LDR 401 (CRN 87148): Leadership in Action, Fall 2026

Capstone for the Minor in Leadership Studies
Cheyenne's Strengths: Activator, Learner, Positivity, Achiever, Includer

Course Information

Cheyenne Luzynski, Ph.D.
Pronouns: She, her, hers
Program: Minor in Leadership Studies
Location: Chitwood Hall Room G1
Course Meeting Time: T/Th 11:30-12:45
Dates: January 13th – May 2nd
Zoom Personal Meeting ID: 980 584 6255

Contact Information

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LDR TA: Bryan Cole, bgc00005@mix.wvu.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION: In an architectural context, a capstone is the top-stone that completes a building. In an academic context, a capstone is the final class that completes a student's curriculum. In other words, a capstone is a class in which students in the minor in Leadership Studies are required to pull together what they have learned and experienced in their previous exposure to leadership (both in and out of the classroom) and use this integrating experience to demonstrate they can reach their full potential as leaders and citizens. This process serves a dual purpose – it provides leadership students with an opportunity to practice and demonstrate the leadership skills and perspectives they will need to succeed after matriculation from the program ("Leadership in Action"). It also presents the Leadership Studies Program with a final opportunity to observe student learning and to assess whether the program has been successful in its mission.

Course Materials Needed:
All articles, videos, and resources available on eCampus course shell.

Outcomes of the Leadership Minor Capstone:

- To enable students to engage in projects that simulate real-world leadership and decision making.
- To encourage students to think critically, engage in research, and make interdisciplinary connections between leadership and their other courses of study.
- To gain an understanding and appreciation of leadership in practical and professional context.
- To hone students' ability to speak in public and give compelling, persuasive presentations.
- To help students communicate effectively through written and visually compelling works.

- To foster students' identities as leaders and followers.
- To allow students to reflect on their future directions as leaders, followers, and the environments for which they want to explore.
- To help facilitate the transition from the undergraduate academic setting to the world of graduate education, professional life, and democratic participation.

Overarching Goals:
In this course, students will have an opportunity to work as individuals and as members of groups to improve their understanding of leadership. As an individual, it is important to know oneself as a leader. What has had an impact on each person? Who or what has been an influence? After knowing oneself, working in groups will allow students to understand what motivates other individuals. Life is comprised of "group work" whether in families, jobs or in social settings. As it relates to leadership, learning to work with groups is an integral part of being effective. "Getting the job done" has a lot more to do with people and context than just the task at hand. Leaders and followers need to know how to take responsibility when making decisions, what motivates the people on his or her team, how to communicate and negotiate in various settings, and how to manage conflict. Assignments in this capstone class have been designed to enable students to test their leadership skills in a safe, classroom environment before entering the workforce.

You are expected to participate and be prepared prior to the class, however, never use not reading as an excuse for skipping class. You can always contribute to the discussion and activities. We will engage in many activities and expect you to participate fully and staying on task. Your participation has a direct impact on the success of this course.

ZOOM LINK FOR COACHING:
LDR 401 Coaching with Cheyenne
Join Zoom Meeting
https://wvu.zoom.us/j/95380638145
Meeting ID: 953 8063 8145

ASSIGNMENTS
All written assignments must be typed, using 12-point Times New Roman font and double-spacing, with standard margins. Use APA seventh edition style guide for citations. **If you have any questions about an assignment, please ask well in advance of the due date.**

Leadership Social Action Project (50%)
As part of the Leadership Studies capstone experience, you and a group of three-four of your classmates, will create a social action project with impacts in both the larger context and in the classroom. Social action is defined when everyday people band together to develop their power to change policy (Myers-Lipton, 2022). A policy change includes a rule, law, regulation, norm, or practice of an institution. The aim of this project is to develop a more critical and deeper understanding of public issues and community change through reflection. Participating in democracy and how power works provides us a better understanding of systems and structures, how to solve problems and overcome challenges. We as learners, tend to learn best through action-oriented, solutions-based experiences. You will explore such topics as issue development, building power, campaign planning, creating effective teams, and campaign evaluation. Addressing a policy change in a community (campus or beyond) teaches students about democracy, power, and how to affect change. This is not a political or religious indoctrination and students are free to select any policy angle they wish (Conservative, Liberal, Social Democrat,

Libertarian, or None). Students can select any policy as long as it is non-violent, does not violate the WVU Non-Discrimination Statement, the UN Declaration of Human Rights and question or attack someone's humanity. Whatever campaign you choose to do, I will be teaching about democracy, power, and how to bring about change. My role is to offer guidance about strategy and tactics and to help you to consider the variety of options available, with groups deciding on how to best move forward.

