



CAROLINA
UNIVERSITY

Dissertation I RES 877 (REX 877) Spring 2025 Syllabus

PROFESSOR: Dr. Dean Slack, MBA

Office Location: Online

Office Hours: Daily, by mutually scheduled appointment, 1 day in advance
Usually, evenings and weekends
Possible early am drive time

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Carolina University Mission Statement

We are a Christ-centered university committed to student success.

Course Information

Course Prerequisites

Students must complete all core courses and pass the Comprehensive Exam.

Course Description

This course is designed to facilitate the development of the preliminary elements of a research dissertation. The course focuses on the initial dissertation chapters and includes elements such as the identification of a leadership problem, the delineation of the purpose of the research in light of that problem, the explanation of the significance of the research, the selection of the research question or questions, the limitations and delimitations of the research, the selection and explanation of the research method, the preliminary examination of literature related to the topic, and the introduction of other related subjects pertaining to the presentation of the research topic.

Course Delivery and Methods

Dissertation I does not require textbooks or lectures. However, there will be scheduled Zoom meetings to facilitate the dissertation process.



Objectives (Course Learning Outcomes)

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Develop an Individual Success Plan that outlines strategies and timelines for achieving key dissertation milestones.
2. Analyze peer-reviewed literature to identify gaps or needs that justify the significance of the proposed study.
3. Choose appropriate research methodologies and designs that align with the identified research problem and objectives.
4. Establish a theoretical framework that underpins the research questions and hypotheses, facilitating a structured approach to the study.
5. Align all ten key components of the dissertation using the Dissertation Alignment Document and create detailed outlines for Chapter 1 and Chapter 2's Review of Literature.

Course Resources

Required Resources:

1. APA 7th Edition:
 - a. Parenthetical Versus Narrative In-Text Citations <https://apastyle.apa.org/style-grammar-guidelines/citations/basic-principles/parenthetical-versus-narrative>
 - b. Paraphrasing: <https://apastyle.apa.org/style-grammar-guidelines/citations/paraphrasing>
 - c. Quotations: <https://apastyle.apa.org/style-grammar-guidelines/citations/quotations>
 - d. References: <https://apastyle.apa.org/style-grammar-guidelines/references>
 - e. <https://apastyle.apa.org/style-grammar-guidelines/paper-format>
 - f. Additional APA resources: https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/apa_style/apa_formatting_and_style_guide/in_text_citations_the_basics.html
2. The Art of Paraphrasing: Avoid Plagiarism: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H1qo10dG5Gw>
3. Scholarly Writing Webinar: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rNBaSNi-u4>

Recommended Resources:

1. Recite Works: <https://reciteworks.com/>



Course Requirements and Assignments

(The dates for each week have been entered but may not be perfect. Students: always double check)

Week 1 Jan 6-12 Mon-Sun: In week 1, you will focus on conducting your research in preparation for writing your Alignment Document. The next four weeks will focus on narrowing down your topic and using the literature to identify the appropriate methodology, theoretical foundation, etc., for your study.

Literature Review Matrix

Download the [Literature Review Matrix .xls](#). Before you can determine your topic, you should start a broad search of the literature and then narrow down your focus. A literature review matrix can help find your topic and the trends regarding the methodology, theoretical foundation, etc. Read 10 articles related to your topic of interest. Using the literature review matrix, document the following:

1. Citation
2. Purpose
3. Population and Sample Studied
4. Methodology
5. Design
6. Sampling Method
7. Theoretical Foundation
8. Instruments/Data Source Used
9. Data Analysis
10. Findings
11. Themes Supported
12. Recommendations for further research
13. Limitations (if applicable)
14. Gap (what was not done)
15. The Biggest Takeaways

Note: Read articles you intend to use for your 10 Strategic Points and Chapter 2: Review of Literature. Ensure these articles are within the last five years.

