

**EDUC 697: Education Minor Capstone**  
Spring 2025, Tuesdays 9:30am - 12:15pm  
Peabody Hall Room 2018

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**Course Description**

The program of studies for the Education Minor in the School of Education culminates with the Capstone course. It should be taken as the last course in one's studies for the minor.

In the Capstone course candidates for the minor:

- (1) synthesize and integrate their learning and research about education and schooling;
- (2) complete a major, signature project as evidence of learning.

This is a mentored research, research intensive course. The School of Education's Minor in Education is designed to arm students with the capacity to think critically about educational issues and to participate knowledgeably and productively in public deliberations about them. This course calls on students to exercise those capacities as they participate actively in class discussions, assignments and activities while completing a substantive research project that is presented orally and in writing and graphic (presentation) formats.

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**Program Course Information**

**Program:** Education Minor

**Course Information:** EDUC 697, 3 credit hours, Spring 2025

**Course Title:** Education Minor

**Target Audience:** Undergraduate

**Instructor:** Caitlin Kearney, she/her

**Contact:** [caitlin\\_kearney@unc.edu](mailto:caitlin_kearney@unc.edu) or 802-999-6587

**Office Hours:** By appointment.

**Office Location:** Peabody 2059C or via Zoom.

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**Course Learning Objectives**

The objectives of the EDUC 697 are as follows:

- To help develop students' abilities as astute readers and consumers of educational research.
  - To further students' interests and deepen their understanding of an educational topic of interest by designing and carrying out an independent review of research literature.
  - To help students develop academic research skills.
  - To help students develop their academic writing skills, including the giving, receiving, and incorporating of feedback on their drafts.
  - To help students develop their verbal communication and public speaking skills.
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**Required Texts**

*You are not required to purchase any texts for this course as all readings will be available on Canvas.*

We will read many chapters from Systematic Reviews in the Social Sciences by Mark Petticrew & Helen Roberts. A PDF of this text is available on Canvas.

A great (optional) resource is [Doing a Systematic Review: A Student's Guide](#) (3rd edition) by Boland et al (2023). A hard copy of this text is on course reserve at the Davis library.

I reserve the right to change readings during the semester with appropriate notice. I will announce these changes in class and update the syllabus accordingly.

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## Course Activities & Assignments

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**ALL ASSIGNMENTS SHOULD BE UPLOADED TO CANVAS AND/OR CIRCULATED TO WRITING GROUPS BY 9AM ON THE DAY THAT THEY ARE DUE IN ORDER FOR THEM TO BE COUNTED AS ON-TIME.**  
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### Attendance (5%)

In an intensive seminar-style course, attendance is necessary for success. This course meets 14 times. You can miss up to two sessions without penalty. However, **please notify me via email prior to any missed class** as it may impact class activities and/or writing groups. Missing more than two class sessions will negatively impact your grade; each additional absence will result in a 1 percentage point deduction from your overall final grade (up to 5 percentage points).

Please see the official university attendance policy at the end of this syllabus for guidance on any extenuating circumstances.

### Preparation, Participation, & Engagement (25%)

Learning is a collective endeavor and everyone in the class shares a responsibility to contribute to that collective. I expect that you will do your absolute best to complete work in a timely way and come prepared to engage your colleagues (and their work) with kindness, respect, and intellectual rigor; and generally to contribute in whatever way you can to the collective good of our learning community (this applies equally if not more to your participation in writing groups discussed below).

Starting in Week 7 you will be asked to submit Status Updates informing me about your progress on your literature review, your goals for the coming week, and any lingering concerns you have about the completion of your project. These will be graded on a pass/no pass basis.

As an instructor it is often difficult to gauge a student's work effort and engagement (e.g. the person who talks the most might not be the most engaged and the one who talks the least might not be disengaged but just shy). Below are key primary elements that will be considered when assigning this portion of your grade. *At the end of the course, I will ask that you write me a short 1 page memo reflecting on your participation and engagement in the course and recommending a grade for yourself. I will take the recommendations in these memos under advisement in assigning your grade.*

### Mini Presentations

One of the learning objectives for this course involves developing your abilities as a presenter and communicator of scholarly information. To help you build your skills in this area (and to prepare you for the final presentation of your literature review) there will be multiple opportunities to practice these skills in the safe confines of our classroom. Beginning in Week 8, each class two students will be assigned to present slides (< 10mins) regarding the progress of their literature review, focussing on an article that they

read in the previous week as part of their literature review. More advice about how to approach this task will be provided in class.

### Writing Groups

Learning how to give, receive, and, ultimately, weigh and incorporate feedback on our written work is an important learning goal of this course. To facilitate the writing, editing, and redrafting process, students will be placed in small writing groups. Starting in Week 8, students will be expected to share between 1-3 pages of writing with the members of their writing groups each week. Sometimes the shared assignments will be assigned by me and other times it will be up to students to select a small section of what they are working on. Students will also be expected to provide thoughtful, critical, and constructive feedback on the drafts shared by those in their writing groups.