Upon successful completion of the social action project, students will be able to:

1. Conduct issue development
2. Build power
3. Conduct research (historical analysis, power map, and target analysis)
4. Enact various strategies and tactics
5. Work with media outlets
6. Implement a campaign
7. Conduct campaign evaluation

You and your team will begin working on the project after a few weeks of class and will present the results of your efforts later in the semester. The purpose of this project is to help you learn about the act of *leading* including assessing needs, reviewing data, synthesizing information, applying creativity, negotiating solutions, communicating written and orally, working in teams, facilitating understanding, generating useful evaluation, and the importance of a thorough campaign process. The value of *following* each other, future colleagues, and working with various stakeholders. The importance of *context*—historical, cultural, political, economic, and social factors—as well as the theories behind leadership, followership, and context.

Total time invested for the group should be about 25 hours per person (13 hours of direct action) including various phases of planning, designing, organizing, executing, presenting, and evaluating your social action project. All projects must represent a community issue, use accurate facts and data in support, and demonstrate the need for leadership and change. All project hours will be recorded using iServe. Time to work on campaigns will also be provided during class meeting times.

The purpose of the project is to provide you with field experience in identifying and solving challenges facing today's community leaders through policy change. You will have an opportunity to put your leadership to task while providing heat and pressure to policy stakeholders. Additionally, you are not alone in this process. You will have the support of experts from the Center of Community Engagement, myself, and your classmates.

The criteria for choosing a campaign are:

1. They have a minimum of three students in a team, ideally 4-5.
2. The students have passion for the issue.
3. The campaign tries to change some type of policy at either the campus, community, state, or federal level.

Student Responsibilities: Students will be responsible for…

- Initiating contact with community partner or community experts on the selected issue.
- Represent the self, group, course, program, and university in a professional manner.
- Be prepared before contacting community experts. Research the organization, prepare questions for understanding the case. You are writing about an issue the community partner is experiencing. Questions should reflect everything you will need (facts, data, background) to write a comprehensive project.

- Recognizing that the community partners are busy. You will need to respect their time and may only have one shot at getting all the information necessary for investigating your project.
- Problem-solving together and making sure you are keeping incremental progress.
- Committing to 1.5 hours outside the classroom a week on campaign efforts.

The entire social action project includes six phases:

A. Creating a Social Action Project (12 %)
B. Planning a Social Action Project (10%)
C. Outcomes and Final Presentation of the Social Action Project (15%)
D. Critiquing and Evaluating a Social Action Project (6%)
E. Social Action Project Peer Evaluation (2%)
F. iServe Hours (5%)

Below is a summary of what is due at each phase:

A. **Create a Social Action Project:** The main purpose of the project is to examine complex issues in real life applications and creating a social action project is to understand the cause-and-effect relationship influenced by several factors. Each group must create an 8–10-page paper reflecting on your selected policy in relation to the areas of issue development, change theory, building power, and research. Paper should clearly define the problem and the context of the problem, provide a historical analysis, whether it is WVU, Morgantown, WV, etc. However, it will be valuable to include previous solutions and results that contribute to understanding the current problem. You want to be clear with your project and policy issues. See the detailed guidelines in eCampus**. (10%)**

   Social Action Project Pitch: During class period, your group will give a 7–8-minute informal presentation to update the class on your project and solicit feedback from your peers and external supports to improve it. The presentation and class discussion will range between 12-15 minutes per group. **(2%)**

B. **Planning a Social Action Project:** Each group should submit an updated timeline and outline of tasks to be completed to achieve project objectives and success metrics. In a 4–5-page report, identify your updates on additional research, group dynamics, strategies and tactics and plan for campaign kick-off How will you define success with this project? See the detailed guidelines in eCampus. **(10%)**

C. **Outcomes and Final Presentation the Social Action Project:** Your group will provide reflection on your entire social action project experience in a 25-30 min presentation including Q & A from outside experts. Taking into consideration your project objectives and your efforts, groups will present their process, actions, and outcomes using the social action framework and guidelines below. Emphasis should be placed on management of the project, actions and activities, and applicable leadership theory and recommendations for the future. More details the better. **(15%)**

   Groups must be prepared to deliver a professional presentation to the class, community partners, and possible external reviewers. Groups have 30 minutes to discuss their social action project and answer questions from the audience.

