ADMPS 2090: Research Processes for School Leadership

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ADMPS 2090
Research Processes in School Leadership
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Office Hours: by personal appointment, telephone, or email

Course Description:

As students who are seeking a graduate degree, you have placed a significant value on learning and its applications. You have entered the world of the practitioner-scholar --- one whose practice is informed by educational research and one whose scholarly pursuits are embedded in the world of educational practice.

Among the most effective educators, reading, thinking, and writing are the tools that we use to engage in lifelong learning and communication with our colleagues. In fact, we hope that you will come to understand writing as “thinking put to paper”. Writing provides one with the opportunity to analyze and organize his or her thoughts and understandings.

This course is designed to help you to synthesize (an important word in this class) your experience in practice and your engagement in scholarship to produce a review of scholarly literature related to an area of educational practice and/or policy that you view as significant. The course materials and activities are organized in a scheme that requires you to read, think, assess, and write throughout the term, to identify, select, and refine a topic of interest, to review and revise your writing with feedback from others, and to engage in independent review of specific literature related to your topic.

Students will work independently, with peers, and with the instructor to identify, access, manage and make best use of a variety of resources to support learning through reading, thinking, and writing.

This course is offered as a fully online experience. No face-to-face meetings are held, though the instructor is available to meet with students should they desire a face-to-face meeting. More details regarding the online nature of the course are included below.
Course materials:

Educational Research:

Literature Review:

Suggested Reference (not required, but helpful):

Texts are available for purchase at the bookstore or through a variety of online sources. Feel free to use electronic versions, if available.

Please purchase the texts (new or used) as soon as possible to not fall behind with readings and discussions.

Course Requirements: *Read, Think, Write*

The Research Seminar course requires you to direct and manage your own learning as a professional. The reading schedule includes many but not all chapters in the textbooks. The additional chapters contain valuable information that may help you with the writing required for the course.

In other words, your own background and expertise might be limited in some areas of writing and research or perhaps more extensive in others. You are responsible for supplementing the required chapters to best enable your own learning.

Electronic Library Use

Additionally, each student will produce his or her own review of literature. As such, only you will be able to identify, locate and review applicable readings and then synthesize your thinking across those sources. This will require active use of online library search facilities through your authorized Pitt account. Familiarize yourself with the Pitt library search capabilities for journal articles and other sources at www.library.pitt.edu.

I suggest that you set aside sufficient time to explore these library resources during the first week of class so that you can identify any issues or problems and resolve them early. While the course is designed to offer suggestions for managing the processes required to produce a comprehensive review of literature, only you can actually do them.
Review of Written Materials

In addition to managing your own work for the course, you will also be expected to provide substantive feedback on writing mechanics and quality of content to your peers. Peer review is an important part of the writing/revision process and is only accomplished if you are as serious about your colleagues’ work as you are about your own.

We also suggest that you find a colleague or friend outside of the course who can also serve as a reviewer for your work. Many times people who are not as familiar with the topic can “see” errors in construction that you may miss. Develop a support system for your writing outside of the course (advisor, colleagues, supervisor, friends) as well as inside (peer review, instructor).

Writing Workshops

A number of classes later in the term are listed as Writing Workshops and have no assignments or readings due. These weeks are designed to give you a critical mass of time to gather and review your literature sources, synthesize your writing and produce your paper, especially as we move to a final version. During these workshops, the instructor will be available by email and/or phone to discuss your progress. For in person discussions, appointments are required.

The University of Pittsburgh has an excellent writing center. I advise every student to take advantage of this service. A visit or two to the center can easily boost your grade. http://www.writingcenter.pitt.edu/

Our Roles

My role as an instructor in this course is that of a coach. I organize “practice” opportunities for you, assist you as you “train” and become more skillful and efficient in your work, and offer diagnostic feedback to help you refine your skills. I will do this by critiquing your writing, use of APA style and the quality of your research.

The syllabus represents my attempt to manage “practice” for you.

I am not a cheerleader (offering “good job” commentary that is neither diagnostic nor helpful) nor the police (making sure you adhere to expectations of the course in spite of yourself).

Your learning is yours to manage. I will help but I will not do it for you.

