



Course Syllabus: Dissertation
College of Education
EDLE 6203 Section Y20
Spring January 21 - May 9, 2025

Contact Information

Instructor: Kym Acuña

Office: BH 104E

Office hours: Tuesday 2:00-4:00pm, Wednesday 2:00-3:00pm, Thursday 2:00-4:00pm, and By appointment

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Instructor Response Policy

The best way to contact me is through email. I usually respond quickly. You can expect a response within 24 hours, however, it could be a little longer on weekends or holidays.

Textbook & Instructional Materials

N/A

Course Description

To be scheduled only with consent of department. Nine hours credit required. No credit assigned until dissertation has been completed and filed with the graduate school. Doctoral students must maintain continuous enrollment in this course subsequent to passing qualifying examination for admission to candidacy.

Course Objectives/Learning Outcomes/Course Competencies

1. Design and conduct an original research project in order to answer your research question(s).
2. Design a discipline specific research methodology.
3. Apply social science/scientific writing skills (APA)
4. Analyze research and other topics with academics in your field

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Dishonesty: Cheating, collusion, and plagiarism (the act of using source material of other persons, either published or unpublished, without following the accepted techniques of crediting, or the submission for credit of work not the individual's to whom credit is given).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

This is a CREDIT or NO CREDIT course. In order to receive credit for the course, candidate must demonstrate progress on the dissertation.

Projects Required

Adequate progress toward dissertation completion and evaluation should occur.

Important Dates

Last day for term schedule changes; Deadline to file for graduation; and Last Day to drop with a grade of "W"; Refer to: [Drops, Withdrawals & Void](#)

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.

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](#).

Inclement Weather

In the case of campus closure due to inclement weather, it should not impact this course as there are no specific due dates and each candidate is individually working on their dissertation. However, if there are any concerns regarding this course related to inclement weather, please contact me.

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

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](#)

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

Course Schedule:

Students shall continue to develop all four chapters of the Dissertation in Practice throughout the term.

Each candidate will be at a different place in their dissertation development and writing. Consult with dissertation chair to establish semester goals for dissertation completion.

AI Guidelines

In all academic work, the ideas and contributions of others must be appropriately acknowledged and work that is presented as original must be, in fact, original. Using an AI-content generator (such as ChatGPT) to complete coursework without proper attribution or authorization is a form of academic dishonesty. While certain AI tools are useful, they should not be used to generate the narrative/writing of your dissertation. If you are unsure about whether something may be plagiarism or academic dishonesty, *please contact your instructor to discuss the issue.*

Appendix A

Dissertation Project Defense Evaluation Rubric

Overview:

While leadership is about influence and getting results, it also requires continuous growth in the process of leading. The self-actualized leader reflects on personal mastery and excellence. As the culminating experience that demonstrates the scholarly practitioner's ability to solve problems of practice, the Dissertation in Practice (DIP) showcases the doctoral candidate's ability "to think, to perform, and to act with integrity" (Shulman, 2005). The ***Leading with Influence*** evidence places the candidate in a leadership role to implement a series of short-term "next-step" interventions which have been identified previously during the strategic planning process as well as to evaluate each one's overall effectiveness and potential for expansion. Along with other pertinent discussions, the candidate will also present a final strategic communication plan at the conclusion of the DIP which is designed to provide a compelling argument for continuing with certain interventions based on short-term data analyses and

findings. The “strategic communication plan” (developed by the candidate in EDLE 6203) should present information suitable for sharing the results of the DIP with key stakeholders (principals, parents, faculty/staff, school board, community leaders, county commissioners, etc.). The written communication plan should be in the form of an *Executive Summary*.

Directions to the Candidate and Requirements:

The Dissertation in Practice (DIP) is a formal demonstration of the doctoral candidate’s knowledge, skills and behaviors, scholarship, and dispositions of educational leadership. It is intended to serve as a demonstration that the doctoral candidate is capable and prepared to provide extraordinary leadership. The DIP is a strategic plan to solve a problem of practice with the preliminary steps “next steps” of implementation and evaluation of potential solutions. It involves working with a -level leader (superintendent or designee) on a problem, or opportunity, that is of mutual concern to them. The DIP serves to provide major evidence of leadership performance, leadership capacity, and leadership thinking.

The candidate should be aware that the DIP must be a practical application of the candidate’s: (1) strategic planning skills; (2) use of data to impact teaching and learning; (3) ability to build and use relationships toward the same end; and (4) ability to apply theory to practice. These four cornerstones emanate from the framework of four key strands of Midwestern State University’s Ed.D. Program in Educational Leadership: *Strategic Leadership; Data and Learning; Building Collaborative Relationships; and Theory, Application and Practice*. The assessment of the DIP is guided by the rubric below which evaluates the candidate’s proficiency in knowledge, skills in oral and written communication, leadership, and dispositions as they are applied to the evidence or product produced by the candidate.

Evaluation:

The Dissertation in Practice Rubric will be utilized by the candidate’s DiP chair to evaluate the candidate’s DiP during the final semester of dissertation work (EDLE 6203). It will also be used as a formative assessment of progress in the dissertation classes prior to the last semester.