Presentations should be . . .

1. Innovative – Your work should address the need of the community partner and the community for which they serve. Present recommended solution(s) with justification.
2. Goal-Oriented – Your work should include measurable goals and timetables for accomplishing them. How do your recommendations support the goals of the organization?

3. Inclusive – Your work should give each team member a chance to practice leadership and followership, leveraging strengths and learning new skills.
4. Quality-Driven – Your work is <u>much</u> more than community service. You have the opportunity to share insights and new perspectives to real world challenges. You should apply your knowledge of context, followership, and leadership to situations. Demonstrate your knowledge. Projects will be assessed on their lasting impact and application to the needs of the community.
5. Research-Based – You should be able to cite and describe the theoretical underpinnings that support your work in the field. Reference and apply the theories learned in LDR 201, 301, and 401.

D. **Critique and Evaluate a Social Action Project**: Each group will be responsible for evaluating and critiquing a groups project and their presented solutions. You will write up a 2-page critique identifying new perspectives and additional comments not covered in the final presentation. **(6%)**

   Your critique should address the following questions:
   1. What did the group set out to achieve?
   2. What were their main recommendations?
   3. Were there any limitations to their recommendations?
   4. Do you have additional recommendations not presented? If so, what are they?
   5. How did this relate to leadership theories and frameworks? What theories or approaches were used? Do you recommend any additional resources? If so, what are they?
   6. Was there anything missing from this analysis? If so, what?

E. **Social Action Project Peer Evaluation**: Due: the date of your final critique. Each member of the group will be asked to submit an evaluation of his/her team members. These evaluations will be considered when determining the final grade for individuals in the group. Based on responses, individual grades may be higher or lower than the groups average grade. **(2%)**

F. **iServe Hours:** Students are to complete 25 hours throughout the course 13 of which are direct action hours associated with your social action projects. Hours will be approved periodically throughout the course and all hours are to be submitted by 11:59pm on last day of the semester. **(5%)**

Leadership Social Action Project Outline and Important Dates:

9/1 - Introducing the Social Action Assignment
9/8 - Form groups and establish direction.
10/1 - Initial research and ideas presented to class as Pitches (A)
10/15 - Social Action workday & Submit written Creating Social Action Project (A)
11/3 - Planning Social Action Project (B)
12/1 – 12/3 - Social Action Final Presentations (C)
12/3 - Social Action Project Critiques (D) Peer Evaluations (E), iServe hours submitted (F)

Comprehension Assessments (23%)

To ensure a rich discussion and comprehension of the readings, I require a series of virtual class and outside of the classroom activities. These include three brief essay (3-4 paragraphs) to be written and submitted to eCampus by the end of the day. These "Mini-Essays" are to be divided into three parts: summary, reflection, and application. Think about these questions when writing your essay:

1. What are the main points or summary of the reading? Highlight new concepts or thought-provoking elements of the article. This should not be a retelling of what you already know.

2. How does the reading relate to your personal understanding of leadership? What does it contribute that is new or has never been considered previously?
3. How could you apply the information from the reading in your current job/student organization/project or future career?

Other activities may be responses in the form of reflection, comprehension questions, worksheets, quizzes, and participation in activities. There will be a series of 10 assessments making up 23% of your course grade. All comprehension assessments have been pre-determined for the course and encourage class participation in readings and discussion. **There will be no make-ups for class assessments and students will receive a zero on the assessment on days of absence including excused absences.**

Saboteur Video Project (12%)

A saboteur is the automatic negative thought or voice in your head that gets in the way of your growth and self-authority aka power. The purpose of this assignment is for you to creatively share your results of the Positive Intelligence Saboteur Assessment in a 4–5-minute YouTube video (can resemble a Tik Tok format). This activity is aimed to help you understand your saboteurs, how they show up and quite literally sabotage your leadership and life. **Part 1**: Complete the Saboteur Assessment **Part 2**: Create a video, reflecting on your saboteurs and upload to eCampus.

