

**GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY**  
**CEHD PH.D. IN EDUCATION PROGRAM**  
**EDLE 815—CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORKS IN EDUCATION LEADERSHIP (3 CREDITS)**  
**Summer 2011**

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Lurking behind each method of research is the personal equation supplied to the setting by the individual observer (Clifford, 1986). In this fundamental sense all research methods are at bottom qualitative and are, for that matter, equally objective; the use of quantitative data or mathematical procedures does not eliminate the inter-subjective element that underlies social research. Objectivity does not reside in a method, per se, *but in the framing of the research problem* and the willingness of the researchers to pursue that problem wherever the data and their hunches may lead . . . (Vidich & Lyman, 2001, p. 5, emphasis added)

**Three important questions for the course:**

*This is a case of what?*  
*What is your unit of analysis?*  
*How will you know it when you see it?*

**Schedule Information**

**Meeting Times:** Classes will meet on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 4:30 – 7:10 p.m. from June 6 – July 28 with certain exceptions. Some days sessions will run 4:30 – 10:00 and other days class will not meet. (See the schedule below for more detail.)

**Location:** Commerce II Rm 101

## **Catalogue Course Description**

Introduces three different disciplinary perspectives on education leadership, and helps identify and articulate different conceptual frameworks. Major focus is designing a conceptual framework that informs research questions.

## **Specific Course Description for Current Semester**

This course introduces students to multiple theoretical perspectives on education leadership and helps students identify and articulate different conceptual frameworks used in various publications. After designing a conceptual framework that informs research questions of students' own choosing, students complete a research prospectus that may be used as the core of dissertation planning for Portfolio 3.

## **Student Outcomes**

Students successfully completing this course will be able to:

1. apply several theoretical perspectives to issues in education leadership;
2. describe, verbally and graphically, conceptual frameworks used in a variety of publications;
3. develop conceptual frameworks that inform their own original research questions; and
4. write a coherent research plan that includes a statement of the research problem, a conceptual framework, and discussion of methodology.

## **Relationship to Program Goals**

EDLE 815 is a course in the Education Leadership specialization in the Ph.D. in Education program. It is aligned with the following CEHD Core Values: Collaboration, Ethical Leadership, Innovation, Research-Based Practice, and Social Justice. This course also directly addresses the two major Ph.D. in Education Program goals: 1) Improve knowledge and skills useful in current or planned educational and counseling roles; and 2) Improve the ability to analyze current social, economic, political, and ethical issues and concerns in their relationship to various educational and community situations and activities. A major goal of the Ph.D. in Education Program is to teach students how to conduct research. Developing a conceptual framework is a key component of engaging in and writing about research.

## **Course Materials**

### *Required Texts*

All articles are posted on Taskstream. Students are expected to have access to reading material (either electronic or hard copy) in class.

### *Recommended Text*

*Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (6<sup>th</sup> edition).  
Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association.

### *Outside-of-Class Resources*

All students are expected to have access to a personal computer and the ability to use basic word processing, e-mail and Web browser programs.

### **Nature of Course Delivery**

Students are expected to be active participants in the class and to help create a unique classroom experience for everyone involved. Brief lectures or presentations help to organize the course, but students are expected to flesh out the basic structure through their participation in classroom activities, discussions, debates, presentations, and electronic discussions via TaskStream. Students will enhance course content through formally and informally sharing their research in a specific topic area.

1. Classes will reflect a balance of activities that enable students to participate actively in the development of their *personae* as scholars. To promote an atmosphere that allows us to accomplish this, we will:
  - a. Start and end on time;
  - b. Maintain (flexibly) a written agenda reflecting objectives for each class;
  - c. Agree to disagree respectfully during class discussions;
  - d. Strive to be open to new ideas and perspectives; and
  - e. Listen actively to one another.
  
2. Student work will reflect what is expected from scholars. As such, students are expected to:
  - a. write papers that are well researched, proofread, submitted in a timely fashion, and consistent with APA guidelines;
  - b. participate actively in class discussions in a manner that challenges the best thinking of the class;
  - c. provide constructive feedback to others both on their ideas and on their written work, striving to learn from each other and to test each other's ideas.
  