Identifying the Research Problem Worksheet

It's generally advised to focus on understanding the specific problem before diving into theoretical frameworks. The rationale is that the research findings and data should guide the development of the theoretical framework, not the other way around. By deeply analyzing the research problem and collecting pertinent data first, it becomes easier to pinpoint gaps in the existing literature and select the most fitting theoretical framework for the research. Moreover, prioritizing the problem ensures that the research is rooted in practical issues, allowing students to contribute significantly to their field.

For this assignment, you will identify the problem worksheet and address the following in 800-1000 words:

1. In two sentences or less, what problem are you looking to investigate?
2. What is the severity of the problem based on research? Which population is affected? If there is no literature on the target population, are other populations experiencing it?
3. What research says this is a relevant problem?
4. What gaps in the literature (research recommendations and limitations) suggest a need to study this problem further? Please ensure that the information provided is up-to-date and relevant, with a timeframe of no more than 3 to 5 years ago, precisely no older than 2019.



Note: If literature about your population of interest concerning the problem is unavailable, it would be advisable to initiate a broad search to determine the problem's relevance in other industries or fields.

Additional requirements:

1. Use 12-point Times New Roman font for the entire document.
2. You may use single-spacing.
3. Use in-text citations to give credit to any sources you utilize in your worksheet. You can refer to Table 8.1 in the APA manual for guidance.
4. Include a reference page at the end of your worksheet that lists all sources cited in your work.
5. Except for criterion 1, criteria 2 through 4 should be structured as follows: Each paragraph begins with a topic sentence that states the paragraph's argument (do not cite). Then, include 3 to 4 sentences supporting your argument using in-text citations. Finally, end the paragraph with a concluding or transition sentence that leads the reader into the next section.

Week 2 Jan 13-19 Mon-Sun: Continue refining your literature review matrix, set dissertation milestones, and draft your Dissertation Alignment Document.

Weekly Deliverables
Updated Literature Review Matrix
Add ten articles to your literature matrix. Ensure these articles are within the last five years.
Dissertation Milestones
Submit your dissertation milestones to your chair.

1st Draft of the Dissertation Alignment Document
Create and submit a draft of your Dissertation Alignment Document to your Chair. Before starting the assignment, it is recommended that you watch the videos available on the Dissertation Research Community Page.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you are doing a qualitative study, view: How to Align Your Study (Qualitative): https://youtu.be/LtGXF7hwjcY?si=UqVEM846d_nVgEN_ • If you are doing a quantitative study, view: How to ALIGN Your QUANTITATIVE Study: https://youtu.be/aw6MvNiv7V4?si=a7Hl97fK5Y_-Xohr
Using your potential dissertation topic, identify the sections required using the Dissertation Alignment Document. Please note that you should use information from your first week's assignment and the feedback you received to populate this document.
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Broad Topic Area 2. Background to the Problem/Knowledge Gap <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Gap b. Theoretical Foundations c. Review of Literature/Key Themes 3. Problem Statement 4. Research Questions 5. Sample 6. Describe the Phenomena (Qualitative) or Define the Variables/Hypothesis 7. Methodology and Design



8. Purpose Statement
9. Data Collection
10. Data Analysis Approach

Additional Directions: The Alignment Document should NOT EXCEED 7 to 10 pages and use concise bullet/numbering/letter format, similar to the provided examples. It should be professional, neat, and include citations for the background information on the problem or knowledge gap. The "gaps in literature" should be within the last five years.

Week 3 Jan 20-26 Mon-Sun: Please continue working on your literature review matrix and revise your dissertation alignment document.

Weekly Deliverables
Add ten articles to your literature matrix. Ensure these articles are within the last five years.
Revise your Dissertation Alignment Document and resubmit.

Week 4 Jan 27-Feb 2 Mon-Sun: Please continue working on your literature review matrix and revise your dissertation alignment document.

Weekly Deliverables
Add ten articles to your literature matrix. Ensure these articles are within the last five years.
Revise your Dissertation Alignment Document and resubmit.

Week 5 Feb 3-Feb 9 Mon-Sun: This week, you will focus on using your Dissertation Alignment Document to write your Chapter 1.

