Stephen F. Austin State university
James I. Perkins College of Education
Department of Human Services and Educational Leadership
Doctorate in Educational Leadership Program

EDLE 6199
Dissertation Writing

Instructor: Ali Hachem
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Course Time & Location: Online (with structured and optional Zoom sessions)
Credits: variable
Office hours: Mondays through Fridays, 9:00 am to 9:00 pm (online) and Zoom (structured and by appointment, any of the seven days of the week (9:00 am to 9:00 pm).

ZOOM Stable Link: https://sfasu.zoom.us/j/8727463271

“If you don't have time to read, you don't have the time (or the tools) to write. Simple as that” (Stephen King)

This syllabus is one among many other resources that describe the requirement for this course. It is your responsibility to familiarize yourself well with this syllabus and with all other resources as described in the respective D2L course and all its related communications, including those via Microsoft Teams.

I. Course prerequisites: this core program course is limited students who have advanced to Candidacy and who have secured the permission of a major professor/dissertation chair.

II. Course description and justification:

The number of credits you can register for each semester range from one to six. You have to earn at least 9 credit hours for this course and defend you dissertation successfully in order to graduate from the program.
A doctoral dissertation is required for partial fulfillment of the EdD in Educational Leadership. The dissertation reflects an original, scholarly contribution to the research literature relevant to educational leadership. At a minimum, students will enroll in two consecutive semesters/terms for the dissertation proposal/prospectus and the dissertation oral defense which must be scheduled in two different semesters/terms. Students must register for at least one credit each fall/spring semester and summer term; must maintain continuous enrollment until the dissertation is successfully defended, corrected/adjusted according to the committee’s will, and submitted to the Graduate School; must accumulate a minimum of 9 credit hours.

This course is classified as dissertation (as opposed to lecture, seminar, lab, practicum), meaning that the only focus of the credit is the independent, but guided work on the doctoral dissertation. For each credit hour, students should expect to spend at least 45 hours/15 week fall or spring semesters or 45 hours/10 weeks summer term.

Candidates are required to maintain contact with the committee chair EVERY enrolled long semester and summer term. The format of the dissertation must be acceptable to the SFA Graduate School. Please refer to the most current version of the EdD in Educational Leadership Dissertation Handbook for specific information.

Program practice has been to allow 10 years to complete the EdD in Educational Leadership. Generally, students require three to four years to complete doctoral coursework, successfully complete the comprehensive examination requirement, and be advanced to candidacy. Once students are advanced to candidacy and begin enrolling in this course, students must maintain continuous enrollment (fall, spring, summer) until the dissertation is successfully defended and the final polished version is submitted to the Graduate School.

III. Informing standards:

A. Stephen F. Austin State University mission statement: Stephen F. Austin State University (SFA) is a comprehensive institution dedicated to excellence in teaching, research, scholarship, creative work, and service. Through the personal attention of our faculty and staff, we engage our students in a learner-centered environment and offer opportunities to prepare for the challenges of living in the global community.

B. James I. Perkins College of Education vision, mission, core values, and diversity statement: The James I. Perkins College of Education will be the college of choice for students striving to achieve professional excellence through exemplary programs that are recognized at state, national, and international levels. The mission of the Perkins College of Education is to prepare competent, successful, caring and enthusiastic professionals from diverse backgrounds dedicated to responsible service, leadership, social justice and continued professional and intellectual development in an interconnected global society. Core values include academic excellence through critical, reflective, and creative thinking, life-long learning, collaboration and shared decision-making, openness to new ideas, to culturally diverse people, and to innovation and change, integrity, responsibility, diligence, and ethical behavior, and service that enriches the community. The James I. Perkins College of Education is committed to proactively recruiting and retaining a diverse faculty, staff, and student population. Through open dialogue, mutual respect and shared responsibility, faculty, staff and students will demonstrate an understanding and sensitivity to ethnicity, race, gender,
IV. Intended Learning Outcomes/Goals/Objectives:

A. Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs):
Students graduating with an Ed.D. in Educational Leadership will be able to:
   1. Use data, policy and research to lead continuous improvement and drive transformative change and innovation in P-20 education settings.
   2. Demonstrate knowledge of ethical and moral responsibilities of leadership.
   3. Apply theory and contextual knowledge to educational practice.
   4. Practice analytical and communication skills in leadership roles.
   5. Understand, design, and conduct research in educational leadership.

B. Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs):
   By the end of this experience, you will be able to:
   1. Identify the different elements of the research process and for a variety of research philosophies, paradigms, designs, and methods.
   2. Identify the different elements of a dissertation and for a variety of research philosophies, paradigms, designs, and methods.
   3. Identify best practices in cultural grounding of educational research.
   4. Identify best practices in theoretical grounding of educational research.
   5. Identify best practices in methodological grounding of educational research.
   6. Produce an IRB application
   8. Appreciate the need for narrative coherence when writing educational research.
   9. Identify best practices in academies search and use these in own writing.
  10. Identify best practices in academies writing and use these in own writing.
  11. Identify best practices in APA Style and use these in own writing.
  12. Produce and present a dissertation aligned with (1.) Through (11.) Above.

V. Pedagogical approach: This course follows an independent study instructional model where your chair supports and guides your independent work on the dissertation project. Your work and your instructor’s support take place mainly online, and on the D2L platform. D2L is the only platform that will be used. Work or communication delivered through other platforms will not be considered. The purpose here is to make sure you have access to the history of your work in one place. This history can then be visited for a variety of purposes, and as/if needed. Students who fail to contact their dissertation chair within the first 12 days of class each semester/first 5 days of class each summer term will be administratively dropped from enrollment in this course.

VI. Readings:

A. Required Texts/materials:
**B. Other readings/materials:**

All materials provided under the respective D2L course and its related communications, including Microsoft Teams.

**C. Optional General Readings:**

**A. Selected Proposals and Dissertations Texts:**


B. Selected Academic Writing Texts:


Williams, V. K. (2016). *I am not a writer and I am just in graduate school*. Chrysalis Consulting.


C. Selected Literature Review Texts:


D. Selected Conceptual Grounding Texts:


E. Selected Introductory Research Texts:


**F. Selected Introductory Qualitative Research Texts:**


**G. Selected Introductory Quantitative Research Texts:**


I. Selected Statistical Theory Texts:


G. Selected IBM SPSS Texts:


K. Selected Philosophy/Cultural Theory of Research Texts:


VII. Calendar, Assignments, Activities, Evaluation, and Assessments: for more details about these, refer to the D2L course. Student documentation of engagement and progress serve as the basis for assigning a grade of WH or an F for each enrolled term. The dissertation chair determines the grade based on the student documentation—WH for adequate progress or F for inadequate progress. The assignment of a grade of F stops the continuation of enrollment in EDLE 6199 Dissertation Writing and may result in dismissal.
from the program. Students who fail to contact their dissertation chair within the first 12 days of class each semester/first 5 days of class each summer term will be administratively dropped from enrollment in EDLE 6199 Dissertation Writing.

VIII. Course Must-Meet Expectations and Policies:

Must-Meet Expectations

Producing a good quality dissertation assumes certain skills, attitudes, and dispositions. The purpose of prior coursework in this program was to help you master these. In this course, you will make use of these skills, attitudes, and disposition to produce a good quality dissertation. Please be reminded that this course is an independent study when the course instructor takes the role of a facilitator rather than an instructor. You are not only your own instructor but your instructor’s instructor as well. The Dissertation Chair and Committee members are to serve only as guides in manuscript organization, clarifying research design and analyses, and raising critical questions about “holes” in the organization, interpretation of data, and reasoning reflected in the manuscript.

Academically, this is a higher-order and critical thinking doctorate course that requires an investment on your behalf of reflective time and effort. You are expected to engage with this project in authentic ways and to submit assignments of good quality (authenticity, inventiveness, and depth) and contribute positively to your overall growth.

Intellectually, you are expected to demonstrate some essential intellectual characteristics including but not limited to those of inquiry, critique, openness, reflexivity, and rigor. Be open to learning and reflexively embrace change.

Personally, you are expected to treat everybody with respect and good manners.

Professionally, your communications should meet professional standards expected from a doctorate student and an aspiring scholar-practitioner.

Relationally, the process of working on such a project is a collaborative and interactive activity between you and the course instructor. This process is most successful when it involves authentic tailored two-way communication that results in tangible improvement. I am here to help you WHENEVER you need help, and it does NOT matter how many times you will need it! Please communicate with me as frequent as you need to. This is my job here! It will be my pleasure to answer an email of yours, communicate with you via Zoom, or meet you in person if you need to. There is no irrelevant question or concern! Emails will be answered within 24 working hours. Feedback will be given within five working days.

Organizationally, be well-planned and manage your time properly. Be proactive. Communicate as and if you need to. Remember that every credit hour you register for is equivalent to 45 hours or individual work. Time is a critical factor. Take time seriously. If you need help, seek help. This project is yours! Do not assume it is anybody else’s. When receiving feedback, and if you are encouraged to re-submit, re-submit as soon as you can.