3. We will endeavor to create a classroom climate that approximates what we know about learning organizations. As such, it is important that we create a space that allows participants to try out new ideas and voice opinions without fear of ridicule or embarrassment. The hallmark of a learning organization is a balance between openness and constructive feedback; hence, everyone is expected to:
  - a. come fully prepared to each class;
  - b. demonstrate appropriate respect for one another;
  - c. voice concerns and opinions about class process openly;
  - d. recognize and celebrate each other's ideas and accomplishment;
  - e. show an awareness of each other's needs.

## **Course Requirements, Assignments, and Evaluation Criteria**

All students are required to complete all assigned readings prior to the date they appear in the “Class Schedule” section below. The following writing assignments are required:

- Research Question and Rationale—15 points
- Analyzing a Conceptual Framework—15 points
- Creating Your Own Conceptual Framework—30 points
- Research Prospectus—20 points

Specific assignment instructions and assessment rubrics may be found at the end of this syllabus. All written assignments must be submitted via TaskStream no later than midnight on the due date.

Letter grades will be assigned according to the weights and grading scale listed below. Students should always bear in mind that grading is primarily the instructor’s judgment about performance. The intent is to indicate student success in completing assignments and tasks, not the level of effort put into them. Students may track their progress on TaskStream. Class participation will be entered on TaskStream according to the rubric posted there.

Class Participation	20 percent
Research Question and Rationale	15 percent
Analyzing a Conceptual Framework	15 percent
Creating Your Own Conceptual Framework	30 percent
Research Prospectus	20 percent

Class participation has the following components:

- Attendance—arriving on time and staying for the duration of the session.
- Preparation for class, including completing reading assignments on time and thinking about topics to be handled or discussed.
- Making oral contributions to discussions—offering original ideas as well as responding to what others have said.
- Making thoughtful contributions to TaskStream discussions including timely submission of “learning logs”.

**Students who do not participate in a TaskStream activity and/or are absent for article presentations and discussions, will not receive credit for those activities.**

### *Absence From Class*

Students are expected to attend every class for its entirety. Emergencies sometimes arise, however. Students who need to be absent from class must notify me in advance by telephone or e-mail. Students who miss more than one class, will lose participation

points. Students who come to class more than 30 minutes late or leave more than 30 minutes early will lose participation points.

### *Grading Scale*

A+	=	99 – 100 percent
A	=	95 – 98 percent
A-	=	90 – 94 percent
B+	=	87 – 89 percent
B	=	84 – 86 percent
B-	=	80 – 83 percent
C	=	75 – 79 percent
F	=	below 75 percent

### *Late Work*

Students are expected to submit all assignments by the due dates listed in the schedule below. Sometimes students fall behind for various personal and/or professional reasons. I will accept a maximum of one late assignment from each student during the semester. **Work may not be submitted later than 48 hours after the published due date.**

### *Re-submission of Assignments*

Students who receive a grade lower than 3.5 may re-submit their papers. All re-submissions are due via e-mail attachment (not TaskStream) one week after the student receives the initial grade and comments.

### **CEHD/GSE Expectations for All Students**

The College of Education and Human Development (CEHD) and the Graduate School of Education (GSE) expect that all students abide by the following:

Students are expected to exhibit professional behavior and dispositions. See <http://cehd.gmu.edu> for a listing of these dispositions.

Students must follow the guidelines of the University Honor Code. See [http://www.gmu.edu/catalog/apolicies/#TOC\\_H12](http://www.gmu.edu/catalog/apolicies/#TOC_H12) for the full honor code.

Students must agree to abide by the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing. See <http://mail.gmu.edu> and click on Responsible Use of Computing at the bottom of the screen.

Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with the GMU Disability Resource Center (DRC) and inform the instructor, in writing, at the beginning of the semester. See [www.gmu.edu/student/drc](http://www.gmu.edu/student/drc) or call 703-993-2474 to access the DRC.

## Schedule

Note: All writing assignments are to be submitted via TaskStream not later than midnight on the due date.

