UT Tyler COLLEGE OF EDUCATION & PSYCHOLOGY

EDLR 5310.060: Leadership Theory and Practice

Term: Spring 2026

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Last Day to Withdraw: March 30, 2026

Office Hours: Mondays 4:00-5:30pm; Tuesdays 4:00-5:30pm (Zoom link on Canvas Home Page). By appointment also.

Course Dates: January 12-May 1, 2026

Course Times: Online

Classroom: Canvas

Course Overview

This course is an introduction to school administration, including the theoretical and historical development of school administration as an academic discipline, an examination of organizational behavior and theory, an exploration of political and legal structures which impact schools and school administration, and the development of the concepts and practices associated with successful leadership and decision making.

Student Learning Outcomes

Texas Principal Standards: [Access the Texas Principal Standards here](#)
The student will be able to:

Objective	Texas Principal Standard
Understand historical management and leadership theories and how they have influenced leadership development.	**2(A)(ii), 3(B)(i)**
Recognize the importance of appreciating faculty and staff, and participate in a simulation requiring positive recognition.	**2(A)(i)(I), 5(A)(i)(V), 5(A)(ii)**
Identify positive attributes of exemplary teachers.	**1(A)(i)(1),**
Reflect upon areas in which they personally must improve to take leadership positions.	**2(A)(i)(VI), 3(A)(i)(III)**
Understand current legal issues and ways to influence through leadership.	**4(B)(iv), 4(B)(v)**
Describe what it means to support teachers and provide strategies for doing so.	**3(A)(i)(VII)**
Recognize the importance of hiring great teachers exemplifying the traits needed for teaching success.	**1(B)(ii), 2(A)(i)(III), 2(B)(i)**
Understand the dynamics of change from the perspective of a campus leader.	**3(A)(i)(V),**
Reflect upon the role of standardized testing within our schools.	**1(A)(ii), 3(A)(i)(III)**
Understand ways in which to improve standardized test scores through using the role of the principal to influence teacher performance.	**2(B)(iv), 2(B)(ii), 5(A)(i)(II)**
Recognize and define the school characteristics that focus on student achievement.	**3(A)(ii), 3(A)(i)(VIII), 4(A)(i)(IV)**
Recognize the importance of expectations among both teachers and students.	**1(A)(i)(V), 2(B)(iii), 4(A)(i)(II), 4(B)(ii)**
Compose a T-PESS self-evaluation and goal-setting, synthesizing educational leadership theory.	**ALL**

Required Textbooks and Readings

- APA Manual, 7th Edition. (program requirement)

- Whitaker, T. (2020). *What Great Principals Do Differently: 20 Things That Matter Most* (3rd ed.). Routledge. ==This text is available for free as an e-text from the UT Tyler Library. Access is available in Canvas.==

- Total Estimated costs of required course materials: $0

Course Structure

This course is designed to support your leadership development in moving from theory to practice and place you in the driver's seat to critically assess and problem-solve approaches to leadership, grounded in leadership and organizational theories. Through each module, you will read, engage in discussion with your Virtual Learning Community, explore various leadership and organizational theories through lectures, apply your learning through a variety of simulation activities or observational exercises (experiential learning), and work toward responsive and strategic goal setting reflecting professional leadership and organizational leadership.

Reading: Each module will be two weeks long. The first week of every module is intentionally designed for you to have time to read, watch the theory lecture videos or other assigned media connections, and reflect. This will set you up for moving from theory to practice, as we will use the reading to then move into an experiential learning activity.

Virtual Learning Community: Following your reading, we will engage in a discussion board during each module. This will be where you engage with your small group, AKA: your Virtual Learning Community. As an instructor, I strive to provide a differentiated approach to the boards, so it is not your typical "write a response and respond to two colleagues." Instead, you will asynchronously engage with your learning community to unpack and explore the implications of the reading on your leadership identity. In alignment to taking the first week of the module to read, you will post your initial response by the second Tuesday of the module. For the learning community responses, I stagger the due dates within the discussion board forums to ensure equitable opportunity to engage meaningfully with all group members. The responses to your community will be due the following Sunday, providing the window of Wednesday-Sunday to respond. To more authentically connect with your community, you will be expected to engage using video posts. Please be sure to review the expectations for the respective board at the beginning of each module to plan your participation accordingly. Your timely participation in discussions is a substantial part of your grade in this course and late posts will result in a loss of credit.