Part 1: The purpose of this assessment is to help people uncover the unquestioned and automatic patterns of self-doubt. This assessment may be completely unfamiliar to you, but you are encouraged to take it and use your saboteur findings as a foundation for your leadership growth and new, healthier patterns.
Part 2: Use the following guidelines to prepare a 4–5-minute **video** of your saboteurs. Have fun, be honest, and demonstrate courage to face your saboteurs! Creativity is encouraged, just be sure you address your strengths and how these strengths apply to your academics, passions, and future interests. Part of the learning in this project is making a video—so please test the video recorder, make sure the audio works well, and be sure that the video uploads properly.

Video Criteria:

a. **Purpose**: Introduce the Saboteur Assessment and describe the purpose of the Assessment. How does it apply to leadership development? What is your reaction/critique of the assessment? (30 sec)
b. **Your Saboteurs**: Creatively present your saboteurs. What are your results? Provide brief definitions about your saboteurs and what about the results was most relevant to you. (1 min)
c. **Application of Saboteurs:** How do your saboteurs show up? How do you experience the various saboteurs in your results? Provide examples and be honest. This can be a cathartic expression of naming them and scrutinizing them rather than accepting them as "true". How do the saboteurs influence your leadership? (1-2 mins)
d. **Leadership Feedback:** Based on the information, what have you learned about yourself? What are new choices or patterns you can make to challenge or disregard your saboteur voice? How will this influence your ability to lead in your future career interests? How does this affect your understanding of leadership? How does this inform your future professional and personal interests?
e. **Creativity:** Leadership is an art! Creatively express your Saboteur Assessment results, thoughts, and application in the video. By acknowledging your saboteurs, giving them a name or characterizing them as something different can help you ignore or sidestep when a saboteur gets in the way of your leadership.

How to upload your YouTube Video or upload an mp4 file directly to eCampus

If you will be using YouTube to upload the video, please make the video **"Unlisted."** You will then need to paste your link in the corresponding assignment section of the course. Title the video **Last Name_ First Name_LDR 401.** Making a video "Unlisted" means that only people who know the link can watch the video--it is not searchable in YouTube.
Post the link to your video on a word document or upload directly in eCampus.
For instructions on using YouTube visit:
https://support.google.com/youtube/answer/57407?hl=en
For instructions on making your video "Unlisted" visit:
http://www.google.com/support/youtube/bin/answer.py?hl=en&answer=157177

Challenge Course Team Leadership Experience* (10%)

To give you a better understanding of how to work in teams/groups effectively, the class will be traveling to the WVU Forest (near Cooper's Rock) for a field trip. Leadership Studies will cover the cost of your participation using the low elements of the challenge course. The weather at the Challenge Course is typically around **10 degrees cooler than in town, so please dress appropriately** as you will be outside. In addition, you may get dirty from walking in the forest, so **wear closed toe shoes/boots** that are suitable for hiking. Everyone who will be present at the Challenge Course will need to bring a completed copy of the "Participant Medical Form and Waiver" the day of programming. Snacks and transportation will be provided. **Event is from 11:00am-4:00pm including travel time.**
Upon completion of the challenge course, each student is to submit a reflection responding to the following prompts:

- Share one unexpected outcome from the challenge course experience
- What did you learn about your own leadership abilities (good, bad, or different)?
- How did or will this experience impact your social action project?

*If you cannot participate in the field trip for a valid reason, you may submit (with permission of the professor) a to 4–5-page paper on team leadership. The research paper should contain a bibliography and academic citations throughout.

1 on 1 Coaching Reflection (5%)

We will run our class as a seminar, meeting on all Tuesdays and some Thursdays as an entire class and 1 on 1 Coaching on most Thursdays. Two students will be coached on Thursdays for 35 mins on a rotating basis to be coached at least 3 total times throughout the semester, roughly one time a month. At the end of the assigned coaching, students will write a 2-page reflection on the experience, provide feedback on what they liked or didn't like about the experience, comment on their goals throughout the coaching session, and how this type of experience could be beneficial to more college students.