Communication:

Sending emails:
You can reach me @ longoj@pitt.edu

I do not answer and may not receive e-mails that are not from a pitt.edu address, because of spam. Please be careful about this.
WHEN COMMUNICATING always tell me your name and what you need: In the subject line, indicate the course number (2090).

Please remember to sign your email. I filter my emails for priority --- if you do not include the course number, the email will not be filtered to a priority area.

Email responses: I want to give you the individual feedback you need. Accordingly, I have guidelines that allow you to receive feedback and help in a timely manner.

Schedule: I review e-mails Monday through Friday throughout the course. I generally do not answer e-mails on weekends, holidays, or evenings.

Response time: You can expect a response within 48 hours of your e-mail, as long as you follow the course guidelines. If you do not hear from me in a reasonable amount of time, please send another e-mail.

Telephone Calls or Office Appointments: You may need to have a conversation about something in the course. I will arrange either telephone “office hours” or meetings on an as-needed basis. Just e-mail me and let me know your available time/days. I will be glad to schedule a conference at a mutually convenient time.

Assignments:

In order to ensure that your work is evaluated in a timely manner, please follow these guidelines.

You will use the assignment tool on the course web site to submit your graded assignments.

Do not email assignments to your instructor unless specifically asked to do so. Be careful when submitting E-Assignments as Blackboard is unforgiving when it is incorrectly done. Think before acting.

Unless specifically requested to do so, do not submit “preview” drafts or unsolicited revisions of your work.

All assignments submitted are considered to be final work, ready to be graded.

- APA style is required in the final paper and all essay assignments. It is not required in your blogs.
- Put your name, the assignment name, and the date on every page.
- If you are not sure about the instructions for an assignment, you are welcome to e-mail me, but do not wait until the last minute lest you do not get a timely response. See the e-mail guidelines.
- If you encounter trouble uploading an assignment, you need to call the HELP desk (412-624-HELP) for assistance.

There are six (6) formal assignments. Each assignment has an associated form that you should download, complete, and upload by the due date. Additionally, you are required to participate fully in the COURSE BLOGS or BLOGS regarding the readings. Each week, questions are posted for responses and discussion. Your online participation grade is fully dependent on your active, engaged, and consistent involvement with the BLOGS or BLOGS. I monitor your online time.

1. Proposal of Topic: 9-18-16
In this focused assignment, students are asked to:

- Identify a topic of interest they plan to explore during the term
- Delineate why this topic is important in educational leadership
- List key *guiding questions* for the review of literature
- List at least ten (10) sources you have identified that address your guiding questions
- Secure the consent of your advisor to research this topic

I will be reviewing this assignment to determine the following:

1. Is the topic one that can be researched through the available literature?
2. Is the topic both broad enough and specific enough to yield sufficient and diverse sources for exploration?
3. Are the guiding questions supportive of a journey into the literature (do they correspond to a broader introduction, a narrowing focus, and an analysis with recommendations, conclusions and implications for continued exploration?)
4. Are the sample sources appropriate, current, scholarly, and present in the professional literature as related to the proposed topic?

2. **Literature Map: Due 10-2-16**

Students are to produce a conceptual “map” of the areas of related literature that they have identified for their topic.

This map should include *areas* to search, *important authors who* write about the topic, and *key words and subtopics* related to the areas. This conceptual map shall be a useful tool in your literature search activities and should continue to be “fleshed out” as your work progresses throughout the term.

Some students prefer to use an outline format for this assignment, others use Inspiration software to connect ideas and concepts graphically. Still others prefer a bulleted list. **The format of the “map” is entirely up to you --- it is designed to be useful to you in the search for sources and materials for your review of literature. We call it a “map” because it can guide you in the literature search --- whatever model helps you best is acceptable to me.**

I will be reviewing the map to determine the following (consult the evaluation rubric!):

1. Is the topic defined sufficiently to allow a meaningful search of the literature?
2. Is the topic area well connected to both larger areas of related literature & to more specific areas that will allow for a deep exploration of the topic?
3. Are the topic and the map of related literature manageable in the time available?
4. Are the key words appropriate in number and kind for an electronic search to yield consequential results?

