### Research Program Mission Statement

The Educational Research Program mission is to develop well-rounded scholar-practitioners in the field of education who uphold the social justice tenets of subsidiarity, the dignity and rights of children, and the right to an education—with special emphasis on the needs of the poor and vulnerable. The goal and the supporting principles will be accomplished by developing students who understand how to conduct practical research in an ethical, self-reflective, collaborative way to effect systemic positive change that serves the students, school, and/or community.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Professor</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Semester</td>
<td>Spring, 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>EDUC/COUN 6326</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Educational Research and Scholarly Writing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Section</td>
<td>KD1P</td>
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<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Online</td>
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<td>Time</td>
<td>See Course Calendar in Blackboard for due dates.</td>
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</table>

| Prerequisites           | None                 |


| Course Description      | Designed to introduce graduate students in Education to scholarly writing and the research process. Topics include exploration of different literary styles in educational research, mastery of APA style, and analysis, synthesis, and critique of peer-reviewed literature. |
Social Justice Tenets Guiding this Course

The content and goals of this course are consistent with three tenets of Catholic social justice teaching that inform the School of Education and Human Services programs.

- **Subsidiarity**: Educational institutions should be organized and governed as much as possible by the community being served; education should only be controlled at higher levels of society when it cannot be done effectively locally.
- **Dignity and rights of children**: Children possess full human dignity and are bearers of rights which should be recognized and upheld in educational processes.
- **People have a right to an education**: All people have a responsibility, for the good of society, to contribute to and foster education.

The Research Program encourages high-quality educational research that can help to improve the education—and thus the lives—of all people, particularly those who are disadvantaged, traditionally underserved, and at-risk. The Catholic social justice tenet **putting the needs of the poor and vulnerable first** underscores the importance of educational research that promotes the elimination of poverty and discrimination.

Course Framework and Professional Standards

This course is guided by two frameworks: the Framework for Success in Postsecondary Writing (WPA, NCTE, & NWP, 2011) and Coghlan and Brannick’s (2014) Action Research Cycle. You will cultivate “habits of mind” (WPA et al., 2011, p. 1) through a variety of reading, writing, and critical analysis experiences that are associated with writing success. You will also begin your introduction to Action Research by considering the context and purpose of writing (pre-steps), selecting and refining a topic (constructing), using pre-writing strategies such as concept maps and outlines (planning), drafting (taking action), and reflecting on feedback prior to revising and editing (evaluating action). The second research course that you will take (EDUC/COUN 6237) will explore the action research cycle in more depth, but you will have a point of reference for the cycle because of your work in the current course.

The course objectives and outcomes of both research courses (EDUC/COUN 6326 and 6327) are consistent with the American Educational Research Association’s “Standards for Reporting on Empirical Social Science Research in AERA Publications” (AERA, 2006), the Code of Ethics of the American Educational Research Association (AERA, 2011), and the Code of Ethics of the American Counseling Association (2014).

Course Overview, Course Objectives, and Student Learning Outcomes

The overarching goal of the course is to develop your proficiency in scholarly writing and foundational research skills. To this end, there are several broad course objectives that course activities and assessments are linked to. Within each objective are specific student learning
outcomes (SLOs). With careful attention to the formative feedback you receive from your peers and professor, and with diligent review and application of the course resources, you can expect to improve as a writer and researcher by the end of this course.

Throughout the course, you will review yourself and be reviewed by the professor on these objectives. In addition, you will have the opportunity to provide feedback on how well you think the course and professor helped you to meet the objectives.

**Orientation Objective:** Become familiar with the course policies, schedule, format, tools, and learning community.
- SLO 0.1: Understand the course format, policies, and schedule.
- SLO 0.2: Demonstrate familiarity with course tools.
- SLO 0.3: Develop a learning community.

**Objective 1:** Learning how to find, evaluate, and use resources to explore a topic in depth.
- SLO 1.1: Use library resources to find relevant, current, peer-reviewed literature.
- SLO 1.2: Analyze and evaluate sources of information.
- SLO 1.3: Demonstrate academic integrity by appropriately citing sources.

