FRESNO PACIFIC
U N I V E R S I T Y

EDUC-947: Teacher Leader Development

Independent Study Online Course Syllabus

Instructor: Cris Sexton	**Number of Graduate Semester Units:** 3 units
Phone: (859) 802-1134	**Target Audience:** 6th - 14th grade teachers
Email: cris.sexton@fresno.edu	**Course Access:** https://connect.fresno.edu

Course Description

This course is designed to equip teacher leaders with the knowledge, skills, and mindset needed to lead effectively within their schools. Through exploration of personal leadership styles, ethical decision-making, and culturally responsive practices, participants will develop a strong foundation for influencing school culture and instructional improvement. Topics include crafting mission and vision statements, applying data-driven tools such as SWOT analyses and SMART goals, and engaging in reflective practice to foster continuous professional growth. Emphasis is placed on practical strategies to build collaborative teams, support colleagues, and promote equity. Course activities combine theory with real-world application to prepare educators to confidently step into leadership roles that positively impact their school communities.

Note: Required book must be acquired separately

Required Texts and Course Materials

Book: Mieliwocki, R., & Fatheree, J. (2019). *Adventures in teacher leadership: Pathways, strategies, and inspiration for every teacher.* ASCD. ISBN-13: 978-1416627824.
https://www.amazon.com/dp/1416627162

Canvas: This course will be delivered totally online. Canvas is a web-based learning management system (LMS) that provides students access to online resources, documents, videos, assignments, quizzes, forums, etc. Canvas is easy to learn and has a user-friendly interface.

Online Resources: Relevant online resources that support the course content and encourage further investigation will be available throughout the course assignments. Active hyperlinks are utilized throughout the course and will link to the appropriate information when clicked. These include videos, podcasts, worksheets, online activities, journal articles and other resources.

Course Dates

Self-paced; students may enroll at any time and take up to one year, from the date of registration, to complete assignments. Students may complete assignments in no less than three weeks for a 3-unit course (one week per unit).

National Standards Addressed in This Course

NEA Teacher Leader Model Standards (TLMS)

(https://www.ets.org/pdfs/patl/patl-teacher-leader-model-standards.pdf)

The Teacher Leader Model Standards outline seven domains of teacher leadership designed to leverage teacher expertise for school improvement and student success. These standards emphasize collaboration, equity, professional growth, and advocacy—recognizing teachers as essential change agents within schools. Course activities draw upon these domains to prepare educators for leadership roles that strengthen instructional practice and foster a positive school culture.

Standards:

1. Fostering a Collaborative Culture: Building trust, teamwork, and collective responsibility among educators.
2. Accessing and Using Research: Applying data and evidence-based practices to inform instruction.
3. Promoting Professional Learning: Designing and facilitating high-quality, job-embedded professional development.
4. Facilitating Improvements in Instruction and Student Learning: Supporting colleagues in refining instructional practices to improve outcomes.
5. Promoting the Use of Assessments and Data: Guiding the effective use of student assessment data to enhance instruction.
6. Improving Outreach and Collaboration with Families and Community: Strengthening school-family partnerships and community engagement.
7. Advocating for Student Learning and the Teaching Profession: Championing equity and advancing the teaching profession.

ACSI Christian School Leadership Framework

(https://www.acsi.org/docs/default-source/website-publishing/school-services/steps-to-school-improvement/standard-2/christian-school-leadership-framework-hos-360-eval.pdf)

The ACSI Christian School Leadership Framework provides a biblically grounded model for leadership that emphasizes both character and competence. It calls leaders to reflect Christ in their decision-making while guiding schools toward excellence. The framework centers on three domains—Leadership from the Heart, Relational Leadership, and Strategic Leadership—each with specific competencies that Christian leaders should embody. Assignments in this course align with these principles to help educators lead with humility, inspire others, and strategically advance the mission of Christian education.

Domains and Competencies:

1. Leadership from the Heart: Personal character, biblical worldview, integrity, and spiritual formation.
2. Relational Leadership: Building relationships, influencing culture, leading people, communicating effectively.
3. Strategic Leadership: Visionary leadership, instructional leadership, managing resources, developing people, driving results.

