



## **ADED 4113: Capstone Project**

Gordon T. & Ellen West College of Education

Summer I 2026

June 1, 2026- July 2, 2026

### **Contact Information**

Instructor: Kayla Meaders, Ed.D., M.Ed., B.B.A.

Office: Bridwell 301

Office hours: By Appointment via Zoom, in person, or by telephone

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### **Instructor Response Policy**

Email is my preferred method of communication.

*Please include ADED 4113 in the title of any email communication.*

I will respond to emails within 24 hours during weekdays.

Please expect a 48-hour response on weekends and holidays.

If you need to contact me via phone, please email me your phone number, and I will schedule a time to connect with you.

### **Textbook & Instructional Materials**

No textbook is required for this course. All reading materials will be provided as website links of PDFs in D2L.

### **Course Description**

This culminating course to the degree completion program is designed to prepare students to effectively join the workforce by: reflecting on their knowledge, skills, and abilities; strengthening job search competence, and polishing professional writing technique.

### **Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes**

Course Objectives:

- Reflect on academic, personal, and professional experiences gained throughout their degree program.

- Identify transferable skills and competencies relevant to future career opportunities.
- Construct professional employment materials tailored to specific positions.
- Practice professional networking and interviewing techniques.
- Utilize job search resources and labor market information to identify employment opportunities.
- Develop a strategy for continued professional growth after graduation.

Learning Outcomes:

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Assess and articulate their knowledge, skills, abilities, and experiences as they relate to career goals.
- Develop professional employment documents, including resumes, cover letters, and professional profiles.
- Demonstrate effective job search strategies and career planning techniques.
- Apply professional communication and writing skills in workplace-related contexts.
- Evaluate employment opportunities and prepare for the transition from college to the workforce.
- Create a personalized career development and job search action plan.

### **Student Handbook**

Refer to: [Student Handbook](#)

### **Academic Misconduct Policy & Procedures**

Academic Dishonesty: Cheating, collusion, and plagiarism (the act of using source material of other persons, either published or unpublished, without following the accepted techniques of crediting, or the submission for credit of work not the individual's to whom credit is given). Additional guidelines on procedures in these matters may be found in the Office of Student Conduct.

[Office of Student Conduct](#)

### **Grading/Assessment**

Table 1: *Points allocated to each assignment*

Assignments	Points
Discussions (5 at 12 points each)	60
Professional Reflection Paper	20
Career Research Project	20
Building Your Professional Brand	20

Job Application Package	40
Career Action Plan	40
Total Points	200

Table 2: *Total points for final grade.*

Grade	Points
A	180-200
B	160-179
C	140-159
D	120-139
F	Less than 119

### **Final Exam**

There will be no final exam for this course.

### **Extra Credit**

There are no extra credit opportunities available for this course.

### **Late Work**

Assignments for the course must be submitted or posted by the established due dates. The discussion boards will be locked after the week is concluded. I understand emergencies arise. If something happens and you cannot submit your assignments by the posted due date, you must communicate that to me head of time. Any late work without proper communication will not be accepted.

### **Important Dates**

Deadline to file for graduation for August 2026 graduates: 06/22/2026

Last Day to drop a Summer I class a grade of "W:" 06/17/2026

Last Day of Class: 07/02/2026

### **Desire-to-Learn (D2L)**

Extensive use of the MSU D2L program is a part of this course. Each student is expected to be familiar with this program as it provides a primary source of communication regarding assignments, examination materials, and general course information. You can log into [D2L](#) through the MSU Homepage. If you experience difficulties, please contact the technicians listed for the program or contact your instructor.

### **Attendance**

My expectation is that you will be present for class on the first day. Attendance is verified when you check into D2L assignments at least twice a week. Excessive absences (not signing into D2L, noncompliance with assignments, and lack of participation on the discussion board) are indicators of non-compliance with the course and may lead to an administrative drop from the course.