GRADING POLICIES:

Late Work: All assignments are due by midnight of the date indicated in the class schedule. Please do not submit homework to me via by e-mail unless there is an issue with eCampus.
For late submissions, the following rules apply:

Up to 2 hours late: 5% off
From 2—6 hours late: 10% off
From 6-24 hours late: 20% off
After 24 hours and less than 48 hours: 30% off
After 48 hours: late work will be accepted and receive 50% off. I will always accept late work and encourage you to do the work rather than receive 0 credit.

Attendance: Due to the unique nature of Leadership 401, a class that emphasizes in-class learning and participation, your attendance will be tracked. For special consideration, students should notify the instructor before he or she will miss when appropriate (i.e. when missing class for a University-sanctioned reason or illness).
To encourage your attendance, students will receive the following incentives:

1. Perfect attendance: students will receive **Fifteen** points added to their final semester grade
2. One absence: students will receive **Ten** points added to their final semester grade
3. Two absences: students will receive **Five** points added to their final semester grade

I highly recommend that you save your absences in case you need them if you become ill. Should you need assistance during a time of difficulty or crisis (especially for a long-term absence), please contact Associate Dean Kim Mosby, in the Office of Student Life in E. Moore Hall at 304.293.5611. If you have concerns about your attendance, please let me know.

Professionalism & Participation: As a capstone course, it is expected that you are preparing for the roles and positions you will occupy following graduation. Professionalism and participation will be a vitally important aspect of this class. All students are expected to participate during every class period actively and constructively. "Active and constructive participation" implies that students not only are on time and prepared for class, but also that they are adhering to established classroom guidelines and creating an overall positive learning environment and regularly contributing to the discussion. Please take care of personal needs (restroom, smoking, eating, calls) prior to class. Your professionalism will be assessed by your behaviors in the classroom. Your professionalism will be assessed by your behaviors in the classroom. Other behaviors such as phone use, showing up late to class, sleeping, or being disruptive would constitute as unprofessional behavior and may result in a deduction of Professionalism and Participation points.

Important Points:
You are expected to participate in a DIGITAL DETOX during the LDR 401 class. Please silence cell phones or other devices that make noise at the start of class and refrain from texting during class. I reserve the right to ask you to leave and deduct points if you are texting or otherwise disrupting the class. Please do not use social media sites or surf the web during class time unless permitted. If you are getting credit for being in class, you need to be paying attention.

Grading Breakdown:

Course Requirements and Value:	Percentage	Points
Leadership Social Action Project	**50%**	
(A)Creating a Social Action Project		
-Informal pitch 2%		**20**
-Written project 10%		**100**
(B)- Planning a Social Action Project 10%		**100**
(C)-Outcomes and Final Presentation of Social Action Project 15%		**150**
(D)-Critique and Evaluation of Social Action Project 6%		**60**
(E)-Peer evaluation 2%		**20**
(F)-iServe hours (25 total – 13 hours of action)		**50**
Comprehension Assessments (10 assessments including: 3 mini-essays @ 30 pts & 7 assessments at 20 pts)	**23%**	**230**
Saboteur Video Project	**12%**	**120**

Challenge Course Experience	**10%**	**100**
1 on 1 Coaching Reflection includes attendance of all 3 sessions	**5%**	**50**
Extra Credit 15 points for 100% completion of SEI's		**15**
Total	**100%**	**1,000**

GRADING SCALE	
A	90-100%
B	80-89%
C	70-79%
D	60-69%
F	< 60%

*Extra Credit: May be available throughout the semester in the form of in class activities or University sponsored events.

