

**UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT GREENSBORO**

**UNIT:** School of Education

**DEPT:** Educational Leadership and Cultural Foundations

**COURSE SYLLABUS**

1. **Course Prefix and Number:** ELC 752
2. **Course Title:** Administrative/Leadership Theories
3. **Credits:** 3.0
4. **Course Prerequisites/Corequisites:** Advanced graduate standing, including students majoring in educational administration, and others by permission of the instructor
5. **For Whom Planned:** Required course for the Ed.S. and Ed.D. in Educational Leadership.
6. **Instructor Information:** Dale Brubaker (336) 334-3460 (336) 334-4737 (Fax)

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**7. Course Purpose/Catalog Description:** The nature of theory, definition, utilization; contemporary theories applied to educational administration; system theory and its application possibilities to educational administration.

**8. Teachers Academy Conceptual Framework Mission Statement:** *The mission of professional education at UNCG is to prepare and support the professional development of caring, collaborative, and competent educators who work in diverse settings. This mission is carried out in an environment that nurtures the active engagement of all participants, values individual as well as cultural diversity and recognizes the importance of reflection and integration of theory and practice. UNCG's professional education programs are guided by shared commitments to: (a) equity and excellence in teaching, research, and service; (b) professional integrity and ethical deliberation in dealing with students and colleagues (university-based, school-based, and community-based); (c) the construction of a professional knowledge base through collaboration and collegiality; and (d) the dissemination of professional knowledge, skills and dispositions through the preparation and continuing professional development of teachers, principals and other school personnel.*

**9. Course Goals and/or Objectives/Student Learning Outcomes:** Instructor's statement of learning outcomes OR goals/objectives from state or national professional standards (please identify the organization, e.g. DPI, CEC, etc.)

A SENSE OF DIRECTION      This semester we will:

...review leadership theories in education;

...participate in the doing of leadership theory, using Seymour Sarason's

THE CREATION OF SETTINGS AND THE FUTURE SOCIETIES,

...Foster's PARADIGMS AND PROMISES, and Brubaker & Coble's

STAYING ON TRACK as background reading;

...explore ways in which learnings above may be used in a case study,

research papers and dissertations;

...build a knowledge base that can be useful to you as a school and/or

school system leader and/or professor of educational leadership and/or

higher education; and

...share the results of our inquiry with each other verbally and in writing.

## THE CHALLENGE OF DOING THEORY

In recent years, scholars have talked about doing theory, not simply studying theories. Doing theory is a constructivist concept. It is assumed that all persons operate on the basis of theories they construct. "WHAT IS YOUR DEFINITION OF THEORY?" is a question doctoral students are frequently asked at dissertation defenses. Doctoral students rather obviously draw upon the theories of others in order to do dissertation research. But, can the doctoral student claim that he or she has created a theory in doing the dissertation?

Theory in its simplest sense is a map of the territory, according to Jim Macdonald. In a recent dissertation defense, a doctoral student said that she had created a theory in her research. When queried about this, she responded that she had a fresh point of view in relating to her topic of study. Chapter 5, "Building and Adapting Theories," in *THESES AND DISSERTATIONS*, by R.M. Thomas & D.L. Brubaker (2000) Westport, CT: Greenwood Press), describes a more scientific approach to theory building: Building a classificatory scheme; building an explanatory theory; and adapting and revising theories. We will use *THESES AND DISSERTATIONS* as a background text.

In short, Thomas & Brubaker differentiate between CLASSIFICATORY THEORIES and EXPLANATORY THEORIES. They define theory in their book as "...a proposal about (a) what variables are important for understanding some phenomenon and (b) how those variables are related to each other." (P. 65)

Social scientists would probably be quite comfortable with the definition of theory used by Thomas & Brubaker. However, we are challenged to also draw upon the humanities in defining theory. Aesthetic theory, for example, is based on the premise that each creation is unique and has within it its own set of principles. (This view is made very clear in former UNC President William Friday's videotaped interview of Fred Chappell, UNCG poet.)

At any rate, for our purposes the process of doing theory is more important than the particular setting studied or theory created. Once you learn to do theory in a setting, you can transfer this learning to other settings.

**10. Teaching Strategies:** For example, lecture, class discussion, group work, conferences, student presentations, electronic chat room, etc.

**11. Evaluation Methods and Guidelines for Assignments:** Statement of how students will be evaluated in the course and/or list of course requirements

We will begin our work this semester with a common focus—THE CREATION AND DYNAMICS OF LEARNING SETTINGS. We will apply Seymour B. Sarason's framework in THE CREATION OF SETTINGS AND THE FUTURE SOCIETIES as we go about our work. (Please read this book ASAP so that we have a common knowledge base.) Note: Peter Senge's THE FIFTH DISCIPLINE: The Art & Practice of the Learning Organization is a recommended book for background reading.