George Mason University
College of Education and Human Development
Graduate School of Education

EDLE 815.B01: Conceptual Frameworks in Education Leadership

Summer 2014

Instructor:	Sonya Douglass Horsford, Ed.D.
Office:	Thompson Hall, Room 1305
E-mail:	shorsfor@gmu.edu
Phone:	(703) 993-3634
Website:	MyMason Blackboard Learn (https://mymasonportal.gmu.edu)
Office Hours:	By appointment
Meeting Times:	Tuesdays and Thursdays, 4:30 – 7:10 p.m. (June 3 – July 17, 2014)
Meeting Location:	Blueridge Hall Room 127, Fairfax Campus

Course Description

This course explores the purpose, components, functions, and significance of conceptual frameworks in education leadership research and presents students with useful tools and strategies for developing conceptual frameworks for their dissertation research.

Course catalog description: Introduces three different disciplinary perspectives on education leadership and help identify and articulate different conceptual frameworks. Major focus is designing a conceptual framework that informs research questions.

Course Objectives

1. Students will gain an understanding of the purpose, components, functions, and significance of conceptual frameworks in education research
2. Students will differentiate conceptual frameworks from theoretical frameworks, conceptual models, theory, and reviews of literature
3. Students will engage strategies and exercises for developing conceptual frameworks for their own research

Learning Outcomes

Students who successfully complete this course will be able to:

1. Define, identify, and provide examples of conceptual frameworks in education research
2. Distinguish a conceptual framework from a theoretical framework, conceptual model, theory, and literature review
3. Construct a conceptual framework based on researcher interests and experience, prior theory and research literature, pilot studies, and thought experiments

Required Readings

Course Text:

Ravitch, S. M. & Riggan, M. (2012). *Reason & rigor: How conceptual frameworks guide research*. Los Angeles: SAGE Publications.

E-Reserves:

GMU Libraries Electronic Reserves: Go to http://library.gmu.edu/. Select EDLE 815 section B01. Password: (provided by instructor)

GMU Policies and Resources for Students

a) Students must adhere to the guidelines of the George Mason University Honor Code [See http://oai.gmu.edu/honor-code/].
b) Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing [See http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/responsible-use-of-computing/].
c) Students are responsible for the content of university communications sent to their George Mason University email account and are required to activate their account and check it regularly. All communication from the university, college, school, and program will be sent to students solely through their Mason email account.
d) The George Mason University Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) staff consists of professional counseling and clinical psychologists, social workers, and counselors who offer a wide range of services (e.g., individual and group counseling, workshops and outreach programs) to enhance students' personal experience and academic performance [See http://caps.gmu.edu/].
e) Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with the George Mason University Office of Disability Services (ODS) and inform their instructor, in writing, at the beginning of the semester [See http://ods.gmu.edu/].
f) Students must follow the university policy stating that all sound emitting devices shall be turned off during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.
g) The George Mason University Writing Center staff provides a variety of resources and services (e.g., tutoring, workshops, writing guides, handbooks) intended to support students as they work to construct and share knowledge through writing [See http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/].

Professional Dispositions

Students are expected to exhibit professional behaviors and dispositions at all times.

CEHD Core Values Commitment

The College of Education and Human Development is committed to collaboration, ethical leadership, innovation, research-based practice, and social justice. Students are expected to adhere to these principles.

Course Requirements, Expectations, and Grading Criteria

Class Participation (15 points)

Students are expected to attend all classes on time and participate actively in class discussions, small group activities, and serve as critical friends to one another. This requires completing the readings in advance, ensuring contributions to the discussion are informed and relevant to the topic at hand, and providing other students the opportunity to share their perspectives and experiences in an intellectually stimulating but supportive classroom environment.

Assignments (85 points)

To complete assignments, students will need access to a computer, basic word processing software, Internet, their GMU Blackboard account, and an active Mason email account. All written assignments must be submitted to Blackboard by 11:59 p.m. on the due date as Word file attachments and formatted according to APA Publication Manual, 6th edition. Late assignments will receive a reduction in points. Students who receive a grade lower than 3.5 may revise and resubmit their assignment no later than one week after the initial grade is received.

1. **Research Identity Memo (15 points) (DUE June 15)**

   According to Ravitch and Riggan (2012), the goal of the research memo is "to create conscious moments of structured, systematic reflection during the development and implementation of your research project" (p. 153). Students will be required to write your own research identity memo to "help you focus on your particular, individual influences and contextualize the research endeavor and your researcher identities in relation to broader spheres of influence such as social location and social identity" (pp. 153-154) in ways that bring clarity to the development of your research questions, review of literature, proposal, and future analysis.

   Refer to pages 147-151 for a fuller description and example of the research identity memo along with guiding questions to assist you are you prepare your research memo. Recommended length: 2-3 pages.

2. **Concept Map and Narrative (30 points) (DUE July 6)**

   According to Maxwell (2005), concepts maps are used to both (1) make your implicit theory visible and existing theory clearer, and (2) "help you see unexpected connections or identify holes or contradictions in your theory and help you to figure out how to resolve these" (Ravitch & Riggan, 2012 pp. 151-152). For this assignment, students will construct a visual concept map and accompanying narrative based on their proposed research as a building block for the conceptual framework to be used in their dissertation or related research.

   Refer to pages 151-153 in the required text for a discussion of the purpose, components, and functions of a concept map. You will be expected to construct both a visual concept map and 2-page double-spaced narrative that describes the graphic image in words.