### **Writing Assignments (35%)**

Writing a literature review is a serious scholarly endeavor even for seasoned graduate students and professors. To help guide you in the process of writing a literature review and to help you develop the key analytic and writing skills necessary to carry out your literature review, you will be asked to complete a series of short writing assignments. Specific expectations and rubrics for evaluating these assignments will be discussed and distributed in class.

*NOTE: For all submitted assignments you must make the first part of the file name [your last name]\_[your first initial] [Assignment Name] (e.g. Kearney\_C Topic Brainstorm). Acceptable file formats are .doc and .docx. Please no PDFs, Pages, or Google Doc links.*

- Assignment #1 – Topic Brainstorm (5% of the 30%)– All good research projects (including literature reviews) begin with an interest that you want to explore further. You will need to write 1 paragraph each for at least 3 ideas that are of sufficient interest to you that you wouldn't mind reading about them for the whole semester. The ideas need not be fully developed but they need to be specific enough that they can be pursued further.
- Assignment #2 – Project Proposal (5%)- The specific elements of the proposal will be discussed in class but the goal of this assignment is to have you set down in writing the basic elements of your literature review project including: a research question; a statement of interest (i.e. why is the question important); and a research plan including a preliminary bibliography.
- In-Class Assignment #3 – Multi-Article Synthesis (5%) – Writing a literature review requires reading multiple papers on the same topic and thinking about if and how the approaches/findings/conclusions can be synthesized into a coherent whole. Doing this with dexterity and grace requires lots of practice. This in-class assignment is designed to help you get that practice. Students must be present in class (February 11th) for this assignment. If you are not able to be in class on this day, there will be an alternate writing assignment. Please notify me if you cannot attend.
- Assignment #4 – Research Matrix (5%) – This assignment is fundamentally a process and organizational check on your progress. For this assignment you will turn in a near-finalized list of the sources you've identified for use in your literature review in addition to a brief summary of their key details and relevance to your project. Details and models to be provided in class.
- Assignment #5 – Introduction (5%) – Students will turn in a full draft of the introduction to their literature review. As with Assignment #5, this assignment presents a terrific opportunity for students to get feedback from their writing group (and me). Students are strongly encouraged to

produce as close to a final version of their introduction to maximize the quality of the feedback and advice they receive.

- Assignment #6 –Methods Section (5%)– For this assignment, you will write the methods section of your paper. This section should include your search strategy (search terms, databases, and inclusion/exclusion criteria), search results (number of articles returned by database and search terms), and information retrieval/data extraction methods.
- Assignment #6 –Methods & Results Section (Part I) (5%)– For this assignment, you will write the first part of your

### **Final Assignments (35%):**

- Literature Review Presentation (10%). All students must make a 10 minute presentation of the main findings of their literature review to an audience of their EDUC 697 colleagues and invited members of the SoE and broader UNC community.
- Research Paper Descriptive Literature Review (25%). All students must complete an original literature review of at least 20 pages, drawing on at least 20 peer reviewed sources, on a topic of their choice. Details and rubrics will be provided during the course of the semester.

**Final Exam Time: May 8, 2025 at 8am**

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### **Grading**

94% - 100% = A  
90% - 93.9% = A-  
88% - 89.9% = B+  
84% - 87.9% = B  
80% - 83.9% = B-  
78% - 79.9% = C+  
74% - 77.9% = C  
64% - 73.9% = D  
63.9% and below = F

The assignment of incomplete or "I" grades will be assigned only in cases of extreme emergencies and in cases where a passing grade may be earned. However, should an "I" grade be required, students should notify the instructor at the time such circumstances exist. Upon notification, a course completion contract between the student and instructor will be developed before the last week of the semester.

#### *Policy on late submissions:*

Throughout the semester, it is likely that things will come up. I provide students with 5 late days that they can use at their discretion throughout the course. You can use the days all at once on a single assignment or spread them out. Please email me to let me know you are using one of your late days. These days cannot be used on the final assignment deadlines. Beyond these 5 late days, any late assignments will be docked 5% for each day late.

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**Course Schedule**

**\*All readings can be found on Canvas.**

<b>Class Session</b>	<b>Topics</b>	<b>Readings (To be read before assigned class date)</b>	<b>Assignments Due (Submit on Canvas by 9am on day of class)</b>
Week #1: 1/14	<i>Course Introduction</i> <i>What is Research?</i> <i>How to Read Research</i>		
Week #2: 1/21	<i>What is a Systematic Literature Review?</i> <i>Topics in Education Research</i>	Petticrew, Chapter 1 Posey-Maddox et al, 2025	
Week # 3:1/28	<i>Identifying Rigorous Research in Education</i> <i>From Topics to Questions</i>	Petticrew, Chapter 2 (pg 35-49) & skim Chapter 3 Tai et al, pgs 91-102	<b>Assignment #1: Topic Brainstorm</b>
Week #4: 2/4	<i>Mini Writing Workshop</i> <i>Searching the Literature</i>	Silvia, Chapter 5 Mason-Jones et al, 2012	<b>Assignment #2: Project Proposal</b>
Week #5: 2/11	<i>Multi-Article Synthesis</i>	Petticrew, Chapter 6  <b>NOTE: It is VERY important that you read all of these articles before class. The readings are necessary to complete the in-class assignment.</b>  1. Johnson et al, 2020 2. Bersamin et al, 2016 3. Strolin-Goltzman, 2010	<b>(In-Class) Assignment #3: Multi-Article Synthesis</b>