Session	Topics	Reading Assignment	Writing Assignment
<p><b><u>Class 1:</u></b></p> <p>June 7 Both EDLE 815 and EDLE 895 meet at 7:20 p.m.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction to the course</li> <li>• What do we mean by literature review?</li> <li>• Preparing <b>Research Question and Rationale paper</b></li> <li>• Picking articles for class to read and discuss from CF perspective</li> </ul>	<p>Maxwell, J. on literature reviews for research (article distributed electronically prior to the start of the course)</p>	
<p><b>June 9</b></p> <p><b><u>Class 2:</u></b></p> <p>Extended Session for EDLE 815, 4:30 – 10:00 p.m.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bill Gates's Conceptual Framework</li> <li>• <b>Sociocultural Theories</b></li> <li>• Understanding the Vygotsky Space Framework</li> <li>• Creating a Lit Chart</li> <li>• Sharing research questions and rationales</li> </ul>	<p>Two Articles:</p> <p>Kelly (2006) What is teacher learning?</p> <p>Gallucci, C., Van Lare, M.D., Yoon, I, &amp; Boatright, B.B. (2010).</p> <p>* Have articles relevant to your work in class (either electronic or hard copy).</p>	
<p><b>June 14</b></p> <p><b><u>Class 3</u></b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>New Institutionalism in Sociology (NIS)</b></li> <li>• How has your research question evolved since the end of EDLE 803?</li> <li>• Defining your purpose and significance; articulating your research questions</li> <li>• Introduction to Analyzing a Conceptual Framework paper</li> </ul>	<p>Two Articles:</p> <p>Smylie, Crowson, Chou, &amp; Levin, 1994</p> <p>Russell, J. (2011).</p> <p>*Review previous articles in New Institutionalism:</p> <p>Powell &amp; DiMaggio (1983) - The iron cage</p>	<p><b>Research Question and Rationale paper due</b> [Post to both 815 &amp; 895 TS]</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Critiquing Frameworks</li> </ul>	revisited Meyer & Rowan (1977)	
<b>June 16</b> <u>Class 4</u>  <b>Extended Session for EDLE 815, 4:30 – 10:00 p.m.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Critical Race Theory</b></li> <li>• Constructing a Framework for Staiger</li> <li>• Critiquing CRT</li> </ul>	Everyone Read: Staiger (2004)  Read one of the following:  Ladson-Billings, G. & Tate, W.F. (1995)  López, G. (2003).  Milner, R. (2008).	<b>Lit Review Chart I</b> (For class – not submitted on TS)
June 21 <u>Class 5</u>	<b>No class meeting for EDLE 815</b>		
June 23 <u>Class 6</u>	<b>No class meeting for EDLE 815</b>		
June 28 <u>Class 7:</u> <b>Extended Session for EDLE 815, 4:30 – 10:00 p.m.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Activity Theory/ Distributed Ldsp</b></li> <li>• What kind of questions do these theories frame?</li> <li>• Verbal and graphic representations of distributed leadership</li> </ul>	Two Articles:  Bakhurst, D. (2009).  Spillane, Halverson, & Diamond (2004)  Choose any previously read article on DL	<b>Analyzing a Conceptual Framework paper due</b>
June 30 <u>Class 8:</u> <b>Extended Session for EDLE 815, 4:30 – 10:00 p.m.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Revisit Previously Assigned Articles</li> <li>• Presentation of the student assigned article work and demonstration of how this might look.</li> <li>• Preparing <b>Analyzing a Conceptual Framework paper</b> Lit Charts &amp; Personal Frameworks</li> </ul>	Revisit Previously Assigned Articles:	<b>Lit Review Chart II</b> (For class – not submitted on TS)

