



DNP Independent Study
NURS 6399
Spring 2026

Scheduled Class Days and Times: Online

Instructor's Name: Gina M Nickels-Nelson DNP, APRN, FNP-BC

Office: Virtual

Phone: (903)-566-7320

Email: gnickelsnelson@uttyler.edu or gina.nickelsnelson@uttyler.edu

Office Hours: Mondays (Noon-1 pm) and Thursdays (1:30-3:30) and by appointment

*Best way to contact me (email).

Course Description: This independent study course offers Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) students the opportunity to explore a specialized area of interest that aligns with their professional goals and scholarly focus. Under the guidance of a faculty mentor, students will develop individualized learning objectives, complete in-depth readings, engage in scholarly inquiry, and produce a tangible academic or practice-based deliverable (e.g., literature review, project proposal, policy analysis, manuscript, or quality improvement plan).

This independent study course supports the doctoral student during the implementation phase of the DNP scholarly project. Under faculty supervision, the student will operationalize the approved project plan, coordinate with stakeholders, collect data, monitor fidelity, and begin preliminary evaluation of outcomes. The course emphasizes leadership, evidence-based practice, quality improvement methodology, and preparation for dissemination. Students will meet regularly with the faculty mentor to review progress, troubleshoot barriers, and ensure alignment with DNP program expectations.

The independent study is designed to foster advanced critical thinking, self-directed learning, and the application of DNP competencies in clinical, administrative, policy, or educational contexts. Topics may include but are not limited to advanced clinical practice, healthcare systems leadership, informatics, population health, or evidence-based practice innovation.

Prerequisites: NURS 6301, 6302, 6303, 6314, 6315, 6317

Corequisites: none

Student Learning Outcomes:

Upon successful completion of this course, the student will be able to:

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

1. Define and articulate a focused area of study relevant to DNP practice.
2. Conduct a critical review of relevant literature or evidence.
3. Apply advanced theoretical, clinical, or leadership frameworks to the topic.
4. Demonstrate synthesis of knowledge through a scholarly or practice-oriented product.
5. Reflect on how the independent study contributes to the student's professional development and DNP role.

By the end of the course, the student will be able to:

1. Implement an evidence-based DNP project using established quality improvement and change management frameworks.
2. Demonstrate leadership in coordinating interdisciplinary stakeholders and project resources.
3. Apply ethical, regulatory, and organizational principles to project implementation.
4. Collect, manage, and analyze project data with attention to rigor, fidelity, and feasibility.
5. Evaluate preliminary outcomes and identify implications for practice, policy, or systems improvement.
6. Prepare materials for final project defense and dissemination.

(***Note:** Additional SLOs may be found within the following DNP courses: NURS 7301, NURS 7302, NURS 7314, NURS 7315, and NURS 7317.)

Required Textbooks and Readings:

If you are in a clinical course, all students are required to have an active InPlace subscription.

Recommended Textbooks and Readings:

American Psychological Association. (2020). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (7th ed.). ISBN-13: 978-1433832161, ISBN-10: 143383216X

Assignments and Weights/Percentage/Point Values

1. Participation	5%
2. Professionalism	5%
3. Discussions	20%
4. Scholarly Paper	40%
5. Application Assignments	30%

DNP Practice Hours:

For the DNP program, completion of 1,000 hours, including placement hours entered into the InPlace platform, is required to graduate. It is expected that the student will continue to accrue practice hours during this course throughout the implementation of the DNP project and then upload those hours into InPlace.

Grading Scale:

Specific guidelines and grading criteria for all assignments are in the Modules. Final grades for the course will be determined based upon the following point assignments:

- A - 90-100
- B - 80-89
- C - 70-79
- D - 60-69
- F - Below 60

Grades will not be rounded when calculating the average (79.5 is not rounded to 80, and 89.5 is not rounded to 90). Students are required to achieve an average of 80% (B) to complete the course successfully.

Although the university policy allows 60 days for grade appeals, the School of Nursing follows a stricter timeline of 10 days to facilitate students' timely progression through the curriculum. In the case of extenuating circumstances, please consult the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs for guidance.

Assignment Resubmission Policy: To support mastery learning and academic success, students are permitted to resubmit any assignment on which they initially earned less than 80%, under the following conditions:

- One-time Resubmission: Students may resubmit each eligible assignment only once.
- Grade Cap: The maximum grade that can be earned on any resubmitted assignment is 75% out of 100. Please noted: Resubmission does not automatically earn a 75%, points will be deducted as per rubric guidelines for the assignment.

- **Exclusions:** This policy does not apply to assignments in which the original grade was below 80% due to late submission penalties applied in accordance with the course's Late Policy.

Submission Deadline: Resubmitted work must be submitted within 7 days of receiving the original grade and feedback, unless otherwise approved by the instructor.

Students are strongly encouraged to review instructor feedback carefully and consult with the instructor as needed before resubmitting work.

Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in this course. 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 (see below) is considered a breach of academic integrity. The student will be subject to disciplinary actions as outlined in UT Tyler's Academic Integrity Policy.

