

**Nova Southeastern University, Abraham S. Fischler School of Education  
Syllabus**

**I. COURSE PREFIX, NUMBER, AND TITLE**

ARC 8966 Applied Dissertation Service 1: Concept Paper (2 credits)

**II. INSTRUCTOR/FACULTY MEMBER**

Candidates needing to contact their instructor prior to the beginning of the course should consult the course schedule at <http://www.fischlerschool.nova.edu/current-students/course-schedule> to find the name of the instructor teaching this course. Right-click on the faculty member's name in the schedule and choose "Properties" in the menu to obtain his or her e-mail address.

Candidates should contact their instructor for any questions regarding this course.

**CONTENT-AREA FACULTY (Responsible for Syllabus)**

Name: Nydia Cummings, PhD

E-mail address: [cnydia@nova.edu](mailto:cnydia@nova.edu)

Telephone: 954-262-8598, 800-986-3223, Ext. 28598

Fax: 954-262-3903

NOTE: To ensure program consistency, all sections of each course, regardless of delivery format, follow the same course outcomes as listed in this syllabus. Any modifications in readings, topics, or assignments may occur only with approval from the content-area faculty listed above.

**III. COURSE DESCRIPTION AND RATIONALE**

- A. Description:** The content of Applied Dissertation Service 1 (Concept Paper) focuses on developing a preliminary literature review and formulating research questions of the concept paper. The committee chair and member roles are discussed as well as the roles and responsibilities of the Applied Research Center's faculty and staff. This service will culminate in the completion of the first corresponding benchmark: the concept paper. Credit for this service will be assigned following approval of the concept paper.

**Rationale:** This course governs the conduct of the concept paper benchmark of the dissertation. The concept paper represents the first stage in the dissertation process that ultimately will allow the student to demonstrate mastery of a chosen field of study and make an original contribution to that field. Usually 8-10 pages in length, a concept paper may differ slightly depending upon the concentration and the expectations of chair and member. The concept paper consists of the following two chapters: Chapter 1 (e.g., introduction, problem statement, purpose and definition) and Chapter 2 (preliminary literature review and research questions). Students who are registered for this course will be required in each semester to participate in at least one online dissertation presentation (offered by the Applied Research Center). Participation is required until a student earns a Pass grade for the dissertation final manuscript (ARC 8968). (NOTE: This requirement applies to all dissertation benchmark courses and Applied Dissertation Services I and II). Information about the presentations will be sent to students at the beginning of each semester and will include dates, times, and registration information.

**B.**

**IV. COURSE STUDENT-LEARNING OUTCOMES**

By the end of this course, the candidate will be able to

- understand the dissertation process
- utilize the library databases efficiently
- demonstrate scientific writing skills
- read research effectively
- synthesize verbal and nonverbal materials
- critique research studies
- demonstrate self-editing and proofreading skills

**V. COURSE OBJECTIVES**

By the end of this course, the candidate will be able to

- introduce the dissertation topic
- produce a title for the dissertation
- provide the background and significance of an identified problem
- develop a purpose statement
- operationally define key terminology
- create a preliminary review of the literature and create an appropriate conceptual framework
- apply theoretical and methodological understanding and skills into devising specific research questions
- demonstrate mastery of APA and Fischler School style
- understand the processes involved in writing a dissertation, including stress, time, project management, committee formation, benchmark approvals, and human subjects' reviews
- write an approved concept paper

**VI. REQUIRED MATERIALS**

The following textbooks that students use (or will use) in other classes will be helpful for the preparation of the dissertation.

**A. Suggested Textbooks**

American Psychological Association. (2010). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th ed.). Washington, DC: Author.

Creswell, J. W. (2012). *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research* (4th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.