Continuing Education Student Learning Outcomes (CE-SLO)

CE-SLO 1	Demonstrate proficient written communication by articulating a clear focus, synthesizing arguments, and utilizing standard formats in order to inform and persuade others, and present information applicable to targeted use.
CE-SLO 2	Demonstrate comprehension of content-specific knowledge and the ability to apply it in theoretical, personal, professional, or societal contexts.
CE-SLO 3	Reflect on their personal and professional growth and provide evidence of how such reflection is utilized to manage personal and professional improvement.
CE-SLO 4	Apply critical thinking competencies by generating probing questions, recognizing underlying assumptions, interpreting and evaluating relevant information, and applying their understandings to the professional setting.
CE-SLO 5	Reflect on values that inspire high standards of professional and ethical behavior as they pursue excellence in applying new learning to their chosen field.
CE-SLO 6	Identify information needed in order to fully understand a topic or task, organize that information, identify the best sources of information for a given enquiry, locate and critically evaluate sources, and accurately and effectively share that information.

Course Student Learning Outcomes (C-SLO)

Student Learning Outcomes for This Course By the end of this course, the student will be able to:		National Standards Addressed*	CE-SLO Addressed**
C-SLO 1	Develop a personal leadership mission and vision that reflects core values and supports a positive school culture.	ACSI 1 NEA: 1, 6	CE 1, 2, 5
C-SLO 2	Explore personal leadership strengths, styles, and tendencies to improve team collaboration and build professional capacity.	ACSI 2 NEA: 1, 3	CE 3, 4, 5
C-SLO 3	Apply critical thinking and data analysis tools (e.g., SWOT, SMART goals) to support instructional improvement and professional growth.	ACSI 3 NEA: 2, 5	CE 2, 3, 4
C-SLO 4	Identify and apply ethical, culturally responsive practices in leadership decision-making.	ACSI 1 NEA: 4, 6	CE 2, 4, 5
C-SLO 5	Evaluate leadership models, frameworks, and strategies that inspire school improvement and support teacher growth.	ACSI 3 NEA: 3, 4	CE 2, 4, 6
C-SLO 6	Reflect on your growth as a teacher-leader and develop a personal action plan for continued leadership impact.	ACSI 3 NEA: 3, 7	CE 3, 5

* Please refer to the section on **National Standards Addressed in This Course**
** Please refer to the section on **Continuing Education Student Learning Outcomes**

Topics, Assignments, and Activities

Module Title	Module Assignments and Activities	Points Possible
Home Page	● Welcome Video ● Course Syllabus ● Policies and Procedures ● Introduce Yourself Forum	
Module 1: Discovering Your Leadership Identity	Writing your personal **mission**, **vision**, and **core values** ● 1.1 Assignment: Read Text Pages 1-10 and take quiz ● 1.2 Assignment: Write your personal leadership mission and vision ● 1.3 Assignment: Video and forum discussion	50 pts 50 pts 50 pts
Module 2: Leadership Strengths & Self-Awareness	Conducting a **personal SWOT analysis** and reflecting on your growth areas ● 2.1 Assignment: Read Text Pages 11-20 and take quiz ● 2.2 Assignment: Complete and reflect on your leadership SWOT ● 2.3 Assignment: Video and forum discussion	50 pts 50 pts 50 pts
Module 3: Leadership Maxims – What You Lead By	Create **non-negotiable leadership principles** that guide how you make decisions and lead ● 3.1 Assignment: Read Text Pages 35-42 and take quiz ● 3.2 Assignment: Create your personal maxims and explain their origin and purpose. ● 3.3 Assignment: Video and forum discussion	50 pts 50 pts 50 pts
Module 4: Understanding Your Working Genius	Explore **Patrick Lencioni's Working Genius** model to identify your leadership wiring ● 4.1 Assignment: Read Text Pages 55-62 and take quiz ● 4.2 Assignment: Take the Working Genius assessment and reflect on your Genius/Frustration zones. ● 4.3 Assignment: Video and forum discussion	50 pts 50 pts 50 pts
Module 5: Instructional Leadership in Action	Leading instructional improvement, providing feedback, building teacher capacity ● 5.1 Assignment: Read Text Pages 63-70 and take quiz ● 5.2 Assignment: Design a peer coaching activity or PD outline. ● 5.3 Assignment: Video and forum discussion	50 pts 50 pts 50 pts
Module 6: Leading for Equity and Inclusion	Conduct a **mini equity audit**, reflect on policies and practices ● 6.1 Assignment: Read Text Pages 71-80 and take quiz ● 6.2 Assignment: Analyze one policy or classroom practice through an equity lens. ● 6.3 Assignment: Video and forum discussion	50 pts 50 pts 50 pts
Module 7: Communicating & Navigating Conflict	Learning **clear communication**, giving feedback, and leading through conflict ● 7.1 Assignment: Read Text Pages 81-88 and take quiz ● 7.2 Assignment: Script and reflect on a difficult leadership conversation. ● 7.3 Assignment: Video and forum discussion	50 pts 50 pts 50 pts