June 5 <u>Class 9:</u>	<b>Electronic Session for EDLE 815</b>		<b>Learning Log due on TS</b>  [CF Map due for 895]
July 7 <u>Class 10:</u>	<b>No class meeting for EDLE 815</b>		
July 12 <u>Class 11</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preparing <b>Research Prospectus paper</b></li> <li>• Picking and choosing: Which concepts inform your research question and why?</li> <li>• Developing a relationship between conceptual framework and research methodology</li> </ul>		<b>Conceptual Framework paper due</b>
July 14 <u>Class 12</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• De-briefing your first attempt at creating a conceptual framework <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ What do you know?</li> <li>➤ What do you need to learn?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Other topics to be determined</li> </ul>	Reading: TBD	
July 19 <u>Class 13:</u>	<b>No class meeting for EDLE 815</b>		<b>Research Prospectus paper</b> [Have draft for peer editing in 895]
July 21 <u>Class 14:</u> <b>EDLE 815 &amp; 895 together 4:30 – 10:00 p.m.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where did you land? Sharing and discussing conceptual frameworks</li> </ul>	Classmates' conceptual frameworks	<b>Final Research Prospectus paper due.</b> [Post to both 815 & 895 TS]



## **Questions To Guide Required Reading:**

When reading, stay focused on the goals of this course. Class discussion will focus on defining the central ideas within a framework, understanding how it is used to guide design and analysis, exploring what the researchers highlighted and omitted within the framework, and critiquing the framework and its use. To be prepared, read with the following questions in mind:

1. What are the central concepts of the framework used in this article? How are these concepts helpful (or not) in thinking about education, schools, or leadership?
2. What is the author's argument for the appropriateness of its use? Is it a convincing argument?
3. How does the frame connect to the questions?
4. How does the frame connect to the design?
5. How did the central concepts in the framework influence the discussion? How would a different frame have changed the discussion?
6. Looking at both articles, did the authors choose to focus on the same concepts? Be ready to compare/contrast.

## **Writing Assignments and Assessment Rubrics**

### **RESEARCH QUESTION AND RATIONALE**

**Due Tuesday, June 9 via TaskStream**

**15 points**

### **Purpose**

This writing assignment has the following goals:

1. To give students the opportunity either to practice developing a research question or to refine a previously developed research question.
2. To provide a foundation for the Conceptual Framework and Research Prospectus papers, the most important products in this course.
3. To give students and the instructor the opportunity to experience one another's writing and feedback.

**This writing assignment may build on previous work, but you may not submit a paper in whole that has been submitted for another course.**

### **Tasks**

To complete this writing assignment, follow the steps below:

1. Articulate a specific research question, or set (no more than three) of questions, you would like to pursue for your dissertation research.

2. Identify a relevant set of literature that helps you to explain your purpose in pursuing your question and provides a persuasive rationale (i.e., significance) for studying it.
3. Write a paper not to exceed **seven** pages that provides the following:
  - An introduction that includes a thesis about the purpose and significance of this research: “I want to learn [blank] which is significant because [blank].”
  - The general topic area into which your question falls and your purpose in pursuing this research topic
  - Why the topic is compelling—i.e., the significance of your topic
  - The specific question (or questions) you intend to answer, written in a clear and concise manner
4. Conclude the paper with one paragraph that re-states the thesis and anticipates concepts that will help the author to investigate the stated research question(s)

Your paper should be written persuasively, using literature to support your arguments. In the absence of literature, you will need to make your arguments compelling through the use of logical argument.

The paper must be formatted in accordance with APA requirements. All non-original ideas and quotations must be properly cited and a full list of references must be included at the end of the paper. (The title page and reference list are not part of the page count.) The reference list must include only sources that have been cited in the text.

### RESEARCH QUESTION AND RATIONALE ASSESSMENT RUBRIC

	<b>Exceeds Expectations</b>	<b>Meets Expectations</b>	<b>Approaching Expectations</b>	<b>Falls Below Expectations</b>
<u>Thesis (25%)</u> The thesis essentially establishes the burden of proof for the paper. It provides structure for the paper by telling the reader what the author intends to prove.	The thesis explains the direction of the paper in a compelling manner that motivates the reader to read further. The thesis appears as the last sentence of the first paragraph.	The thesis is clear, analytical, and focused on the importance of studying the research question(s). It requires demonstration through coherent arguments. The thesis appears as the last sentence of the first or second paragraph.	The thesis is apparent, though not entirely clear. It may be more descriptive than analytical.	The paper lacks a clear thesis.