Weekly Deliverables
Using your Dissertation Alignment Document, download the template: https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1Y4U7AB20UWv57Hro9qL_8xIddr7_pMRY?usp=drive_link and begin writing a draft of Chapter 1.
Refer to the Chapter 1 rubric to ensure you adhere to the criterion: https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1X-bv018INOb9cs42w3zD3SkwGz97hE8h?usp=drive_link
Note: You are required to upload this document to Turnitin.com.
Submit your updated literature review matrix.

Week 6 Feb 10-Feb 16 Mon-Sun: Continue revising Chapter 1.

Weekly Deliverables
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Submit Chapter 1 Revisions• Submit your updated literature review matrix.

Week 7 Feb 17-Feb 23 Mon-Sun: Continue revising Chapter 1.

Weekly Deliverables
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit Chapter 1 Revisions • Submit your updated literature review matrix.

Week 8 Feb 24-Mar 2 Mon-Sun: Finalize Chapter 1 of your dissertation proposal.

Weekly Deliverables
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete Chapter 1 and submit it to your Chair. This final draft should incorporate the feedback provided by your Chair. • Submit and updated matrix.

Week 9 Mar 3-Mar 9 Mon-Sun: If Chapter 1 is approved, begin writing an outline for Chapter 2.

Weekly Deliverables
<p>Before you write Chapter 2, create an outline for the Literature Review and send it to your Chair. Download the outline template: https://docs.google.com/document/d/1qmvomC4LqkfT0k51Y7IEPkqEf5Sdkgtx/edit?usp=drive_link&oid=111463865846733173498&rtpof=true&sd=true and complete using the literature from your matrix.</p>

Week 10 Mar 10-Mar 16 Mon-Sun: Revise your literature review outline.

Weekly Deliverables
Revise your outline and resubmit to your Chair.

Week 11 Mar 17-Mar 23 Mon-Sun: Begin Writing Chapter 2.

Weekly Deliverables
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin Writing Chapter 2. Follow the criterion in the rubric: https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1XyJpXCilNze53G6ABqfzvqTjVSbNW87u?usp=drive_link

Week 12 Mar 24-Mar 30 Mon-Sun: Check in With Your Chair

Weekly Deliverables
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give an update to your Chair about your progress on Chapter 2.



Week 13 Mar 31-Apr 6 Mon-Sun: Submit an updated version of Chapter 2.

Weekly Deliverables
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Submit an updated Chapter 2.

Week 14 Apr 7-Apr13 Mon-Sun: Check in With Your Chair

Weekly Deliverables
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Check in With Your Chair

Week 15 Apr 14-Apr 20 Mon-Sun: Submit an updated version of Chapter 2.

Weekly Deliverables
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Check in With Your Chair

Course Schedule

Course Due Dates: Regularly check the LMS for your course due dates.

Course Specific Policies

Writing Criteria. Each dissertation artifact must meet the following standards:

1. Paragraph Structure: Each paragraph begins with a topic sentence (not cited) that tells the reader what the paragraph discusses. Synthesize three to four authors' thoughts (cited) that support your topic sentence. Provide a concluding (or transition) paragraph that takes the reader into the next section.
2. Logical Flow/APA: Each section is written well-structured, has a logical flow, uses correct paragraph structure, uses proper sentence structure, uses correct punctuation, and uses correct APA format.
3. References: Learners can use books, dissertations, peer-reviewed articles, conference proceedings, and technical reports. 75% of the references used must be within the last five years. Additionally, learners must use articles other than the "required reading" articles in this syllabus.
4. Similarity Index: The similarity index shall be no higher than 15%.

