

04/04

LDR 8561
RESEARCH ACTIVITIES IN LEADERSHIP TO SHAPE THE FUTURE

Course Syllabus
by
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A. COURSE DESCRIPTION

Organizations are alive with problems that require thoughtful resolution and, as a result, concomitant research activity. Research is a logical, dispassionate thought process used to solve problems as well as a method of inquiry that build knowledge. The purpose of LDR 8561 is to introduce participants to basic research methodology and the scientific method. The concepts, skills, and research practices introduced in LDR 8561 are intended to assist participants in completing assignments in core organizational leadership courses and the dissertation. Ultimately, however, the concepts, skills, and practices to which students are introduced can serve as indispensable tools valid for the solution or practical problems in organizations of all types.

In LDR 8561 students focus on the electronic search process for professional research literature, a review of various research models and methodologies, and the analysis of published research reports. The course is designed to be interactive and mediated by an instructor on the World Wide Web.

Participants will engage in research activities in support of the domain Leadership to Shape the Future, LDR 8510. The purpose of this course is to introduce students to the research skills and practices used in the organizational leadership program. The skills are intended to assist students in the dissertation process as well as in completion of assignments in the core organizational leadership courses

B. LEARNING OUTCOMES

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

1. Differentiate major categories of research.
2. Perform electronic searches of various databases and Educational Impact.
3. Identify the elements of the research process.
4. Analyze and interpret professional research.
5. Review procedures for conducting a research project.
6. Identify the standard research procedures in the dissertation process.
7. Locate critical course and program information.
8. Successfully complete coursework in an online environment.

C. REQUIRED TEXTS/IMPORTANT WEB LINKS

Charles, C. M., & Mertler, C. A. (2002). *Introduction to educational research* (4th ed.). Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

American Psychological Association. (2001). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (5th ed.). Washington, DC: Author.

Applied Research Office Home: <http://www.fgse.nova.edu/aro/index.htm>

FGS/Educational Impact Electronic Textbook. To be purchased at the Educational Impact Web site: <http://www.educationalimpact.com>

FGS/Organizational Leadership Homepage:
<http://www.fgse.nova.edu/orgleader>

Mills, P. K. (2002, August). *Form and style guidelines for course papers*. Fort. Lauderdale, FL: Nova Southeastern University.
<http://www.nova.edu/fgse/orgleader/resources/formnstyle.pdf>
(Note that, on page 4 regarding levels of headings, the third level heading should be indented, italicized, and the first word and proper nouns only should be capitalized. The third-level heading should be followed by a period and then text on the same line. These levels of headings correspond with APA Levels 1, 3, and 4 as per the discussion in APA on pages 114-115, section 3.32.)

Mills, P. K. (2003). *Guide to the applied dissertation process*. Fort Lauderdale, FL: Nova Southeastern University.
This resource can be found at the Applied Research Office:
<http://www.fgse.nova.edu/aro/pdf/guidedol.pdf>

Mills, P. K. (2003, June). *Style guide for the applied dissertation*. Fort Lauderdale, FL: Nova Southeastern University.
This guide can be found at the Applied Research Office:
<http://www.fgse.nova.edu/aro/pdf/sgad.pdf>

NSU Electronic Resources: <http://www.nova.edu/library/electlib>

NSU WebCT: <http://www.nova.edu/webct>

SUGGESTED READINGS

Friedman, B. D. (1998). *The research tool kit*. Pacific Grove: Brooks/Cole Publishing Company.

Leedy, P. D. & Ormrod, J. E. (2001). *Practical research* (7th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill Prentice Hall.

Trochim, W. M. K. (2001). *The research methods knowledge base* (2nd ed.). Cincinnati, OH: Atomic Dog Publishing.

The primary text used in LDR 8561, *Introduction to Educational Research*, (Charles & Mertler, 2002), is intended to provide you with a review of basic concepts, models, and principles of research. It will be used throughout the program in all the companion research courses. Specific chapters will be assigned in each course. In LDR 8561 you are responsible for reading Chapters 1-6.

C. RESEARCH COURSE EXPECTATIONS

The course is taught entirely online in a synchronous and asynchronous format. Students will have ample time to prepare for course chats as well as reflect on topics and post responses to the Discussion Board. In addition, assignments will be posted at the beginning of the course so students should be able to think about and prepare work well in advance of the due dates.