3. **Annotated Bibliographies: Due: 10-16-16**
As you review the literature associated with the topic, you will complete an annotated bibliography for each source that includes complete citation/source information as well as a summary and critique of the source written by you.

These bibliographies can be stored as Word files or entered in EndNote software (NOTE: EndNote software is available to students for $5 via Computing and Information Services) and serve as your personal library as you synthesize across sources to produce your review of literature.

http://www.technology.pitt.edu/software/for-students-software/endnote-st.html

You are expected to review/annotate a minimum of two (2) sources for this assignment, one each of a quantitative and qualitative research genre (1 mixed method genre may be substituted for one of the others). The assignment form is self-explanatory for what is expected.

These bibliographies are meant as a learning tool --- using this format (or a similar one) will help you to gather the information necessary to write your review of literature. This simply allows me to review your work for accuracy and comprehensive annotations that support your writing. Consult the evaluation rubric for guidance.

4. First Peer Reviewed Draft: Due: 11-6-16

This draft undergone peer review and revision and represents your best effort at a complete and thorough literature review. The purpose of providing me with this paper is to receive substantive feedback on your writing and content.

The instructor’s feedback will help you to revise and refine a final draft of the paper. You can expect to receive the paper back in seven to ten days, which will allow you a number of weeks to finalize your review of literature and revision processes. Always consult the evaluation rubric.

Important Note Concerning Editing and Revising

My review process typically includes a first page or so review of writing style and mechanics issues. I usually find that errors in mechanics are repetitive. If I notice it in the first page or so, and note it, assume that the error repeats throughout your paper even though I will not always note it on the paper.

As you edit the paper, make mechanical changes throughout. After the first few pages, you will/may see a line drawn and a notation indicating that I am now reading for content only.

This signals that my focus for the review changes from mechanical (though as noted above, these errors are most likely present throughout the paper) to conceptual --- I am now reading for the content of the paper and the construction of your argument or thesis throughout the remainder of the paper.

Consult the writing rubric to understand the aspects of your writing that I am reviewing. Suggested changes in these parts of the paper go beyond “editing” and suggest substantive revision --- in other words, my comments are meant to have you rethink the section, the concept, the idea, the argument, etc. Editing is mechanical correction and revision is rethinking and revising the concept.
5. Final Revised Draft: Due: 12-04-16

This draft has undergone numerous reviews (by your advisor, peers, colleagues) and revisions and represents your best final effort toward a complete and thorough literature review.

I will be reading this paper as a summative piece for grading rather than as a piece to review for further revision, hence my feedback will be limited. Consult the evaluation rubric for feedback information.

6. Poster Presentation: Due: 12-11-16

As part of our responsibility as scholar-practitioners, we share what we learn with our colleagues. It is through “professed” scholarship and practice that we claim ourselves as “professionals”.

You will be expected to complete a conference-appropriate poster that adequately captures the focus of your work this term and presents a visually compelling summary for others.

These “posters” may be produced in a number of ways. Most students use PowerPoint, though it is not required. Inspiration, Prezi, and other graphic and animation software can be used as well. Nonetheless, you must produce a “poster” that meets the following criteria:

1. Consider that this is an electronic poster --- keep in mind how it will be viewed and how that influences the design and presentation of material!
2. The poster must be viewable from any computer without the need for special software. Failure to abide by this requirement may result in a total loss of credit. Also, be very cautious when putting the poster into Blackboard.
3. The poster must be viewed in its entirety within 5 minutes.
4. Recorded oral commentary must be included, offering a brief introduction and as well as the highlights of research.
5. The recorded oral commentary should align with the graphic representations of the poster.
6. The poster should cover the breadth of the paper/project without getting bogged down in fine points and extensive detail.
7. The poster is designed to entice people to read your paper because of increased interest in the topic.
8. The poster should be of professional quality able to be shared with professional colleagues and the public.

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<th>Course grade Chart</th>
<th>Total Points</th>
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Good Luck in the class. I hope that you gain a deeper understanding of the role and function of research and the value of a literature review to the practitioner-educator.

R. Gerard Longo, Ph.D.