Use of Artificial Intelligence

The use of generative AI tools is permitted in this class for the following activities:



- Brainstorming and refining ideas
- Fine-tuning research questions
- Finding information on a topic
- Drafting an outline
- Checking grammar and style



Course Grading

Assignment Type	Weight (points or percentage)
Literature Review Matrix	Pass/Fail
Dissertation Milestones	Pass/Fail
Identify a Methodology	Pass/Fail
Identify a Research Design	Pass/Fail
Choose a Theoretical Framework	Pass/Fail
Dissertation Alignment Document	Pass/Fail
Chapter 1	Pass/Fail
Chapter 2 Outline	Pass/Fail
Total	

Course Assessment Mapping

Assessment	Objective(s) Met
Literature Review Matrix	2, 3, and 4
Dissertation Milestones	1-6
Identify a Methodology	3
Identify a Research Design	3
Choose a Theoretical Framework	4
Dissertation Alignment Document	5
Chapter 1	6
Chapter 2 Outline	7



University Policies

Late Assignment Policy

- Students are expected to inform professors prior to a scheduled absence and understand work may be made up at the professor's discretion to ensure full credit.
- Upon an unexpected absence from class, the student should contact the professor immediately to discuss make-up work and submit such work in a timely manner.
- Students should not wait until the end of the session to deal with concerns about absences.

Grading Scale

Grade	Point Value	Range	
		Undergraduate	Graduate
A	4	94-100	96-100
A-	3.7	90-93	93-95
B+	3.3	87-89	90-92
B	3	83-86	87-89
B-	2.7	80-82	85-86
C+	2.3	77-79	82-84
C	2	73-76	79-81
C-	1.7	70-72	77-78
D+	1.3	67-69	74-76
D	1	60-66	70-73
F	0	<60	<70



Instructor Student Interaction & Communication

- Please use email whenever possible.
- Faculty should respond to all emails and voicemail messages within 1 day.
- Grading of assignments is to be done within 3 days for regular assignments (this includes attendance) and 7 days for larger assignments.
- Some assignments may require additional time to grade due to the length of the project and the directive to provide substantive feedback that will assist you throughout the learning process. In cases where the assignment is not returned with feedback within the stated period, refer to communication from your professor to facilitate expectations on subsequent assignments. Students are not expected to apply adjustments on subsequent assignments in advance of returned grading and feedback.

All CU faculty and students are provided means of electronic communication (e.g. email, video conferencing, chat features, discussion boards, etc.) All employees and students are required to use official university electronic accounts for official university correspondence. This policy is meant to include both synchronous and asynchronous communication. **Faculty and staff are not obligated to read, receive, or respond to communications where these guidelines are not followed.** Email must be checked regularly, especially when enrolled in an active course. Adhere to the following guidelines when communicating online with professors, university employees, and other students.

- Accounts: Only university email and related systems should be used for institutional communications. Do not use personal email or video conferencing accounts.
- Names: Refer to professors and CU employees by their last names with appropriate honorifics (e.g., "Dr." or "Prof."). For professors, if you cannot easily verify their degree or status, "Prof." is most appropriate—not "Ms." or "Mr." *Under no circumstance should you use first names unless given explicit permission.*
- Introductions: Use subject lines appropriately and begin any course-specific email with your first and last name, the course number, and your exact section number or meeting time (e.g., "101-05," "9 am MW," but not "this morning").
- Grammar and Style: All written communications must conform to standard English. Emails and discussion board posts should not resemble text message, chat, or social media posts. Use complete sentences with correct capitalization, spelling, punctuation, and grammar.
- Coordination: All members of a synchronous, online interaction should participate by the same mode of interaction when possible. For example, join video conferences with video. This is especially true for one-on-one meetings with your professor and small group video discussions in or outside of class.
- "Class" Conduct: When participating in synchronous classes or meetings (especially when using video), conduct yourself as if in the classroom. Be on-time and mentally present. Be seated at a desk or table. Dress according to classroom standards. Do not introduce distractions into the interactions and be prepared to stay for the duration of the session per normal classroom behavior.
- Complexity: In general, asynchronous communication is appropriate for simple questions and activities. Complex questions that require more than one simple response should be addressed synchronously—during class is often best. If you are unable to ask your question



during class, or it is too personal to do so, use an asynchronous method to arrange a synchronous meeting.

