Professor Rachel Leventhal-Weiner  
Office hours: McCook 312 T/Th 11am – 12pm  
Email: Rachel.leventhalweiner@trincoll.edu  
Phone: 860-297-2294

**Course objectives:**
The senior seminar fulfills the senior exercise requirement for all Education Studies majors. The course is designed to guide students through the design and execution of an independent research project. In the seminar we focus on refining a researchable question, collecting and analyzing data, and presenting research findings orally and in writing. The weekly seminar provides a forum for students’ research activities and support for the research process.

**Readings:**
There is no text for this course. I will provide hard copies or e-copies of the required readings at least one week in advance.

**Course criteria (out of 100 points):**

- **Research progress reports:** 10  
  Students will complete and share progress reports on their research on a weekly basis.

- **IRB protocols:** 5  
  Students will complete and submit necessary IRB protocols with Trinity and Hartford Public Schools (when applicable) in order to clear their research.

- **Class participation:** 15  
  Students must attend and participate in seminar discussion and activities.

- **Revised research plan memo:** 5  
  Students will revise their research plans and provide an outline for the rest of their project.

- **Literature memo:** 5  
  Students will summarize one key article for their literature review in a brief memo.

- **Methods memo:** 5  
  Students will summarize their methods in a memo.

- **Thesis and evidence paper:** 10  
  Students will write a 5-page paper (minimum) paper combining their revised research plan, literature review memo and methods memo while foreshadowing their results.

- **Public Research Presentation:** 10  
  Students will deliver a 10-minute presentation of their research project in progress to their peers and invited guests. Students will nominate a guest evaluator several weeks in advance.

- **Final Paper:** 35  
  Students will incorporate feedback from their public research presentation into their final draft to be submitted by December XX.
**Research Project Criteria:**

1. Does the author pose a thought-provoking, researchable question (or hypothesis) and explain its significance to educational studies?
2. Does the author connect the question to the existing research literature and move beyond into new territory?
3. Does the author identify the most appropriate primary sources and research methods for this study?
4. Does the author present a clear and insightful thesis that directly addresses the research question (or hypothesis)?
5. Is the author’s thesis persuasive? Is it supported with convincing evidence and analysis?
6. Is the paper (or presentation) well-organized and well-written? Are sources properly and consistently cited?
7. Does the author follow ethical guidelines for research?

**Please note:**

- This syllabus will undergo changes over the course of the semester. Please always refer to the version posted on Moodle.
- Late assignments will be penalized 10% each day they are late with exceptions granted only for documented excuses or family emergencies.
- **Repository:** All seminar participants are welcome and strongly encouraged to submit their final project to the online repository. However, anyone who wants to be eligible for honors in Ed Studies **must** deposit their final paper in the repository.

**Working groups:** In an effort to connect students studying similar topics or students using similar methods, I have created working groups based on your original research plans and will encourage you to work with your working group on literature review and methods issues.

**Methods**

- Mixed: Shantel, Nicole, Carlos
- Quant: Brigit, Booker, Taylor
- Qual (observations): Diana, Emily, Rosio
- Qual (interviews): Louise, Shanese, Danyelle, Pornpat

**Substantive**

- Race/higher education: Nicole, Shanese
- Out of school factors: Rosio, Shantel, Carlos, Diana
- Teaching/curriculum: Pornpat, Emily, Louise, Danyelle
- Choice/achievement: Brigit, Booker, Taylor
Course Outline

W1 (9/2) No formal class meeting
**Progress reports due 9/6

W2 (9/9): First class
Research project workflow: establishing good habits.
Discuss Research Project Criteria--the seven guiding points
Discuss "Write Less Badly"
Complete Research/Writing goals for seminar
**DRAFT IRB docs (Trinity and HPS) due 9/13

W3 (9/16): Thinking about educational research as a science: Comparing methods and thinking about where your project fits into the existing scholarship
Read: “Paradigms for Thinking about Ethnographic Research,” in Designing and Conducting Ethnographic Research, by Margaret LeCompte and Jean Schensul, pp. 41-51 and 55-60.
**Revised research plan memo due Friday, September 20th

W4 (9/23): Getting started on your project: Establishing your place in the scholarship
Rob Walsh to visit class and help us answer: How do I find the existing scholarship and connect my research to what's already been done?
In preparation for class: read sample article in your substantive working groups and prepare to discuss in class.
**Literature memo due Friday, September 27th

W5 (9/30): Connecting existing literature and data
In class data tutorial with Rachael Barlow
**Peer reviewing exercise in class (literature review memo)

W6 (10/7): Forms of evidence--analyzing and interpreting data.
What counts as data in educational research? How do educational researchers analyze/interpret data for a broader audience?
Methods discussion:

**Methods memo due Friday, October 11th**

**W7 (10/14 TD No class)**
Complete progress report and share via Moodle
No class but commit to visiting the Writing Center with either literature review or methods memo for feedback.

**Submit midterm reflection memo on Friday, October 18th**

**W8 (10/21): Working with data, a quantitative approach**
Discussion facilitated by quantitative working group

**W9 (10/28): Working with data, a qualitative approach**
Discussion facilitated by qualitative working groups

**W10 (11/4): Writing Boot Camp**
Class held in another location.
Bring laptops and notes to begin writing

**W11 (11/11): Thesis/Evidence**
Author: __________________________ Reviewer: __________________________
Author: __________________________ Reviewer: __________________________
Author: __________________________ Reviewer: __________________________

**W12 (11/18): Thesis/Evidence**
Author: __________________________ Reviewer: __________________________
Author: __________________________ Reviewer: __________________________
Author: __________________________ Reviewer: __________________________

**W13 (11/25): Thesis/Evidence**
Author: __________________________ Reviewer: __________________________
Author: __________________________ Reviewer: __________________________
Author: __________________________ Reviewer: __________________________

**W14 (12/2): Practice presentations**

**W15 (12/9): Practice presentations**

**Public Research Presentations: Friday, December 13th**

**Final Paper: Monday, December 16th by 5pm**