**Objective 2:** Developing skill in expressing myself orally or in writing.
- SLO 2.1: Use concept mapping and outlining as pre-writing strategies.
- SLO 2.2: Demonstrate awareness of one’s audience and the purpose of one’s writing.
- SLO 2.2: Demonstrate proficiency in APA style.
- SLO 2.4: Create clear, focused thesis statements.
- SLO 2.5: Demonstrate proficiency in essay/paper organization.
- SLO 2.6: Create unified, logically organized, concise paragraphs that employ clear, accurate language.
- SLO 2.7: Demonstrate proficiency in grammar and mechanics.
- SLO 2.8: Respond to others’ writing.
- SLO 2.9: Reflect on one’s own writing

**Objective 3:** Learning to apply course material (to improve thinking, problem solving, and decisions).
- SLO 3.1: Craft a teaching statement that incorporates personal narrative.
- SLO 3.2: Synthesize evidence from the scholarly literature to support a thesis.
- SLO 3.3: Formulate persuasive, evidence-based recommendations.

**Assessments**
A variety of assessments are used to evaluate your progress in the course. Assessments are linked to course objectives and student learning outcomes, and earlier assessments support subsequent assessments. Furthermore, the assessments are designed to reflect the kinds of writing that you will be likely to do in future coursework and in your professional career. Clear criteria for evaluating your performance are provided with each assessment. Feedback on each assignment can be found in the “My Progress” section of Blackboard’s navigation menu. **Due dates can be found on the Course Calendar, in Blackboard.**

1. **Quizzes and surveys (SLOs 0.1, 0.2, 1.3):** Quizzes (orientation and academic integrity) assess your knowledge and comprehension of the syllabus and academic integrity.
Writing self-assessment surveys (pre and post), learning community surveys, and course evaluation surveys provide opportunities to reflect on your own goals and learning.

II. **Group and Partner Work (SLOs 0.3, 2.8):** You will participate in several activities with peers as part of a writing support group. The writing support group is a learning community in which you will review others’ work, provide feedback, and receive feedback on your own work. Your professor will assign you to a writing support group at the beginning of the course. Within the support group, you will rotate partners for peer review so that you gain multiple perspectives. Group and partner work is assessed through Discussion Board responses, Collaborate session recordings, and peer review responses. Additional details for Collaborate sessions and peer review responses can be found in Blackboard.

III. **Compare and contrast essay (SLOs – 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6, 2.7, 2.8, 2.9):**

The compare and contrast essay allows you to familiarize yourself with the steps of the scholarly writing process, to gain practice with key elements of the course (e.g., APA style, peer review, self-reflection), and to prepare for the course assessment—the synthesis paper. It involves developing a thesis about a topic related to social justice, providing personal experience that supports the thesis, comparing and contrasting two peer-reviewed journal articles related to the thesis, and making a recommendation based on the findings. Additional details about this assignment can be found in Blackboard.

1. Pre-writing: Research topic concept map, virtual meeting with librarian, essay outline, and APA reference list draft.
2. Drafting: Draft of compare and contrast essay.
3. Responding: Writing support group meeting to provide peer review.
4. Revising and editing: Final compare and contrast essay (3 pages; minimum of 2 peer-reviewed journal articles presenting different perspectives on the topic).
5. Reflection: Self-reflection and development of personal learning plan.

IV. **Synthesis paper (SLOs – 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6, 2.7, 2.8, 2.9, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3):**

The synthesis paper allows you to demonstrate your proficiency with narrative, expository, and persuasive modes of writing, and your ability to synthesize various modes within a single paper. You will apply the steps of the scholarly writing process to the three main sections of the paper—professional practice (narrative mode), review and synthesis of evidence (expository mode), and recommendations (persuasive mode)—gaining professor and peer feedback along the way. Additional details about this assignment can be found in Blackboard.

1. Pre-writing: Teaching statement concept map, paper outline, updated reference list.
2. Drafting: Draft of synthesis paper (including introduction, teaching statement, review and synthesis of evidence, recommendations, and conclusion sections).
3. Responding: Writing support group meeting to provide peer review.
4. Revising and editing: Final synthesis paper (5-6 pages; minimum of 4 peer-reviewed journal articles).
5. Reflection: Group reflection on support group process and individual reflection on personal learning plan progress.
### Instructions for Submitting Work

