

# LEAD 400: Leadership Capstone

## Fall 2025 (08/18 – 12/11)

### Instructor Information

Dr. Stacy Edds-Ellis  
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### Office Hours

By appointment. I am happy to meet with you in-person or via Zoom. Simply contact me via email to schedule a time.

I try my best to respond to emails within 24 hours during the week and 48 hours over the weekend. Waiting until the last minute to email questions about assignments is not a good idea. You most likely won't get a response before the assignment is due. Please be proactive.

Email is the preferred method of communication. **Please note that using Blackboard messages is NOT a method of communication for this course. Please use Toppermail for messaging.**

### Blackboard Ultra & ITS Service Desk

This course uses Blackboard Ultra. If you experience issues with Blackboard Ultra, you must contact the WKU ITS Service Desk. Your instructor can help you with Course Content questions but cannot help you with technical issues.

### Required Texts

There are no required textbooks for this course. Instead, you will use your research abilities, personal reflections, and writing skills.

### Other Items Needed

- A computer—*not a tablet, not a phone*— with a reliable Internet connection.
- Microsoft Word or word processing software that saves files in .docx file format

### Course Software Standards

The course software standards are Word for word processing, PowerPoint for presentations, and Adobe Acrobat for viewing PDF files.

### Learning Outcomes

Upon the conclusion of this course, students should be able to:

1. ***analyze and compare*** various leadership styles that are best suited to your future position or profession
2. ***gain an understanding*** of strategies to develop personal leadership styles
3. ***compare and contrast*** tools available for developing a strategy to gain a position within an organization or start a profession
4. ***utilize*** the knowledge and experiences gained from this course to continue developing their leadership competencies.

## Your Course Grade

The grading scale for this class is as follows: 1000 – 900 points = A, 899 – 800 points = B, 799 – 700 points = C, 699 – 600 points = D, and 599 points and below = F.

Satisfactory completion of the objectives will be measured as follows:

Assignment	Points
Introduction (Extra Credit)	5 Points
Class Knowledge Reflections (5 @ 15 points each)	75 Points
Mid-Term: Leadership Skills and Competencies Map	250 Points
Future Self Tool Kit	
-Resume & Cover Letter	-100 Points
Digital Persona	-50 Points
-Mock Interview	-150 Points
30-Second Elevator Pitch	-50 Points
Organizational Leader Profile	200 Points
Leadership Program Assessment Survey	25 Points
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,000 Points</b>

## Assignments Schedule

*All official due dates are listed on the schedule of assignments. All assignments are due by 11:59pm Central Time on the day of the week that they are listed.* Due dates are listed on the schedule. These dates override any other date you see on Blackboard.

One of the most important skills of being a good leader is communication. Therefore, please keep me in the loop if life gets in the way of due dates.

## Student Email and Blackboard Announcements

All students should check their WKU email accounts at least weekly and the Blackboard Announcements page each time they log in. New announcements will appear at the top of the page, so read until you get to information you already know. Not checking email/reading the Announcements is not an excuse for not knowing of information given via those mediums. (Note that Blackboard automatically emails all announcements!)

## Withdrawal Policy

It is the student's responsibility to withdraw from the class promptly if he/she wishes to do so after attempting any work in Lesson 1. The final withdrawal date is **stated on the Office of the Registrar's website in the [Registration Guide](#)**.

## Late Work

All assignments are due according to the Assignments Schedule at the end of this syllabus. ***Coursework not submitted by the deadline will receive a 10% penalty on the grade earned and will not be accepted more than 7 days late.*** It is the student's responsibility to keep up with class assignments. The schedule of assignments has clear due dates for each assignment on it. If the

schedule changes, a new schedule will be announced and distributed via email and Blackboard. *Note: Work not submitted by the deadline will receive a 0 in My Grades, but if submitted within 7 days WILL be graded and the 0 changed.*

### **Resolving Complaints about Grades**

The first step in resolving a complaint about grades is for the student to attempt to resolve the problem directly with the course instructor. See [the Student Handbook](#) for additional guidance or visit the [Academic Grade Complaint Procedure](#).

### **Incompletes**

A grade of “X” (incomplete) is given only when a relatively small amount (typically 1 or 2 assignments) of work is lacking in the course. A grade of “X” received by a student will automatically become an F unless removed within twelve weeks of the next full term (summer term excluded). Incompletes must be pre-approved by your instructor.

### **Academic Integrity: SLPS Departmental Policy**

The School of Leadership & Professional Studies expects all undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral students to demonstrate academic integrity and not participate in academic misconduct as defined by the University (<https://www.wku.edu/studentconduct/process-for-academic-dishonesty.php>). The SLPS has developed two tiers for academic misconduct. Examples of academic offenses include (but are not limited to) any act of plagiarism, cheating, or falsification or misuse of academic records.

