LDRS 591

TWU Online

Aug 5, 2025

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Welcome

This is the course book for LDRS 591: Scholarly Inquiry. This book is divided into thematic units of study to help you engage with the materials. The course resources and learning activities are designed not only to help prepare you for the course assessments, but also to give you opportunities to practice various skills.

> Below you will find information about how to navigate this book. Please read the full course syllabus located on the Course Home page in Moodle. It includes key information about the course schedule, assignments, and policies.

Course Notes

Below is some key information on features you will see throughout the course.

> *Learning Activity*
> This box will prompt you to engage in course concepts, often by viewing resources and reflecting on your experience and/or learning. Most learning activities are ungraded and are designed to help prepare you for the assessment in this course.

> *Assessment*
> This box will signify an assignment or discussion post you will submit in Moodle. Note that these demonstrate your understanding of the course learning outcomes. Be sure to review the grading rubrics for each assignment.

> *Checking your Learning*
> This box is for checking your understanding, to make sure you are ready for what follows. Ways to check your learning might include self-check quizzes or questions for discussion. These activities are not graded but are critical for you to be able to begin to develop evaluative judgement in this domain of knowledge.

> *Note*

> This box signifies key notes. It may also warn you of possible problems or pitfalls you may encounter!

If you have any questions, do not hesitate to ask. We are here to help and be your guide on this journey.

1 Course Description

LDRS591: Scholarly Inquiry provides learners with an overview of the process, critical analysis, and associated skills required for scholarship and research. This course is designed for learners who may have little research experience and will introduce scholarly inquiry and various research approaches used in the field of leadership. The aim of this course is to provide learners with the necessary skills to become critical consumers and discriminating users of research. This course does not aim to develop intermediate or advanced skills in quantitative or qualitative research methods. Rather, the course provides an introductory "toolkit" that will support the work on your applied Master of Arts (MA) in Leadership activities and in further professional work.

The syllabus includes key information about the course schedule, assignments, and policies. Please read the full Course Syllabus located at the bottom of this Welcome page.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, the learner will be able to:

1. Evaluate potential research questions based upon problems in the leadership domain and distinguish among appropriate methods to address these questions.
2. Conduct a thorough review of scholarly literature using library and internet search skills.
3. Critique research studies using critical-analytic thinking skills.
4. Develop scholarly writing that reflects higher-order thinking and analysis.
5. Critically analyze scholarly literature.
6. Appraise the research process based upon the values and ethical standards of servant leadership.
7. Differentiate between and engage with types of scholarly approaches.

Please note: This course is a pre-requisite for LDRS 697 and LDRS 698.

Learning Resources

- American Psychological Association. (2020). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association: The official guide to APA style* (7th ed.). American Psychological Association.

- Boland, A., Cherry, M. G., & Dickson, R. (2023). *Doing a systematic review: A student's guide* (3rd ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Rosch, D. M., Kniffin, L. E., & Guthrie, K. L. (2023). *Introduction to research in leadership.* Information Age Publishing.
- Additional articles will be assigned in specific units and will be available from the TWU library.

1.1 Course Activities/Requirements

The course will follow an inquiry-based format. This involves exploring leadership issues collaboratively. Each unit will involve a variety of learning approaches. There will be regular opportunities for you to engage in the material through questions, small group discussion and a variety of scholarly articles that will allow you to apply key course concepts. You are expected to come to each unit prepared, having read weekly course materials in advance.

1.2 Course Evaluation

The course grade will be determined by satisfactory completion of all requirements.

Assignment

% of Grade

Due Date

Discussion Forum Posts

20%

Weeks 1-5 (Mondays & Thursdays)

A1: Annotated Bibliography & Critique

20%

Unit 3 / Week 3

A2: Developing Your Research Question

15%

Unit 4 / Week 4

A3: Scoping Literature Review

30%

Unit 6 / Week 6

[A4: Research Letter of Intent](#)

15%

Unit 6 / Week 6

Total

100%

1.3 Course Communication and Syllabus

Please carefully read the **Course Syllabus** located at the bottom of this Welcome page and keep up to date with **Course Announcements**. You may find the **Q&A Forum** useful for answering your questions.

