James I. Perkins College of Education  
Department of Human Services and Ed. Leadership  
SPSY 6138: Dissertation  

Summer 2024  

**Instructor:** Dr. Elaine Turner, Ph.D.  
**Course Time & Location:** Zoom  

**Office:** TBA  
**Office Hours:** Tuesdays: 10:30-1:30pm F2F and Thursdays: 2:30pm-4:30pm Zoom  

**Office Phone:** 1153  
**Email:** eturner@sfasu.edu  

**Credits:** 3  

**Prerequisites:** Admission to the PhD program in School Psychology and graduate school  

I. Course Description: (brief paragraph)  

A doctoral dissertation 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 dissertation ideas. Students will register for this course a minimum of three times.  

The required course dissertation course is SPSY 6138 Dissertation, which can be taken for a total of nine (9) credit hours. As per Graduate School policy, if the student is unable to complete the dissertation by 9 credit hours, the student must continuously enroll in a minimum of one credit of SPSY 6138 every Fall, Spring, and Summer semester, until the dissertation is defended and approved. At a minimum, the student will meet with the dissertation committee two times; once for the proposal defense and once for the final dissertation defense. The student's committee may request additional meetings if necessary. Students may not propose and defend their dissertation within the same semester.  

II. Intended Learning Outcomes/Goals/Objectives (Program/Student Learning Outcomes):  
The complete listing of the standards associated with the PLOs, SLOs, assignments, and assessments are located on the PCOE website.  

This course reflects the following core values of the College of Education:  
- 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  
- Service that enriches the community  

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.

This course also supports the mission of the Human Services Department. 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.

Program Learning Outcomes (PLO)

1. **Human Diversity:** Candidates demonstrate awareness and sensitivity in working professionally with diverse individuals, groups, and communities.

2. **Psychoeducational Foundations:** Each graduate student must demonstrate appropriate knowledge of historical, political and laws, policies, and procedures that affect the field of psychology and education.

3. **Content Knowledge:** Each candidate must also demonstrate the ability to use knowledge of biological, psychological sociocultural, ethical and legal factors to understand typical and atypical behavior.

4. **Research & Technology:** SFA trained psychologists must demonstrate the ability to use their knowledge of research, statistics, and evaluation methods to inform all areas of practice, from choosing appropriate methods for collecting information to making recommendations for interventions based on empirical evidence.

5. **Professional Skills and Dispositions:** Candidates will conduct themselves in a manner that reflects the values and attitudes alienated with the American Psychological Association policies and guidelines; The candidate will demonstrate knowledge, skills, and professional work characteristics/dispositions and effectively apply them in the practice.

6. **Application of Principles and Procedures:** Assessment that demonstrates candidates’ knowledge, skills, and dispositions are applied effectively in the practice of psychology. As part of this assessment, each student must document the ability to use both problem-solving (client-centered) and process-focused (consultee-centered) models of consultation.

7. **Communication:** The candidate will demonstrate proficiency in communication skills relevant to the field of psychology both written and spoken. This may include, but not be limited to, effective writing for different purposes, effective presentation skills for a variety of audiences and purposes, and skills for interacting appropriately with others.

**Student Learning Outcomes:**

- At the end of the course, the student will write a comprehensive and empirical study based upon research that makes an original contribution to the literature.

*This course incorporates the Core Curriculum Objectives in the listings of course objectives and indicated in course assignments.* Just as was required in the application for the inclusion in the core curriculum, faculty are asked to note how each core objective is met in the course schedule in terms of instruction and in the description of course assignments. The following lists the Core Curriculum Objectives with definitions that this course meets.

**Critical Thinking.** Description indicates how students will be instructed in critical thinking skills including creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation and synthesis of information.

**Communication.** Students will be instructed in Communication Skills to include effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas through written, oral and visual communication.
Personal Responsibility. Students will be instructed in personal responsibility to include the ability to connect choices, actions and consequences to ethical decision-making.

Social Responsibility. Students will be instructed in intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national, and global communities.

Empirical and Quantitative Skills. Students will be instructed in the manipulation and analysis of numerical data observable facts resulting in informed conclusions.

Teamwork. Students will be instructed in the ability to consider different points of view and to work effectively with others to support a shared purpose or goal.

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

**Milestones:** Students will meet individually with their dissertation chair within the first two weeks of classes to set the major milestones during the semester. These milestones will be put in writing, and they must be accomplished by the date indicated below. Milestones will be adapted depending on the student’s progress made in prior semesters, and graduation goals. Submission of all milestones will be done on the Dissertation D2L shelf. Note that Dissertation chair will meet and give feedback after each milestone.

IV. Evaluation and Assessments (Grading):

Dissertations are graded on a Pass (P) or Fail (F) scale. Students will be given a grade of Pass (P) on the 9 credits required for SPSY 6138 after they successfully complete their proposal (6 credit hours) and defend (3 credit hours) (please see program handbook and graduate school website for more information). The grade of Withheld (WH) will be assigned to indicate progress on the project without a successful proposal or defense. Progress in the course is defined as the student meeting the three established milestones (above). The grade of F will be assigned to students that do not make progress (fail to meet their individual milestones) during the enrolled semester.

V. Tentative Course Outline/Calendar:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Deadlines</th>
<th>Requirement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>June 1st</td>
<td>Meet with Chair to develop milestones</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 15th</td>
<td>Milestone 1 due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 30th</td>
<td>Milestone 2 due</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 15th</td>
<td>Milestone 3 due</td>
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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/

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.

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. 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.

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.