

University of Arkansas – Fort Smith

5210 Grand Avenue
P. O. Box 3649
Fort Smith, AR 72913–3649
479–788–7000

Graduate Studies General Syllabus

MELA 6223 Capstone/Thesis Project in English

Credit Hours: 3 Lecture Hours: 3 Laboratory Hours: 0

Prerequisite(s): 18 hours of graduate work completed, MED 5003 Action Research in Education, and consent of Department Head.

Effective Catalog: 2019-2020

I. Graduate Course Information

A. Catalog Description

Drawing on prior knowledge and experience, course knowledge and current research in his/her area of specialization; embodying original, independent, and applied scholarship to complete a major Capstone project or Master's thesis that merits academic scholarship. An oral defense of the thesis or capstone project is required.

B. Additional Information

The purpose of this course is to enable the graduate candidate to acquire an in-depth professional knowledge of a selected topic within the field of English education through an advanced level composition of a Master's thesis or a Capstone project of equal academic scholarship. The thesis is a research investigation designed specifically to generate and/or critically examine new knowledge in the theory and/or practice of English education.

Master's Thesis and Oral Presentation: Under the guidance of a supervising committee, the graduate candidate will make a contribution to the knowledge of his/her area of specialization in English education - embodying original, independent, applied scholarship. This contribution may take the form of: research based inquiry through data collection and analysis; a comprehensive, critical review and analysis of literature in a field of English education; the development of a theoretical position; a critique of curriculum materials or of policies and practices in the field of English education; or some combination of these aforementioned formats or another approved topic. An oral evaluation focuses on the content, context and implications of the work.

Capstone Project and Oral Presentation: Under the guidance of a supervising committee, the graduate candidate will complete a major research project that

is equal to a thesis in academic quality, but which may be more limited in scope and/or degree of originality. The Capstone project may take on a variety of forms, such as: a critical review of the literature on a topic of interest; an essay that explores a theoretical position; a research study of either a qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods nature; or a curriculum or program development project. An oral evaluation focuses on the content, context and implications of the work.

II. Student Learning Outcomes

A. Subject Matter

Upon successful completion of this course, the student will be able to:

1. Demonstrate knowledge and understanding in the field of English education.
2. Demonstrate an ability to critically and systematically integrate knowledge and research, using appropriate methods to undertake advanced tasks within a predetermined timeframe in order to contribute to the formation of knowledge in the field of English education.
3. Demonstrate an ability in both speech and written form exemplary of advanced level academia.
4. Demonstrate the ability to evaluate disciplinary, social, and ethical issues relevant to ethical aspects of research in the field of English education.
5. Demonstrate insight into the possibilities and limitations of research.
6. Demonstrate in-depth and current knowledge and understanding of scholarly inquiry within selected areas of educational research and its possible impact on educational practice.

B. Program Learning Outcomes:

The M.Ed. program bases Program Learning Outcomes on the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS). The NBPTS establishes and upholds rigorous expectations for what expert teachers should know and do. This graduate course enhances student abilities in the following areas:

Commitment: Teachers believe that all students can learn and meet high expectations. Teachers are committed to all learners and are passionate about teaching. They develop relationships with students in a variety of educational settings. Teachers create learning experiences that differentiate instruction to meet the needs of all students. They understand their subjects and how to teach those subjects to students.

Responsibility: Teachers facilitate and supervise student learning. Teachers embrace a variety of methods to increase student success. They establish social norms within a variety of dynamic grouping options. They

motivate and engage students while assessing student performance.

Systematic Thinking: Teachers critique their practices and learn from experience. Teachers evaluate their practices and expand their learning based on best practices, current research, evolving technologies, and student data.

Leadership: Teachers demonstrate leadership that fosters excellence, effectiveness, and collaboration with colleagues, families, and the community. Teachers approach their work with a team mentality. They collaborate with all stakeholders sharing vital information and planning a course of action that will improve the effectiveness of the school.

III. Major Graduate Course Topics

Major course topics will vary based on the graduate candidate's needs and the research method and topic.

- A. Capstone project/thesis guidelines
- B. Research methods alignment with projects
- C. Development of research proposal or capstone project
- D. Selection of committee
- E. Evaluation, synthesis, and analysis of research data
- F. Implementation of research process