Simulation Activities and Observational Exercises (Experiential Learning): As an additional learning activity in each module, we will engage in experiential learning through various simulation activities and/or observational exercises. Simulation is designed to put you in the driver's seat in a risk-free environment and facilitate moving from theory to practice in your learning. Some simulation activities will require you to collaborate with a small team at your campus, so you will be responsible for identifying participants and scheduling the collaborative focus to complete your activity. Other simulation activities may include scenario-based practice, immersion-centered activities, or virtual-based practice. Directions and supports will be provided within each module to prepare you for each simulation activity or observational exercise.

Personal Philosophy and Style of Leadership Paper: This formal writing exercise is designed to give you an opportunity to begin refining your own perspectives and philosophy about leadership.

T-PESS Leadership Assignment: Through the course, we will explore two lanes to support your leadership identity development: 1) self-evaluation/growth as a leader and 2) leadership actions, practice, and planning. Through this

culminating assignment, you will utilize previous simulation activities in root cause analysis and strategic planning to simulate the development of two goals: 1) Professional Growth Goal and 2) Student/Campus Growth Goal. As a campus principal or other administrator, there is a strong likelihood that you will be evaluated using the Texas Principal Evaluation and Support System (T-PESS). As an aspiring administrator, it is essential that you become familiar with not only the Texas Principal Standards but also with the T-PESS rubric and evaluation process. This assignment is also designed to acquaint you with these expectations.

Lecture Quizzes: As we explore Leadership and Organizational Theories, I will not require outside reading but instead provide recorded lectures for you to view. Timestamps are provided for time management. In some modules, you will engage in a quiz to reflect upon and apply your understanding of the presented theories.

Check-in and Check-up: Throughout the course, I incorporate some short, formative feedback opportunities, which I call "Check-In and Check-up." This is an opportunity for me to support your learning and get feedback on how I may better meet your needs as an instructor. Think "monitor and adjust" like we do in the classroom with our PK-12 students, colleagues during professional learning, etc. Your success is my priority, so please do take the opportunity to share how I can support you better, or if all is good, then affirmations are welcome so I know to do more of the same.

Tips for Success in this Course

1. **Participate.** I invite you to engage deeply, ask questions, and talk about the course content with your learning community. You can learn a great deal from discussing ideas and perspectives with your peers, as you all have different perspectives you bring to the table through your educator experiences.
2. **Manage your time.** I get it—students usually juggle a lot, and I know you've got commitments beyond this class: work, life, family, personal time, etc. Still, doing your best in graduate school means carving out enough dedicated time for coursework. I provide a pacing guide for each module to help you balance your time effectively. I encourage you to use this as a resource to support the "here and now" with coursework, and then also to develop strategies to balance demands in the future as a school leader.
3. **Login regularly.** I recommend that you log in to Canvas several times a week to stay active with the course. I do use the announcement feature in lieu of sending out class emails to ensure you do not overlook or miss anything (emails can get buried sometimes!).
4. **Do not fall behind.** This class moves at a quick pace and each week builds on the previous class content. For example, what we will read in week one of each module will then move forward into application. If you feel you are starting to fall behind, check in with me as soon as possible so we can troubleshoot together.
5. **Use Canvas notification settings.** Pro tip! Canvas can ensure you receive timely notifications in your email or via text. Be sure to enable notifications to be sent instantly or daily. (Canvas Notification Guide)
6. **Ask for help if needed.** If you are struggling with a course concept, reach out to me for support. Your success is my priority. I am available and happy to help.

Graded Course Requirements Information

Virtual Learning Community/Discussion Boards: Described above. Points are awarded in alignment to stated direction in the module.

Simulation Activities: Following each Simulation Activity, you will engage in a written reflection for submission. Here, you will engage in exploring what you learned and how you will apply the learning in the future as a school leader. Points are awarded in alignment to stated direction in the module.

Personal Philosophy and Style of Leadership Paper: Described above. Points are awarded in alignment to the provided rubric.

T-PESS Leadership Assignment: Described above. Points are awarded in alignment to the provided rubric.

Lecture Quizzes: Described above. Points are awarded in alignment to stated direction in the module.

Check-in and Check-up: Described above. This is a participation grade.

Grading Structure

Assignment	Percentage %
Discussion Board and Participation	35%
Simulation Activities/Reflections; Check-In/Check-up; Lecture Quizzes	35%
Personal Philosophy and Style of Leadership Paper	10%
T-PESS Leadership Assignment	10%
Final Exam	10%
Total	100%

Grading Scale

➔ **A** - (90% or higher)
➔ **B** - (80 - 89%)
➔ **C** - (70 - 79%)
➔ **D** - (60 - 69%)
➔ **F** - (Below 60%)

Late Work and Make-Up Exams:

1. No late work is accepted unless prior arrangements have been made.
2. If an initial discussion board post is submitted after the due date, no points for that board will be awarded. Engaging in peer response will not earn partial credit.
3. If you have an emergency or life event, please reach out to me **prior to the due date** to make arrangements. I do understand unexpected events happen, and I am here to support you.