- **Boundaries:** Synchronous communication is less formal than asynchronous. However, the appropriate use of names, language, acronyms, and emojis must still conform to classroom standards. Since we do not all share the same online culture, be prepared to explain yourself if your acronym or emoji is not understood. Be polite and respectful when asking for clarification, and gracious when misunderstandings occur.

Course Attendance and Participation

All courses follow specific attendance policies found in the [Academic Catalog](#) for that course level and format. It is the student's responsibility to be familiar with these policies and to keep track of their own attendance. Per the university attendance policy, accrued absences may contribute negatively toward a student's final grade.

Carolina University faculty will assess course participation and may assign grade points as deemed appropriate for the course and subject matter. Participation may be gauged by attending online or in-person classes, lectures, or labs, submitting coursework, engaging in workshops or other interactive computer-assisted teaching activities, engaging in group study or online discussions curated by the instructor, or otherwise interacting with an instructor about academic matters by Zoom or other means. Students should refer to the assignment weighting table and course specific policies for details on participation assessments.

Disability Assistance

Carolina University welcomes students, faculty, staff and visitors with disabilities to our campus and to our programs. Our goal at CU is to ensure an accessible, inclusive welcoming learning and working environment for individuals with disabilities while complying with federal and state regulations.

Students with disabilities are encouraged to reach out to University Accessibility Services (UAS) as soon as possible to explore possible accommodations. UAS serves as a central resource on disability-related information, procedures and services for the university community and partners will work with the student and any other campus partners to identify barriers and implement plans for access. More information about UAS can be found at <https://carolinau.edu/university-accessibility-services>



Academic Integrity and Misconduct

The Student Handbook has a detailed list of different ways students show a lack of academic integrity, including academic technology misuse, cheating, complicity, fabrication or invention, falsification, forgery, multiple submissions, plagiarism, and sabotage.

Academic integrity is the honest and responsible conduct of studies, scholarship, research, information collection, and presentation. The university expects students to submit assignments that are original to them and to properly cite and reference other peoples' ideas using the prescribed style guide. The very foundation of a good university education is academic integrity. Learning how to express original ideas, cite sources, work independently, and report results accurately and honestly are skills that carry students beyond their academic careers. If a student is uncertain about an issue of academic honesty, they should consult the faculty member to resolve questions in any situation prior to the submission of the academic exercise.

Maintaining your academic integrity involves:

- Creating and expressing your own ideas in course work.
- Acknowledging all sources of information including verbal, written, digital, and graphic.
- Completing assignments independently or acknowledging collaboration.
- Attending classes, exams, and required academic events.
- Accurately reporting results when conducting your own research.
- Honesty during examinations.
- Not tampering with or misusing technology.
- Not aiding or abetting other students in violating any academic rules or policies.

Courses at Carolina University will utilize proctoring for select exams to ensure exam integrity. Per Carolina University directives, all exams that represent 25% or more of a course grade are required to be proctored. Instances of cheating or inappropriate behavior will be considered violations of the Academic Integrity policy and will result in disciplinary action.

Plagiarism is the use of another person's distinctive ideas or words without acknowledgment. All researchers are expected to acknowledge the use of another author's words by the use of quotation marks around those words in the text of a paper and by appropriate citations.

Plagiarism can occur in an oral, written, or media project submitted for academic credit or for some other benefit. Examples of plagiarism include (but are not limited to), the following:

- Word-for-word copying of another person's ideas or words;
- Mosaic (interspersing of one's own words here and there while, in essence, copying another's work);
- Paraphrasing without citation (the rewriting of another's work, yet still using their fundamental idea or theory);
- Submission of another's work as one's own;
- Having another person write a paper;
- Buying or procuring a ready-made paper from a research paper "service" on the Internet or from another such service;
- Neglecting quotation marks on material that is otherwise acknowledged;
- Fabrication of references (inventing or counterfeiting sources)



BIBLIOGRAPHY

Not Applicable