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Using Blackboard</th>
<th>Assignments must be submitted to the professor in Blackboard before midnight on the due date. It is your responsibility to ensure that the professor receives your documents. Please be sure to submit your work as an attachment unless otherwise indicated. Work submitted in the text box (through cutting and pasting) is not easily graded.</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>APA Style</td>
<td>All work must be written in APA style, <strong>using MS Word</strong>. Font must be Times New Roman, 12-point, and double-spaced, and margins must be 1-inch. For the essay and paper, please include a running head, Title page, and (where applicable) reference page, all consistent with APA style. A sample APA paper can be found in the APA Style section of Blackboard.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Naming files</td>
<td>Please name the file using your last name, your first name, and the name of the assignment, separated with underscores. For example: <strong>Lastname_Firstname_Research_Topic_Concept_Map</strong>. This will expedite grading!</td>
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<tr>
<td>Late submissions</td>
<td>You will greatly benefit from being punctual. This is a fast-paced course, and it is essential that you keep up with the deadlines. Late and missing submissions will negatively contribute to the evaluation of your effort in this course. If one assignment is late without an excuse, please speak with the professor to discuss a plan for preventing future late work.</td>
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</table>

### Evaluation and Grading Policy

This course uses a personalized approach to student evaluation. Your professor will provide extensive formative feedback on your work, identifying strengths as well as areas for growth within the relevant student learning outcomes (SLOs). Based on this feedback, you and your professor will construct a personal learning plan (PLP) that identifies particular areas to focus on in future work as well as resources for how to improve. The PLP will evolve as you develop in this course.

Self-review promotes meta-cognitive skills and a reflective stance that will benefit you as a writer and researcher; thus, self-review is an essential part of this course. You will regularly reflect (in writing) on your written work, following guidelines provided in Blackboard.
In addition, you will receive and provide peer review on several aspects of your work. Although this may initially feel intimidating, peer review is an excellent way to obtain a fresh perspective on your writing and is consistently cited by students as one of the most valuable aspects of the course. The purpose of peer review is not to edit each other’s work but to give meaningful feedback about structure and content of early drafts so that the final work will be more polished.

Your final course grade will reflect both your progress and your effort.

**Progress:** Progress is defined as growth on SLOs, with special focus on the targets identified in your personal learning plan. Consistent with research on writing instruction, this course places heavy emphasis on formative assessment. The first major assignment in this course, the compare and contrast essay, is purely formative. Thus, on the compare and contrast essay, you will receive extensive comments and an overall rating of Proficient, Developing and Improved, or Not Improved. However, this rating is simply a guidepost about your progress in the course; it will not contribute to your final grade.

The second major assignment in this course, the synthesis paper, is both formative and summative. You will receive comments and an overall rating (Proficient, Developing and Improved, or Not Improved) on a draft of your synthesis paper. This rating will be an additional guidepost about your progress in the course.

If your formative ratings are below Proficient, you will need to substantially improve in order to earn a Proficient rating on the final paper. Similarly, if your early ratings are Proficient, you will need to maintain this level of performance on your final paper to maintain a Proficient rating. **However, only the rating of your final synthesis paper will contribute to your course grade.**

We believe that good writing involves development over time. Thus, your final synthesis paper in the course should represent your best work and should reflect your learning over the course of the semester. Regardless of your level of writing ability at the beginning of the course, you should expect to see substantial improvement in your writing if you make the effort to learn from the course materials and the formative feedback you receive.

**Effort:** High effort is defined as completing all work (including surveys, quizzes, written assignments, and any other activities listed in the syllabus), submitting work on time, making meaningful contributions to the learning community (through group review and peer review), attending to and integrating professor feedback into future assignments, and demonstrating conscientiousness in one’s work (e.g., by following instructions, proofreading, etc.). Effort is evaluated as high effort or low effort. To earn high effort, you must complete all work, submit work on time (no more than one late submission), participate in all learning community activities, and follow instructions on assignments. Any missing assignments or activities not completed will result in a rating of low effort. More than one late assignment (without prior notification) will also result in a rating of low effort. **Earning low effort will result in a course grade of F.**

Final course grades will be determined as follows:

**Final synthesis paper rating + Effort = Course Grade**
Proficient + High effort = A
Developing and Improved + High effort = B
Not Improved + High effort = F
Proficient + Low effort = F
Developing and Improved + Low effort = F
Not Improved + Low effort = F

As you can see, it is essential that you put effort into the course. Even if you begin the course as a Proficient writer, you can further develop your skills, so it is important to complete all tasks and put forth effort into the course. Conversely, it is extremely rare that a student will earn full credit for effort but make no progress. If this appears to be the direction a student is heading, the professor will discuss resources and options with the student prior to the final assignment.

Please see the Evaluation Criteria at the end of the syllabus for descriptions of what constitutes Proficient, Developing and Improved, and Not Improved.

