



Course Syllabus: **EDUC5501 Research Methods**
AgathonU Professor(s): Jennifer (Jamie) Ervin, Ed.D.
For Program: MDiv., MAAF, M.Ed. / 60 hours
Revision Date: **8/5/2026**

Policies (Links) [Enrollment Agreement](#)
[Standards of Intellectual Honesty](#)

[Withdrawal and Refund Policy](#)
[Writing Style Policy](#)

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

EDUC5501 Research Methods introduces the graduate student to various research design methods. The course emphasizes analysis, methodology, and techniques that can assist the learner to prepare for the master's thesis or research project.

II. AGATHON PROFESSOR(S) BIO

Jamie Ervin has served in public and private education at the k-12 and post-secondary levels as a classroom teacher, curriculum and assessment coordinator, instructional coach, school administrator, enrollment manager, and course developer in her 20+ years in education. She began her career serving in public education as a high school social studies teacher. Her passion for education led her to pursue her master's degree in special education from Ohio University. A continued passion for building and implementing best practices in instructional delivery and curricular development led her to serve in various teaching roles, as a building administrator, and as an assistant director of enrollment at a private university while serving as a part-time instructor at the post-secondary level. During her tenure as a high school assistant principal, Ervin pursued a Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership at Liberty University, completing her dissertation research focusing on implementation of best practices in online education. Currently, Ervin serves as a special education teacher and assessment coordinator for a fully online k-12 public school in addition to serving in her role as a faculty member at Agathon University.

III. COURSE TEXTS AND RESOURCES

- (1) The Bible is a primary textbook for this course. Please use any of the following translations: NASB, ESV, KJV, or NKJV.
- (2) Appearance Publishers. (2021). APA Manual 7th Edition Simplified for Easy Citation: Concise APA Style Guide for Students. (current price from <https://apastyle.apa.org/products/publication-manual-7th-edition-spiral> - \$44.99)
- (3) Bhattacharjee, A. (2012). Social science research: Principles, methods, and practices. Textbooks Collection. 3. https://digitalcommons.usf.edu/oa_textbooks/3/ (Free resource available through Open Educational Resources)
- (4) Mauldin, R. (n.d.). Foundations of social work research. <https://opentextbooks.uregina.ca/foundationsofsocialworkresearch/chapter/4-1-types-of-research/> (Free resource available through Open Educational Resources)
- (5) Purdue Online Writing Lab. (n.d.). Welcome to the Purdue online writing lab. Purdue Online Writing Lab. <https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/> (Free to use website)

- (6) Purdue Online Writing Lab. (n.d.). General format. Purdue Online Writing Lab.
https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/apa_style/apa_formatting_and_style_guide/general_format.html (Free to use website)

IV. COURSE SCHEDULE AND OUTLINE

Module 1 – The Research Process & The Research Question – Jamie Ervin, Ed.D.

Learners will explore various research methods and how they are applied to address research questions. Through an examination of research practices, learners will investigate ways research impacts society. Beginning with an introduction into the basic terminology associated with research (e.g., hypotheses, variables, types of data, and analysis), learners will review approaches to identifying problems and developing research questions.

1. *Reading Assignment*
 - Read: Bhattacharjee, pp. 1-25. Introduction to Research
2. *Reading Content Assessment*

Graduate: Learners will write a 300-500-word summary on *each* assigned reading and highlight one way in which the reading was helpful or informative.
3. *Module Assessment*

Graduate: Learners will create a 7–10-minute video summarizing the information covered in the module, with appropriate emphasis on important facts and issues.
4. *Reading Content Assessment*

Graduate: Learners will write a 300-500-word summary on *each* assigned reading and highlight one way in which the reading was helpful or informative.
5. *Interaction Assessment*

Learners will create an initial, substantive post on the assigned question(s)/topic(s), and will respond to at least two other posts by Faculty and/or Learners. Initial posts should address the question/topic, should reflect appropriate critical thought, should be well formatted and communicated, and should be gracious and edifying (even if critical).
6. *Interaction question(s)/topic(s):*
 - What are some professionally accepted research practices?
 - What are some research methods you may use specifically to address research questions?
 - How does research impact society?
 - what are some approaches to developing research questions?

Module 2 – Key Research Approaches – Jamie Ervin, Ed.D.