1.4 Course Navigation

This course is organized into the following sections/tabs in navigation bar across the top of the course page:

1. **Course Introduction**

   - This main home page has key course information.
   - Please see the [course syllabus](#) and carefully read through the information.

2. **Weeks 1-6: Course Units**

   - These six sections contain all the course units and resources you need to complete the course.
   - Be sure to complete the learning activities as they will prepare you for the course assessments.

3. **Assessments**

   - In this section you will find the Discussion Forum and Assignment instructions and the Dropboxes to submit your assessments for this course.

4. **Reflective Journal**

- Throughout this course, you will engage in reflective journal writing. A reflective journal is simply a record of your thoughts. There is no correct way to create this journal; rather, it reflects the way you think and the way you respond to learning. Journals can include traditional handwritten notes, Word documents, mind maps, pictures, stream-of-consciousness writing, audio recordings, important quotes, sketches, or drawings—use any combination that suits you. Experiment and have fun.
- The purpose of journalling is to make you an active participant in your learning experiences as you engage with your instructor and your fellow students in the various activities throughout the course's readings, activities, and discussions. Reflecting upon these learning events will help you gain a deeper understanding of the course materials and help integrate your learning into applied practice in everyday life and work.
- Throughout the course, you will be reminded to write in your journal to ensure you are actively learning the material. To assist you, the course provides you with questions you can ask yourself to get your creative energies flowing. Reflective journalling is an activity you can and should complete on a regular or daily basis, even outside of our scheduled course activities.
- This journal is not submitted or graded, but is an opportunity for you to reflect on, and engage with, the course content. The questions posed will often help you prepare for your assignments and are designed to help you successfully achieve the learning outcomes for each unit.

1.5 Academic Integrity and TWU Policy

As scholars pursuing higher education, academic integrity is a core value of the entire TWU community. Students are invited into this scholarly culture and required to abide by the principles of sound academic scholarship at TWU. This includes, but is not limited to, avoiding all forms of plagiarism and cheating in scholarly work. TWU has a strict policy on plagiarism (see academic calendar). Learning what constitutes plagiarism and avoiding it is the student's responsibility.

It will be assumed that you have read, understand, and agree to the information provided at the 'Academic Dishonesty Policy' button below. If you have any questions at all, please contact your instructor.

See the **Course Syllabus** below for important policies to keep in mind as you take this course. Also see the TWU website for **Student Policies**.

2 Student Support Services

2.1 Writing Centre Sessions

Please note that you may be required to use the support of our writing centre coaches for this course. Plan to book your appointments well in advance, so that the coaches have time to work with you on each of your assignments. The Writing Centre is available to assist all students with their academic writing assignments in any subject at any stage of the writing process. This is a free service. Online Writing Sessions are available, for more information visit the Learning Commons website or contact writingcentre@twu.ca

2.2 TWU Library

Visit the TWU library for readings and your research.

Overview

Unit 1 will provide you with a general introduction to inquiry, familiarizing you with foundational concepts related to scholarly inquiry. This unit will focus on the philosophical foundations of research, the connection between leadership and scholarly inquiry, and what evidence-based leadership looks like. By the end of the unit, you will understand the importance of research and begin to evaluate the decision-making processes that you utilize in your professional life.

Topics

Unit 1 is divided into four topics. See the **Unit 1 Topics** link at the bottom of this page for the course notes on the following topics:

1. What is Scholarly Inquiry?
2. Leadership and Scholarly Inquiry
3. Philosophical Foundations of Research
4. Unit Summary

Unit Outcomes

When you have completed this unit, you should be able to:

1. Distinguish between informal research and scholarly inquiry.
2. Reflect on why evidence-based decision making is important for leadership.

Learning Activities

Here is a list of learning activities you will benefit from in completing this unit. You may find it useful for planning your work:

1. Read Chapters 1 and 2 in *Introduction to Research in Leadership* (Rosch et al., 2023).
2. Reflective Journalling activities.

Resources

Here are the resources you will need to complete the unit:

Text

- Rosch, D. M., Kniffin, L. E., & Guthrie, K. L. (2023). *Introduction to research in leadership.* Information Age Publishing.