<p><u>Purpose and Significance</u> (25%)</p> <p>It is important to explain to the reader the background for asking the stated research question, and to make a persuasive argument about its significance.</p>	<p>Purpose and significance are clear and compelling and well supported by published literature. Purpose and significance are explained from multiple perspectives (e.g., practical, academic, and personal) in a logical and persuasive manner that links the two.</p>	<p>The author weaves together an explanation of the purpose for studying the topic and persuasive arguments regarding the significance of the topic.</p>	<p>The purpose is unclear and/or there is no demonstrated relationship with significance. Significance is not persuasively demonstrated, though it is somewhat apparent.</p>	<p>The question is not well supported.</p>
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**ANALYZING A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**  
**Due Tuesday, June 23 via TaskStream**

**15 points**

**Purpose**

This writing assignment has the following goals:

1. To give students the opportunity to think deeply about a conceptual framework that may be useful to them as they create their own.
2. To help students identify strengths and weaknesses in others' conceptual frameworks so that they may write their own more effectively.
3. To practice using published literature to support one's own ideas.

**Tasks**

1. Identify a paper from the CD distributed in EDLE 801/802 that you believe presents concepts that are useful to you as you pursue your own research interest.
2. Write a 3 – 5 page “reading notes memo” that explains the following:
  - The paper you chose and why (provide appropriate citation in the text and reference at the end of the paper)
  - The most important concepts from the paper, including your working definition of each
  - How you anticipate applying some or all of the concepts from the paper as you build your own conceptual framework
  - Strengths and weaknesses of the paper in terms of:
    - Clarity of the concepts presented (Would we know them when we see them?)
    - Applicability of the concepts presented
    - Connections among concepts presented: Does the model embedded in the paper move in a clear direction?

This paper is intended to be less formal than the other papers for the course to give you the opportunity to play with ideas. I have borrowed Maxwell's (2005) notion of a “memo” to convey to you that you are writing this to help organize your thinking. It is really a memo to yourself that I have the opportunity to read and assess.

Format, citations, and references must be consistent with APA requirements.

## ASSESSMENT RUBRIC FOR ANALYZING A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

	Exceeds Expectations	Meets Expectations	Approaching Expectations	Falls Below Expectations
<u>Explaining Concepts (30%)</u> Explaining concepts clearly is vital to writing an effective conceptual framework.	Important concepts from the paper are clearly explained with appropriate working definitions. Reasons why the concepts are important to you are compelling.	Important concepts from the paper are clearly presented. Relationships to your own work are evident	Some concepts are clearer than others and/or relationships to your own work are missing or vague.	Important concepts are not clearly explained and relationships to your own work are unclear.
<u>Applying Concepts (30%)</u> The task of creating a conceptual framework involves the application of useful concepts gleaned from published literature.	Your explanation of how you will use concepts from your chosen paper is persuasive and so clear that the reader is able to visualize at least a portion of your conceptual framework.	How concepts from your chosen paper might be applied to your own conceptual framework is clear and logical.	How concepts from your chosen paper might be applied is inconsistently explained.	Application of concepts from your chosen paper is missing or confusing.
<u>Assessing Strengths and Weaknesses (30%)</u> Understanding the strengths and weaknesses of others' conceptual work is important to improving one's own abstract thinking.	Strengths and weaknesses of the chosen paper's concepts are presented with clear and compelling arguments for each one.	Strengths and weaknesses presented are clear and logical.	Strengths and weaknesses are presented, but not in a persuasive manner	Strengths and/or weaknesses are missing or difficult to understand.
<u>Grammar, Mechanics, and APA style (10%)</u>	The paper contains no errors.	The paper contains few errors and is consistent with APA style.	The paper has several errors.	The paper has numerous errors.

**CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**  
**Due Tuesday, July 7 via TaskStream**

**30 points**

**Purpose**

This writing assignment has the following goals:

1. To help students decide which concepts have greatest potential to address their research questions.
2. To help students develop a conceptual framework than can be used in their dissertation proposals (very likely with some modification in EDUC 998).

