Family Studies Certificate Programs

Guidelines for FS 995E: Seminar and Special Problems – Human Development (Independent Study)

1. Familiarize yourself with APA writing style and publications guidelines.

2. Decide on a topic or area of expertise you would like to develop for your final paper.

3. Create a week-by-week semester timeline that includes specific goals and due dates toward completion of the final paper.

4. Identify multidisciplinary literature you will review.

5. Analyze and organize the literature relevant to your topic. Consider developing an annotated bibliography that includes and organizes the following:
   a. Key terms (with definitions)
   b. Key statistics
   c. Strengths (both substantive and methodological)
   d. Weaknesses (both substantive and methodological)
   e. Major trends or patterns (synthesize what you have read)
   f. Gaps in the literature and why they may exist
   g. Relevant theories
   h. Relationships between studies

   Keep your review focused on your topic; consider creating a table to organize and summarize findings.

6. Develop an outline of your paper:
   a. Consider your purpose and voice before you write.
   b. Answer the question “Why is this topic important?”
   c. Create a topic outline that organizes your argument.
   d. Do not just summarize a series of studies; this paper must involve analysis/synthesis.
   e. Demonstrate your command of your area of expertise substantively and methodologically.
   f. Present conclusions and implications.
   g. Suggest specific directions for future work.

7. Writing your paper:
   a. Provide an overview of your goals early in your paper.
   b. Specify your point of view early in the review.
   c. Use topic sentences.
   d. Use sub headings.
   e. Use transitions to help the reader.
   f. Check flow of argument for coherence.