



Chaminade
University
OF HONOLULU

EDUC 891 Course Syllabus

3140 Waiialae Avenue - Honolulu, HI 96816

www.chaminade.edu

Course Number: EDUC 891

Course Title: Dissertation I

School/Division: School of Education and Behavioral Sciences

Term: July 2025 – September 2025

Credits: 3

Contact Information

Instructor Name: Dr. John Hamilton

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Office Hours: By appointment

NOTE: The student works directly with his/her dissertation chair/committee to develop the dissertation proposal. The student should contact his/her dissertation chair for any questions regarding this benchmark.

University Course Catalog Description

This is the first course in the dissertation process. It provides students with both group and individualized support in their dissertation development. Students work directly with their instructor and committee (chair) to develop their research proposal and IRB documents for submission.

EDUC 891 provides the framework to enable students to develop a proposal. Working closely with his/her dissertation chair, the student will select a research topic/problem/phenomenon and develop the initial components of their dissertation. In this benchmark the student will write Chapters 1, 2, and 3 of the Dissertation Proposal. They will develop and refine the problem statement, background and justification, the purpose statement, and research questions. In addition, the student will begin to write an **exhaustive** literature review on the topic and identify a suitable, well-developed theoretical or conceptual framework for the proposed study. This will be done using primarily current, peer reviewed journal articles and other scholarly resources such as textbooks, dissertations, conference presentations, etc. In addition, when necessary, the student may also reference other *credible sources such as official websites reports, etc.

Note: For all dissertation benchmarks, there is no course in Canvas. Instead, the student works directly with his/her dissertation committee. **Upon completion of this benchmark, the student will advance to the next stage in the dissertation process, EDUC 892 Dissertation II.**

**Credible sources include materials published within the last 7 years, research articles written by respectable and well-known authors, websites registered by government and educational institutions, academic databases, materials from Google Scholar, peer-reviewed articles/journals, other published dissertations, etc. When in doubt, check with your Committee Chair.*

Mission Statement for:

Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership for Adaptation and Change

The program's mission is based on Marianist values and focused on developing strong leaders who use their knowledge and skills to value diversity, promote social justice, and help organizations adapt and change. Drawing on the Marianist Educational Values of formation in faith; quality education; family spirit; service, justice and peace; and adaptation and change, the program builds on a program of

leadership that promotes continuous self-reflection and personal growth.

Marianist Values

1. Educate for formation in faith
2. Provide an integral quality education
3. Educate in family spirit
4. Educate for service, justice and peace
5. Educate for adaptation and change

Program Learning Outcomes (PLO)

1. Apply advanced knowledge and competencies of research and evaluation methods utilized by organizations.
2. Utilize advanced knowledge and competencies of leadership and innovation which are grounded in social justice, ethical practices, and cultural awareness.
3. Use advanced knowledge and competencies related to how organizations and the people within them develop.
4. Integrate advanced knowledge and competencies of scholarly behaviors for designing, implementing, evaluating, and communicating research relevant to effective organizations.

Course Learning Outcomes (CLO)

1. Demonstrate knowledge learned in the program by applying it to real settings. (1, 2)
2. Conduct an independent research investigation that contributes to the general body of knowledge in a specific field or profession. (1, 2)
3. Solve diverse problems using information and skills acquired in the program to create solutions. (2, 3)
4. Make informed decisions based on ethical and legal principles. (2, 3, 4)
5. Formulate scholarly arguments supported by academic resources. (4)

Expected Student Outcomes

By the end of this course, the doctoral candidate will be able to compose an introduction (e.g., problem statement and purpose of the study) produce an exhaustive literature review with a well-developed conceptual framework, apply theoretical and methodological understanding and skills to developing the research questions, create a well-designed methods section (e.g., participants, instruments, procedures, design, and limitations (or show application of data-sets), develop an IRB protocol, consent/assent forms, and any other ancillaries involved in the process of seeking IRB approval demonstrate mastery of APA, and write an approved proposal.