The following is expected of you as a doctoral student:

- Thinking, writing, and expression of ideas appropriate for learners at the doctoral level
- Flawless expression of ideas in both content and format
- No grammatical errors in written assignments transmitted to your instructor. Proof read and spell check materials prior to submission
- Coherent and logical flow of ideas and materials
- Well organized submissions
- Sophisticated understanding of ideas
- Participation in chats and consistent participation in postings to the Discussion Board (your instructor will provide details about your weekly postings)

Web Course Expectations

- Students are expected to attend and participate in three course chats.
- Mini-assignments, postings, are due weekly. They may range from practical, “get you started online” activities to thoughtful reflection exercises.
- All readings and assignments must be completed prior to postings to the Discussion Board.
- Postings must reflect an understanding and appreciation of the content of the reading assignments.
- All postings must be completed by the date designated by your instructor.
- No late assignments will be accepted.
- All assignments must be posted electronically to the instructor by the due date and must be sent to the instructor’s email or WebCT address (ask your instructor which address is preferred).
- Failure to post assignments to the instructor by the due date and/or failure to post responses to discussion questions to the Discussion Board will result in your

being required to withdraw from the course and re-enroll at a later date or to accept Failure for the course.

Web Participation

Students are expected to attend three required chats on the dates and at times specified by the course instructor. Additionally, students are expected to log-on to the system at least twice each week and to check the Web site for instructions regarding posting requirements. Instructors will notify students about their individual requirements in their own Discussion Boards and their expectations for responding to lectures or questions for discussion.

Grading

Work completed in LDR 8561 is graded according to the NSU grading policy. In LDR 8561 final grades will be assigned as follows:

- ◆ A = 100-90 points
- ◆ B = 89-80 points
- ◆ F = 79 points or below
- ◆ I = Incomplete
- ◆ AW = Administrative Withdrawal

No plus or minus grades (e.g., A-, B+) are used in the Organizational Leadership (OL) doctoral program. A grade point average of at least 3.0 ("B") is required for retention in the program. A grade of Incomplete ("I") must be negotiated with the course instructor. The "I" grade is assigned when the student has completed the majority of the assignments. A student who has not completed any assignments at the end of the course is not eligible for an "I". An "I" must be made up by the date stipulated by the course instructor. The longest period of time that may be granted to a student is one term. A grade of "F" will automatically appear on a student's permanent record, if course requirements are not met on time.

For additional information regarding grade assignments in the OL program, see the *Student Handbook of Policies and Procedures*.

Rewrites

Students are expected to submit outstanding work that conforms to the editorial requirements set forth in the *Form and Style Guidelines for Course Papers* and *The Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*. If unacceptable work is submitted, students may be allowed to rewrite the assignment at the instructor's discretion. Some instructors do not permit rewrites; others allow only one rewrite per student per course.

Plagiarism

All written work submitted to instructors must be the student's own work. Materials that are taken from other sources must be appropriately documented. Failure to do so constitutes plagiarism and may result in the participant's dismissal from the program. Students are encouraged to ensure that they are thoroughly familiar with the NSU policy on plagiarism. This can be found in the student handbook of Policies and Procedures available on http://www.nova.edu/fgse/orgleader/resources/dol_handbook.pdf

Course Requirements

Online chats (3) – 15 points (5 points each maximum for attendance and participation)
Written assignment #1 – Topic Selection and Search – 15 points
Written assignment #2 – Analysis of a Research Article – 20 points
Written Assignment #3 – Outline of a Research Project – 20 points
Weekly Postings to the Discussion Board – 30 points

Your instructor for LDR 8561 will provide you with more detailed information regarding the dates, times, and focus of chats; the grading criteria for each assignment; and the topics/questions/tasks for weekly postings.

Written Assignments

Assignment #1 – Topic Selection and Search

You are required to select a topic related to the content covered in LDR 8510, Leadership to Shape the Future, identify appropriate descriptors, and electronically locate professional research literature for the topic. One of the most common places to locate research is the ERIC database. There are several other databases containing professional literature. Try Web sites of professional organizations, government, foundations, etc.

Your search should focus on two categories of scholarly publications: reports of empirical studies (original research) and literature review articles (critical evaluations of published material). Reports of empirical research usually follow a prescribed format: abstract, introduction and statement of purpose, hypotheses or research questions, methodology or procedures, results, and conclusion or discussion. In addition, most research studies contain statistical information. In contrast, in literature review articles, including meta-analyses, the results of several previously published studies within a specific topic or theoretical area are summarized and critically evaluated. Review articles are also important in that the most current information (literature) on a particular topic is cited and reviewed. Make sure that you include both types of articles in your searches..