Technically, your writing should be of high caliber, comparable to that of good quality scholarship as presented in high caliber publication venues in the field of interest. Good writing is like a good, predictable, condensed, and rich story. A good narrative is logical,
flowing, coherent, and integrated. A good narrative is thematic, within and across its different parts, and against its overall identity. A good narrative is thick and rich. Your writing is expected to be coherent, creative, and does not include spelling, syntax, or grammar mistakes.

Stylistically, you are expected to use APA style for formatting, citation, and referencing at all times. You are also expected to adhere to any technical requirements set by your chair, the program, the department, the college, the graduate school, and the university. Enrollment in a doctoral program assumes effective written communication. Although the dissertation chair shall assist in typical editorial feedback for overall manuscript improvement and compliance to APA-style guidelines, the responsibility for attending to issues related to grammar, sentence structure, and paragraph organization resides solely with the student. Students are strongly encouraged to consult with the writing skills center at Steen Library to attend to persisting issues in this domain for which faculty are not responsible. A candidate for the doctoral degree must be able to use spoken and written English to the satisfaction of the dissertation committee.

Substantively, your work should be of high caliber, comparable to the substance of good quality scholarship as presented in high caliber publication venues in the field of interest. For the substance to be of high caliber, your work should demonstrate total command of the discourses of interest. Your understating of such discourses cannot be partial and reduced. The criterion for success here is that you will know these discourses like any other expert on the topic will.

Policies

Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities (Policy 6.1 and 6.6): To obtain disability related accommodations, alternate formats and/or auxiliary aids, students with disabilities must contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS), Human Services Building, and Room 325, 468-3004 as early as possible in the semester. Once verified, ODS will notify the course instructor and outline the accommodation and/or auxiliary aids to be provided. Failure to request services in a timely manner may delay your accommodations. For additional information, go to http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/.

Academic expectations: this is a synthetic and integrated dissertation course that requires an investment on your behalf of reflective time and effort. You are expected to submit assignments of good quality and contribute positively to your intellectual, academic, and professional growth.

Intellectual expectations: in this dissertation course, you are expected to demonstrate some essential intellectual characteristics including but not limited to those of inquiry, critique, openness, reflexivity, and rigor.

Personal expectations: in this dissertation course, you are expected to treat everybody you interact with respect and good manners. Your communications should meet professional standards expected from a dissertation student and an aspiring scholar-practitioner.

Work quality: as a dissertation student, you are expected to give your best in completing the required work. Assignments should be completed with care, meet all assignment criteria, and show authenticity, inventiveness, and depth. Your writing is expected to be coherent,
Participation and engagement: in this dissertation course, you are expected to engage with course materials, your chair, and your committee members in authentic ways that will contribute to your growth.

Late and missing work: All deadlines, as set by your chair, should be met. Failing to do so might affect your course grade and your standing in the program.

Hints for success: be organized and manage your time properly. Be proactive. Communicate if you need to. Be open to learning and reflexively embrace change. Anxiousness that leads you to be proactive is healthy. Anxiousness that makes you freeze is healthy. If you need help, ask for help!

Instructor support: Your chair is here to help you WHENEVER you need help, and it does NOT matter how many times you will need it! Please communicate with your chair as frequent as you need to. This is the chair's job here! It will be the chair's pleasure to answer an email of yours, communicate with you via Microsoft Teams, or meet you in person if you feasible. There is no irrelevant question or concern!

Scholarly Responsibility: You are ultimately responsible for the content and quality of your dissertation. While we will support you in every way we can, the final responsibility rests with you. You are expected to maintain a high standard of scholarship and writing, and you must engage any help you might need to produce a final dissertation that fulfills the dissertation requirements as specified by your dissertation chair and committee.

Scholarly Conduct: Our program demands high standards of academic integrity, scholarly conduct, and etiquette of doctoral candidates, and we treats misconduct as a serious offense. Academic offenses such as dishonesty, plagiarism (including self-plagiarism), falsification or fabrication of data, and academic sabotage of the work of another are specifically prohibited (for more details, see the Dissertation Handbook). Dispute over scholarly conduct is governed by the SFA Policy 4.1 (Student Academic Dishonesty). Per SFA Student Academic Dishonesty Policy 4.1, “Penalties may include, but are not limited to, reprimand, no credit for the assignment or exam, resubmission of the work, make-up exam, failure of the course, or expulsion from the university.”