E-Resources

The following articles can be found through the TWU library:

- Brown, M. E., & Dueñas, A. N. (2020). A medical science educator's guide to selecting a research paradigm: Building a basis for better research. *Medical Science Educator, 30*, 545–53. https://doi.org/10.1007/s40670-019-00898-9
- Wallace, J. R. (2007). Servant leadership: A worldview perspective. *International Journal of Leadership Studies, 2*(2), 114-32. https://www.psychodramaaustralia.edu.au/sites/default/files/serveant_leadership_-_worldview.pdf

Note: All other resources will be provided online.

What is Scholarly Inquiry?

Inquiry is "the process of developing skills to arrive at understandings of a problem, an issue, or a phenomenon, through the process of asking good questions, searching out good evidence, and arriving at well-reasoned conclusions" (Penner, 2017).

By now you are well aware of the applied nature of the Master of Arts (MA) in Leadership program. This feature may be an important part of what attracted you to the program. Why, then, study research methods? Why worry about scholarly inquiry? This course in scholarly inquiry will help you develop systematic thinking skills applicable in all realms of leadership and everyday life. As Rosch et al. (2023) note, research focuses professional knowledge to inform your leader-centric, group-centric, and context-centric concepts, guiding the broader view of your leadership position and contributing to your overall leadership practice (p. 23). Moreover, your leadership practice is ideally evidence-based; that is, based on evidence derived from systematic scholarly inquiry.

Indigenous (Canada's First Peoples) knowledge systems offer a complementary perspective to scholarly inquiry by emphasizing relational, holistic, and ethical dimensions of knowledge. Unlike Eurocentric models that often compartmentalize knowledge, Indigenous inquiry focuses on the interconnectedness of all living things and aims to achieve harmony between people, the environment, and spirituality. As Battiste (2005) explains, Indigenous methodologies prioritize ethical relationships and community well-being, filling gaps in mainstream research by addressing the moral responsibilities of researchers.

For example, when Indigenous scholars ask questions, they often consider their impact on future generations and the environment. This approach enriches traditional inquiry by integrating ethical considerations into the process of evidence-gathering and analysis.

Activity: Learning Activity

According to Plano-Clark and Creswell (2015), "research is a process of steps used to collect and analyze information in order to increase our knowledge about a topic or an issue" (p.4) and it is different than informal research.

Watch the following video "Research as Inquiry" from Bertrand Library at Bucknell University (2024) that gives an overview of research as inquiry:

Figure 2.1: https://img.youtube.com/vi/ufAJV76HW6g/0.jpg
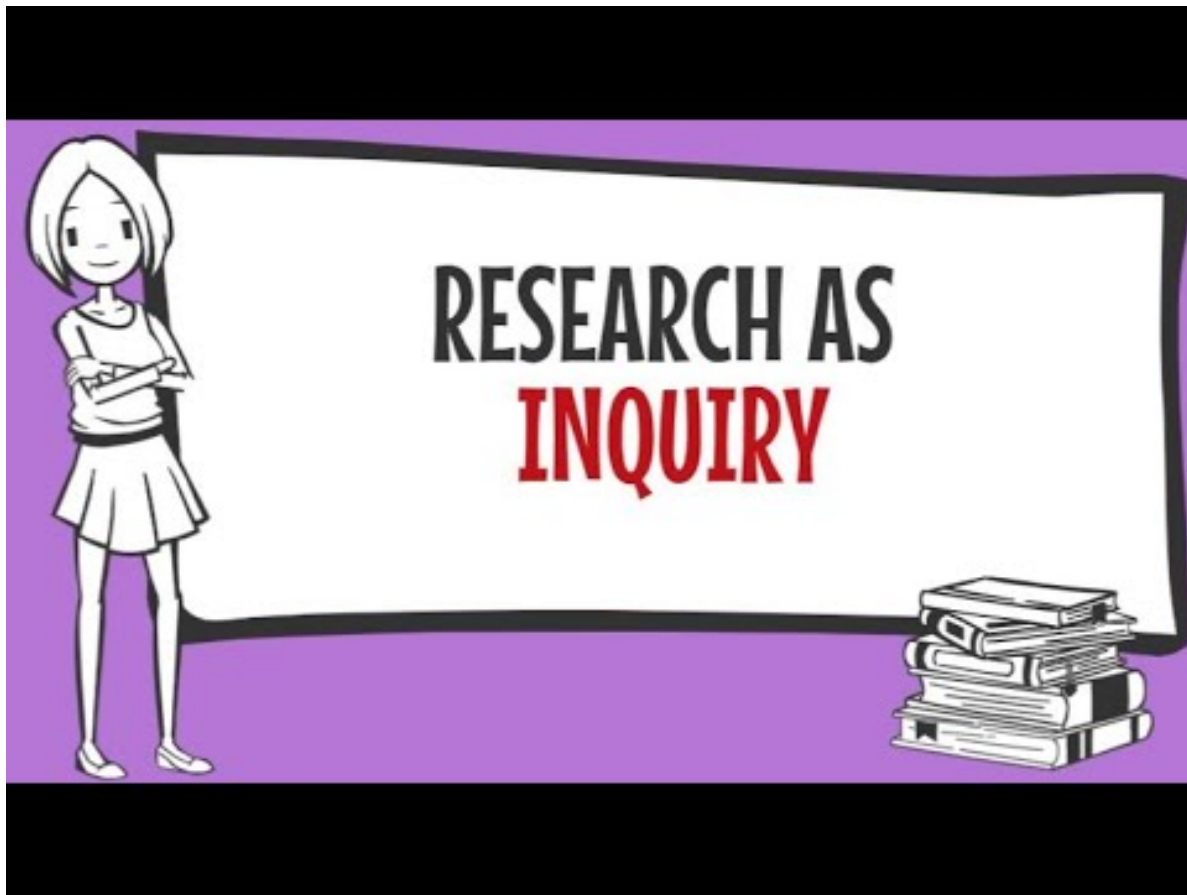
Read Chapters 1 and 2 in in *Introduction to Research in Leadership* (Rosch et al., 2023).

Start a **Reflective Journal**. This journal is not submitted or graded, but is an opportunity for you to reflect on, and engage with, the course content. The questions posed will often help you prepare for your assignments and are designed to help you successfully achieve the learning outcomes for each unit.

Next, write about the following in your Reflective Journal:

- How would you define research?
- Describe your experience with "research."

    – Have you taken an undergraduate statistics course?
    – Is this your first time learning about research?
    – Have you published your own scientific paper?

- How might relational approaches to inquiry change the way you frame research questions?

- How can integrating ethical considerations into research contribute to leadership practices?

Note: Your Journal is not graded but will help you in your assessment for this unit.

Leadership and Scholarly Inquiry

On what basis are sound decisions made? What evidence do leaders rely upon for best outcomes? The need to evaluate evidence for best practices in leadership decision-making is widely acknowledged. Patton (2001) observes that "the emphasis on knowledge generation disseminated in the form of best practices has swept like wildfire through all sectors of society" (p. 329).

The MA in Leadership program emphasizes a vision of best practices in leadership. What do is meant by this? Put simply, "best practices" refers to those practices and initiatives that result in the best possible outcomes. What qualifies something as best practice? Identifying best practices starts by understanding the common sources of evidence available to leaders.

Take a moment to think about a recent decision you made as a leader. On what did you base this decision? Previous experience? Values? Company policy? Empirical evidence (e.g., data derived from research)? Expert opinion? Systematic inquiry, as represented by research, is one tool that leaders can use to inform best practices and their decision-making process.

Systematic inquiry is hardly new; first century writings demonstrate Bible evidence of systematic, logical, and empirical inquiry.

Consider the following passage from Luke, a physician trained in empirical methods of his day:

> Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us, just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eyewitnesses and servants of the word. With this in mind, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, I too decided to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught. (Luke 1:1-4, NIV)

How does the research process differ from managerial activities such as decision-making and problem solving? Research shares with decision-making and problem-solving the systematic and disciplined procedure of identifying an issue or problem, deciding on an approach, formulating a plan, collecting and analyzing data, drawing conclusions, and implementing decisions based on this rigorous process. What distinguishes research from generic or everyday problem solving is its commitment to advance or generate knowledge that typically will be communicated to the larger academic or scientific community. Since the beginning of the 21st century, there has been remarkable growth in the foundations of research and research methodologies across the natural, applied, and social sciences, as well as the humanities.