You are required to locate 10-12 scholarly articles related to the topic you selected. Then, following the format and style prescribed in the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (5th ed.), prepare a list of references.

Assignment #2 – Analysis of a Research Article

You are required to electronically obtain a full text research article and write an analysis/critique/evaluation using the questions outlined below. Your analysis should be based on the content of chapters 1-5 in *Introduction to Educational Research*. The topic of the article that you select should be related to the content covered in LDR 8510, Leadership to Shape the Future.

The article you select to analyze may be from among those that you identified in Assignment #1, Topic Selection and Search, or another article. However, the article must be a report of an actual research study, i.e., an original report of empirical research, obtained from a professional journal. Do not analyze articles that are literature reviews or meta-analyses. Articles from newspapers or magazines published for popular consumption are not acceptable as scholarly sources.

The questions outlined below can be used to develop both the structure and substance of your paper. All of the questions may not be applicable to the article that you have selected to analyze; however, your paper should contain some commentary about each of the major subsections of a research report. Your paper should be written in narrative form and be no more than 5 double spaced pages. Remember, your paper is an analysis/critique/evaluation of the research reported in the article, not simply a description summary of the contents.

Guidelines for Analyzing a Research Article

A. Introduction

1. What is the theoretical or practical orientation of the author(s) conducting the study? Does the research cite a specific theory, approach, or premise?
2. What is the focus of the author's work? Is the research question or problem clearly stated?
3. Is the importance or significance of the current study discussed?
4. Does the researcher work from a framework of past research? Is the work of other researchers cited? Is the review of previous research well organized? Are cited sources relevant? Are cited sources primary or secondary?

B. Methodology

5. What specific variables will be evaluated?
6. What definitions or operational definitions are provided? Are variables clearly defined?
7. What information is given about the subjects and their selection? Is the sample and method of selection clearly described?
8. Given the sample size and method of selection, to the extent can the results of the study can be generalized?
9. Is the information given concerning the setting and the procedures sufficient to replicate the study? How were the data collected? What, if any, information is missing?

10. Is an adequate description of all measurement tools provided? Are validity and reliability data reported? If a measurement instrument was developed for the study, was the process by which it was designed clearly described?

C. Results

11. What type of question is the researcher addressing in the statistical analysis?
12. What groups or variables did the researcher utilize in the statistical analyses?
13. If no statistical analysis was conducted, how were the data analyzed?
14. What relationships or differences between groups or variables were found to be important or statistically significant? Were effect sizes reported?
15. Were the results of the analysis of data clear? Inconclusive?
16. Were the data handled properly? What, if anything, would you have done differently, if you were the researcher?

D. Conclusion

17. What were the researcher's conclusions or interpretations? Are they related to the hypotheses or research questions?
18. Is there any evidence of researcher bias? Are the generalizations made by the researcher appropriate?
19. Do you agree with the interpretation of the results? Why or why not?

E. Applicability

20. Consider the entire article. What was, for you, most important? What do you think are the strengths and weaknesses of this article?
21. How do the study and findings related to your needs or the needs of the organization from which you work? Is the research of any practical significance?
22. In what ways, if any, were the phenomena as defined, measured, and studied, related to your interests as an organizational leader?

Assignment #3 – Outline of a Research Project

Using the planning guide and tasks enumerated in Chapter 6 of *Introduction to Educational Research*, you are required to develop an outline consisting of no more than 5 double spaced pages of an investigation into the following topic:

Factors that might serve to improve employee morale and job satisfaction in your place of work.

Provide the following information in your outline:

1. Compose a tentative working title that describes the topic.
2. Appraise the topic to determine whether it can be researched, considering ethics, the scientific method, difficulty, time, cost.
3. State the purpose of the proposed investigation.
4. Write a brief justification (1-3 sentences) of the importance of the study.
5. For the topic, provide two limitations, two delimitations, and define two terms that a lay reader may not readily understand.

6. Provide two descriptors that could be used to electronically search for related literature. Descriptors should not be more than two words.
7. Write the names of three indexes or directories that seem most promising for researching the literature.
8. Indicate the probably type of research you are proposing to conduct.
9. List the kinds of data you will need to collect and the probably sources of those data.
10. Indicate the kind of sample you will select and how you will select it.
11. Indicate what you will expect the participants in your study to do.
12. List the specific steps you would take and tolls you might use to collect data.
13. Explain how you will attempt to ensure the quality of your data.
14. Explain why you will need to use qualitative or quantitative analysis.
15. Indicate how you would expect to present your findings and conclusions.