#### **Tier 1 Violations**

Acts of plagiarism that involve not citing all sources and/or using papers previously written and submitted in other courses (aka Recycled Writing) are considered a Tier 1 violation. Students committing violations in Tier 1 will meet with the instructor to discuss the incident and work toward a resolution. Students may receive a zero on the submitted work with feedback stating the issue; students are responsible for checking grades and reading feedback. Instructors will follow the policy for Tier 2 violations for additional Tier 1 violations.

#### **Tier 2 Violations**

Tier 2 violations include but are not limited to using artificial intelligence programs, content generators, or websites to complete an assignment in ways not allowed by the instructor, as described by the course syllabus, sharing passwords and login information with individuals not enrolled in the course, failing to cite any sources in submitted work when outside sources were obviously used, cheating on an assignment or test, employing a person, to complete an assignment, and/or committing a second Tier 1 violation. Students committing violations in Tier 2 will meet with the instructor to discuss the incident and review evidential materials. If the instructor determines a Tier 2 violation has occurred, the instructor should report the student to the Office of Student Conduct and request that the Office of the Registrar issue a failing grade for the course. If the academic misconduct is severe and flagrant, the student may be dismissed from the program. Students who wish to dispute the allegation, dismissal, or grade should [follow the Student Complaint Policy](https://www.wku.edu/handbook/academic-complaint.php) (<https://www.wku.edu/handbook/academic-complaint.php>).

### **ADA Notice: Disability and Accommodations**

In compliance with University policy, students with disabilities who require academic and/or auxiliary accommodations for this course must contact the Student Accessibility Resource Center located in Downing Student Union, room 1074 of the Student Success Center. The phone number is 270-745-5004 or [email](mailto:sarc.connect@wku.edu) at [sarc.connect@wku.edu](mailto:sarc.connect@wku.edu). Please do not request accommodations directly from the professor or instructor without a letter of accommodation from The Student Accessibility Resource Center.

### **The Learning Center (TLC)**

Should you require academic assistance with your WKU courses, [The Learning Center](#) (located in the Downing Student Union, 2141) provides free supplemental education programs for all currently enrolled WKU students. The Learning Center at Downing Student Union offers certified, one-on-one tutoring in over 200 subjects and eight academic skill areas by appointment or walk in. Online tutoring is offered to distance learners. TLC is also a quiet study area (with side rooms designated for peer-to-peer tutoring) and a computer lab to complete academic coursework. Please call TLC in the Downing Student Union at (270) 745-5065 for more information or to schedule a tutoring appointment. [www.wku.edu/tlc](http://www.wku.edu/tlc).

### **Title IX, Discrimination, Harassment, and Sexual Misconduct Policy**

Western Kentucky University (WKU) is committed to supporting faculty, staff, and students by upholding WKU's [Sex and Gender-Based Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation](#) (#0.070) and [Discrimination and Harassment Policy](#) (#0.2040). Under these policies, discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct based on sex/gender are prohibited. If you experience an incident of sex/gender-based discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct, you are encouraged to report it to the Executive Director, Office of Institutional Equity/Title IX Coordinator, Ena Demir, 270-745-6867 or Title IX Investigators or Michael Crowe, 270-745-5429. Please note that while you may report an incident of sex/gender based discrimination, harassment, and/or sexual misconduct to a faculty member, WKU faculty are "Responsible Employees" of the University and MUST report what you share to WKU's Title IX Coordinator or Title IX Investigator. If you would like to speak with someone who may be able to afford you confidentiality, you may contact WKU's [Counseling and Testing Center](#) at 270-745-3159.

### **Regular and Substantive Interaction**

The U.S. Department of Education requires that distance education courses must include regular and substantive interaction between students and faculty. For more information about Regular and Substantive Interaction at WKU, please visit the [Regular and Substantive Interaction in Online and Distance Learning webpage](#).

In this course, regular and substantive interaction will take place in the following ways:

- Feedback on assignments.
- Clear deadlines scattered throughout the term.

## Assignment Descriptions

The following assignments are required in this course. In Blackboard, most of the work will be grouped into different modules (Module 1: Leadership Skills & Competencies; Module 2: Career Readiness Toolkit; Module 3: Organizational Leader Profile). Refer to the due dates in the course schedule. Also, be sure to read the rubrics and requirements for each assignment in Blackboard.

## Introductions

Research shows that online classes that begin with community-building activities such as introductions have students with higher success and completion rates. See the prompt for what to share and meet your classmates for 5 points extra credit.

