



HIED 697, Bridging the Gap: From Courses to Dissertation

COURSE SYLLABUS: Summer I 2026

Professor's Information

Instructor:	Dimitra Smith, Ph.D. Professor
Office Location:	Frank Young Education North Building, ETAMU campus (next to the University Library)
Office Hours:	Please make an appointment for a face-to-face or virtual meeting.
University Email Address:	Dimitra.smith@etamu.edu
Preferred Form of Communication:	email.
Communication Response Time:	48 hours during the weekdays. I may not be able to respond during the weekends.

COURSE INFORMATION

Materials – Textbooks, Readings, Supplementary Readings

Required Textbook

American Psychological Association. (2020). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (7th ed.).

*Additional resources will be provided in the course.

Course Objective and Description

This course is designed for doctoral students at any stage of their doctoral journey. Whether you're nearing the end of your coursework or just beginning to think about your dissertation, this course will provide you with critical insights into life after coursework. You'll gain an understanding of dissertation-related processes, access key forms, and learn about the essential components of the

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dissertation itself. Throughout the course, we'll guide you through the dissertation process, helping you navigate key steps like selecting a dissertation topic, working effectively with your committee, and developing a realistic timeline. We will also explore strategies to make the most of your dissertation journey, ensuring you're well- equipped for success. This course is great for any doctoral student eager to jumpstart their understanding of the dissertation phase. With essential resources and expert guidance, you will be prepared to tackle the challenges of the dissertation process with confidence.

Student Learning Outcomes

- Demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of the dissertation process, including its stages, expectations, and required skills.
- Articulate the student's role and responsibilities within each phase of the dissertation process, emphasizing active participation and accountability.
- Cultivate autonomy in learning by applying self-directed research strategies, time management, and problem-solving skills throughout the dissertation process.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Minimal Technical Skills Needed

Students must familiarize themselves with D2L and Microsoft Word. Utilization of ETAMU's online library resources, including search and retrieval of peer-reviewed journal articles will be necessary.

Instructional Methods

This is a fully online course. Assignments will be delivered via the D2L learning media platform. Knowledge of the substantive material covered in the course is of central importance. Grading will include consideration of content and APA format guidelines as well as grammar, spelling, organization, and explicit use of readings. A serious commitment to mastery of the content and contribution to everyone's learning is expected. An online course inherently requires students to be active, reflective, and contributive learners.

Instructional Methods

This is an entirely online course.

1. Research and Reading Expectations

To fully engage with each week's topics, students are expected to delve into both the course text and supplementary resources. While the internet may offer valuable insights, it should not be the sole source of information. Your commitment to thorough research will enhance your understanding and research skills.

Participation in Online Threaded Discussions

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Active participation in online threaded discussions is essential. Initial responses to discussion questions and responses to peers are due each week. Merely regurgitating lecture content or textbook material will not suffice; substantive engagement and citing appropriate references are crucial. Failure to complete both components of the discussion will result in no credit being awarded.

Final Assignments

Late submissions will not be accepted. Final project must be meticulously edited and adhere to APA Style Manual guidelines. Writing quality, including grammar, punctuation, and spelling, will be rigorously assessed alongside content. Any instance of academic dishonesty will result in appropriate penalties.

As you navigate this course, remember that effective communication through writing is a vital skill in this program. Strive for clarity, accuracy, and adherence to academic standards in all your academic work.

Student Responsibilities or Tips for Success in the Course

1. Scholarly Expectations

At East Texas State University, we prioritize academic integrity and hold a zero-tolerance policy towards plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty. Such behavior includes but is not limited to plagiarism, auto-plagiarism, cheating, collusion, and abuse of resource materials. All submitted work must be original and uniquely created for this course. Works will be screened for plagiarism using TurnItIn or similar services. Consequences for academic

dishonesty may range from reduced credit on assignments to potential removal from the academic program or institution, with an automatic F in the course being a standard outcome. Proper citation in APA 6th edition style is required for any referenced works.

Students should demonstrate proficiency in resolving technical issues, problem-solving skills, and the ability to embrace challenges as opportunities for learning and growth. As future educational technology professionals, collaboration and cooperation are essential skills that students are expected to practice throughout this course. It is encouraged to seek assistance when needed and offer support to peers.

Timeliness

Assignments must be submitted by the designated due dates to receive full credit. Late assignments will not be accepted. Incomplete assignments will be graded at a starting point of 50%. Ample notification and time will be provided for completing course assignments. Students are encouraged to plan ahead for any anticipated absences or technical difficulties and have contingency plans in place.