## **Online Computer Requirements**

Taking an online class requires you to have access to a computer (with Internet access) to complete and upload your assignments. It is your responsibility to have (or have access to) a working computer in this class. *\*Assignments and tests are due by the due date, and personal computer technical difficulties will not be considered reason for the instructor to allow students extra time to submit assignments, tests, or discussion postings.* Computers are available on campus in various areas of the buildings as well as the Academic Success Center. *\*Your computer being down is not an excuse for missing a deadline!* There are many places to access your class! Our online classes can be accessed from any computer in the world that is connected to the internet. Contact your instructor immediately upon having computer trouble. If you have technical difficulties in the course, there is also a student helpdesk available to you. The college cannot work directly on student computers due to both liability and resource limitations however they are able to help you get connected to our online services. For help, log into [D2L](#).

## **Change of Schedule**

A student dropping a course (but not withdrawing from the University) within the first 12 class days of a regular semester or the first four class days of a summer semester is eligible for a 100% refund of applicable tuition and fees. Dates are published in the [Schedule of Classes](#) each semester.

## **Refund and Repayment Policy**

A student who withdraws or is administratively withdrawn from Midwestern State University (MSU) may be eligible to receive a refund for all or a portion of the tuition, fees and room/board charges that were paid to MSU for the semester. HOWEVER, if the student received financial aid (federal/state/institutional grants, loans and/or scholarships), all or a portion of the refund may be returned to the financial aid programs. As described below, two formulas (federal and state) exists in determining the amount of the refund. (Examples of each refund calculation will be made available upon request).

## **Services for Students with Disabilities**

In accordance with Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Midwestern State University endeavors to make reasonable accommodations to ensure equal opportunity for qualified persons with disabilities to participate in all educational, social, and recreational programs and activities. After notification of acceptance, students requiring accommodations should make application for such assistance through Disability Support Services, located in the Clark Student Center, Room 168, (940) 397-4140. Current documentation of a disability will be required in order to provide appropriate services, and each request will be individually reviewed. For more details, please go to [Disability Support Services](#).

## **College Policies**

### Campus Carry Rules/Policies

Refer to: [Campus Carry Rules and Policies](#)

### Smoking/Tobacco Policy

College policy strictly prohibits the use of tobacco products in any building owned or operated by MSU TEXAS. Adult students may smoke only in the outside designated-smoking areas at each location.

### Alcohol and Drug Policy

To comply with the Drug Free Schools and Communities Act of 1989 and subsequent amendments, students and employees of Midwestern State are informed that strictly enforced policies are in place which prohibits the unlawful possession, use or distribution of any illicit drugs, including alcohol, on university property or as part of any university-sponsored activity. Students and employees are also subject to all applicable legal sanctions under local, state and federal law for any offenses involving illicit drugs on University property or at University-sponsored activities.

### Campus Carry

Effective August 1, 2016, the Campus Carry law (Senate Bill 11) allows those licensed individuals to carry a concealed handgun in buildings on public university campuses, except in locations the University establishes has prohibited. The new Constitutional Carry law does not change this process. Concealed carry still requires a License to Carry permit, and openly carrying handguns is not allowed on college campuses. For more information, visit [Campus Carry](#).

### Active Shooter

The safety and security of our campus is the responsibility of everyone in our community. Each of us has an obligation to be prepared to appropriately respond to threats to our campus, such as an active aggressor. Please review the information provided by MSU Police Department regarding the options and strategies we can all use to stay safe during difficult situations. For more information, visit [Safety / Emergency Procedures](#). Students are encouraged to watch the video entitled "Run. Hide. Fight." which may be electronically accessed via the University police department's webpage: ["Run. Hide. Fight."](#)