Student Accommodations
In accordance with Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the professor will make all possible and reasonable adjustments in policies, practices, services, and facilities to ensure equal and optimal educational programs and activities. Whenever a special accommodation is necessary to ensure access to full participation by students with disabilities, the student must inform the professor of any disability or needed accommodations.

The University Office for ADA Compliance may ask to seek proof of disability and specify accommodations as requested by students. Students with special needs should inform the professor within the first two weeks of class. Students must also contact the Office of Counseling and Disability Services (2nd floor of Crooker Center) by calling Dr. Rose Signorello at 713-525-3162 or Ms. Debbie Jones at 713-525-6953; the Office is open 8-5 Monday through Friday.

The accommodations will become official when the professor receives official, written notification from the officer in charge of ADA compliance. Students should contact the professor immediately if new needs arise. All information will be confidential.

Expectations for Students and Faculty

| Academic integrity | Master’s-level students in the School of Education demonstrate integrity in all of their activities, both personal and professional. Any unprofessional behavior or failure to adhere to the honor system is a serious violation of integrity and may result in failure of the course. |
**Plagiarism** involves taking credit for another person’s work. You must cite sources in APA style any time source material (e.g., books, journal articles, internet material, etc.) has been used, paraphrased, or quoted. Quoted material must be placed in quotation marks and referenced appropriately. Please note that copying information directly from a source without giving credit, using friends’ work, buying papers online, re-using one’s own work from previous classes, etc., all constitute plagiarism.

Any instance of plagiarism will result in failure of the course and may result in dismissal from UST. Ignorance is no excuse; if you remain uncertain about the guidelines for using and citing source material after these issues are addressed, you should seek input from the professor.

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<tr>
<th>Technology Requirements and Guidelines</th>
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<tr>
<td>This course relies heavily on Blackboard, which is best viewed in the Firefox or Chrome browser. (A free download can be obtained at <a href="http://www.firefox.com">www.firefox.com</a> or <a href="http://www.google.com/chrome">www.google.com/chrome</a>.) Please familiarize yourself with Blackboard through the tutorial (in the Start Here menu).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Frequent visits to Blackboard are encouraged. You should log in at least 2-3 times a week to check Announcements, review feedback, etc. If you have not logged in at some point during the first week of class, you can be dropped from the class.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Additional information about technology requirements, skills, and Netiquette can be found on the Start Here page in Blackboard.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Use of UST email accounts</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>You are required to use your UST email account. The professor may send messages through Blackboard, which uses your UST address. If you have linked your UST account to another account, be sure to periodically clean out your UST mailbox so that it doesn’t</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Professor availability</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Professor feedback</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Language diversity</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Tutorial Services Center</strong></td>
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Providing Feedback on the Course

The research program and your professor greatly value feedback. In addition to providing informal feedback throughout the course by emailing or talking with the professor, there are two formal opportunities to provide anonymous feedback. First, the midpoint course feedback survey (in Blackboard) is a way for you to let the professor know what is and is not working about the course. Your suggestions for improvement will be reviewed and considered for implementation while you are still enrolled. Although Blackboard does track who has and who has not responded, your individual responses are anonymous.