## Class Knowledge Group Reflections

LEAD 400 has 5 group reflections that are like discussion boards. ***Each reflection is worth 15 points.*** To receive up to 10 of the 15 points, students must 1) answer the question(s); 2) apply an appropriate leadership content that was discussed during the organizational leadership program to the answer; and 3) provide an example (if appropriate - can be personal) that illustrates your reflection. Providing these three aspects in their response to the discussion question(s), students can earn up to 10 points. Students earn the other 5 points for their active participation regarding the question by posting comments to other student posts. ***Students have three days beyond the reflection deadline to comment on another student's post. For example, if the reflection is due on Sunday, students have until Wednesday at 11:59 pm to respond to classmates.***

Online discussion is generally looser and more free-flowing than face-to-face. Students should exercise basic respect for one another and not engage in derogatory arguments. Although free-flowing and somewhat informal, students ***MUST use correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation during the postings.***

## Mid-Term Project: Leadership Skills & Competencies Map

The Leadership Skills and Competencies Map serves as a comprehensive assessment of what you have learned in the organizational leadership program and how well you have connected the assignments in your leadership coursework to the Kentucky Graduate Profile (workforce competencies). Students should use the five reflective discussion boards to guide their thoughts on completing this map.

## Career Readiness Toolkit

You will complete different components designed to equip you with essential tools and strategies useful for any future leadership roles. Through a combination of cover letter and resume creation, digital personal development, and a mock interview, you will gain practical experience and build a profile that reflects your leadership aspirations.

Toolkit components:

- **Cover Letter and Resume (100 points)**
  - Create a professional resume and cover letter specific to the profession/position/job you want to pursue after retirement or the next rank you plan to pursue.
  - Submit your resume and cover letter to **WKU's Career Development Center** for feedback and incorporate their suggestions.

- **Digital Persona (50 points)**
  - Create or redesign your LinkedIn Profile. Incorporate elements that highlight your professional journey, key achievements, and leadership skills.
- **Mock Interview (150 points)**
  - You will participate in a simulated mock interview using the Yoodli.ai platform. Yoodli is an AI-powered speech coaching app designed to help professionals enhance their communication skills for job interviews, presentations, and more (Yoodli, 2023). (Note: If you do not feel comfortable using the AI tool for your mock interview, you will need to recruit a friend or colleague who will agree to interview you and record the mock interview.)
- **30-Second Elevator Pitch (50 points)**
  - Create a 30-second elevator pitch that you can use to sell yourself when encountering people of influence who may be able to assist you as you pursue your profession/position/job. The videos in the Blackboard lesson folder provide examples and suggestions.

### **Organizational Leader Profile**

Students will choose a preferred medium to present an interactive and creative organizational leader profile that shares their leadership story and vision for their professional future.

Suggestions include: an infographic, a blog or vlog, a Google Site, etc. The profile should be no more than 2 pages but must include the following: professional introduction, personal leadership style, personality assessment results (DISC) or Jung Typology, High 5 Strengths results, Top 5 Competencies acquired through your studies in organizational leadership, professional vision statement and goals, and links to your resume, LinkedIn Profile, and 30-second elevator pitch. You can even include some of your best work samples from your organizational leadership courses. More information is in Blackboard.

### **Online Certifications**

Students are required to complete two online certificates as part of this course. The certificates are free but will require you to log in to a third-party system using a preferred email address. After each online program, you will receive a certificate of completion that will be uploaded for course credit.

### **Certificate 1: Professional Growth Certificate (Your Choice)**

After assessing your growth in the organizational leadership program, start thinking about knowledge gaps that you may have that can be filled with an online certificate program. I have compiled a list of certificates you can complete.

The following training courses are available through Saylor Academy ([Home | Saylor Academy](#)). You must create an account. Then, you must search for them using the codes and titles listed below. Follow the instructions and complete ALL assessments to earn the certificate. Certificates vary in the number of hours that they take to complete. This requirement is due by the end of the course. Plan accordingly.

- PRDV009: Writing Grant Proposals
- PRDV005: Time and Stress Management
- PRDV215: Mass Communication
- PRDV214: Organizational Communication
- PRDV103: Interviewing Skills
- PRDV102: Resume Writing

You can also complete a free course on using Canva ([Free Canva Course with Certificate](#)).

If you know of another online certificate program, you are welcome to request approval to complete it. Online programs MUST provide a certificate that verifies your completion of the course. If you can attend a professional development workshop associated with your workplace or a professional organization, you can also submit proof of attendance from the organization.

### **Certificate 2: Professional Etiquette**

To access this online program, you must create an account at Saylor Academy ([Home | Saylor Academy](#)), then search for **PRDV104: Professional Etiquette**. Follow the instructions and complete ALL assessments to earn the certificate.

### **Leadership Program Assessment Survey**

The leadership assessment survey consists of a series of ‘select the best answers’ questions used as a posttest for our Organizational Leadership programs. Students will receive full credit for completing the survey and providing adequate answers. Students are asked to answer this survey honestly without the use of any references as this is the post-test for our program assessment.