Required Learning Materials

- American Psychological Association. (2020). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (7th ed.). American Psychological Association.
- Foss, S. K., & Watters, W. (2016). *Destination Dissertation: A traveler's guide to a done dissertation* (2nd edition). Rowan and Littlefield: New York

Recommended Learning Materials

- Harris, R. A. (2017). *Using sources effectively: Strengthening your writing and avoiding plagiarism* (5th ed.). New York: Routledge.
- Creswell, J. W. (2019). *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research* (6th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.
- Galvan, J. L. & Galvan, M. C. (2017). *Writing literature reviews: A guide for students of the social and behavioral sciences* (6th ed.). New York: Routledge.
- Glatthorn, A. A., & Joyner, R. L. (2018). *Writing the winning thesis or dissertation: A step-by-step guide* (4th ed.). Corwin Press.

Assistance with APA, Formatting, and Writing:

- American Psychological Association. (2020). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (7th ed.). Washington DC: Author.
- Chaminade University Sullivan Library: <https://chaminade.edu/sullivan-library/>
- American Psychological Association. (2020). *APA style*. <http://www.apastyle.org/>
- American Psychological Association. (2023). *Handouts and guides*. Retrieved from <https://apastyle.apa.org/instructional-aids/handouts-guides>
- The Purdue Online Writing Lab. (1995-2016). Retrieved from <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/>
- Warlick, D., & The Landmark Project. (2000–2016). *Son of citation machine*. Retrieved from <http://citationmachine.net/>

List of Activities/Assignments

These activities are required to successfully complete this benchmark. You will be assigned a dissertation chair at the beginning of the semester. **Upon assignment of a dissertation chair, please contact your dissertation chair immediately to discuss a plan for developing your proposal this semester, including identifying target dates for each of the activities listed below.**

Weeks	Topics	Activities/Assignments
1-10	Chapter 1	1) Submit documents to the dissertation chair via Canvas using Microsoft Word . The dissertation chair uses the reviewing and tracking features in Microsoft Word to provide comments and feedback; become familiar/proficient with those features .
		2) Submit work that conforms to APA 7th ed., guidelines for format and style.
		3) Use only a Chaminade account for any e-mail correspondence with the dissertation chair when communicating outside the PREFERRED medium, Canvas.
	Chapter 2	4) Maintain contact and communicate with the dissertation chair at least once a month (the more frequent, with relevance, the better). Trust me...this will benefit you in the long run. Stay connected!!!
	Chapter 3	5) Understand the working relationship between student and committee/chair is unique and based on a trusting interaction between professionals. The student should contact the dissertation chair for clarification on points in questions concerning research and writing, and for advice and information regarding the dissertation process.
	Format/Style	6) Utilize the information received from the dissertation chair to make the recommended organizational, content, format, and style changes in the proposal paper, dissertation proposal, and final dissertation report.
	IRB	7) Inform the dissertation chair of any changes in position, address, and other contact information, as well as professional and personal changes that might affect the student's progress.
		8) Follow the policies and procedures established by the university's IRB for research with human subjects AND the regulations that the student's own agency or institution may have concerning the protection of human subjects in research.
		9) Be current with CITI certification.

Checklist

When submitting assignments (Chapters 1, 2, and 3) to the dissertation chair, the student will also complete the checklist below prior to sending (checklist does not need to be sent). The student is responsible to check and confirm all the necessary sections are included in Chapters 1, 2, and 3 of the Dissertation Proposal.

Proposal Development Checklist (do not submit with actual Word Document)	
Preliminary Pages	
Item	Page number / Comment
<u>1) Title Page</u> a) Description of Dissertation study b) Useful for keyword searches c) Title is within 10-12 words	a) b) c)
<u>2) Table of Contents</u> a) Contains key headings b) All tables, figures, and appendices (if any) are listed	a) b)
<u>3) Abstract (NOTE!...This will not be completed until the very end)</u> a) Contains accurate and concise description of Chapters 1-3 (fewer than 220-250 words)	a)
Chapter 1: Introduction	
<u>1) Nature of the Problem</u> a) Actual problem is indicated b) Impact of problem is clearly stated as a declarative sentence c) Problem statement is concise and focused d) Purpose study is clearly indicated and stated as a declarative sentence	a) b) c) d)
<u>2) Background and Significance of the Problem</u> a) Detailed, documented evidence of problem provided b) Brief review of literature supporting the existence of the problem c) Definition of major issues related to the problem d) Setting of the problem described in detail e) Problem is in range of student's influence f) Includes other salient information	a) b) c) d) e) f)
<u>3) Deficiencies in the Evidence</u> a) Gaps in the current literature are identified b) Student clearly states how the current study will address the deficiencies in the evidence	a) b)
<u>4) Definition of Terms</u> a) Definitions provided for technical and professional jargon b) Variables in study are defined operationally	a) b)
Chapter 2: Review of Related Literature	
Item	Page Number
<u>1) Review of related literature</u> a) The literature review is comprehensive and exhaustive	a)