GRADING

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Final grades in this course will be based on the following scale:

A = 90%-100%

B = 80%-89%

C = 70%-79%

D = 60%-69%

F = 59% or Below

Weights of the assessments in the calculation of the final letter grade.

Module 1 Discussion Forum Posting	20%
Module 2 Discussion Forum Posting	20%
Module 3 Discussion Forum Posting	20%
Module 4 Discussion Forum Posting	20%
Module 5 Final Project	20%
TOTAL	100%

Assessments

- Refer to the course calendar at the end of this syllabus for assignment due dates and key deadlines.
- For each graded forum, respond thoughtfully to the instructor’s prompt. Your postings will be evaluated based on a rubric that assesses depth of understanding and engagement with the material.
- Participate in the Module 2 discussion on defining the purpose of a dissertation and formulating research questions to clarify your approach and goals.
- Engage with your colleagues’ postings to enrich the discussion and foster a collaborative learning environment. Although not graded, these interactions are highly encouraged to deepen understanding and build a sense of community.

**Syllabus (including assignments) are scheduled to change at instructor’s discretion*

TOPICS COVERED

**Topics subject to change*

- **Understanding and Avoiding Plagiarism** – Learn about academic integrity, ethical research practices, and strategies to avoid plagiarism in scholarly writing.
- **Selecting a Dissertation Topic** – Explore strategies for choosing a meaningful and feasible dissertation topic aligned with personal interests and field needs.
- **Collaborating with Your Dissertation Chair** – Gain insights into building a productive relationship with your chair, including communication strategies and setting shared goals.
- **Navigating the Dissertation Process** – Understand the key stages of the dissertation journey, from proposal to defense, and the expectations at each phase.
- **Setting Realistic Goals and Expectations** – Develop skills to set achievable timelines, manage workload, and balance commitments throughout the dissertation process.

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- **Completing Essential Forms and Documentation** – Familiarize yourself with necessary forms, such as committee selection and proposal approval, and learn how to manage these administrative requirements effectively.
- **Assembling Your Dissertation Committee** – Learn best practices for selecting committee members who can provide valuable expertise, guidance, and support for your research.

Interaction with Instructor Statement

Email me at Dimitra.smith@etamu.edu . I will reply to email messages within 48 hours, except on the weekends and holidays. Use your etamu email only with an appropriate message title when communicating with me.

COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES

Course Specific Procedures/Policies

Late Assignments

There will be a 100% penalty for discussion postings, feedback, and the written assignment that are not completed on time. These assignments have a rippling effect on other components of the class. In such cases, you will be assigned a zero grade for assignments not completed on time or turned in late after the indicated due dates. Remember that any missed or incomplete assignment will have an adverse effect on your final grade.

Respect Differing Views

As with all graduate-level classes, this course deals with common and differing ideas and opinions. Please always be scholarly, courteous, fair-minded, and respectful of each other's opinions, particularly in disagreement situations. Always be a good listener, attempting to understand other people's rationale, perspective, and beliefs. Any discourtesy and lack of respect will not be tolerated.

Academic Honesty

Academic integrity is of utmost importance in academia. Acts of academic misconduct and plagiarism are considered egregious matters that will severely jeopardize your career as a student. Plagiarism, depending on severity, will result in a failing grade for either that particular assignment or the entire course. Work produced, whether in part or in whole, from assignments for other courses will not be accepted for credit and will be considered a form of plagiarism.

I expect all assignments for this course to be creative and honest representation of your scholarly work. If the evidence is clear that you have committed academic misconduct, including plagiarism, a formal charge will be filed against you following university policy. At my discretion as the course instructor, if the misconduct is not intentional, I can decide on

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whether a particular assignment may be rewritten and resubmitted for a maximum grade of 70% of the original total, along with other stipulations, including participation in an academic misconduct workshop.

You are strongly suggested to visit two of these sites for additional information:

- [Plagiarism Tutorial](#), Indiana State University, 2016, 26 mins.
- [Avoiding Plagiarism: Writing with Integrity](#), 2015, 35 mins.
- [Academic Integrity](#), University of Oklahoma, 2024.
- [Nine Things You Should Already Know About Plagiarism](#), University of Oklahoma, no date.
- [10 Types of Plagiarism](#), 2012, 4 mins.

Late Assignments

No late assignments are accepted, except with prior approval from the instructor.

Writing Center

Students are encouraged to visit the East Texas A&M University's [Writing Center](#) and other locations for writing assistance. Graduate students, especially at the doctoral level, are expected to have a high level of writing ability and skills. Also, as the instructor for this class, I will be providing helpful writing guidance and advice. You should also consult with your faculty advisor for any needed assistance.