Learners will investigate three key forms of research: exploratory, descriptive, and explanatory research. Through an exploration of these key research forms, learners will differentiate between the approaches and explain key uses and applications of each.

1. *Reading Assignment*
 - Read: Section 4.1 Types of Research, accessible from
<https://opentextbooks.uregina.ca/foundationsofsocialworkresearch/chapter/4-1-types-of-research/>
2. *Reading Content Assessment*

Graduate: Learners will write a 300-500-word summary on *each* assigned reading and highlight one way in which the reading was helpful or informative.

3. *Module Assessment*

Graduate: Learners will create a 7–10-minute video summarizing the information covered in the module, with appropriate emphasis on important facts and issues.

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6. *Interaction question(s)/topic(s) should be listed here.*

- What might be 2-3 benefits of the exploratory research approach?
- How might using the descriptive approach to research be beneficial?
- Describe one way you could use one of the three main approaches to research in your daily life.

Module 3 – Ethics in Research and Communication – Jamie Ervin, Ed.D.

Learners will examine ethical practices in research and research design. Learners will explore ethical frameworks for research and review case studies that led to the establishment of modern ethical practices including informed consent, institutional review, and specific codes of ethics in research.

1. *Reading Assignment*

- Read: Read Chapter 3: Ethics in Social Work Research, accessible via <https://opentextbooks.uregina.ca/foundationsofsocialworkresearch/part/chapter-three-ethics-in-social-work-research/>
- Read: Five Principles for Research Ethics from the American Psychological Association, accessible from <https://www.apa.org/monitor/jan03/principles>
- Read Bhattacharjee, pp. 137-142—Research Ethics

2. *Reading Content Assessment*

Graduate: Learners will write a 300-500-word summary on *each* assigned reading and highlight one way in which the reading was helpful or informative.

3. *Module Assessment*

Graduate: Learners will create a 7–10-minute video summarizing the information covered in the module, with appropriate emphasis on important facts and issues.

4. *Reading Content Assessment*

Graduate: Learners will write a 300-500-word summary on *each* assigned reading and highlight one way in which the reading was helpful or informative.

5. *Interaction Assessment*

Learners will create an initial, substantive post on the assigned question(s)/topic(s), and will respond to at least two other posts by Faculty and/or Learners. Initial posts should address the question/topic, should reflect appropriate critical thought, should be well formatted and communicated, and should be gracious and edifying (even if critical).

6. *Interaction question(s)/topic(s):*

- What do you believe are the three most important principles for ethical research presented by the APA? Why?
- Which of the presented studies addressed in this section do you find the most concerning?
- Why is informed consent such an important aspect to the research process?

Module 4 – Introduction to Qualitative Methods – Jamie Ervin, Ed.D.

Learners will delve into the basic tenets of qualitative research methods. An introduction to approaches for exploring phenomena will be examined, and learners will familiarize themselves with major approaches to qualitative research including observations, interviews, case studies, and focus groups. A brief introduction into associated data collection procedures is included.

1. Reading Assignment

- Read Bhattacharjee, pp. 73-82, 93-112 – Data Collection
- Read 7.4 Qualitative Research, accessible from <https://open.lib.umn.edu/psychologyresearchmethods/chapter/7-4-qualitative-research/>

2. Reading Content Assessment

Graduate: Learners will write a 300-500-word summary on *each* assigned reading and highlight one way in which the reading was helpful or informative.

3. Module Assessment

Graduate: Learners will create a 7–10-minute video summarizing the information covered in the module, with appropriate emphasis on important facts and issues.

4. Reading Content Assessment

Graduate: Learners will write a 300-500-word summary on *each* assigned reading and highlight one way in which the reading was helpful or informative.

5. Interaction Assessment

Learners will create an initial, substantive post on the assigned question(s)/topic(s), and will respond to at least two other posts by Faculty and/or Learners. Initial posts should address the question/topic, should reflect appropriate critical thought, should be well formatted and communicated, and should be gracious and edifying (even if critical).

6. Interaction question(s)/topic(s):

- What makes the qualitative research approach unique?
- Describe two or three benefits of qualitative research approaches.
- Identify three data collection methods commonly used in qualitative research studies.

Module 5 – Sampling, Scales, Tests, & Surveys – Jamie Ervin, Ed.D.

