course and assignment grade based on quality of scholarly work, effort, and progress.

To determine your grade, take the points earned and divide by the number of points possible. Letter grades for the course will be determined as follows: 90-100%=A, 80-89%=B, 70-79%=C, 60-69%=D, below 60%= F

No course with a grade below C can be used to satisfy degree requirements.

A grade of WH (incomplete or grade withheld) may be given at the discretion of the instructor and 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. Students that are granted a grade of WH may not receive an A for the course.

**QUALITY OF ASSIGNMENTS**

All assignments are to be submitted in a timely, professional manner. This includes proper use of grammar, correct spelling, and appropriate formatting. These elements will be considered as part of your grade on each assignment you submit. As a teacher, you should want only the best for and from your students. As your professor, I want the same from you and will hold you to a standard of excellence. Remember that the quality of work you present reflects the quality of your desire to be an exceptional teacher.

**LATE WORK**

All written assignments are due at 11:55 PM. After 48 hours, the work may/may not be accepted at my discretion. Late work also will not receive feedback and will receive a reduction in grade.

**V. Required Texts:**

1. Online lectures and articles as posted in D2L
2. **Required:** This course uses QClassroom data management system to collect critical assessments for students who are PCOE majors. Support emails will come from qclassroom@sfasu.edu.
3. Additional readings will be assigned and/or distributed as the class progresses. These will be provided by the instructor or will be designated as available online.
VI. Tentative Course Calendar:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Module 1</td>
<td>Syllabus Interests and Issues</td>
<td>Discussion Board Reflection</td>
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<td>1/18-1/28</td>
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<tr>
<td>Module 2</td>
<td>Proposal</td>
<td>Discussion Board Proposal Individual ZOOM Meetings</td>
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<tr>
<td>1/29-2/18</td>
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<tr>
<td>Module 3</td>
<td>Individual Work</td>
<td>Check in Discussion Boards Reflection ZOOM Meeting 3/25 @ 7:00 PM</td>
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<td>2/29-4/14</td>
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<tr>
<td>Module 4</td>
<td>Comprehensive Projects</td>
<td>Future of Education Reflection Zoom PPT Final Paper ZOOM Presentation 5/6 @ 7:00 PM</td>
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<td>4/15-5/7</td>
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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 COE 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 Policy

**Institutional Absences (HOP 04-110)**

- An Institutional Absence may be granted to a student who participates as a representative of the University in academic (including research), extra- or cocurricular, or athletic activities. Students will be excused for institutional purposes from otherwise required academic activity only when a valid Institutional Absence is approved by the appropriate administrative unit or official and the documentation of approval is provided to the faculty member at least five (5) days in advance.

Institutional absences will not be approved for keystone events, defined as: a special or unique assignment, test, project, experience, or other academic exercise identified by the Faculty member as critical for successful completion of standards of the class and unable to be missed. These events must be identified on the syllabus at the beginning of the semester and communicated to the students. Events added to the syllabus at a later date will not qualify for Keystone Event status. Keystone Events where the date/time is changed will no longer be considered a Keystone Event. Students should make themselves aware of any Keystone Events identified in the syllabus to ensure there are no conflicts.

For keystone events where the assignment dates vary, it is incumbent upon the students to work with their faculty member to not select a conflicting date.

More information on Institutional Absences, including how to apply, can be found at https://www.sfasu.edu/deanofstudents/student-resources/institutional-absences.

**Code of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity**

- The Code of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity (HOP 04-106) outlines the prohibited conduct by any student enrolled in a course at SFA. It is the responsibility of all members of all faculty, staff, and students to adhere to and uphold this policy.

Articles IV, VI, and VII of the new Code of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity outline the violations and procedures concerning academic conduct, including cheating, plagiarism, collusion, and misrepresentation. Cheating includes, but is not limited to: (1) Copying from the test paper (or other assignment) of another student, (2) Possession and/or use during a test
of materials that are not authorized by the person giving the test, (3) Using, obtaining, or attempting to obtain by any means the whole or any part of a non-administered test, test key, homework solution, or computer program, or using a test that has been administered in prior classes or semesters without permission of the Faculty member, (4) Substituting for another person, or permitting another person to substitute for one’s self, to take a test, (5) Falsifying research data, laboratory reports, and/or other records or academic work offered for credit, (6) Using any sort of unauthorized resources or technology in completion of educational activities.

Plagiarism is the appropriation of material that is attributable in whole or in part to another source or the use of one’s own previous work in another context without citing that it was used previously, without any indication of the original source, including words, ideas, illustrations, structure, computer code, and other expression or media, and presenting that material as one’s own academic work being offered for credit or in conjunction with a program course or degree requirements.

Collusion is the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing academic assignments offered for credit or collaboration with another person to commit a violation of any provision of the rules on academic dishonesty, including disclosing and/or distributing the contents of an exam.

Misrepresentation is providing false grades or résumés; providing false or misleading information in an effort to receive a postponement or an extension on a test, quiz, or other assignment for the purpose of obtaining an academic or financial benefit for oneself or another individual or to injure another student academically or financially. For additional information, go to https://www.sfasu.edu/docs/hops/04-106.pdf.