Syllabus Change Policy

The syllabus is a guide. Circumstances and events, such as student progress, may make it necessary for the instructor to modify the syllabus during the semester. Any changes made to the syllabus will be announced in advance.

University Specific Procedures

Student Conduct

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. The Code of Student Conduct is described in detail in the [Student Guidebook](#).

<http://www.tamuc.edu/Admissions/oneStopShop/undergraduateAdmissions/studentGuidebook.aspx>

Students should also consult the Rules of Netiquette for more information regarding how to interact with students in an online

forum: [Netiquettehttp://www.albion.com/netiquette/corerules.html](http://www.albion.com/netiquette/corerules.html)

ETAMU Attendance

The syllabus/schedule are subject to change.

For more information about the attendance policy please visit the [Attendance](#) webpage and [Procedure 13.99.99.R0.01](#).

<http://www.tamuc.edu/admissions/registrar/generalInformation/attendance.aspx>

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/academic/13.99.99.R0.01.pdf>

Academic Integrity

Students at East Texas A&M University are expected to maintain high standards of integrity and honesty in all of their scholastic work. For more details and the definition of academic dishonesty see the following procedures:

[Undergraduate Academic Dishonesty 13.99.99.R0.03](#)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/undergraduates/13.99.99.R0.03UndergraduateAcademicDishonesty.pdf>

[Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty 13.99.99.R0.10](#)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/graduate/13.99.99.R0.10GraduateStudentAcademicDishonesty.pdf>

ADA Statement

Students with Disabilities

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

Office of Student Disability Resources and Services

East Texas A&M University

Gee Library- Room 162

Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835

Fax (903) 468-8148

Email: studentdisabilityservices@tamuc.edu

Website: [Office of Student Disability Resources and Services](#)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/campusLife/campusServices/studentDisabilityResourcesAndServices/>

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Nondiscrimination Notice

East Texas A&M University will comply in the classroom, and in online courses, with all federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination and related retaliation on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age, genetic information or veteran status. Further, an environment free from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression will be maintained.

Campus Concealed Carry Statement

Texas Senate Bill - 11 (Government Code 411.2031, et al.) authorizes the carrying of a concealed handgun in East Texas A&M University's buildings only by persons who have been issued and are in possession of a Texas License to Carry a Handgun. Qualified law enforcement officers or those who are otherwise authorized to carry a concealed handgun in the State of Texas are also permitted to do so. Pursuant to Penal Code (PC) 46.035 and East Texas A&M University Rule 34.06.02.R1, license holders may not carry a concealed handgun in restricted locations.

For a list of locations, please refer to the [Carrying Concealed Handguns On Campus](#) document and/or consult your event organizer.

Web

url: <http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedure/s/34SafetyOfEmployeesAndStudents/34.06.02.R1.pdf>

Pursuant to PC 46.035, the open carrying of handguns is prohibited on all East Texas A&M University campuses. Report violations to the University Police Department at 903-886-5868 or 9-1-1.

Artificial Intelligence Use Policy (May 23, 2023)

East Texas A&M University acknowledges that there are legitimate uses of Artificial Intelligence, ChatBots, or other software that has the capacity to generate text, or suggest replacements for text beyond individual words, as determined by the instructor of the course.

Any use of such software must be documented. Any undocumented use of such software constitutes an instance of academic dishonesty (plagiarism).

Individual instructors may disallow entirely the use of such software for individual assignments or for the entire course. Students should be aware of such requirements and follow their instructors' guidelines. If no instructions are provided the student should assume that the use of such software is disallowed.

In any case, students are fully responsible for the content of any assignment they submit,

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regardless of whether they used an AI, in any way. This specifically includes cases in which the AI plagiarized another text or misrepresented sources.

- 13.99.99.R0.03 Undergraduate Academic Dishonesty
- 13.99.99.R0.10 Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty

Mental Health and Well-Being

The university aims to provide students with essential knowledge and tools to understand and support mental health. As part of our commitment to your well-being, we offer access to Telus Health, a service available 24/7/365 via chat, phone, or webinar. Scan the QR code to download the app and explore the resources available to you for guidance and support whenever you need it.



COURSE CALENDAR

Modules	Assignments
1	Readings (provided in the course) Complete Module 1 Assignment
2	Readings (provided in the course) Complete Module 2 Assignment
3	Readings (provided in the course) Complete Module 3 Assignment
4	Readings (provided in the course) Complete Module 4 Assignment
5	<i>Final Project</i>

*Due date: 11:59 pm, ETAMU time

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