Learners will examine the role of sampling in conducting research. Through an investigation of several common types of sampling, learners will familiarize themselves with approaches to determine appropriate sampling procedures for specific research goals and populations. Learners are also presented with an overview of how to scale data collection. Reliability and validity are explored in relation to these approaches. Learners will review common techniques for collecting and examining survey data. Emphasis will be placed on the significance of determining when and how surveys may be effectively utilized in research.

1. Reading Assignment

- Read Bhattacharjee, pp. 43-64 – Measurement of Constructs and Scale Reliability and Validity
- Read Bhattacharjee, pp. 65-72 – Sampling

2. Reading Content Assessment

Graduate: Learners will write a 300-500-word summary on *each* assigned reading and highlight one way in which the reading was helpful or informative.

3. Module Assessment

Graduate: Learners will create a 7–10-minute video summarizing the information covered in the module, with appropriate emphasis on important facts and issues.

4. Reading Content Assessment

Graduate: Learners will write a 300-500-word summary on *each* assigned reading and highlight one way in which the reading was helpful or informative.

5. Interaction Assessment

Learners will create an initial, substantive post on the assigned question(s)/topic(s), and will respond to at least two other posts by Faculty and/or Learners. Initial posts should address the question/topic, should reflect appropriate critical thought, should be well formatted and communicated, and should be gracious and edifying (even if critical).

6. Interaction question(s)/topic(s):

- Describe the benefits to random sampling procedures.
- Explain at least one challenge random sampling methods poses in research processes.
- Describe when criterion sampling procedures may be appropriate and why.

Module 6 – Experimental Research and Research Design – Jamie Ervin, Ed.D.

Learners examine various methods for conducting experimental design. An investigation of key vocabulary terms is a focus throughout this module.

1. Reading Assignment

- Read: Bhattacharjee, pp. 83-92 – Experimental Research
- Read Experimental Design: What is it and when should it be used? via <https://opentextbooks.uregina.ca/foundationsofsocialworkresearch/chapter/12-1-experimental-design-what-is-it-and-when-should-it-be-used/>

2. Reading Content Assessment

Graduate: Learners will write a 300-500-word summary on *each* assigned reading and highlight one way in which the reading was helpful or informative.

3. Module Assessment

Graduate: Learners will create a 7–10-minute video summarizing the information covered in the module, with appropriate emphasis on important facts and issues.

4. Reading Content Assessment

Graduate: Learners will write a 300-500-word summary on *each* assigned reading and highlight one way in which the reading was helpful or informative.

5. Interaction Assessment

Learners will create an initial, substantive post on the assigned question(s)/topic(s), and will respond to at least two other posts by Faculty and/or Learners. Initial posts should address the question/topic, should reflect appropriate critical thought, should be well formatted and communicated, and should be gracious and edifying (even if critical).

6. Interaction question(s)/topic(s):

- What makes experimental research unique (what must be present for true experimental design)?
- Describe two or three benefits of experimental research design.
- How does quasi-experimental design differ from true experimental design?

Module 7 – Introduction to Qualitative Analysis – Jamie Ervin, Ed.D.

Learners will explore approaches to analyzing data from interpretive and qualitative approaches. Specific focus is given to rigor in interpretive research, including methods to gauge dependability, credibility, confirmability, and transferability. Learners explore how qualitative analysis requires the researcher to analyze data in various ways to make sense of the phenomenon as opposed to predicting or trying to explain a phenomenon.

1. Reading Assignment

- Read: Read Bhattacharjee, pp. 103-128 – Interpretive Research & Qualitative Analysis
- Read Unique Features of Qualitative Research accessible via <https://opentextbooks.uregina.ca/foundationsofsocialworkresearch/part/chapter-nine-unique-features-of-qualitative-research/Bhattacharjee, pp. 1-25. Introduction to Research>

2. *Reading Content Assessment*

Graduate: Learners will write a 300-500-word summary on *each* assigned reading and highlight one way in which the reading was helpful or informative.

3. *Module Assessment*

Graduate: Learners will create a 7–10-minute video summarizing the information covered in the module, with appropriate emphasis on important facts and issues.

4. *Reading Content Assessment*

Graduate: Learners will write a 300-500-word summary on *each* assigned reading and highlight one way in which the reading was helpful or informative.