## B. Required Supplemental Materials

Abraham S. Fischler School of Education. (2012, January). *Applied dissertation procedures manual*. Retrieved from Nova Southeastern University, Abraham S. Fischler School of Education, Applied Research Center website:  
<http://www.fischlerschool.nova.edu/applied-research/arc>

Abraham S. Fischler School of Education. (2011, May). *Style guide for the applied dissertation*. Retrieved from Nova Southeastern University, Abraham S. Fischler School of Education, Applied Research Center website:  
<http://www.fischlerschool.nova.edu/applied-research/arc>

## VII. CLASS ACTIVITIES AND ASSIGNMENTS

Weeks	Topics	Class Activities & Assignments
1-16	Choose a topic	1) Submit documents to the dissertation committee chair using Microsoft Word. If the dissertation chair uses the reviewing and tracking features in Microsoft Word, the student should become proficient with those features.
	Develop the problem statement	2) Submit work that conforms to Fischler School guidelines for format and style as described in the <i>Style Guide for the Applied Dissertation</i> found on the ARC website.  3) Use only an NSU account for any e-mail correspondence with the dissertation chair.
	Develop the purpose of the study	4) Maintain contact and communication with the dissertation chair at least once a month.  5) Understand that the working relationship between student and 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.
	Create an abbreviated literature review	6) Utilize the information received from the dissertation chair and member to make the recommended organizational, content, format, and style changes in the concept paper, dissertation proposal, and final report.  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.
	Formulate research questions	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.
--	--	---

## VIII. ASSIGNMENT CHECKLISTS

### Concept Paper Checklist (Chapter 1)

Chapter 1	
Sections	Comments
<b><u>1) Title Page</u></b> a) Is descriptive of AD study b) Useful for keyword searches c) Title is within 10-12 words	a) b) c)
<b><u>2) Introduction - Nature of the Problem</u></b> a) Actual problem indicated b) Impact of problem is clearly stated as a declarative sentence c) Problem statement is concise and focused	a) b) c)
<b><u>3) Background and Significance of the Problem</u></b> a) Documented evidence of problem provided b) Definition of major issues related to the problem provided c) Explains the setting of the study d) Contains organizational profile, if applicable e) Describes the student's role in relation to the organization f) Problem is in range of student's influence g) Deficiencies in the evidence h) Includes other salient information	a) b) c) d) e) f) g) h)
<b><u>4) Purpose of the Study</u></b> a) Clearly delineates the purpose statement b) Identifies and defines the central concepts or ideas of the study	a) b)
<b><u>5) Definitions</u></b> a) Provides the complete scientific definition and appropriate reference if necessary	a)

<b>Chapter 1</b>	
<b>Sections</b>	<b>Comments</b>
b) Includes as many terms or variables as needed	b)

## Concept Paper Checklist (Chapter 2)

Chapter 2	
Sections	Comments
<p><b><u>1) Preliminary Literature Review</u></b></p> <p>a) Provides contextual background (theoretical foundation)</p> <p>b) Reveals related issues</p> <p>c) Reviews similar problems elsewhere</p> <p>d) Provides significance to your approach to the study</p> <p>e) Includes major/seminal research articles pertaining to study</p> <p>f) Written in an integrated manner</p> <p>g) Uses peer-reviewed research</p>	<p>a)</p> <p>b)</p> <p>c)</p> <p>d)</p> <p>e)</p> <p>f)</p> <p>g)</p>
<p><b><u>2) Research Questions</u></b></p> <p>a) The research questions are based on the problem or area of need and on the research reviewed.</p> <p>b) The research questions adhere to the following guidelines: (a) formation of question or questions based on theory, previous research (i.e., the literature review), and experience; (b) stated in the form of a question; and (c) focused and clear (i.e., specific, feasible, and measurable).</p>	<p>a)</p> <p>b)</p>
<p><b><u>3) References</u></b></p> <p>a) consistent with citations in the text (APA style)</p> <p>b) peer-reviewed research</p> <p>c) retrieval dates if obtained from Internet</p>	<p>a)</p> <p>b)</p> <p>c)</p>

### IX. SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS (SAP)

Prior to receiving approval (i.e., a Pass grade), students are expected to demonstrate progress by the end of the term in which they are enrolled. See the ARC website (SAP webpage) for details and for the NSU—FSE Dissertation Progress Report form. The following may be considered as examples of progress:

- searched databases
- downloaded articles
- consulted with chair
- developed design ideas
- created outline of various sections