Academic Honesty (Student Academic Dishonesty, Policy 4.1): Abiding by university policy on academic integrity is a responsibility of all university faculty and students. Definition of Academic Dishonesty: Academic dishonesty includes both cheating and plagiarism. Cheating includes, but is not limited to:

- using or attempting to use unauthorized materials on any class assignment or exam
- falsifying or inventing of any information, including citations, on an assignment; and/or
- helping or attempting to help another in an act of cheating or plagiarism

Plagiarism is presenting the words or ideas of another person as if they were one’s own. Examples of plagiarism include, but are not limited to:

- submitting an assignment as one's own work when it is at least partly the work of
another person;
• submitting a work that has been purchased or otherwise obtained from the Internet or another source; and/or,
• incorporating the words or ideas of an author into one's paper or presentation without giving the author credit.

Penalties for Academic Dishonesty: Penalties may include, but are not limited to reprimand, no credit for the assignment or exam, re-submission of the work, make-up exam, failure of the course, or expulsion from the university.

Student Appeals: A student who wishes to appeal decisions related to academic dishonesty should follow procedures outlined in Academic Appeals by Students (6.3).

**Paid and Unpaid Assistance:** All dissertations are, in fact, collaborative projects between the candidate and his or her committee. You will receive much assistance with the direction of your research from your Dissertation Chair and committee. Additionally, you are permitted to engage help with the physical formatting of your document. A colleague’s critical review of your document is generally recommended as well. The acceptability of further assistance is at the discretion of your Dissertation Chair. Anything that diminishes intellectual ownership of your work is much more than assistance and is not permissible. Check with the chair of your dissertation committee if you have any questions about the nature of what is acceptable. All assistance you receive, paid and unpaid, must be disclosed and briefly described, in the acknowledgment section of your dissertation. Should you be planning to use such assistance, do not start using it before the approval of your chair.

**Tracking Citations:** It is legally and ethically imperative that you accurately cite all sources used in your dissertation. This includes crosschecking all cited materials with the materials referenced to ensure that all information is accurate. For a document the size of a dissertation, this is an extensive and time-consuming project. Be mindful of this from the beginning and choose a method that will allow you to track all materials you use efficiently.

**Course Evaluation:** Near the conclusion of each semester, students in the Perkins College of Education electronically evaluate courses taken within the PCOE. Evaluation data is used for a variety of important purposes including:
1. Course and program improvement, planning, and accreditation;
2. Instruction evaluation purposes; and
3. Making decisions on faculty tenure, promotion, pay, and retention.

As you evaluate this course, please be thoughtful, thorough, and accurate in completing the evaluation. Please know that the PCOE faculty is committed to excellence in teaching and continued improvement. Therefore, your response is critical!”

In the Perkins College of Education, the course evaluation process has been simplified and is completed electronically through MySFA. Although the instructor will be able to view the names of students who complete the survey, all ratings and comments are confidential and anonymous, and summarized data will not be available to the instructor until after final grades are posted.

**Student Code of Conduct (Policy 10.4):** Classroom behavior should not interfere with the instructor’s ability to conduct the class or the ability of other students to learn from the instructional program. Unacceptable or disruptive behavior will not be tolerated. Students who disrupt the learning environment may be asked to leave class and may be subject to
judicial, academic or other penalties. This policy applies to all instructional forums, including electronic, classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. The instructor shall have full discretion over what behavior is appropriate/inappropriate in the classroom. Students who do not attend class regularly or who perform poorly on class projects/exams may be referred to the Early Alert Program at SFA.

**Mental Health:** SFASU values students’ mental health and the role it plays in academic and overall student success. SFA provides a variety of resources to support students mental health and wellness. Many of these resources are free, and all of them are confidential.

**On-campus Resources:**
(1) SFASU Counseling Services  
www.sfasu.edu/counseling  
Tucker Building (Southeast corner of Raguet and East College streets)  
936-468-2401  
(2) SFASU Human Services Counseling Clinic  
www.sfasu.edu/humanservices/139.asp  
Human Services Room 202  
936-468-1041

**Crisis Resources:**
Burke 24-hour crisis line 1(800) 392-8343  
Suicide Prevention Lifeline 1(800) 273-TALK (8255)  
Crisis Text Line: Text HELLO to 741-741

A complete list of mental health resources for students can be found at:  
[https://www.sfasu.edu/info-for/current-students/mental-health-resources](https://www.sfasu.edu/info-for/current-students/mental-health-resources)

More information about student wellness and support options can be found on the Health and Wellness Hub ([https://www.sfasu.edu/thehub](https://www.sfasu.edu/thehub)) and the Lumberjacks Wellness Network ([https://www.sfasu.edu/lwn](https://www.sfasu.edu/lwn)).

**IX. Disclaimer:** The instructor reserves the right to revise, alter and/or amend any section in this syllabus or any other related D2L or Microsoft Teams content, as deemed necessary. Students will be notified by email of any such revisions, alterations, and/or amendments.