Second, the end-of-course evaluation is completely anonymous; your professor will never know who has (or has not) responded to this survey. Survey results are not even available to the professor until after grades have been posted. We strongly encourage you to complete the end-of-course evaluation. This is one of the main ways we have to assess the quality of the course (and the professor) and make improvements. The University of St. Thomas uses IDEA Center’s evaluation. As part of this evaluation, you will be asked to rate how effective the course and the professor were for helping you achieve the four course objectives listed earlier in the syllabus. Please be thoughtful in your evaluation and provide suggestions for improvement. We strive for a 100% response rate, with reliable and valid responses!
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Module</th>
<th>Resources, Readings, and Activities</th>
<th>Assessments and Student Learning Outcomes</th>
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</thead>
</table>
| **LM1: Orientation**  
Course format, policies, schedule, and tools; learning community  
**All readings except APA text are in Blackboard.** | ✓ Review: “Start Here” page  
✓ View: Course orientation video  
✓ Read: Syllabus.  
✓ Read: Resource on writing process framework and Personal Learning Plan | ✓ Orientation quiz – 0.1, 0.2  
✓ Discussion Board: Introductions and responses - 0.3 |
| **LM2: Pre-writing**  
Overview of scholarly writing; determining your audience and purpose; selecting a topic; concept mapping | ✓ Review: Overview of first half of course  
✓ View: Scholarly writing tutorial  
✓ Read: Resource on audience  
✓ Read: Resource on understanding assignments  
✓ View: Mini-lecture on selecting a research topic  
✓ View: Mini-lecture on concept mapping  
✓ Review: Sample research topic concept map  
✓ Read: Blackboard Collaborate tutorial resources  
✓ Collaborate: Prepare for writing support group meeting – read entire Personal Learning Plan (PLP) form and complete section A prior to meeting | ✓ Discussion Board: Research topic concept map - 0.3, 2.1  
✓ Learning Community Survey 1 – 0.3  
✓ Personal Learning Plan section A – 0.2  
✓ Writing support group meeting – 0.3, 2.2 |
| **LM3: Pre-writing**  
Finding, analyzing, evaluating, and citing source material | ✓ View: Tutorials on finding and saving peer-reviewed journal articles  
✓ Review: Library resources website and list of journals  
✓ Collaborate: Virtual meeting with UST librarian  
✓ View: Mini-lecture on analyzing a journal article  
✓ View: Mini-lecture on evaluating a source through critical thinking  
✓ Explore: Identify at least four peer-reviewed sources (one of which expresses a different view) on your research topic. Read all articles, summarize their main points, and select two articles that illustrate different perspectives. | ✓ Discussion Board: Respond to writing support group members’ research topic concept maps – 0.3  
✓ Reference list draft, in APA style – 1.1, 1.2, 2.3 |
Include these two articles in the reference list draft.
- Read: APA pp. 169-224
- View: Mini-lecture on APA style
- Review: APA style citation and reference tables

| LM4: Pre-writing | ✓ Read: Resource on outlining  
|                 | ✓ View: Mini-lecture on writing thesis statements (with practice exercises)  
|                 | ✓ Read: Resource on how to structure and organize a paper  
|                 | ✓ Read: Resource on writing a compare and contrast essay  
|                 | ✓ Review: Sample compare and contrast essay outline  
|                 | ✓ Explore: Determine whether you have sufficient evidence to support your thesis; if not, select different articles | ✓ Outline of compare and contrast essay, with thesis statement and reference list – 1.1, 1.2, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5

| LM5: Drafting | ✓ View: Mini-lecture on writing paragraphs and sample paragraph practice  
|               | ✓ View: Mini-lecture on scholarly writing style  
|               | ✓ Read: Resource on quoting, paraphrasing, and summarizing  
|               | ✓ Explore: Academic integrity tutorial quiz; save quiz certificate as jpg/pdf/doc  
|               | ✓ Read: APA pp. 61-77  
|               | ✓ Read: Sample compare and contrast essay | ✓ Submit academic integrity tutorial quiz certificate (jpg/pdf/doc) – 1.3

| LM6: Responding | ✓ View: Mini-lecture on giving and receiving feedback  
|                | ✓ Read: Resources on effective feedback  
|                | ✓ Read: Peer review guidelines and form  
|                | ✓ Collaborate: Prepare for writing support group meeting – read draft of group members’ essays and complete peer review form for each prior to meeting | ✓ Writing support group meeting – 0.3, 2.8

| LM7: Revising and Editing | ✓ View: Mini-lecture on grammar and mechanics  
|                           | ✓ Review: APA style resources  
|                           | ✓ Review: Revising and editing checklist  
|                           | ✓ Read: APA manual pp. 77-114 | ✓ Final compare and contrast essay – 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6, 2.7