University Policies & Student Resources:

University policies and student resources are available on the University website and in Canvas under "Syllabus".

- University Policy
- Student Resources

Artificial Intelligence Statement:

UT Tyler is committed to exploring and using artificial intelligence (AI) tools as appropriate for the discipline and task undertaken. We encourage discussing AI tools' ethical, societal, philosophical, and disciplinary implications. All uses of AI should be acknowledged as this aligns with our commitment to honor and integrity, as noted in UT Tyler's Honor Code. Faculty and students must not use protected information, data, or copyrighted materials when using any AI tool. Additionally, users should be aware that AI tools rely on predictive models to generate content that may appear correct but is sometimes shown to be incomplete, inaccurate, taken without attribution from other sources, and/or biased. Consequently, an AI tool should not be considered a substitute for traditional approaches to research. You are ultimately responsible for the quality and content of the information you submit. Misusing AI tools that violate the guidelines specified for this course is considered a breach of academic integrity. The student will be subject to disciplinary actions as outlined in UT Tyler's Academic Integrity Policy.

Within this course, AI or Generative-AI tools are not to be used for any submissions, including discussion posts.

Calendar of Topics, Readings, and Due Dates

Module Number and Description	Activities and Whitaker Chapters to Read	Assignments Due
Module 1: Course Introduction January 12-18	Course and Professor Expectations Whitaker: Chapters 1 & 2 Group Intro Reflection: It's People, Not Programs	Group Intro Reflection Professor Expectations
Module 2: Introduction to Leadership January 19-February 1	Observational Exercise: Interviews Whitaker: Chapters 3 & 4 Thinking About Leadership: Media & Article Discussion: Develop an Accurate Sense of Self Review Personal Philosophy Instructions	Observational Exercise **Discussion Board**
Module 3: Leadership Philosophy and Style February 2-15	Whitaker: Chapters 5-7 Media: Every Kid Needs a Champion Discussion: Treat Everyone with Respect Lecture: Leading Collectives Lecture Quiz/Check-in and Check-up Connecting to Practice: Teacher Shortage Personal Philosophy and Style of Leadership	Lecture Quiz Connecting to Practice Personal Philosophy **Discussion Board**
Module 4: Applying Leadership Philosophy Feb 16-March 1	Whitaker: Chapters 8-10 Media: Different, Dependable & Dynamic Discussion: Hire Great Teachers *Leadership in Practice:* Video: Creating Your Leadership Framework Media: Five Pillars of Effective Leadership Leadership Framework Pillars Simulation Exercise: Virtual Simulation	Leadership Framework Pillars Simulation Exercise Reflection **Discussion Board**
Module 5: Leadership and Change March 2-8 and March 16-22	Whitaker: Chapters 12-14 Discussion: Behavior, Beliefs, Loyalty & the Best Teachers Lecture: Leading Change Part 1 Media: How Leaders Learn	Simulation Exercise Reflection Check-in/Check-up **Discussion Board**

	Leadership in Practice: Simulation Exercise: Root Cause Analysis (this requires 3-5 campus participants)	
Module 6: Vision March 30-April 12	Whitaker: Chapters 15-18 Discussion: Vision, Change and Who is Comfortable Lecture: Leading Through Change (Part 2) Lecture Quiz (Modules 5 and 6) *Leadership in Practice:* Leadership Framework: Building Upon Your Pillars Simulation Exercise: Leading Change (may do with participants or solo)	Lecture Quiz Leadership Framework Simulation Exercise **Discussion Board**
Module 7: Ethical and Moral Leadership April 13-30	Whitaker: Chapters 19-22 Discussion: Exploring What it Means to be an Ethical and Moral Leader Media/Article: How Your Leadership Affects Others *Leadership in Practice* Final Leadership Framework and Reflection Major Assignment: T-PESS Leadership Goals (scaffolded from previous assignments) ***Final Exam***	Final Leadership Framework T-PESS Leadership Goals **Discussion Board** Final Exam

The UT Tyler College of Education and Psychology Mission and Vision

CEP Mission

The mission of the CEP is to prepare competent and passionate professionals in the fields of education, psychology, and counseling; to advance knowledge and expertise; and to impact these fields locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally.

CEP Vision

The CEP will be a global leader in responding to needs in the fields of education, psychology, and counseling, with a focus on the East Texas region, by creating innovative academic and scholarly pathways and partnerships.

Access the Texas Administrative Code for the **Educators' Code of Ethics and Standard Practices**