Date	Module & Topic	Assignments/Readings Due
Week 1 8/18	***Mod. 1: Class & Community Building*** Syllabus and Course Overview	Review the syllabus and discuss class culture
8/20	Group Building Activity	Group building activity
Week 2 8/25	"Tell Your Story" & Group building	"Tell Your Story" Visual aid.
8/27	"Tell Your Story"	Complete and Debrief "Tell Your Story" Activity. Introduce Social Action Project
Week 3 9/1	***Mod. 2: Introduction to Social Action*** **Issue Development**	Allegory of the Cave – Plato Walk the Walk Documentary In class reflection activity – Fear & Needs
9/3	1 on 1 Coaching	
Week 4 9/8	Social Action Project Brainstorming **Issue Development, Choose Campaigns & Set Tone**	Change! A Student Guide to Social Action Ch. 1 Community Pitches Change! A Student Guide to Social Action Ch. 2
9/10	1 on 1 Coaching	
Week 5 9/15	***Mod. 3: Change & Eco-Leadership*** **Change Theory**	Change! A Student Guide to Social Action Ch. 3
9/17	1 on 1 Coaching	
Week 6 9/22	Eco-Leadership	Eco-Leadership Paradox (Western) **Write/submit mini essay #1**
9/24	**WV Challenge Course**	11:00-4:00pm at the WV Adventure Challenge Course
Week 7 9/29	***Mod. 4: Power, Research & Social Action Pitches*** **Building Power & Research**	Change! A Student Guide to Social Action Ch. 4 Change! A Student Guide to Social Action Ch. 5
10/1	Leadership Social Action Project Pitches	**Social Action Project Pitches (A)** Present project idea to class and experts to receive feedback
Week 8 10/6	***Mod. 5: Skill Building & Group Dynamics*** Positive Psychology and Saboteurs	Readings linked in eCampus, ABCDE Activity Complete Saboteur Assessment
10/8	1 on 1 Coaching	
Week 9 10/13	Negotiation Facilitation	5 Common Negotiation Mistakes (Harvard Law). **Mini-Essay #2 completed in class.**

		Organizing Groups and Teams – Chapter 5, p. 97-113 (Bolman & Deal)
10/15	1 on 1 Coaching	**Submit Create a Social Action Project (A)**
Week 10 10/20	***Mod. 6: Strategy and Tactics*** Decision-Making	Readings linked in eCampus, Decision-Making Activity, **Saboteur Video Project Due**
10/22	1 on 1 Coaching	
Week 11 10/27	**Power Mapping & Target Analysis**	Change! A Student Guide to Social Action Ch. 7
10/29	**Social Action Workday during Class**	ILA Conference, class time dedicated to work in social action project groups
Week 12 11/3	***Mod. 7 Campaign Work*** **Campaign Kick-Off** **Campaign Plan** **Campaign Evaluation**	Change! A Student Guide to Social Action Ch. 8 Change! A Student Guide to Social Action Ch. 9 Change! A Student Guide to Social Action Ch. 10 **Submit Planning a Social Action Project (B)**
11/5	1 on 1 Coaching	
Week 13 11/10	***Mod. 8: Leadership in Action*** Prozac Leadership	Prozac leadership and the limits of positive thinking (Collinson) **Write/Submit mini essay #3**
11/12	1 on 1 Coaching	
Week 14 11/17	***Mod. 9: Social Action & Leadership*** Etiquette Dinner and Discussion **Social Action Workday during Class**	Dr. Ryan Thompson, Esq. **Dinner at 6:00 location TBD. Meet with groups to work on your projects**
11/19	1 on 1 Coaching	
Week 15	**Fall Recess – Happy Thanksgiving** Rest and Recharge (11/20-11/29)	
Week 16 12/1	Social Action Presentations	**Final Presentations (C)**
12/3	Social Action Presentations Social Action Evaluations; Closing Remarks, & Reflection	**Final Presentations (C), Critique & Evaluation (D), Peer Evaluations (E), iServe hours (F) Due** Prepare to share what you have learned in this process with the class.
TBD	You are invited to attend the National College Summit on Social Action	Opportunity to share your experiences with other students from across the country. Email me for details!

*This topical outline is subject to change throughout the semester.

CLASS POLICIES:

WVU INCLUSIVITY STATEMENT: The West Virginia University community is committed to creating and fostering a positive learning and working environment based on open communication, mutual respect, and inclusion. If you are a person with a disability and anticipate needing any type of accommodation in order to participate in your classes, please advise your instructors and make appropriate arrangements with the Office of Student Accommodations .

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY STATEMENT: The integrity of the classes offered by any academic institution solidifies the foundation of its mission and cannot be sacrificed to expediency, ignorance, or blatant fraud. Therefore, instructors will enforce rigorous standards of academic integrity in all aspects and assignments of their courses. For the detailed policy of West Virginia University regarding the definitions of acts considered to fall under academic dishonesty and possible ensuing sanctions, please see the West Virginia University Academic Standards Policy. Should you have any questions about possibly improper research citations or references, or any other activity that may be interpreted as an attempt at academic dishonesty, please see your instructor before the assignment is due to discuss the matter.