Evaluation Rubric Dissertation in Practice	Advanced	Acceptable	Needs Improvement	Unacceptable
Standard 1: Mission, Vision, and Improvement				
Component 1.1 Program completers understand and demonstrate the capacity to	Candidate demonstrates the capacity to collaboratively	Candidate demonstrates the capacity to evaluate, develop, and	Candidate demonstrates the capacity to develop, and	Candidate does not demonstrate the capacity to collaboratively evaluate, develop,

collaboratively evaluate, develop, and communicate a school mission and vision designed to reflect a core set of values and priorities that include data use, technology, equity, diversity, digital citizenship, and community	evaluate, develop, and communicate a school mission and vision designed to reflect a core set of values and priorities that include data use, technology, equity, diversity, digital citizenship, and community	communicate a school mission and vision designed to reflect values OR priorities that may include data use, technology, equity, diversity, digital citizenship, OR community BUT not all of them	communicate a school mission OR vision BUT does not necessarily reflect a core set of values OR priorities	and communicate a school mission and vision designed to reflect a core set of values and priorities that include data use, technology, equity, diversity, digital citizenship, and community
Component 1.2 Program completers understand and demonstrate the capacity to lead improvement processes that include data use, design, implementation, and evaluation.	Candidate demonstrates the capacity to lead improvement processes that include data use, design, implementation, and evaluation	Candidate demonstrates the capacity for improvement processes that include data use, design and implementation BUT does not provide a mechanism for evaluation	Candidate demonstrates the capacity for improvement processes that include data use OR design, BUT does not include a plan for implementation NOR evaluation	Candidate does not demonstrate the capacity to lead improvement processes that include data use, design, implementation, and evaluation
Standard 2: Ethics and Professional Norms				
Component 2.1 Program completers understand and demonstrate the capacity to reflect on, communicate about, cultivate, and model professional	Candidate demonstrates the capacity to reflect on, communicate about, cultivate, and model professional	Candidate demonstrates the capacity to communicate about, cultivate, and model professional dispositions	Candidate demonstrates the capacity to cultivate, OR model professional dispositions and norms (i.e.,	Candidate does not demonstrate the capacity to reflect on, communicate about, cultivate, and model professional

dispositions and norms (i.e., fairness, integrity, transparency, trust, digital citizenship, collaboration, perseverance, reflection, lifelong learning) that support the educational success and well-being of each student and adult.	dispositions and norms (i.e., fairness, integrity, transparency, trust, digital citizenship, collaboration, perseverance, reflection, lifelong learning) that support the educational success and well-being of each student and adult.	and norms (i.e., fairness, integrity, transparency, trust, digital citizenship, collaboration, perseverance, reflection, lifelong learning) that support the educational success and well-being of each student and adult.	fairness, integrity, transparency, trust, digital citizenship, collaboration, perseverance, reflection, lifelong learning) that BUT does not connect those to the educational success and of each student and adult.	dispositions and norms (i.e., fairness, integrity, transparency, trust, digital citizenship, collaboration, perseverance, reflection, lifelong learning) that support the educational success and well-being of each student and adult.
Component 2.2 Program completers understand and demonstrate the capacity to evaluate, communicate about, and advocate for ethical and legal decisions.	Candidate demonstrates the capacity to evaluate, communicate about, and advocate for ethical and legal decisions	Candidate demonstrates the capacity to communicate about, and advocate for ethical and legal decisions	Candidate demonstrates the capacity to communicate ethical and legal decisions	Candidate does not demonstrate the capacity to evaluate, communicate about, and advocate for ethical and legal decisions
Component 2.3 Program completers understand and demonstrate the capacity to model ethical behavior in their personal conduct and relationships and to cultivate ethical behavior in others.	Candidate demonstrates the capacity to model ethical behavior in their personal conduct and relationships and to cultivate ethical behavior in others.	Candidate demonstrates the capacity to model ethical behavior in their personal conduct and relationships and references ethical behavior in others.	Candidate demonstrates the capacity to model ethical behavior in their personal conduct and relationships.	Candidate does not demonstrate the capacity to model ethical behavior in their personal conduct and relationships and to cultivate ethical behavior in others.
Standard 3: Equity, Inclusiveness, and Cultural Responsiveness				

<p>Component 3.1 Program completers understand and demonstrate the capacity to use data to evaluate, design, cultivate, and advocate for a supportive and inclusive school culture</p>	<p>Candidate demonstrates the capacity to use data to evaluate, design, cultivate, and advocate for a supportive and inclusive school culture</p>	<p>Candidate demonstrates the capacity to use data to evaluate and design a supportive and inclusive school culture</p>	<p>Candidate demonstrates the use of data to design and advocate school culture</p>	<p>Candidate does not demonstrate the capacity to use data to evaluate, design, cultivate, and advocate for a supportive and inclusive school culture</p>
<p>Component 3.2 Program completers understand and demonstrate the capacity to evaluate, cultivate, and advocate for equitable access to educational resources, technologies, and opportunities that support the educational success and well-being of each student.</p>	<p>Candidate demonstrates the capacity to evaluate, cultivate, and advocate for equitable access to educational resources, technologies, and opportunities that support the educational success</p>	<p>Candidate demonstrates the capacity to advocate for equitable access to educational resources, technologies, and opportunities that support the educational success</p>	<p>Candidate demonstrates the capacity to advocate for access to educational resources, technologies, and opportunities.</p>	<p>Candidate does not demonstrate the capacity to evaluate, cultivate, and advocate for equitable access to educational resources, technologies, and opportunities that support the educational success</p>
<p>Component 3.3 Program completers understand and demonstrate the capacity to evaluate, cultivate, and advocate for equitable, inclusive, and culturally responsive instruction and behavior support practices among teachers and staff.</p>	<p>Candidate demonstrates the capacity to evaluate, cultivate, and advocate for equitable, inclusive, and culturally responsive instruction and behavior support practices among teachers and staff.</p>	<p>Candidate cultivates and advocates for equitable, inclusive, and culturally responsive instruction and behavior support practices among teachers and staff.</p>	<p>Candidate cultivates culturally responsive instruction and behavior support practices among teachers and staff.</p>	<p>Candidate does not demonstrate the capacity to evaluate, cultivate, and advocate for equitable, inclusive, and culturally responsive instruction and behavior support practices among teachers and staff.</p>