3. **Conference Proposal and Presentation (40 points) (DUE JULY 15)**

Students will be required to prepare a written conference proposal for the American Educational Research Association (AERA) 2015 Annual Meeting based on their proposed research and present their proposal to their colleagues during the final week of class. Guidelines for proposals can be found at the AERA website at www.aera.net under the Call for Proposals. Students are encouraged to, but not required to submit the proposal to AERA for consideration. The in-class presentation portion of the assignment will allow students the opportunity to share their emergent conceptual frameworks with their colleagues, receive feedback in a supportive environment, and gain practice in presenting and defending their research (in preparation for the oral defense process).

Assignment Expectations and Possible Points:

Class Participation	15 points
Research Identity Memo	15 points
Concept Map and Narrative	30 points
Conference Proposal and Presentation	40 points
TOTAL POSSIBLE	**100 points**

Grading

The grading scale for the final course grade is as follows:

A+	=	100 points
A	=	95-99 points
A-	=	90-94 points
B+	=	87-89 points
B	=	83-86 points
B-	=	80-82 points
C	=	75-79 points
F	=	below 75 points

EDLE 815.B01 Conceptual Frameworks in Education Leadership

Instructor: Dr. Horsford

Summer 2014 Course Calendar

WEEK 1: June 3 and June 5

Topic: What are Conceptual Frameworks and Why Do We Need Them?
- Welcome and introductions
- Course overview, calendar, and assignments
  - Research identity memo
  - Concept paper and narrative
  - Conference paper and presentation
- Exploring and defining the conceptual framework
- Situating the conceptual framework in education research
  - Conceptual framework and theory
  - Conceptual framework and the literature review
  - Conceptual framework as source of clarity and coherence in research

All Read:
- Syllabus
- Ravitch & Riggan, Chapters 1, Chapter 2
- Chapter 3 in Maxwell, J. A. (2005*). Qualitative research design: An interactive approach* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. (E-Reserve)

WEEK 2: June 10 and June 12*

Topic: Conceptual Frameworks and Research Design
- Assessing your research interests and the research literature
  - Preparing your Research Identity Memo
- Excavating research questions
- Fenwick Library Tour*
  - Secure three peer-reviewed journal articles of interest given their conceptual framework and its relationship to your research positionality and interests; select articles that can inform your future concept map

All Read:
- Ravitch & Riggan, Chapter 3; Chapter 7, pp. 142-158 only
- Spillane, J. (2002). Local theories of teacher change: The pedagogy of district policies and programs. *Teachers College Record, 104*, 377-420. (E-Reserve)

ASSIGNMENT DUE:
- **Research Identity Memo – JUNE 15**

WEEK 3: June 17 and June 19

Topic: Conceptual Frameworks and Data Collection & Analysis
- Researcher positionality (research identity map)
- Background and research context (concept map)

All Read:
- Ravitch & Riggan, Chapters 4 and 5
- Fine, M., & Sirin, S. R. (2007). Theorizing hyphenated selves: Researching youth development in and across contentious political contexts. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass, 1*, 1-23. (E-Reserve)
     - OR -
- Erickson, F. (1996). Going for the zone: The social and cognitive ecology of teacher-student interaction in classroom conversations. In D. Hicks (Ed.), *Discourse, learning and schooling* (pp. 29-62). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press. (E-Reserve)
- Bring your Research Identity Memo to class and prepare to share

WEEK 4: June 24 and 26

Topic: Conceptual Frameworks, Theory, & Research Findings
- Relationship between conceptual frameworks, theory, research literature, and data
- Conceptual frameworks in education leadership
- Concept Maps: Visual display of concepts and their relationships

All Read:
- Ravitch & Riggan, Chapter 6
- Spencer, M., Dupree, D., & Hartmaan, T. (1997). A phenomenological variant of ecological systems theory (PVEST): A self-organizational perspective in context. Development and Psychopathology, 9, 817-833. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press. (E-Reserve)
- Capper, C. A., & Green, T. L. (2013). Organizational theories and the development of leadership capacity for integrated socially just schools. In L.C. Tillman, and J. J. Scheurich's (Eds.) *Handbook of research on educational leadership for equity and diversity* (pp. 62-81). New York: Routledge. (E-Reserve)

WEEK 5: July 1 and July 3* (July 3 is an E-Session*)

Topic: Developing Your Concept Map and Narrative
- Constructing visual representations of your conceptual framework components
- Preparing narrative descriptions of your concept map
- Preparing a conference proposal
- Delivering a research presentation

All Read:

- Self-directed reading based on your concept map (i.e., your library articles)
- One article from Dr. Horsford's Readings List (be prepared to share in class) (All accessible through GMU University Libraries E-Journals)

ASSIGNMENT DUE:
- **Concept Map and Narrative – JULY 6**

Week 6: July 8 and 10

Topic: Constructing a Conceptual Framework for Your Own Research
- Connecting the research memos, concept map and narrative, and research literature to construct your own conceptual framework
- In-class work session: peer reviews and individual consultations with instructor

All Read:
- Ravitch & Riggan, Chapter 7, pp. 135-142
- Self-directed reading based on your conceptual framework (i.e., your library articles)

Week 7: July 15 and 17

Final Presentations and Concluding Thoughts

ASSIGNMENT DUE:
- **Conference Proposal – JULY 15**