For this course, AI is permitted only for specific assignments or situations, and appropriate acknowledgment is required. During some class assignments, we may leverage AI tools to support your learning, allow you to explore how AI tools can be used, and/or better understand their benefits and limitations. Learning how to use AI is an emerging skill, and we will work through the limitations of these evolving systems together. However, AI will be limited to assignments where AI is a critical component of the learning activity. I will always indicate when and where the use of AI tools for this course is appropriate

Academic Integrity: Cheating of any kind, as defined in Section 8 of the UT Tyler Manual of Policies and Procedures (MOPP) for Student Affairs (<https://www.uttyler.edu/mopp/>), will not be tolerated. Consequences may include:

- reprimand
- exam failure
- course failure
- expulsion from the Nursing program
- expulsion from the University

- other consequences as assigned

Late Assignments and Missed Tests - Attestation Required for this Course

As future Nurse Practitioners (or nursing leaders), professionalism, accountability, and time management are critical skills that directly impact patient care and your success in this field. Meeting deadlines and adhering to schedules are essential not only for academic integrity but also for the expectations in clinical practice.

Please ensure that all assignments are submitted on time and all exams/quizzes are taken as scheduled. Failure to do so may result in penalties, including deductions or ineligibility to submit past-due work.

Please confirm that you have received this notice and acknowledge your understanding of these expectations. If you have any concerns or need assistance, please reach out proactively.

You are required to attest to receipt of this notification.

Exam and homework materials, questions, and problems are the intellectual property of faculty, UT Tyler, or publishers.

- These materials may not be distributed without permission.
- Distributing or uploading them to online resources destroys the integrity of the assignment and the course, allowing others an unfair advantage by letting them view the materials.
- Uploading these materials to online resources is a violation of UT Tyler's academic misconduct policies and may result in formal conduct charges.
- Sanctions for uploading or otherwise divulging the contents of these materials can include:
 - a reduced or failing grade on an assignment
 - a reduced or failing grade for the course
 - removal from the Nursing program
 - removal from UT Tyler

Late Policy: 5% will be deducted each day an assignment is past due unless prior arrangements have been made with your course faculty. Extenuating circumstances may apply.

Repeating a Course: Students repeating this course may not use previously submitted assignments nor utilize the same patients for an assignment. Submitting the same or slightly modified assignments from previous semesters is considered self-plagiarism and is subject to academic discipline, including failing the assignment or the course.

Attendance and Make-up Policy: Attendance/participation is expected. Make-up for exams, quizzes, assignments, and missed clinical time is at the instructor's discretion.

Graded Course Requirements Information: Course assignment descriptions will be present in Canvas.

Please Note: Detailed information along with grading rubrics for course assignments will be provided in Canvas.

Assignments in this Course:

The following types of assignments are present in this course:

- Participation (5% of course)
- Professionalism (5% of course)
- Project Reflection (40% of course)
- Implementation Milestones (50% of course)

Important Course Dates:**Classes Begin:** January 8, 2026**Orientation:** January 12, 2026 at 6pm. Zoom link will be provided.**Census Date (withdraw without penalty):** January 21, 2026**Holidays:** MLK Day January 19, 2026; Spring Break March 9-13, 2026**Last Date to Withdraw:** March 24, 2026**Last Day of Class:** April 25, 2026

Week	Module	Module Content	Due Dates
Preview: January 8-11			
Week 1: January 12-18	1	Course Orientation and Project Readiness	Due Sunday, January 18 by 11:59 pm CST: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Graduate Affirmation Form• Updated Implementation Plan• IRB Approval Documents• Site Readiness Checklist• New Project Timeline
Week 2: January 19-25	2	Finalizing Logistics	Census Date: Jan 21- may withdraw without penalty Due Sunday, January 25 by 11:59 pm CST: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Staff Training & Orientation Summary• Reflection
Week 3: January 26-February 1	3	Launch of Project Implementation	Launch (if not already done so) Project
Week 4: February 2-8	3		Due by Sunday, Feb 8 at 11:59 pm: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reflection
Week 5: February 9-15	4	Initial Review of Data	Continue Implementation Review Data

Week 6: February 16-22	4		Due by Sunday, Feb 22 at 11:59 pm <ul style="list-style-type: none"> PDSA Cycle
Week 7: February 23-March 1	5		Continue Implementation Start to Review Data
Week 8 March 2-8	5		Due by Sunday, March 8 by 11:59 pm CST: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initial Review of Data
Week 9: March 9-15	ENJOY	YOUR	SPRING BREAK!
Week 10: March 16-22	6	Outcome Monitoring	Due by Sunday March 22 by 11:59 pm CST: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mentor Meeting
Week 11: March 23-29	6		Last Day to Withdraw from Course: March 24, 2026 Due by Sunday, March 29 by 11:59 pm CST: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outcome Management
Week 12: March 30-April 5	7	Preparing for Dissemination	Due by Sunday, April 5 by 11:59 PM <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project Update
Week 13: April 6-12	7		Work on Manuscript
Week 14: April 13-19	7		Due by Sunday, April 19 by 11:59 pm CST: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chapters 1-3 with start of Chapters 4 and 5
Week 15: April 20-25	7	Course Close	Last day of Course: April 25, 2026 Grades due by instructor to UTT: Tuesday April 28 Due by Friday, April 24 at 11:59 pm: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Final Reflection