<p>b) The theoretical and conceptual framework for the study is appropriate, it well-developed</p> <p>c) The review establishes the significance of the proposed study</p> <p>d) Major/seminal research articles pertaining to study are included</p> <p>e) Sources are appropriate, consisting mostly of current, peer reviewed journal articles, as well as other scholarly and credible sources</p> <p>f) Methodology is used in prior research or discussed setting the groundwork for the choice or methodology for the proposed study</p> <p>g) The literature review is organized, cohesive, well-sequenced, integrated, and transitions appropriately</p> <p>h) The literature review establishes a clear pathway to the research questions in the proposed study</p>	<p>b)</p> <p>c)</p> <p>d)</p> <p>e)</p> <p>f)</p> <p>g)</p> <p>h)</p>
<p><u>2) Research Questions</u></p> <p>a) Formulated based on theory, previous research, and professional experience</p> <p>b) Stated in the form of a question</p> <p>c) Focused and clear</p>	<p>a)</p> <p>b)</p> <p>c)</p>
Chapter 3: Methodology	
<p><u>1) Participants</u></p> <p>a) Description of who and how many</p> <p>b) Demographics included</p> <p>c) Sampling method delineated</p>	<p>a)</p> <p>b)</p> <p>c)</p>
<p><u>2) Instruments</u></p> <p>a) All data-gathering instruments are cited</p> <p>b) Review of psychometric characteristics provided</p> <p>c) Source of instruments are described with proper citation</p> <p>d) Copy of instruments developed by student included as appendices</p> <p>e) If you will be using DATA SETS:</p> <p>1. Describe the Data Sets:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Briefly explain the type of data sets you'll be using (e.g., survey data, medical records, economic data). • Mention the source of the data sets (e.g., government agency, research institution, private company). • If they are publicly available datasets, mention their name and any access requirements. <p>2. Justify the Choice:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain why these specific data sets are relevant to your research question. • How do they address the gap in knowledge you identified in your literature review? • Are they established and reliable sources for your field? 	<p>a)</p> <p>b)</p> <p>c)</p> <p>d)</p>

<p>3. Data Acquisition and Preparation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe how you will access the data sets. Will you download them, request access, or use an existing platform? • Explain any necessary steps to prepare the data for analysis. This might include cleaning, formatting, or merging datasets. <p>4. Data Analysis Techniques:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Briefly outline the data analysis techniques you'll use (e.g., statistical tests, machine learning algorithms). • How do these techniques align with the type of data and your research questions? • You don't need to go into extreme detail here, but establish a connection between data and analysis. 	
<p>3) Procedures</p> <p>a) Clear, precise, and sequential description of how the study will be conducted</p> <p>b) Research design is indicated</p> <p>c) Rationale for methods is explained</p> <p>d) Appropriateness of methods to address the problem and to answer research questions is justified</p>	<p>a)</p> <p>b)</p> <p>c)</p> <p>d)</p>
<p>4) Limitations</p> <p>a) All shortcomings of study are presented</p> <p>b) Possible threats to the internal validity are included</p> <p>c) Threats to external validity are explored</p>	<p>a)</p> <p>b)</p> <p>c)</p>
<p>5) References</p> <p>a) Accurate and consistent with text citations</p> <p>b) Peer-reviewed research is utilized</p> <p>c) APA 7th ed. style is used</p>	<p>a)</p> <p>b)</p> <p>c)</p>
<p>6) Appendices</p> <p>a) Include instruments created by student only</p> <p>b) All necessary information included</p> <p>c) Conforms with Chaminade University guidelines</p>	<p>a)</p> <p>b)</p> <p>c)</p>
<p>7) Overall</p> <p>a) Proposal is consistent with APA style</p> <p>b) Provides a concrete plan of action that permits it to serve as a “contract” between student and Dissertation Committee/Chair</p>	<p>a)</p> <p>b)</p>
References	
Item	Page Number
<p>a) References are accurate and <u>correspond</u> to in-text citations</p> <p>b) Reference list adheres to APA style</p>	<p>a)</p> <p>b)</p>
Overall	
Item	Page Number
<p>a) Adheres to the Chaminade University Guidance and APA style</p>	<p>a)</p>