5. *Interaction Assessment*

Learners will create an initial, substantive post on the assigned question(s)/topic(s), and will respond to at least two other posts by Faculty and/or Learners. Initial posts should address the question/topic, should reflect appropriate critical thought, should be well formatted and communicated, and should be gracious and edifying (even if critical).

6. *Interaction question(s)/topic(s):*

- Explain how trustworthiness is gauged in qualitative research studies.
- How is content analysis conducted and what are the main reasons for using this analysis method?
- Describe how coding is used in the analysis process for qualitative research studies.

Module 8 – Descriptive and Inferential Statistics – Jamie Ervin, Ed.D.

Learners examine basic statistical procedures including descriptive statistics (mean, median, mode, distribution, variation, and correlation). Other basic statistical concepts and methods including t-test for analysis of variance (ANOVA) and the analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) are explored.

1. *Reading Assignment*

- Read Bhattacharjee, pp. 119-136 – Descriptive and Inferential Statistics

2. *Reading Content Assessment*

Graduate: Learners will write a 300-500-word summary on *each* assigned reading and highlight one way in which the reading was helpful or informative.

3. *Module Assessment*

Graduate: Learners will create a 7–10-minute video summarizing the information covered in the module, with appropriate emphasis on important facts and issues.

4. *Reading Content Assessment*

Graduate: Learners will write a 300-500-word summary on *each* assigned reading and highlight one way in which the reading was helpful or informative.

5. *Interaction Assessment*

Learners will create an initial, substantive post on the assigned question(s)/topic(s), and will respond to at least two other posts by Faculty and/or Learners. Initial posts should address the question/topic, should reflect appropriate critical thought, should be well formatted and communicated, and should be gracious and edifying (even if critical).

6. *Interaction question(s)/topic(s):*

- How are descriptive statistics useful in research?
- Describe how inferential statistics may support data analysis processes.
- Describe how descriptive and inferential statistics differ.

Module 9 – Analyzing a Research Proposal – Jamie Ervin, Ed.D.

In this module, learners apply information gained throughout the course to analyze a research proposal. Learners will examine a research proposal and identify strengths and areas where the proposal could be improved based upon the learners' understanding of a strong research proposal. Learners will select a sample proposal to critique. Learners will critique a research proposal.

1. Reading Assignment

- Read: Read Examples of Research Proposals accessible via <https://www.yorksj.ac.uk/study/postgraduate/research/apply/examples-of-research-proposals/Bhattacharjee>, pp. 1-25. Introduction to Research

2. Reading Content Assessment

Graduate: Learners will write a 300-500-word summary on *each* assigned reading and highlight one way in which the reading was helpful or informative.

3. Module Assessment

Graduate: Learners will create a 7–10-minute video summarizing the information covered in the module, with appropriate emphasis on important facts and issues.

4. Reading Content Assessment

Graduate: Learners will write a 300-500-word summary on *each* assigned reading and highlight one way in which the reading was helpful or informative.

5. Interaction Assessment

Learners will create an initial, substantive post on the assigned question(s)/topic(s), and will respond to at least two other posts by Faculty and/or Learners. Initial posts should address the question/topic, should reflect appropriate critical thought, should be well formatted and communicated, and should be gracious and edifying (even if critical).

6. Interaction question(s)/topic(s):

- What is one thing you noticed as you were reviewing research proposals that you found interesting?
- What research proposal did you select to review and why?
- Describe at least three critical components of a strong research proposal

Module 10 – Preparing a Research Proposal – Jamie Ervin, Ed.D., Ed.S., M.Ed.

In this module, learners apply information gained throughout the course to develop a research question that could be used to create a research proposal. Learners will identify a problem, determine a focus, and compose a research question to address the problem statement.

1. Reading Assignment

- Read “How to Write a Problem Statement” accessible from <https://www.scribbr.com/research-process/problem-statement/>
- Read: Bhattacharjee, pp. 1-25. Introduction to Research

2. Reading Content Assessment

Graduate: Learners will write a 300-500-word summary on *each* assigned reading and highlight one way in which the reading was helpful or informative.

3. Module Assessment

Graduate: Learners will create a 7–10-minute video summarizing the information covered in the module, with appropriate emphasis on important facts and issues.

4. Reading Content Assessment

Graduate: Learners will write a 300-500-word summary on *each* assigned reading and highlight one way in which the reading was helpful or informative.