| LM8: | ✓ Read: Resource on reflecting on your writing | ✓ Personal Learning Plan section F – 2.9
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Reflecting</th>
<th>Reflecting on your work</th>
<th>✓ Mid-point course feedback survey – 0.3</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LM9:</td>
<td>Pre-writing</td>
<td>✓ Review: Overview of second half of course</td>
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<td>Teaching statements</td>
<td>✓ Read: Resource on crafting a teaching statement that incorporates personal narrative</td>
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<td>✓ Review: Sample teaching statement concept map</td>
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<td>LM10:</td>
<td>Pre-writing:</td>
<td>✓ Read: Resource on summarizing primary vs. secondary sources</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Summarizing and</td>
<td>✓ View: Mini-lecture on synthesizing evidence</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>synthesizing evidence</td>
<td>✓ Explore: Develop the thesis and review existing evidence; select additional articles if needed</td>
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<td></td>
<td>✓ Review: Sample synthesis paper outline</td>
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<tr>
<td>LM11:</td>
<td>Drafting</td>
<td>✓ Read: Resource on rhetorical strategies for persuasion</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Developing persuasive</td>
<td>✓ Read: Sample synthesis paper</td>
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</table>
|            | recommendations          | |}
| LM12:      | Responding              | ✓ Collaborate: Prepare for writing support group meeting – read draft of group members’ papers and complete peer review form for each prior to meeting |
|            | Giving and receiving    | ✓ Course evaluation: Complete online |
|            | feedback                | ✓ Writing support group meeting – 0.3, 2.8 |
|            |                         | ✓ Discussion Board: Post feedback on writing support group members’ synthesis paper drafts – 0.3, 2.8 |
| LM13:      | Revising and           | ✓ Review: APA style resources |
|            | Editing                 | ✓ Review: Revising and editing checklist |
|            | Final revisions and     | ✓ Final synthesis paper – 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6, 2.7, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3 |
|            | edits                   | |}
| LM14:      | Reflecting              | ✓ Collaborate: Prepare for writing support group meeting – read and reflect on the group reflection questions (linked in Blackboard) prior to meeting |
|            | Reflecting individually | ✓ Writing support group meeting – 0.3, 2.8, 2.9 |
|            | and with your group;    | ✓ Personal Learning Plan sections L and M – 2.9 |
| planning your next steps | ✓ Learning Community Survey 2 – 0.3 |

The professor reserves the right to make changes to this syllabus during the semester. Please check Blackboard on a regular basis for updated information, announcements, and handouts.
Evaluation Criteria

Progress:

Work that earns a “Proficient” rating has all of the following characteristics:

- The writer demonstrates attention to the audience and purpose of the work and maintains a scholarly tone throughout.
- The work includes a clear, focused, and inviting thesis statement.
- The work contains an introduction, body, and conclusion, with information that is well-organized and relevant to the topic of the essay. Transitions are varied. Examples and evidence are original/novel and show clarity of purpose and voice.
- The work incorporates paragraphs that are unified (i.e., all sentences within the paragraph relate to the main idea of the paragraph), are logically organized (i.e., sentences are ordered in a way that flows and makes sense), demonstrate conciseness of expression (i.e., no “wordiness” or rambling), and that use clear, accurate language.
- The work demonstrates nuanced understanding of grammatical and mechanical rules, with no errors within the revising and editing checklist categories.
- Citations and references are accurately formatted, and headings and all other aspects of the paper formatting are accurate.
- Source material is credible, relevant, and current; peer-reviewed scholarly journal articles predominate (i.e., at least the minimum number of sources required are from peer-reviewed journals).
- Self-reflection demonstrates understanding of one’s strengths and areas for growth.
- Assessment-specific instructions are completely followed.

Work that earns a “Developing and Improved” rating may have many of the characteristics of a “Proficient” essay. However, it also has one or more of the following characteristics:

- The writer generally attends to the audience and purpose of the work but may occasionally lapse into non-scholarly writing habits (e.g., use of colloquialisms or jargon; use of second person—“you,” “your”).
- The work includes an identifiable thesis statement, but the thesis is somewhat confusing, disconnected from the rest of the essay, or unfocused.
• The work contains an introduction, body, and conclusion, but has irrelevant information and/or lack of smooth transitioning between paragraphs. Examples and evidence are generic or repeated from source material.

• Paragraphs have sentences that are logically organized but may include choppy sentences, unnecessary wordiness, awkward wording, or lack of supporting detail.

• Although there may be some errors in grammar and/or mechanics, those identified in one’s PLP have been addressed.

• There are minor errors in the citations and references, headings, and/or other aspects of the paper formatting (e.g., running head or headings).

• Source material is credible, relevant, and current, but non-peer-reviewed scholarly sources (e.g., books or book chapters) predominate.

• Self-reflection discusses what one has learned about the topic of the work but not one’s strengths and areas of growth.

• Assessment-specific instructions are mostly followed, with minor omissions.

**Work will earn a “Not Improved” rating if any of the following characteristics are present:**

• Instructor feedback on previous drafts/assessments has not been incorporated into the current assessment.

• Areas targeted on Personal Learning Plan are not addressed in the current assessment.

• Source material is not scholarly; Internet sources (other than electronic journal articles) are used exclusively.

• Assessment-specific instructions are not followed.

**Effort:**

**High effort is defined as the following:**

• Completing all work (no missing assignments or activities)

• Submitting work on time (no more than one late submission)

• Participating in all learning community activities (peer review, group meetings)

• Following instructions on assignments.

**Low effort is defined as the not meeting one or more of the above criteria.**