



AUBURN UNIVERSITY SYLLABUS

1. **Course Number:** EDLD 7970
Instructor: Dr. David DiRamio
Course Title: Special Topics: Dissertation Seminar
Credit Hours: 3 semester hours
Class Meetings: Thursdays, 5:00 - 7:50 pm, Duncan Hall 112
Blackboard site: blackboard.auburn.edu
Office: Haley Center 4096, phone (334) 844-3065
Office Hours: Wed. & Thurs.: 1:30 - 3:45; and by appointment
E-mail: diramio@auburn.edu
Prerequisites: Dissertation topic and advisor permission
Corequisite: ADED Dissertation Seminar
2. **Date Syllabus Prepared:** May 19, 2011
3. **Suggested Texts:** Becker, H. S. (2007). *Writing for social scientists: How to start and finish your thesis, book, or article*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press. ISBN: 0226041085

Glatthorn, A. A., & Joyner, R. L. (2005). *Writing the winning dissertation: A step-by-step guide* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press. ISBN: 076193961X
4. **Course Description:** In addition to drafting a dissertation proposal, this course is dedicated to the craft of writing. While focusing on improving writing, students will become acquainted with the process of conceptualizing, proposing, and conducting a dissertation.
5. **Course Objectives:** Upon completion of this course, students will have:
 - I. Continued building research support networks among cohort and faculty;
 - II. Practiced and sharpened writing skills in anticipation of proposal;
 - III. Refined the dissertation topic;
 - IV. Identified resources for conducting dissertation;
 - V. Reviewed key dates and administrative processes for doctoral program; and
 - VI. Established areas of interest for ongoing doctoral journey.

6. Course Content:

I. Writing

- A. Introduction and basics
- B. Enticing the reader
- C. Developing and using transitions
- D. Synthesis
- E. Brevity
- F. Basics
- G. “Top 20 errors by grad students”
- H. Practice

II. Conceptualizing, Proposing, and Conducting a Dissertation

- A. Groundwork: Strategy
- B. Topic: Something worth studying?
- C. Research problem
- D. Capturing the literature: “Nomological net”
- E. Methodology and design
- F. Technology
- G. Stats and results
- H. Chapter Five
- I. References

III. "Pulling it all together" (Writing and the Dissertation)

- A. Your committee
- B. Proposal defense
- C. The “Crate”
- D. Proselytizer vs. Researcher
- E. Human subject and the IRB
- F. A learning process throughout
- G. Key dates and timeline for doctoral studies
- H. Technology helps
- I. Defense

7. Course Requirements:

- I. **Regular attendance and class participation** are essential for successful completion of the course. Active and mature participation includes asking questions, sharing experiences, and contributing to the class community. You are part of a classroom community and the total learning environment depends upon the contributions of each individual. Absence must be handled like it would be in a professional position on campus: Communicated and planned for in advance. Since our class meets only once weekly, excessive absences (more than one, during short summer semester) may result in a lower grade for the course. Extenuating circumstances will be considered on an individual basis, especially if negotiated ahead of time.

A successful EDLD 7970 student demonstrates initiative in the area of participation. You are responsible for adding to the knowledge base during class by discussing input prepared and gained from your readings and coursework. The quality (not the quantity) of participation is important. Students who come to class unprepared to discuss course material will be downgraded accordingly. All student voices are important, so please do not monopolize classroom discussion.

Weekly: Post a short commentary in Blackboard about the assigned reading. Assigned readings are posted weekly by the instructor. Instructor may use your posting for discussion in class. You may also be directed by the instructor to react to another student's posting.

Weekly: Bring to class information about a scholarly article or other "worthy" (non-peer reviewed) item related to your research topic. Be prepared to share the article with the class using structured inquiry, professional dialogue, and reflective thinking. Add the article reference and abstract to a document, week by week, in order to build an annotated bibliography (used to support your research topic and proposal).

II. Dissertation Proposal.

Prepare a dissertation outline, a.k.a. the "proposal" including Chapters One (full text), Chapter Two (outline), and Chapter Three (outline), in accordance with information supplied in class meetings. This will include, but not limited to a research problem(s) to be addressed, preliminary literature review, identified conceptual framework(s) for studying your topic, proposed methodology and limitations.