Module Title	Module Assignments and Activities	Points Possible
Module 8: Learning from a Local Leader	**Interviewing a local leader** to connect theory to real-life leadership ● 8.1 Assignment: Read Text Pages 121-130 and take quiz ● 8.2 Assignment: Conduct an interview and write a reflection paper tying it to course content. ● 8.3 Assignment: Video and forum discussion	 50 pts 50 pts 50 pts
Module 9: Sustaining Leadership with SMART Goals	Developing a long-term plan for leadership impact using SMART goals ● 9.1 Assignment: Read Text Pages 97-106 and take quiz ● 9.2: Assignment: Write 1–2 leadership SMART goals and a short rationale ● 9.3 Assignment: Video and forum discussion	 50 pts 50 pts 50 pts
Course Wrap-up – Grading and Evaluation	● Final Leadership Toolbox ● Course Evaluation ● Course Completion Checklist ● Grade Request / Transcript Request	
	TOTAL POINTS	**1350 points**

Grading Policies, Rubrics, and Requirements for Assignments

Grading Policies
● Assignments will be graded per criteria presented in the course rubrics.
● A = 90-100% and B = 80-89%, (anything below 80% will not receive credit.)
● The discernment between an A or a B letter grade is at the discretion of the instructor based on the quality of work submitted (see course rubrics).
● Coursework falling below a B grade will be returned with further instructions.
● All assignments must be completed to receive a grade and are expected to reflect the quality that teacher-training institutions require of professional educators. If completed assignments do not meet this standard, students will be notified with further instructions from the instructor.

Grading Rubrics
Grade	Percent	Description	Rubric
A	90-100%	Excellent	Meets all course / assignment requirements with significant evidence of subject mastery and demonstration of excellent graduate level professional development scholarship.
B	80-89%	Very Good	Adequately meets criteria for all course/assignment requirements - demonstrates subject competency with very good graduate level professional development scholarship.
NC	Below 80%	Unacceptable	Does not meet the minimum criteria for all course/assignment requirements and demonstrated little, if any, evidence of acceptable graduate level professional development scholarship.

Writing Requirements
- **Superior:** Writing is clear, succinct, and reflects graduate level expectations. Clearly addresses all parts of the writing task. Maintains a consistent point of view and organizational structure. Includes relevant facts, details, and explanations.
- **Standard:** Writing is acceptable with very few mistakes in grammar and spelling. Addresses most parts of the writing task. Maintains a mostly consistent point of view and organizational structure. Includes mostly relevant facts, details, and explanations.
- **Sub-standard:** Writing contains noticeable mistakes in grammar and spelling. Does not address all parts of the writing task. Lacks a consistent point of view and organizational structure. May include marginally relevant facts, details, and explanations.

Lesson Plan Requirements
- **Superior:** Instructional goals and objectives clearly stated. Instructional strategies appropriate for learning outcome(s). Method for assessing student learning and evaluating instruction is clearly delineated and authentic. All materials necessary for student and teacher to complete lesson clearly listed.
- **Standard:** Instructional goals and objectives are stated but are not easy to understand. Some instructional strategies are appropriate for learning outcome(s). Method for assessing student learning and evaluating instruction is present. Most materials necessary for student and teacher to complete lesson are listed.
- **Sub-standard:** Instructional goals and objectives are not stated. Learners cannot tell what is expected of them. Instructional strategies are missing or strategies used are inappropriate. Method for assessing student learning and evaluating instruction is missing. Materials necessary for student and teacher to complete lesson are missing.

Instructor/Student Contact Information

Throughout the course participants will be communicating with the instructor and their classmates on a regular basis using asynchronous discussion forums. Students are provided with instructor contact information in the event they want to make email or phone contact. In addition, students are encouraged to email or phone the instructor at any time. Students will also receive feedback on the required assignments as they are submitted.

Forums

Participation is an important expectation of this course and all online courses. Online discussions promote reflection and analysis while allowing students to appreciate and evaluate positions that others express. While students may not be engaging with the same students throughout this course, they will be expected to offer comments, questions, and replies to the discussion question whenever possible. The faculty role in the discussion forum is that of an observer and facilitator.