**Tasks**

This paper requires students to write a conceptual framework very similar to what will appear in their dissertation proposals and dissertations. Students are expected to:

- Write an introduction that articulates the research question(s) to be explored and leads into the conceptual framework.
- Write a thesis that takes a position regarding the most powerful family of concepts (i.e., answering the question: This is a case of what?) that provides a theoretical foundation for studying their research questions.
- Argue persuasively (using appropriate literature citations) for the validity of the specific concepts used and their appropriate relationships for studying the specific research question—i.e., construct a verbal conceptual framework.
- Provide a graphic representation of the conceptual framework that gives the reader a clearer understanding. (This must be integrated with the text of the paper.)
- Conclude with a restatement of the thesis and a brief explanation of potential research methodology suggested by the conceptual framework.

The paper should be no longer than 20 pages and must conform to APA requirements. Please include as an appendix your literature chart.



## CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK ASSESSMENT RUBRIC

	<b>Exceeds Expectations</b>	<b>Meets Expectations</b>	<b>Approaching Expectations</b>	<b>Falls Below Expectations</b>
<p><u>Introduction and Thesis (10%)</u> The introduction orients the reader to the author's research question and presents the thesis.</p>	<p>The introduction provides a compelling and engaging transition from research question to conceptual framework. The thesis appears as the last sentence of the first or second paragraph and presents an obvious family of concepts to be used.</p>	<p>The introduction provides a smooth transition from research question to conceptual framework. The thesis is clear and analytical in nature. The thesis makes obvious to the reader which concepts (at least generally) the author will use and why.</p>	<p>The introduction may be somewhat confusing. The thesis is apparent, though not entirely clear. The thesis may not be sufficiently analytical.</p>	<p>The paper lacks a clear thesis.</p>
<p><u>Body Paragraphs (35%)</u> The body of the paper demonstrates the validity of the thesis. The paragraphs emphasize how the author has put together vital concepts and why.</p>	<p>All body paragraphs are linked directly to the thesis. Each paragraph follows logically from the one before. The body progressively clarifies the author's conceptual framework and uses relevant literature persuasively. Relationships among key concepts are clearly explained.</p>	<p>The body follows logically from the thesis and each paragraph is directly related to the thesis. Concepts used are well defined and the relationships among them are clearly explained to create a coherent conceptual framework. Literature is used to support arguments appropriately.</p>	<p>The body of the paper contains worthwhile information, but not all of it is linked to the thesis. The progression of paragraphs may be confusing or illogical. The conceptual framework and its rationale are not entirely clear.</p>	<p>The body of the paper is not analytical and/or does not elaborate on the thesis.</p>



	<b>Exceeds Expectations</b>	<b>Meets Expectations</b>	<b>Approaching Expectations</b>	<b>Falls Below Expectations</b>
<u>Graphic Representation (20%)</u> A graphic representation helps the author to present complex and abstract ideas so that the reader can comprehend them more easily.	The graphic representation requires little explanation because it so obviously flows from and relates to the text. High quality techniques are used to create an elegant and communicative picture of the conceptual framework.	The graphic representation is tightly linked to the verbal description of relevant concepts and their relationships. Graphics are clear and easily understood and/or clearly explained in the text. Ideally, the graphics enhance the verbal analysis.	The graphic representation is related to the body of the paper but contains ambiguity, conceptual gaps, or inaccuracies.	The graphic representation is either missing or unhelpful.
<u>Conclusion (25%)</u> The conclusion of a conceptual framework must reiterate the main points and draw the reader into thinking about methodology.	The conclusion is very persuasive both in terms of having demonstrated the thesis and presenting potential methodological approaches.	The conclusion appears obvious based on the body of the paper. The methodological approaches suggested follow in a compelling manner from the arguments in favor of the theoretical approach to the research question(s).	The conclusion appears somewhat disconnected from the body and/or is not entirely persuasive with regard to methodology.	The conclusion does not follow logically from the body and/or the implications for methodology are unclear.
<u>Grammar, Mechanics, and APA style (10%)</u>	The paper contains no errors.	The paper contains few errors and is consistent with APA style.	The paper has several errors.	The paper has numerous errors.