Writing Assignments (Proposal)

All dissertation content will be submitted to the dissertation chair. All assignments must adhere to the *APA 7th edition*. The approved dissertation proposal is the culminating activity for this course. The proposal should include an overview of the research topic/problem/phenomenon, justification, preliminary purpose statement, overview or identification of the most relevant literature on the topic, and initial/tentative research questions. **The proposal should be between 4,000 and 6,000 words**, depending on your topic. **Submit your final Dissertation Proposal via the Resource Hub.**

Grading Criteria

Dissertation I

Letter Grade	Credit
Credit (CR) = <i>Committee Chair approved Proposal for IRB submission</i>	3
No Credit (NC) = <i>No progress by student</i>	No Credit

This course is graded as Credit (CR) or No Credit (NC). The primary goal of Dissertation I is for you to begin your dissertation research and make substantial progress on your dissertation proposal. While the expectation is to submit a complete proposal by the end of the course, the key is consistent engagement and demonstrable progress.

A CR grade is earned if you actively engage with your Dissertation Chair and submit work that shows clear academic progress toward your dissertation proposal. Should you not engage with your Dissertation Chair or fail to submit any work toward your Dissertation Proposal, an NC grade will be inputted and be required to retake the course. The Proposal Development Checklist (in the syllabus) is your guide to preparing and submitting a dissertation proposal that meets the requirements.

Rubric Item	Met	Not Met
The proposed study is meaningful for the local research site or the profession.		
The candidate presented evidence/background/justification of the research topic/problem/phenomenon.		
The candidate presented a preliminary purpose statement and initial research questions.		
The preliminary purpose statement and initial research questions are aligned.		
The candidate offered examples from current peer-reviewed literature of sources that demonstrate relevance to the study topic.		

Schedule (Students will develop their own course timeline that fits their need but must stay within the intent of meeting the designated milestones of each course allowing review, refinement, and resubmitting of dissertation course requirements)

Week	Topic	Review/Do
Weeks 1 – 3	Chapter 1 – Proposal Introduction	Reading: Foss & Waters – Chapters 1-4 Course Reading Material Write Chapter 1 of your Dissertation Proposal (Due last day of Week 3) Start IRB Documents Preparation
Week 4 – 7	Chapter 2 – Proposal Literature Review	Reading: Foss & Waters – Chapter 5 Course Reading Material Refine Chapter 1 & Write Chapter 2 of your Dissertation Proposal (Due last day of Week 7) Continue IRB Documents Preparation

Week	Topic	Review/Do
Week 8 – 9	Chapter 3 – Proposal Methodology IRB (content overview)	Reading: Foss & Waters – Chapter 5 Course Reading Material Refine Chapter 1, 2, & Write Chapter 3 of your Dissertation Proposal (Due last day of Week 9) Complete ALL IRB Documents Preparation
Week 10	Proposal Review	Proposal Assessment by Committee

Academic Honesty

Academic honesty is an essential aspect of all learning, scholarship, and research. It is one of the values regarded most highly by academic communities throughout the world. Violations of the principle of academic honesty are extremely serious and will not be tolerated.

Students are responsible for promoting academic honesty at Chaminade by not participating in any act of dishonesty and by reporting any incidence of academic dishonesty to an instructor or to a University official. Academic dishonesty may include theft of records or examinations, alteration of grades, and plagiarism, in addition to more obvious dishonesty.