**Withheld Grades Semester Grades Policy (HOP policy 02-206)**

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 coursework 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. 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 to compute the grade point average. For additional information, go to https://www.sfasu.edu/docs/hops/02-206.pdf.

- **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 promptly may delay your accommodations. For additional information, go to http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/.

- **Student Wellness and Well-Being**

  SFA values students’ overall well-being, mental health and the role it plays in academic and overall student success. Students may experience stressors that can impact both their academic experience and their personal well-being. These may include academic
pressure and challenges associated with relationships, emotional well-being, alcohol and other drugs, identities, finances, etc.

If you are experiencing concerns, seeking help, SFA provides a variety of resources to support students’ mental health and wellness. Many of these resources are free, and all of them are confidential.

- **Other important course-related policies:**
  
  ***Other SFA policy information is found in the Handbook of Operating Procedures (HOP)***

IX: Resources

- **On-campus Resources:**
  
  o **The Dean of Students Office** (Rusk Building, 3rd floor lobby)
    
    www.sfasu.edu/deanofstudents
    
    936.468.7249
    
    dos@sfasu.edu

  o **SFASU Counseling Services** • www.sfasu.edu/counselingservices
    
    Health and Wellness Hub (corner of E. College and Raguet) • 936-468-2401

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

  o **The Health and Wellness Hub** “The Hub”
    
    Location: corner of E. College and Raguet St.
    
    To support the health and well-being of every Lumberjack, the Health and Wellness Hub offers comprehensive services that treat the whole person – mind, body and spirit. Services include:
    
    ❖ Health Services
    ❖ Counseling Services
    ❖ Student Outreach and Support
    ❖ Food Pantry
    ❖ Wellness Coaching
    ❖ Alcohol and Other Drug Education
    
    www.sfasu.edu/thehub
    
    936.468.4008
    
    thehub@sfasu.edu

  - **Crisis Resources:**
    
    ❖ Burke 24-hour crisis line 1(800) 392-8343
    ❖ National Suicide Crisis Prevention: 9-8-8
    ❖ Suicide Prevention Lifeline 1(800) 273-TALK (8255)
    ❖ Crisis Text Line: Text HELLO to 741-741

X: Additional Information Specific to Educator Preparation:

- **Code of Ethics for the Texas Educator:**
  
  o The Texas educator shall comply with standard practices and ethical conduct toward students, professional colleagues, school officials, parents, and members of the community and shall safeguard academic freedom. The Texas educator, in maintaining the dignity of the profession, shall respect and obey the law, demonstrate personal integrity, and exemplify honesty and good moral character. The Texas educator, in exemplifying ethical relations with colleagues, shall extend just and equitable treatment
to all members of the profession. The Texas educator, in accepting a position of public trust, shall measure success by the progress of each student toward realization of his or her potential as an effective citizen. The Texas educator, in fulfilling responsibilities in the community, shall cooperate with parents and others to improve the public schools of the community. This chapter shall apply to educators and candidates for certification.

- Please go to TAC 247.2 – Code of Ethics and Standard Practices for Texas Educators.

- To complete Certification/Licensing Requirements in Texas related to public education and other professional settings, you will be required to:

  - Candidates must undergo a criminal history background check prior to clinical teaching and prior to employment as an educator. The public school campuses are responsible for completing the criminal background check. A person who is enrolled or planning to enroll in a State Board for Educator Certification-approved educator preparation program or planning to take a certification examination may request a preliminary criminal history evaluation letter regarding the person’s potential ineligibility for certification due to a conviction or deferred adjudication for a felony or misdemeanor offense.

  - A Preliminary Criminal History Evaluation is a non-mandatory, non-binding evaluation of an individual’s self-reported criminal history. In addition, the agency obtains your name-based Texas criminal history information. The service is provided to the requestor for a non-refundable fee. The requestor will receive an evaluation letter by email from agency staff advising of potential ineligibility for educator certification. You are eligible to request a Preliminary Criminal History Evaluation if:
    - You enrolled or planning to enroll in an educator preparation program or,
    - You are planning to take a certification exam for initial educator certification, and
    - You have reason to believe that you may be ineligible for educator certification due to a conviction or deferred adjudication for a felony or misdemeanor offense.

  - You are not eligible for a preliminary evaluation of your criminal history if you do not have a conviction or deferred adjudication for a felony or misdemeanor offense.

  - In addition, you must complete the fingerprinting process when you apply for certification. Participation in the evaluation does not preclude you from submitting to a national criminal history review at the time you apply for your educator certification. Your criminal history will be reviewed and you may be subject to an investigation based on that criminal history, including any information you failed to submit for evaluation.

  - Provide one of the following primary ID documents:
    - Passport
    - driver’s license, state or providence ID cards
    - a national ID card, or military ID card to take the TExES exams
    - 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.

  - 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 SFA.

  - For further information, contact the Office of Assessment and Accountability at 936-468-1282 or edprep@sfasu.edu.

XI: Other Relevant Course Information:

Additional Information:
I prefer students to email me through my SFA email: rudolpham@sfasu.edu. I have more access to that email than the email in D2L. My intention is to reply to all emails within 48 hours. Sometimes, I may be unavailable due to conference attendance or unexpected illness. If that is the case, I will post my availability in the class.