- read books and articles on study design
- read books and articles on content area
- read books and articles on analysis
- worked on reference section or annotated bibliography
- worked on IRB protocol
- worked on format and style of manuscript
- wrote elements of Chapter 1
- wrote elements of Chapter 2
- revised elements of Chapter 1
- revised elements of Chapter 2

## X. GRADING CRITERIA

### A. Grading Scale

Doctoral Program	
Letter Grade	Credit
Pass (P)	2 Credits
Progress (PR)	Credit in Progress
No progress (F)	No Credit

Pass: Concept paper approved by chair, member, and ARC

Progress: Documented by progress report form

No progress: Fail

### B. Definition of Progress

Progress is evident and documented by the student and chair at the end of the semester (i.e., NSU—FSE Dissertation Progress Report).

The progress report consists of two sections: (a) student’s self-assessment and objectives for the next term, and (b) dissertation chair’s assessment and objectives for the next term.

For more details on the dissertation benchmarks, please see the *Applied Dissertation Procedures Manual* at the ARC website:

[http://www.fischlerschool.nova.edu/applied-research/procedures\\_and\\_resources](http://www.fischlerschool.nova.edu/applied-research/procedures_and_resources)

## XI. STANDARDS

As professionals in the field of education, students who complete this course will be expected to understand and comply with standards established by the research and program evaluation professional communities. In particular, students should pay close attention to the standards promulgated in the following documents:

American Educational Research Association, American Psychological Association, & National Council on Measurement in Education. (1999). *Standards for educational and psychological testing*. Washington, DC: American Educational Research Association.

Yarbrough, D. B., Shulha, L. M., Hopson, R. K., & Caruthers, F. A. (2011). *The program evaluation standards: A guide for evaluators and evaluation users* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

American Educational Research Association. (2000). Code of ethics. *Educational Researcher*, 40(3), 145-146, doi:10.3102/0013189X11410403

## **XII. UNIVERSITY POLICIES**

### **A. Plagiarism**

Work that is submitted for credit must be the original work of the student. Any assignment that is not the original work of the student is considered plagiarism and in violation of the Code of Student Conduct and Academic Responsibility. Plagiarism occurs when another person's work, words, or ideas are represented as one's own without the use of a school-recognized method of citation (e.g., copied from another source such as an author or another student without properly acknowledging the actual writer/author), or when another person's work is copied or otherwise duplicated for academic credit. Plagiarism also occurs when knowingly giving or allowing one's own work to be copied or otherwise duplicated by another for academic credit, or when resubmitting one's own work for academic credit (i.e., work that has previously been submitted for academic credit).

If the faculty member or administration determines that plagiarism has occurred, the following disciplinary action will ensue:

1. Initial Occurrence: Failing grade (F or N/P) for the course.
2. Any Subsequent Occurrence: Immediate dismissal; ineligible to return to the Fischler School of Education at any time in the future.
3. Any Occurrence of Plagiarism on a Practicum or Applied Dissertation: Immediate dismissal; ineligible to return to the Fischler School of Education at any time in the future.

### **B. Americans with Disabilities Act (<http://www.ada.gov/>)**

Nova Southeastern University complies with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 by providing reasonable accommodations for qualified individuals with a disability.

The Fischler School's ADA Policies and Procedures, and the necessary forms for requesting disability-related accommodations, can be obtained by contacting the FSE Office of Student Judicial Affairs at 954-262-8617 or 1-800-986-3223, ext. 8617, or via e-mail at [seldines@nsu.nova.edu](mailto:seldines@nsu.nova.edu).

To ensure that reasonable accommodations can be provided in a timely manner, all forms and documentation must be completed and on file in the FSE Office of Student Judicial Affairs a minimum of four (4) weeks prior to the commencement of classes for any given semester.

Students with disability-related needs are encouraged to request services as early as possible, preferably at least 4 weeks before the beginning of the first term of enrollment for which disability-related services are sought. Certain accommodations may involve other professionals and specialists and, therefore, may require considerable time to implement.

### **C. Last Day to Withdraw from Course**

In accordance with policy, students wishing to withdraw from a course must do so formally through the registrar prior to the last class session.