**RESEARCH PROSPECTUS**  
**Draft due Tuesday, July 14 via e-mail to classmates**  
**Final version due Thursday, July 16 via TaskStream**  
**20 points**

**Purpose**

This writing assignment has the following goals:

1. To help students explain their research design, including a statement of the problem, a conceptual framework, thoughts about methodology.
2. To give students the opportunity to re-visit their statements of the problem and conceptual frameworks to improve them while trimming their writing to fit within the parameters of this assignment.
3. To give students the opportunity to create and receive feedback on the core of their Dissertation Planning section for Portfolio 3.

**Tasks**

1. Write an introduction that brings the reader into your Research Prospectus gradually and ends with a clear thesis about your research design.
2. Write your statement of the problem based on our Research Question and Rationale paper. Be sure to include:
  - The purpose of the research—What do you hope to learn?
  - The significance of the research—Why is it important to conduct this study?
  - Current research questions
3. Present your conceptual framework based on your Conceptual Framework paper. Be sure to include:
  - Major concepts that help to frame the research problem
  - Empirical studies that provide background information to the problem
  - Relationships among important concepts and among concepts, empirical research, and the student's own intended research
  - A graphic representation of your conceptual framework
4. Explain potential research methods you anticipate employing, including preliminary thoughts regarding:
  - How your conceptual framework suggests specific kinds of data collection and analysis
  - A rationale regarding the use of quantitative, qualitative, or mixed methods
  - Speculation about appropriate level of analysis, research sites, and participants
  - (Note: For your dissertation proposal and dissertation, your methodology should be supported by literature. We are not expecting that for this paper, but literature support would be a wonderful enhancement.)
5. Write a brief conclusion that summarizes and explains the significance of the content of your Research Prospectus.

The paper should be no longer than 15 pages and must conform to APA requirements.

## RESEARCH PROSPECTUS ASSESSMENT RUBRIC

	<b>Exceeds Expectations</b>	<b>Meets Expectations</b>	<b>Approaching Expectations</b>	<b>Falls Below Expectations</b>
<p><u>Statement of the Problem</u> (20%) The statement of the problem must include discussion of the purpose and significance.</p>	Research purpose and significance are clearly and persuasively presented and supported by relevant literature.	Research purpose and significance are clearly presented and supported by relevant literature.	There is evidence of purpose and significance, but this section is not well organized and/or literature support is missing.	The nature of the research problem is unclear.
<p><u>Research Question(s)</u> (15%) A specific, researchable question (or questions) is presented to frame the proposed study.</p>	Clear, specific researchable question(s) are presented that are tightly connected to the purpose of the study.	Research question(s) are presented that are at least loosely connected to the research purposes. The questions appear to be researchable.	Research questions are presented, but how they are connected to the research purpose is not clear. Research questions may not be feasible.	The research questions are not apparent.
<p><u>Conceptual Framework</u> (45%) To frame or define research requires grounding in theory and concepts that come from published literature.</p>	The conceptual framework, based on relevant literature, clearly and persuasively explains the perspective from which the research questions will be explored. The graphic representation of the conceptual framework enhances the verbal explanation.	The conceptual framework, based on relevant literature, explains the perspective from which the research questions will be explored. The graphic representation of the conceptual framework is clearly related to the verbal explanation.	Relevant concepts are identified, but not clearly related to the research question and/or not presented in a coherent framework that helps to define the study. Literature is missing or inadequate.	The conceptual framework does not inform the reader about how the research questions would be studied.

<p><u>Methodology (15%)</u> Methodology should follow logically from the research questions and the conceptual framework.</p>	<p>The proposed methodology is very appropriate based on the research questions and conceptual framework.</p>	<p>The proposed methodology would help to answer the research questions and appears to fit with the conceptual framework.</p>	<p>The methodology presented does not consistently support the research questions and/or may not seem to follow logically from the conceptual framework.</p>	<p>An adequate understanding of important aspects of research methodology is not apparent.</p>
<p><u>Grammar, Mechanics, and APA style (10%)</u></p>	<p>The paper contains no errors.</p>	<p>The paper contains few errors and is consistent with APA style.</p>	<p>The paper has several errors.</p>	<p>The paper has numerous errors.</p>