### Obligation to Report Sex Discrimination under State and Federal Law

Midwestern State University is committed to providing and strengthening an educational, working, and living environment where students, faculty, staff, and visitors are free from sex discrimination of any kind. State and federal law require University employees to report sex discrimination and sexual misconduct to the University's Office of Title IX. As a faculty member, I am required to report to the Title IX Coordinator any allegations, personally observed behavior, or other direct

or indirect knowledge of conduct that reasonably may constitute sex discrimination or sexual misconduct, which includes sexual assault, sexual harassment, dating violence, or stalking, involving a student or employee. After a report is made, the office of Title IX will reach out to the affected student or employee in an effort to connect such person(s) with resources and options in addressing the allegations made in the report. You are also encouraged to report any incidents to the office of Title IX. You may do so by contacting:

Laura Hetrick  
Title IX Coordinator  
Sunwatcher Village Clubhouse  
940-397-4213  
[laura.hetrick@msutexas.edu](mailto:laura.hetrick@msutexas.edu)

You may also file an online report 24/7 at [Online Reporting Form](#)

Should you wish to visit with someone about your experience in confidence, you may contact the MSU Counseling Center at 940-397-4618. For more information on the University's policy on Title IX or sexual misconduct, please visit [Title IX Website](#)

### **Grade Appeal Process**

Update as needed. Students who wish to appeal a grade should consult the Midwestern State University [MSU Catalog](#).

Changes in the course syllabus, procedure, assignments, and schedule may be made at the discretion of the instructor.

### **Assignment Breakdowns**

#### **Discussion Boards**

Each week, respond thoughtfully to the discussion board prompt by Sunday 11:59 PM. Make sure your post is well-organized, addresses all parts of the question, and demonstrates critical thinking. Engage with at least two of your classmates' posts by the same deadline. Your responses should add value to the conversation, whether by agreeing with additional insights, respectfully challenging ideas, or asking thoughtful questions. Keep all conversations respectful and professional. Be mindful of your tone, and ensure that your comments are constructive, even when disagreeing. There will be a total of 5 discussion board posts throughout the course, each following the same guidelines. Make sure to participate consistently each week. Following these steps will ensure a meaningful and respectful exchange of ideas.

### **Professional Reflection Paper**

As you prepare to complete your degree and transition into the workforce, it is important to evaluate the experiences, skills, and knowledge you have gained

during your academic journey. This assignment provides an opportunity to reflect on your growth and identify how your experiences have prepared you for future professional success.

Instructions:

Use the template provided in Week 1, found in D2L. This is purely a reflection. No outside sources are required. Write a two-page reflection paper addressing the following questions:

- What motivated you to pursue your degree?
- What knowledge, skills, and abilities have you gained throughout your academic experience?
- What challenges have you faced during your educational journey, and how did you overcome them?
- What accomplishment are you most proud of during your time in college?
- How do you believe your degree has prepared you for your future career?
- What areas would you still like to improve as you enter the workforce?

### **Career Research Project**

Before beginning your job search, it is important to understand the opportunities available within your field. This assignment will help you explore potential career paths related to your degree, learn about current job market expectations, and identify a position that aligns with your interests, skills, and professional goals. Research three potential positions related to your degree program or career interests.

For each position, provide the following information:

- Job title
- Typical job responsibilities
- Required qualifications or experience
- Salary expectations
- Employment growth outlook
- Geographic opportunities (Where are these jobs commonly available?)

In addition, provide evidence of your research by including screenshots of the job postings, career websites, or resources you used to gather your information. After researching all three positions, conclude your presentation by answering the following questions:

- Which position best fits your career goals?
- Why does this position interest you most?

- What steps can you begin taking now to prepare for this career?

Presentation Requirements:

Create a presentation using Google Slides, PowerPoint, Canva, or a similar presentation platform. You are creating the slides for a presentation, but a video recording or voice-over of you giving the presentation is not needed.

## **Building Your Professional Brand Assignment**

Employers often form their first impression of candidates through professional networking platforms and personal introductions. This assignment will help you develop your professional brand by creating or updating a LinkedIn profile and crafting a professional elevator pitch that highlights your strengths, skills, and career goals.