Coursework Hours

Based on the Carnegie Unit standard, a unit of graduate credit measures academic credit based on the number of hours the student is engaged in learning. This includes all time spent on the course: reading the textbook, watching videos, listening to audio lessons, researching topics, writing papers, creating projects, developing lesson plans, posting to discussion boards, etc. Coursework offered for FPU Continuing Education graduate credit adheres to 45 hours per semester unit for the 900-level courses. Therefore, a student will spend approximately 135 hours on a typical 3-unit course.

Services for Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities are eligible for reasonable accommodations in their academic work in all classes. In order to receive assistance, the student with a disability must provide the Academic Support Center with documentation, which describes the specific disability. The documentation must be from a qualified professional in the area of the disability (i.e. psychologist, physician or educational diagnostician). Once documentation is on file, arrangements for reasonable accommodations can be made. For more information and for downloadable forms, please go to https://www.fresno.edu/departments/disability-access-education.

Plagiarism and Academic Honesty

All people participating in the educational process at Fresno Pacific University are expected to pursue honesty and integrity in all aspects of their academic work. Academic dishonesty, including plagiarism, will be handled per the procedures set forth in the Fresno Pacific University Catalogue and Handbook - https://handbook.fresno.edu/graduate/academic-policies

Technology Requirements

To successfully complete the course requirements, course participants will need Internet access, can send and receive email, know how to manage simple files in a word processing program, and have a basic understanding of the Internet. Please remember that the instructor is not able to offer technical support. If you need technical support, please contact your Internet Service Provider.

Getting Help with Canvas: If you need help with Canvas, please contact the FPU Help Desk by phone: (559) 453-3410 or email: helpdesk@fresno.edu. Help is available Mon-Fri 8:00 am to 7:00 pm.

Final Course Grade and Transcripts

When all work for the course has been completed, students will need to logon to the Continuing Education website (https://ce.fresno.edu/my-account) and "Request Final Grade". Once the instructor receives the requests and submits the grade online, students may log back in to view their Final Grade Report or order transcripts online. Please allow at least two weeks for the final grade to be posted. For more information, see the Continuing Education Policies and Procedures at https://ce.fresno.edu/ce-policies-and-procedures.

University Policies and Procedures

Students are responsible for becoming familiar with the information presented in the Academic Catalog and for knowing and observing all policies and procedures related to their participation in the university community. A summary of university policies may be found on the university website at https://www.fresno.edu/departments/registrars-office/academic-catalogs.

Fresno Pacific University Student Learning Outcomes (FPU-SLO)

FPU-SLO 1	**Oral Communication:** Students will *exhibit* clear, engaging, and confident oral communication – in both individual and group settings – and will critically *evaluate* content and delivery components.

FPU-SLO 2	**Written Communication:** Students will *demonstrate* proficient written communication by *articulating* a clear focus, *synthesizing* arguments, and utilizing standard formats in order to *inform* and *persuade* others.
FPU-SLO 3	**Content Knowledge:** Students will *demonstrate* comprehension of content-specific knowledge and the ability to apply it in theoretical, personal, professional, or societal contexts.
FPU-SLO 4	**Reflection**: Students will *reflect* on their personal and professional growth and *provide evidence* of how such reflection is utilized to manage personal and vocational improvement.
FPU-SLO 5	**Critical Thinking:** Students will *apply* critical thinking competencies by *generating* probing questions, *recognizing* underlying assumptions, *interpreting* and *evaluating* relevant information, and *applying* their understandings to new situations.
FPU-SLO 6	**Moral Reasoning:** Students will *identify* and *apply* moral reasoning and ethical decision-making skills, and *articulate* the norms and principles underlying a Christian worldview.
FPU-SLO 7	**Service**: Students will *demonstrate* service and reconciliation as a way of leadership.
FPU-SLO 8	**Cultural and Global Perspective:** Students will *identify* personal, cultural, and global perspectives and will employ these perspectives to *evaluate* complex systems.
FPU-SLO 9	**Quantitative Reasoning**: Students will accurately *compute* calculations and symbolic operations and *explain* their use in a field of study.
FPU-SLO 10	**Information Literacy:** Students will *identify* information needed in order to fully understand a topic or task, *explain* how that information is organized, *identify* the best sources of information for a given enquiry, *locate* and critically *evaluate* sources, and accurately and effectively *share* that information.