Questions of academic dishonesty in a particular class are first reviewed by the instructor, who must make a report with recommendations to the Dean of the Academic Division. Punishment for academic dishonesty will be determined by the instructor and the Dean of Academic Division and may include an “F” grade for the work in question, an “F” grade for the course, suspension, or dismissal from the University.

For the most up to date information, please refer to the [Academic Honesty Policy](#) on the Chaminade University Catalog website.

Violations of Academic Integrity: Violations of the principle include, but are not limited to:

- Cheating: Intentionally using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, notes, study aids, or other devices in any academic exercise.
- Fabrication and Falsification: Intentional and unauthorized alteration or invention of any information or citation in an academic exercise. Falsification is a matter of inventing or counterfeiting information for use in any academic exercise.
- Multiple Submissions: The submission of substantial portions of the same academic work for credit (including oral reports) more than once without authorization.
- Plagiarism: Intentionally or knowingly presenting the work of another as one’s own (i.e., without proper acknowledgment of the source).
- Abuse of Academic Materials: Intentionally or knowingly destroying, stealing, or making inaccessible library or other academic resource materials.
- Complicity in Academic Dishonesty: Intentionally or knowingly helping or attempting to help another to commit an act of academic dishonesty.

Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to:

- Copying or borrowing liberally from someone else’s work without his/her knowledge or permission; or with his/her knowledge or permission and turning it in as your own work.
- Copying of someone else’s exam or paper.
- Allowing someone to turn in your work as his or her own.
- Not providing adequate references for cited work.
- Copying and pasting large quotes or passages without properly citing them.

While AI technologies can be useful tools for research and learning, the Academic Honesty policies apply when using these technologies. The use of AI is not permitted to compose essays or produce content for assignments and exams. Students should give proper credit to sources when using information obtained through AI tools or other sources. It is essential that we uphold academic integrity while fostering a culture of creativity and critical thinking.

Title IX and Nondiscrimination Policy

Chaminade University of Honolulu is committed to providing a learning, working and living environment that promotes the dignity of all people, inclusivity and mutual respect and is free of all forms of sex discrimination and gender-based violence, including sexual assault, sexual harassment, gender-based harassment, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking. As a member of the University faculty, I am required to immediately report any incident of sex discrimination or gender-based violence to the campus Title IX Coordinator.

Chaminade University of Honolulu does not discriminate on the basis of sex and prohibits sex discrimination in any education program or activity that it operates, as required by Title IX and its regulations, including in admission and employment. Inquiries about Title IX may be referred to the University's Title IX Coordinator, the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights, or both and contact information may be found at the [Chaminade University Title IX Office Contact Information and Confidential Resources website](#).

The University's Nondiscrimination Policy and Grievance Procedures can be located on the University webpage at: <https://chaminade.edu/compliance/title-ix-nondiscrimination-policies-procedures/>

To report information about conduct that may constitute sex discrimination or make a complaint of sex discrimination under Title IX, please refer to the [Campus Incident Report form](#). Chaminade University of Honolulu prohibits sex discrimination in any education program or activity that it operates. The NOTICE of NONDISCRIMINATION can be found here: [Notice of Nondiscrimination](#).

Disability Access

Chaminade University of Honolulu offers accommodations for all actively enrolled students with disabilities in compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, and the ADA Amendments Act (2008).

Students are responsible for contacting Kokua Ike: Center for Student Learning to schedule an appointment. Verification of their disability will be requested through appropriate documentation and once received it will take up to approximately 2–3 weeks to review them. Appropriate paperwork will be completed by the student before notification will be sent out to their instructors. Accommodation paperwork will not be automatically sent out to instructors each semester, as the student is responsible to notify Kokua Ike via email at ada@chaminade.edu each semester if changes or notifications are needed.

Credit Hour Policy

This is a three-credit hour course requiring 135 clock hours of student engagement, per the official CUH Credit Hour Policy. Students enrolled in this course are anticipated to spend 135 researching, writing, and developing Dissertation Proposal/IRB document.

Educator Ethics

The Model Code of Educator Ethics is intertwined throughout the various activities within this course, as well as the other courses you will take within this program. The responsibility to profession, of

professional competence, to our students, to the school, and with the use of technology are integral to all aspects of this course.