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Week #6: 2/18	<i>Research Matrices</i>	Petticrew, Chapter 5 Tai et al, pgs 103-108	<b>Preliminary References List</b>
Week #7: 2/25	<i>Organizing and Outlining a Research Paper</i>	Marsh, 2012	<b>Assignment #4: Research Matrix, Part 1</b>
Week #8: 3/4	<i>Introduction Sections</i>	Welsh, 2018	<b>Assignment #4: Research Matrix, Part 2</b>
Spring Break, No Class on 3/11			
Week #9: 3/18	<i>Methods Sections</i>	Petticrew, Chapter 7	
Week #10: 3/25	<i>Writing Workshop</i>	Sword, Chapter 4, 5, 6, & 7	<b>Assignment #5: Introduction</b>
Week #11: 4/1	<i>Results Sections</i>	Graff & Birkenstein, Chapter 1, 2, & 3 Berkowitz et al, 2017	<b>Assignment #6: Methods</b>
Week #12: 4/8	<i>Discussion Sections Organizing Your Arguments</i>	Graff & Birkenstein, Chapter 4, 5, & 7	<b>Assignment #7 Results Section, Part 1</b>
Week #13: 4/15	<i>Final Presentation Day 1</i>		
Week #14: 4/22	<i>Final Presentation Day 2 Course Wrap-up</i>		
<b>Final Papers Due Friday 5/2 at 11:59pm (This provides me about a week to grade all final papers before grades are due).</b>			
Final Exam Period	<b>Thursday May 8th, 8am</b>		

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## Additional Course Policies

### Attendance:

#### *University Attendance Policy*

1. Attendance and punctuality are required. The Bulletin of the University describes regular class attendance as “a student obligation” and reminds us that “no right or privilege exists that permits a student to be absent from a given number of class meetings.”
2. On rare occasions, it may be necessary to request that an absence be excused, e.g., for illness, death of an immediate family member or other emergencies. It is the student’s obligation to give prior notification of such absences if at all possible. Lastly, although the University calendar does not recognize religious holidays, we will make accommodations for students requesting to miss class due to the observance of religious holidays. *Students should make every effort to attend class. Students who do not attend class should call the instructor immediately to explain the absence and discuss the ways to make up for missed work.*
3. Instructors have the right to lower course grades because of absences or tardiness, provided in both cases that advance notice of the policy is given.

### Syllabus Changes

The instructor reserves the right to make changes to the syllabus, including project due dates and test dates, when unforeseen circumstances occur. These changes will be announced as early as possible so that students can adjust their schedules. **The most up to date course materials, assignments, and due dates will be maintained on the class Canvas site.**

### 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 Student Affairs 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> or contact the Office of Student Conduct at 919-962-0804 or at [jpa@unc.edu](mailto:jpa@unc.edu)

### Policy on Prohibited Harassment and Discrimination:

The University’s Policy on Prohibited Harassment and Discrimination (<https://eoc.unc.edu/our-policies/ppdhrm/>) prohibits discrimination or harassment on the basis of an individual’s race, color, gender, national origin, 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 contact the Equal Opportunity/ADA Office for assistance at 919-966-3576 or via email at [equalopportunity@unc.edu](mailto:equalopportunity@unc.edu) or through U.S. Mail at

*Last revised January 14, 2025*

Equal Opportunity/ADA Office  
The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill  
100 East Franklin Street, Unit 110  
Campus Box 9160  
Chapel Hill, NC 27599

Accessibility and Resource Services:

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill provides, upon request, appropriate academic accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. The provision of services and accommodations is intended to ensure equal access, not guarantee success, in the academic environment. Academic requirements may be modified, as necessary, to ensure that they do not discriminate against students with disabilities. Academic requirements that are essential to programs of instruction (e.g., grade point averages, specific prerequisite courses) are not considered discriminatory and cannot be waived. These modifications, coordinated through DDS, shall neither affect the substance of the educational program nor compromise educational standards. Students can request that DDS send a letter to specific faculty members outlining the reasonable accommodation(s) recommended for the Class in which the student is enrolled. Students are then responsible for initiating discussions with their instructors about the need for accommodations. For more information, visit <https://ars.unc.edu/>