5. Interaction Assessment

Learners will create an initial, substantive post on the assigned question(s)/topic(s), and will respond

to at least two other posts by Faculty and/or Learners. Initial posts should address the question/topic, should reflect appropriate critical thought, should be well formatted and communicated, and should be gracious and edifying (even if critical).

6. *Interaction question(s)/topic(s):*

- Explain the steps to prepare a research question.
- Describe the purpose of the literature review.
- Explain what is meant by "filling the gap" in the existing literature.

Course Content Assessment

Graduate: Learners will write a 1500–2000-word paper or create a 7-10 minute video summarizing the course highlights and explaining how the course has impacted your thinking.

Competency Assessment

Learners will select and complete any 1 of the 3 competency assignments. Specifics of the assessment *must* be preapproved by the Mentoring Professor:

1. Practical Engagement Component – a practical social engagement of 2-3 hours applying principles and a 2000-word report discussing: (1) Introduction of the Engagement, (2) Methodology, (3) Summary of What Happened, and (4) Benefits and Implications
2. Writing Component – a publishable quality paper 5000-7000 words on an approved topic related to the course material.
3. Teaching Encounter Component – preparing, delivering, recording, and submitting a 40–60-minute teaching to a live audience on an approved topic related to the course material.

V. LEARNING OUTCOMES

Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs)

1. Develop a critical understanding of the nature, process, development, and application of effective and ethical research methods.
2. Demonstrate an understanding of key concepts and purposes of qualitative and quantitative research.
3. Demonstrate an understanding of common types of sampling and identify appropriate methods for specific research scenarios.
4. Analyze and evaluate the components of research methods presented in a research proposal.
5. Apply knowledge of ethical research methods, processes, and procedures to develop a strong research question.

Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs)

1. To develop Learners' professional competency and skills in Biblical learning theory and leadership practice.
2. To develop Learners' competency in research and methods in Biblical learning theory and leadership.
3. To integrate Learners' Biblical worldview and perspective on transformative learning and leadership.
4. To prepare Learners for advanced level coursework.

Agathon UAF Learning Outcomes (ALOs)

1. *Critical Thinking, Problem Solving, and Research* – Learners will demonstrate ability to think critically from a Biblical worldview platform, solve problems, and conduct interdisciplinary research at a level appropriate to their program, and in a way that is gracious and beneficial to those operating within other worldviews.
2. *Personal Growth* – Learners will understand how learning is related to personal growth, and will be challenged to grow in their thinking, communication, conduct, and engagement with others.
3. *Skills Development* – Learners will advance in skills related to their area of learning, demonstrating a level of competency appropriate to their program.
4. *Social Responsibility* – Learners will appreciate the diversity in and value of others as designed by our Creator, and will grow in willingness and capability to serve others.
5. *Worldview Applications* – Learners will become capable at thinking from a Biblical worldview perspective and will understand the relationship of description and prescription, so that they can ground their actions in sound principles.

VI. ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING RUBRIC (1000 POINTS)

Module Assessments	(20 points each x 10)	200 Points	CLO 1,2,3,4,5 / PLO 2,4 / ALO #3,4
Reading Content Assessments	(20 points each x 10)	200 Points	CLO # / PLO # / ALO #1,2
Interaction Assessments	(10 points each x 10)	100 Points	CLO # / PLO # / ALO #2
Course Content Assessment		250 Points	CLO # / PLO # / ALO #3,5
Competency Assessment		250 Points	CLO # / PLO # / ALO #4,5
Total COURSE Points		1000 Points	

[View the Agathon UAF Grading Policy and Assessment Rubrics Here](#)

VII. GRADING SCALE

Letter grades are given, which represent the following percentages:

- A - 94-100% - Excellent
- B - 86-93% - Above Average
- C - 78-85% - Average
- D - 70-77% - Inferior
- F - Below 70%
- WP - Withdrew passing
- WF - Withdrew failing

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Students receiving “D” or “F” grades in any course will be notified in the middle of the semester.

VIII. CARNEGIE UNIT CREDIT HOUR EQUIVALENT

Total Hours of Module Content:	20 hours
Total Hours of Reading Content:	60 hours
Total Hours of Minor Assessments:	50 hours
Total Hours of Major Assessment:	50 hours

Equivalent of 3 Credit Hours (60 hours of total course time per credit hour)