Proposal shall be prepared according to the *APA Style Manual* 6th edition of 2009. (Note: 5th addition is acceptable for the purposes of this class, but check with your advisor about the version for use in your dissertation)

8. Grading and Evaluation Procedures:

The final grade for the course will be based on the following:

Participation in	
Discussion/Class Meetings	
One-page reflections	
CITI / IRB Training	
Annotated bibliography.....	400 pts.
Dissertation proposal	<u>600 pts.</u>
Total.....	1000 points

The following grading scale will be used:

900 - 1000	= A
800 - 899	= B
700 - 799	= C
600 - 699	= D
Below 600	= F

9. Class Policy Statements:

- A. Students are expected to attend all class meetings and participate in all classroom exercises (Tiger Cub, p. 73). Should students need to be absent for any reasons, please contact the course instructor before missing that class meeting.
- B. Students are responsible for initiating arrangements for missed work due to excused absences (Tiger Cub, p. 74)
- C. Students who need special accommodations should make an appointment to discuss the Accommodation Memo during office hours as soon as possible. If you do not have an Accommodations Memo, contact the Program for Students with Disabilities, in 1224 Haley Center as soon as possible. Telephone: 334-844-5943 (Voice T/O)
- D. All portions of the Auburn University Honesty Code can be found in the Tiger Cub (Title XII) will apply in this class.
- E. A grade of incomplete will not be given except under extreme circumstances as determined by the instructor.

10. Important Dates & Deadlines

May 19	Week 1. First class session, introductions, syllabus, etc.
May 26	Week 2. Dissertation Dissections. Prepare for readings and discussion. Assigned readings in Blackboard folder "Week 2."
June 2	Week 3. Chapter 1: Introduction. Select topic, guidelines, research problem statements. Prepare for readings and discussion. Assigned readings in Blackboard folder "Week 3."
June 9	Week 4. Library visit w/ Todd Shipman at RBD Library - Mell Street Lobby. Prepare for readings and discussion. Assigned readings in Blackboard folder "Week 4."

June 16	Week 5. Graduate School guidelines and deadlines. Continue research problem review. Prepare for readings and discussion. Assigned readings in Blackboard folder "Week 5."
June 23	Week 6. Chapter Two: Review of Literature. Prepare for readings and discussion. Assigned readings in Blackboard folder "Week 6." Chapter One outline due.
June 30	Week 7. Research and study. Work on CITI requirements.
July 7	Week 8. The IRB process w/ Niki Johnson, Director, Research Compliance. Prepare for readings and discussion. Assigned readings in Blackboard folder "Week 8." Chapter Two outline due.
July 14	Week 9. Chapter Three: Methods. Prepare for readings and discussion. Assigned readings in Blackboard folder "Week 9."
July 21	Week 10. Chapter V: Conclusions/Recommendations/Implications
July 28	All work due, including final draft of Chapter One and outlines of Chapters Two and Three.

11. Relevant Books/Journals/Periodicals/Web resources available in/through Auburn RBD Library:

- *The Chronicle of Higher Education*
- *The Journal of Higher Education*
- *The Review of Higher Education*

EDLD 7970: Special Topics Dissertation Seminar

Student Needs Assessment

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

E-mail: _____

Area of Emphasis: (Circle One)

K-12

Higher Ed. (General)

Student Affairs

Community Colleges

Leadership T&D

Other _____

Courses Taken: _____

Research Courses Taken (Instructor): _____

Who is your chair? _____

Who are your other committee members? _____

What is the topic area for your dissertation? _____

What methodology will you use? _____

Are you familiar with the library system?_____

Have you begun work on your lit review?_____

If so, at what stage are you?_____

Have you completed/ Are you familiar with the necessary human subjects paperwork?_____

Have you selected the sample for your study?_____

If so, what is it?_____

Have you gained site access?_____

Have you started to collect data?_____

If so, at what stage are you? _____

Have you taken or plan to take your comps next year?_____ When? _____

What is the expected date for dissertation completion? _____

What do you want to get out of this class?

Questions?