Boyer's Model of Scholarship

The MA in Leadership program is focused on applied scholarship. In defining this, Boyer's four-part Model of Scholarship (1997) is useful. Boyer's typology identifies four domains of scholarship: discovery, integration, application, and teaching. Marta Nibert (2011) discusses the model in her paper titled "Boyer's Model of Scholarship."

In the section titled "Application," Nibert (2011) notes that the scholarship of application:

> focuses on using research findings and innovations to remedy societal problems. Included in this category are service activities that are specifically tied to one's field of knowledge and professional activities. Beneficiaries of these activities include commercial entities, non-profit organizations, and professional associations (para. 4).

Though Nibert's primary audience is the professoriate, this material is relevant for MA Leadership learners. Application is highlighted because this program was designed to focus on the scholarship of application, although work in the capstone will likely include one or more of the other domains.

Scholarship of Discovery

Boyer's Scholarship of Discovery is the type of scholarship associated with traditional scholarly research. "Research is a systematic process of collecting, analyzing and interpreting information (data) in order to increase our understanding of a phenomenon abut which we are interested or concerned" (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010, p. 2). Boyer's Scholarship of Discovery is often referred to as primary research. Primary research is narrowly focused and contributes to the body of knowledge by helping people understand one isolated part of reality in detail in the hopes that this understanding can be generalized to a broader part of reality. In traditional research, the Scholarship of Discovery falls into two distinct genres: quantitative and qualitative research. Each of these genres manifest in numerous variations, including hybrid models involving both quantitative and qualitative elements, designed for and suited to differing research questions.

Scholarship of Integration

Boyer's Scholarship of Integration is "the attempt to arrange relevant bits of knowledge and insight from different disciplines into broader patterns that reflect the actual interconnectedness of the world" (Boyer, as cited in Jacobsen & Jacobsen, 2004, p. 51).

The Scholarship of Integration often involves interdisciplinary collaboration and requires critical analysis and review of knowledge, followed by the creative synthesis of ideas to address specific topics or issues.

Scholarship of Application

The Scholarship of Application is "the scholarship of engagement; seeking to close the gap between values in the academy and the needs of the larger world" (Boyer, as cited in Jacobsen & Jacobsen, 2004, p. 51). In the Scholarship of Application, knowledge is applied to the solution of societal needs and practice. In most cases, knowledge stemming from the Scholarship of Discovery and the Scholarship of Integration informs the solutions to problems. These scholarships are often associated with the context of formal education. Although the Scholarship of Application may happen within formal education contexts, it is most often associated with other settings (Boshier, 2009, p. 6).

Scholarship of Teaching

Finally, the Scholarship of Teaching is "the scholarship of sharing knowledge" (Boyer, as cited in Jacobsen & Jacobsen, 2004, p. 51). The Scholarship of Teaching involves the reflective analysis of the knowledge about teaching and learning. This knowledge base itself is the product of the Scholarships of Discovery, Integration and Application combining as "active ingredients of a dynamic and iterative teaching process" (Boshier, 2009, p. 5). Boyer's typology originally identified as the Scholarship of Teaching has expanded and is now widely known in literature as the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (Boshier, 2009).

Boshier contends that Boyer's four domains were conceived holistically as elements that overlap and interact, not as discrete elements, appearing in any predictable order, and are better viewed as an operating system than a list of discrete elements (Boshier, 2009, pp. 4-5). As such, it is helpful to view the model as a Venn diagram where each scholarship domain overlaps (see Figure 1).

Figure 1

Boyer's Model of Scholarship

Note: This figure demonstrates how the four domains of Boyer's Model of Scholarship overlap and interact to create a holistic system of scholarship.

LDRS 591 is designed to help you understand types of research, identify a research topic, develop a research question, and decide whether you will pursue a thesis track in your MA Leadership studies. Should you choose the thesis track, you will engage in Scholarship of Discovery, meaning you will conduct primary research.

Note: Choosing the thesis track requires approval from the Department of Leadership Program Director.

Most program students choose the capstone track, in which they conduct secondary research.