### Part 1: LinkedIn Profile

LinkedIn is the world's largest professional networking platform and is commonly used by employers, recruiters, and professionals to identify potential candidates and make professional connections. Maintaining an updated LinkedIn profile can help you expand your professional network, showcase your qualifications, and discover career opportunities.

If you do not already have a LinkedIn account, create one. If you already have an account, review and update your profile.

Your LinkedIn profile should include:

- Professional profile photo
- Professional headline
- About/Summary section
- Educational background
- Work experience (if applicable)
- Skills section
- Certifications, honors, awards, or extracurricular activities (if applicable)
- Career interests or desired field

### LinkedIn Submission Requirements

Submit the following:

- A link to your LinkedIn profile
- A screenshot of your profile homepage
- A screenshot of your About/ Summary section
- A screenshot of your Experience or Education section

Screenshots should be inserted into your Word document. *See and use the template provided for more guidance on formatting.*

## Part 2: "Why Hire Me?" Professional Branding Statement

Imagine you have 30 to 60 seconds to introduce yourself to a potential employer. What would you want them to know about you?

Write a professional branding statement that answers the following questions:

- Who are you professionally?
- What degree, skills, or experiences make you qualified?
- What strengths do you bring to an organization?
- What type of position or career are you seeking?
- Why would an employer want to hire you?

### Professional Branding Statement Requirements

- Minimum 150 words
- Maximum 300 words
- Written in first person
- Professional tone
- Clearly highlights your qualifications, strengths, and career goals

Submit one Word document that includes:

LinkedIn profile link

Required LinkedIn screenshots

Professional Branding Statement

A template is provided to use for your submission.

## **Job Application Package**

One of the most important skills you can develop before entering the workforce is the ability to effectively market yourself to employers. Most job seekers submit the same resume and cover letter for every position they apply for. However, successful applicants tailor their application materials to match the needs of the employer and the specific position. This assignment simulates a real-world job application process by requiring you to create a customized resume, cover letter, and professional email for an actual job opportunity. By completing this assignment, you will gain experience preparing professional application materials that can be used during your future job search.

Instructions

Using one of the positions you researched in Week 2, create a complete job application package. Your application package must include:

### Part 1: Job Posting

Include a link to the job posting or a screenshot of the position you selected. The posting should clearly show:

- Position title
- Employer name
- Job description
- Required qualifications

### Part 2: Tailored Resume

Create a resume specifically designed for the position you selected. A tailored resume is a resume that highlights the skills, experiences, education, and qualifications that best match the requirements listed in the job posting. Review the job description carefully and emphasize the experiences, accomplishments, and skills that demonstrate your ability to succeed in that role.

Your resume should:

- Be one to two pages whenever possible.
- Include current contact information
- Highlight relevant education, experience, and skills
- Reflect qualifications listed in the job posting
- Be professional in appearance and formatting

### Part 3: Cover Letter

Write a professional cover letter addressed to the hiring manager or organization.

Your cover letter should:

- Introduce yourself
- Identify the position for which you are applying
- Explain why you are interested in the position
- Highlight qualifications that match the job requirements
- Explain how you can contribute to the organization
- Conclude professionally and express interest in future communication
- The cover letter should be approximately one page in length.

#### Part 4: Professional Email

Write a professional email that could be sent to the hiring manager after submitting your application.

Your email should:

- Include a professional subject line
- Introduce yourself
- State the position for which you applied
- Express enthusiasm for the opportunity
- Thank the employer for their time and consideration.&nbsp;
- Include an appropriate professional closing
- The email should be approximately 100–150 words.

A template is provided, and students are expected to use it. Submit one Word document containing:

- Job posting screenshot
- Tailored resume
- Cover letter
- Professional email

All materials should be combined into a single document and uploaded to the assignment folder.

### **Career Action Plan**

Completing a degree is an important milestone, but career success requires intentional planning beyond graduation. This final project provides an opportunity to develop a realistic and actionable career plan that outlines your professional goals, job search strategy, networking efforts, and plans for continued growth. The purpose of this assignment is to help you transition from college to the workforce by creating a roadmap that you can use after completing this course and throughout your professional career.

#### Instructions

Write a 4–5 page Career Action Plan that addresses each of the sections below. A template is provided (above), and students are expected to use the template.

1. Career Goal—Describe the career you hope to pursue after graduation.

Consider addressing the following:

- What position are you seeking?
- Why does this career interest you?

- How does your degree prepare you for this field?
- What attracts you to this profession?

2. Target Employers— Identify at least two employers or organizations where you would like to work.

For each employer, discuss:

- The organization's mission or purpose
- Why you would like to work there
- Available positions that align with your career goals
- Any qualifications or experiences that would strengthen your candidacy

3. Networking Strategy— Networking is one of the most effective ways to discover professional opportunities. Describe how you plan to build and maintain professional connections. Explain how these activities may support your career goals.

Consider discussing:

- LinkedIn networking
- Professional organizations
- Conferences or events
- Alumni connections
- Mentors
- Community involvement

4. Professional Development Goals— Professional development refers to activities that help you improve your knowledge, skills, and abilities throughout your career. Identify at least three professional development goals. Explain why each goal is important and how it will contribute to your career growth.

Examples include:

- Earning certifications
- Attending workshops or conferences
- Completing additional training
- Developing leadership skills
- Pursuing graduate education

5. Job Search Timeline— Create a realistic timeline for your job search. Describe specific actions you plan to take during the next six months. Your timeline should demonstrate a clear and organized approach to securing employment.

Examples include:

- Updating application materials
- Applying for positions
- Attending networking events
- Conducting informational interviews
- Following up with employers

6. Short-Term Goals (0–6 Months) - Identify at least three goals you plan to accomplish within the next six months.

For each goal:

- Describe the goal
- Explain why it is important
- Identify specific action steps needed to achieve it.

7. Long-Term Goals (1–5 Years)- Identify at least three goals you hope to achieve within the next one to five years.

For each goal:

- Describe the goal
- Explain why it is important
- Explain how it supports your overall career plan

References: Include a minimum of three references that informed your career planning. Use APA format for citations and references. The template provided will assist with APA formatting. Other APA resources can be found under APA Formatting Assistance under the Table of Contents section of this course.

Submission Requirements:

- 4–5 pages in length (not including title page and references)
- Minimum of three references
- APA 7th edition proper formatting
- Use section headings for each required component
- Submit as a Word document or PDF

## 5 Week Course Schedule:

<b>Week 1: Professional Identity and Reflection</b>		
<b>Week 1</b> 06/01-06/07	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Familiarize yourself with the syllabus and course information</li> <li>2. Discussion Board</li> <li>3. Professional Reflection Paper</li> </ol>	Sunday by 11:59 pm
<b>Week 2: Career Exploration and Job Search</b>		
<b>Week 2</b> 06/08-06/14	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Discussion Board</li> <li>2. Career Research Project</li> </ol>	Sunday by 11:59 pm
<b>Week 3: Professional Branding</b>		
<b>Week 3</b> 06/15-06/21	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Discussion Board</li> <li>2. Building Your Professional Brand Assignment</li> </ol>	Sunday by 11:59 pm
<b>Week 4: Professional Communication and Interviewing</b>		
<b>Week 4</b> 06/22-06/28	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Discussion Board</li> <li>2. Job Application Package</li> </ol>	Sunday by 11:59 pm
<b>Week 5: Career Readiness Capstone</b>		
<b>Week 5</b> 06/29-07/01	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Discussion Board</li> <li>2. Career Action Plan Paper</li> </ol>	<b>7-1-26 by 12 pm (Noon)</b>