Activity: Learning Activity

Watch the following video "Introduction to Research Design" from Research & Doctoral Services at Walden University (2015) where Dr. Patton introduces the concept of research as a scholar-practitioner:

Figure 2.2: https://img.youtube.com/vi/GYywR7SA03E/maxresdefault.jpg
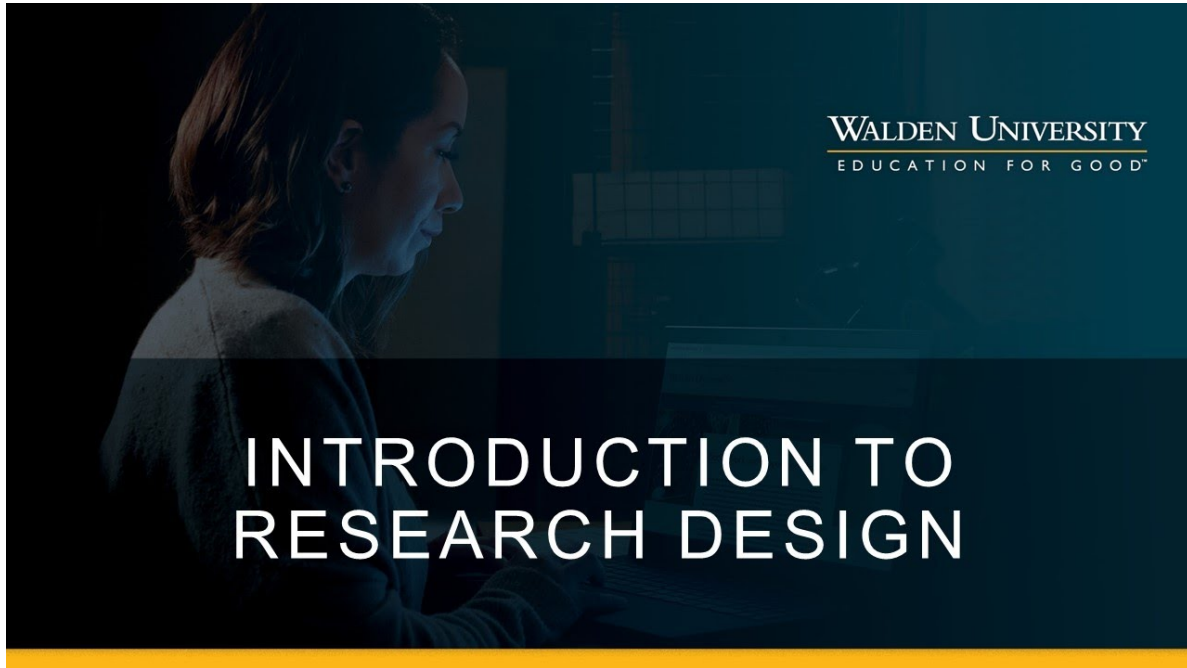
Respond to the following in your Reflective Journal:

- Describe at least one example of a decision you have made as a leader.
- Consider the factors that went into that decision making process (e.g., values, research, policy, past experience, expert opinion).
- What do you consider as "evidence" in your decision making?
- In your own words, why is evidence-based decision-making important in leadership?

Note: your Journal is not graded but will help you in your assessment for this unit.

Philosophical Foundations of Research

A professor once observed that a fundamental attribute of being human is the tendency to ask questions. Humanity is especially interested in three fundamental questions:

- What is real?
- What is true?
- What is good?

The philosophical category of metaphysics is concerned with what is real, and what is the nature of reality. The philosophical category of epistemology is concerned with the truth, and the nature and process of knowing. The philosophical category of axiology is concerned with what is good and how people can determine the nature of goodness. Much of history is a chronicle of the different ways people have answered these three fundamental questions. How people answer these questions reveals their perspective and worldview.

Every person bases their own thoughts, decisions, and actions on what is called a worldview. A worldview is "an interpretive framework through which one makes sense of themselves, other people, and the world around them" (Geisler & Watkins, 2003). It is like a pair of glasses that you wear when you are observing things about yourself, other people, and the world in which you live.

Watch the following short video "What's Your Worldview? (Quiz)" by the Impact 360 Institute (2015) that explains the concept of worldview: