

**GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY  
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT  
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION  
EDUCATION LEADERSHIP PROGRAM**

201510.18005 EDLE 634 Section 601: Contemporary Issues in Education Leadership  
3 Credits, Spring 2015

Tuesdays – January 13, 2015 – April 14, 2015; 4:30-7:30 p.m.  
Loudoun County Public Schools Administration Building, Room 420/421

**PROFESSOR(S):**

Name: Dr. Mary V. Kealy

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**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

**A. Prerequisites/Corequisites**

Admission to program

**B. University Catalog Course Description**

Examines current and emerging issues and trends impacting education to include: demographic shifts; globalization; technology; data-based decision-making; inclusion of diverse learners in American schools; and recent research on student achievement when influenced by race, gender, and poverty.

**C. Expanded Course Description**

Not applicable

**COURSE OBJECTIVE:**

This course is intended as one of two culminating courses in the Masters in Education Leadership Program. Course content focuses on key contemporary issues in public education, which hold important implications for education leadership, policy, and practice in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. At the conclusion of the course, students will be expected to demonstrate the knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed to increase their effectiveness in working with multiple school and community stakeholders in increasingly diverse and complex education contexts.

**LEARNER OUTCOMES or OBJECTIVES:**

This course is designed to enable students to:

1. Analyze contemporary issues and major trends in education and their implications for society at large and schools, communities and school districts in particular;
2. Define characteristics and skills of future-focused leaders and learn strategies to address the implications for leadership in education systems and individual schools.
3. Evaluate how student diversity can help teachers and administrators develop

- curriculum that includes global literacy with a significant effect on economic, cultural, and political matters, with particular attention on how culture influences learning;
4. Synthesize recent research relative to student achievement in diverse school settings, with particular attention to the relationships between student achievement, gender, race, poverty, and ability;
  5. Identify various strategies to maximize the effective use of data to improve student achievement and effective ways to communicate results to various community stakeholders and groups;
  6. Defend educational decisions using data rather than personal opinion.

## **PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS**

This course is intended as one of two culminating courses in the Masters in Education Leadership Program. Course content focuses on key contemporary issues in public education, both current and emerging. At the conclusion of the course, participants are expected to demonstrate knowledge and skills that increase their effectiveness when working in diverse school settings; an expected hallmark of education in the 21st century.

In relationship to professional organization competencies, participants in this course will demonstrate proficiency in appropriate VA DOE competencies and ISLLC standards. VA DOE: 1-d, 1-e, 2-c, 2-d, 3-g, 4-a, 5-c, 6-e, 6-f. ISLLC: 1-K1, 1-K4, 1-K5, 2-K7, 2-K10, 2-P5, 2-P6, 2-P9, 2-P16, 2-P18, 3-K8, 3-P3, 3-P16, 3-P17, 4-K1, 4-K2, 4-P11, 5-K3, 5-P12, 6-K6, 6-K8, 6-P2, 6-P4, 6-P5. With regard to NCATE Curriculum Guidelines, candidates in this course will demonstrate an understanding of, and capabilities in, all four areas of education leadership; strategic leadership (1.3, 1.6, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, and 2.4); instructional leadership (3.3, 3.4); and organizational leadership (7.2, 7.4, and 9.3).

## **REQUIRED TEXTS**

\*Marx, G. (2014). *21 Trends for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Out of the Trenches and into the Future*. Bethesda, MD: Education Week Press.

Marx, G. (2015). *A Guide to Twenty-One Trends for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Out of the Trenches and into the Future*. Bethesda, MD: Education Week Press.

Noll, J.W. (2013). *Taking Sides: Clashing Views on Educational Issues (17<sup>th</sup> ed.)*. New York, NY: McGraw Hill.

\*This text is necessary for the group assignment; however, if students are unable to purchase both, the large text and the Guide, it may be shared by those who are able to purchase it.

## **REQUIRED RESOURCES**

Due to the nature of this course, the online publications listed below will be used to provide students with the most current issues and best practices and information in the field. Students are required to sign up for the publication prior to the start of the course. The instructor will provide registration and access information. The publications will be used as a regular part of every class.

### **ASCD SmartBrief**

**Education Week:** [www.Edweek.org](http://www.Edweek.org) (selected readings assigned by instructor and posted to the VISION site for the course)

**VISION Site:** Research articles, briefs and reports will be posted to the VISION site related to discussion topics for specific class sessions. Students will be required to check the site daily for articles posted and be prepared for class discussions on the topic. Directions to access the VISION site and course will be sent to all students prior to the first week of class.

### **COURSE ASSIGNMENTS AND EXAMINATIONS:**

Below is a list and a brief summary of the required assignments in this course. Please refer to the assignment rubrics at the end of the syllabus for more detailed information on exactly what is expected for each assignment.

#### **1. Class Discussion and Participation (20 points)**

Students are expected to participate in class by completing readings prior to class discussions and making thoughtful and informed contributions to the discourse. As such, weekly readings should be completed prior to the class meeting for which they are assigned. Students are also encouraged to share relevant materials and resources to stimulate discussion, learning, and improved practice in the field, while fostering an environment that welcomes diverse and critical perspectives, given the aims of this course. If an unforeseen circumstance arises that keeps an individual from attending class prepared and on time, that student is responsible for notifying the professor prior to the scheduled class time. Failure to provide such notice may affect your class participation grade, as will arriving late to class and/or leaving early without prior notice. Only those students who attend class regularly, arrive on time, and are actively informed and engaged in the coursework will be eligible for maximum participation points.

#### **2. Issue Brief (15 points) DUE DATE: February 3, 2015**

Students will select a contemporary issue in education that is of great interest to them and holds important implications for the study and practice of education leadership. Once selected, the student will write an issue brief (3 to 5 pages) that: (a) clearly describes the underlying assumptions and arguments informing multiple perspectives on the issue; (b) integrates current research/policy literature and popular media coverage of the issue; (c) analyzes competing perspectives on the prevailing issue and their implications for education leaders, and (d) presents at least three recommendations for policy and/or leadership practice as possible solutions.

### **3. Group Presentation: Trends for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (25 points)**

Collaboration is a key skill for 21<sup>st</sup> century leaders and learners. This assignment allows future leaders to share their knowledge of 21<sup>st</sup> century trends that are likely to have a significant impact on our students, schools, districts, communities and our future. Based on Marx's work, these trends are grouped into 8 "spheres". Students will be assigned to groups and selected spheres, inclusive of several trends. Using the assigned text (Marx), students will research two "spheres" and demonstrate their collective knowledge on related research, perspectives, issues, and insights to the class. The focus of the presentation will be on the implications for education and particularly the role of the educational leader in addressing the issues. Students will synthesize the implications for the educational leader into a one-page executive summary document that will also be distributed to the class. Through this collaborative learning activity, students will connect the learning to current and future practice, with a focus on the role of the educational leader, including challenges and opportunities. Students are encouraged to use other 21<sup>st</sup> century skills, such as critical thinking, creativity, and effective communication to convey the essential knowledge and implications. The instructor will provide further guidelines for the presentation.

### **4. Research Paper and Presentation (40 points) DUE DATE: March 24, 2015**

In this culminating research paper and presentation, students will synthesize what they have learned about the education issue of their choice, highlighting the related research, knowledge of 21<sup>st</sup> century trends/implications, and the ways in which their thinking has developed since the initial issue brief. In order to demonstrate the student's mastery of the course learning objectives, the paper should draw upon relevant course readings and class discussions, while integrating the student's stakeholder interviews along with findings from at least three peer-reviewed journal or policy research articles that expand the student's knowledge of the issue. The paper should also include the student's reflections on how her/his position has developed/changed since the first position paper and one or more policy interventions. The accompanying presentation should succinctly cover all paper components, not exceed 20 minutes, and followed by 5 minutes of Q & A with the audience.

#### **Assignment Expectations and Possible Points:**

All papers must be typed (12 pt. font, 1-inch margins, double-spaced in APA format – 6<sup>th</sup> edition) and submitted electronically to the instructor. It is expected that student work will be submitted on time (before 11:59 p.m. on the due date). If you miss class the day an assignment is due, it is your responsibility to ensure the assignment is turned in before the deadline to avoid a failing grade. If you anticipate needing an extension (except, of course, in the case of a true emergency), please make arrangements prior the deadline.

Class Discussion and Participation	20 points
Education Issue Brief	15 points
21 <sup>st</sup> Century Trends: Group Presentations	25 points
Research Paper and Presentation	40 points

**TOTAL POSSIBLE**

**100 points**

## Grading

The grading scale for the final course grade is as follows:

A+	=	100 points
A	=	95-99 points
A-	=	90-94 points
B+	=	87-89 points
B	=	83-86 points
B-	=	80-82 points
C	=	75-79 points
F	=	below 75 points

## COURSE POLICIES AND EXPECTATIONS

### Attendance:

Attendance is required during this 13-week course. The class discussions, presentations, activities, and full participation are essential to complete course requirements. Students will not be excused for any reason. Students are expected to (a) attend **all** classes during the course, (b) arrive on time, (c) stay for the duration of the class time, (d) show evidence of having read/studied material, (e) exhibit professional behavior (see Professional Disposition Criteria), and (f) complete all in-class assignments with professional quality in a timely manner to earn full points for class participation. Be aware that points will be deducted for any class absence and cannot be reclaimed.

### Late Work:

Points will be deducted for work submitted late (up to 10% per day). This includes any items that are not submitted upon request due to class absence or tardiness. This includes items initiated or modified during class as well as those listed in the syllabus. Please discuss any issues with the instructor prior to due dates.

## GMU POLICIES AND RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS

- a. Students must adhere to the guidelines of the George Mason University Honor Code (See <http://oai.gmu.edu/the-mason-honor-code/>).
- b. Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing (See <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/responsible-use-of-computing>).
- c. Students are responsible for the content of university communications sent to their George Mason University email account and are required to activate their account and check it regularly. All communication from the university, college, school, and program will be sent to students solely through their Mason email account.

- d. The George Mason University Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) staff consists of professional counseling and clinical psychologists, social workers, and counselors who offer a wide range of services (e.g., individual and group counseling, workshops and outreach programs) to enhance students' personal experience and academic performance (See <http://caps.gmu.edu/>).
- e. Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with the George Mason University Office of Disability Services (ODS) and inform their instructor, in writing, at the beginning of the semester (See <http://ods.gmu.edu/>).
- f. Students must follow the university policy stating that all sound emitting devices shall be burned off during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.
- g. The George Mason University Writing Center staff provides a variety of resources and services (e.g., tutoring, workshops, writing guides, handbooks) intended to support students as they work to construct and share knowledge through writing (See <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/>).

## **PROFESSIONAL DISPOSITIONS**

Students are expected to exhibit professional behaviors and dispositions at all times.

## **CORE VALUES COMMITMENT**

The College of Education and Human Development is committed to collaboration, ethical leadership, innovation, research-based practice, and social justice. Students are expected to adhere to these principles: <http://cehd.gmu.edu/values/>.

**For additional information on the College of Education and Human Development, Graduate School of Education, please visit our website <http://gse.gmu.edu>.**

**PROPOSED CLASS SCHEDULE:** The schedule is tentative and subject to change by the instructor.

DATE	TOPICS	READINGS/ ASSIGNMENTS DUE
Week 1 Jan. 13	Course Introduction & Overview Discussion of Syllabus, Assignments, Expectations, Group Work/Assignments Introduction: Trends for the 21 <sup>st</sup> Century VISION site overview	Introduction to Noll & Marx (required texts)
Week 2 Jan. 20	Demographic Sphere: Trends 1-3 (Group 1)  Issue 2: Curriculum: Should the Curriculum Be Standardized for All?	Marx: pp. 7-24 VISION site: <i>School Administrator</i> Articles Noll: pp. 15-29
Week 3 Jan. 27	Technology Sphere: Trends 4-5 (Group 2)	Marx: pp.25-38
Week 4 Feb. 3	Economic Sphere: Trends 6-7 (Group 3)  Issue 8: Is No Child Left Behind a Flawed Policy?	Marx: pp. 39-45 Noll: pp. 126-138 <b>Assignment Due: Issue Brief</b>
Week 5 Feb. 10	Energy & Environment Sphere: Trends 8-10 (Group 4)	Marx: pp. 53-68
Week 6 Feb. 17	International/Global Sphere: Trend 11 (Group 1)  Issue 11: Are Undocumented Immigrants Entitled to Public Education?	Marx: pp. 69-76  Noll: pp. 170-188
Week 7 Feb. 24	Education & Learning Sphere: Trends 12-14 (Group 2)  Issue 14: Diversity: Is the Inclusive Classroom Model Workable?	Marx: pp.77-94  Noll: pp. 224-238
Week 8 Mar. 3	Public & Personal Leadership Sphere: Trends 15-18 (Group 3)  Issue 18: Education Policies: Can Zero Tolerance Rights Violate Student Rights?	Marx: pp. 95-112  Noll: pp. 295-308
Week 9 Mar. 10	Well-Being Sphere: Trends 19-21 (Group 4)	Noll: pp. 350-371
Week 10 Mar. 17	Issue 21: Curriculum: Is the “21st Century Skills” Movement Viable?  Issue 23: Technology: Is the Road to Virtual Schooling Smoothly Paved?	Marx: pp. 113-124  Noll: pp. 390-406
Week 11 Mar. 24	Research Paper Presentations	<b>Assignment Due: Research Paper</b>
Week 12 Apr. 7	Dealing With The Trends  Research Paper Presentations	Marx: pp.125-130
Week 13	Reflections Wrap-Up	

Apr. 14	Evaluation	
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## ASSESSMENT RUBRIC(S):

### Assessment Rubric for Issue Brief

Students will select a contemporary issue in education that is of great interest to them and holds important implications for the study and practice of education leadership. Once selected, the student will write an issue brief (3 to 4 pages) that: (a) clearly describes the issue, underlying assumptions and arguments, key players, and divergent points of view; (b) integrates current research/policy literature and popular media coverage of the issue; (c) discusses the prevailing issue and its implications for education leadership.

Criteria	Exceeds Expectations (4)	Meets Expectations (3)	Approaches Expectations (2)	Falls Below Expectations (1)
<b>Overview of Issue (25%)</b>	The brief begins with an accurate overview of the issue that is clear and concise. The author calls attention to key players, divergent points of view and the issue's significance to education leadership.	The brief begins with an overview of an issue, but may wander. The author does at least two of the following: calls attention to key players, divergent points of view and the issue's significance to education leadership.	The brief offers an overview of the essay but misstates critical details. The author does at least one of the following: calls attention to key players, divergent points of view and the issue's significance to education leadership.	The brief does not offer an accurate overview of the issue. The author neglects to call attention to key players, divergent points of view and the issue's significance to education leadership.
<b>Related Research (40%)</b>	The author effectively integrates publicly accessible research/policy literature and popular media coverage of the issue to further illustrate multiple and diverse perspectives on the issue.	The author integrates some publicly accessible research/policy literature and popular media coverage of the issue to present multiple and diverse perspectives on the issue.	The author does not present a sufficient discussion of the relevant research and popular media coverage or multiple perspectives on the issue.	The author does not include any research or popular media coverage of the issue.
<b>Implications for Education Leadership (25%)</b>	The author offers a clear and specific statement and examination of how he/she would lead around this issue as a school leader.	The author offers a statement of how he/she would lead around the issue, but offers few specific details.	The author offers a vague statement of how he/she would lead around the issue with few specific details.	The author does not offer a statement or examination of how he/she would lead around the issue as a school leader.
<b>Mechanics (10%)</b>	The paper is nearly error-free which reflects clear understanding and thorough proofreading.	There are occasional grammatical errors and questionable word choice.	Errors in grammar and punctuation are present, but spelling has been proofread.	There are frequent errors in spelling, grammar, and punctuation.

## Assessment Rubric for Research Paper and Presentation

In this culminating research paper and presentation, students will synthesize what they have learned about the education issue of their choice, highlighting the related research, knowledge of the 21 trends for the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and the ways in which their thinking has developed since the initial issue brief. In order to demonstrate the student's mastery of the course learning objectives, the paper should draw upon relevant course readings and class discussions, while integrating the student's stakeholder interviews along with findings from at least three peer-reviewed research articles that expand the student's knowledge of the issue. The paper should be a concisely written 10-12 pages. The accompanying presentation should be no more than 20 minutes long, followed by 5 minutes of Q & A with the audience.

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Exceeds Expectations (4)</b>	<b>Meets Expectations (3)</b>	<b>Approaches Expectations (2)</b>	<b>Falls Below Expectations (1)</b>
<b>Overview of Issue; Statement of Position (10%)</b>	The paper begins with an accurate overview of the issue that is clear and concise. The author provides a clear thesis statement that highlights the author's position on the issue. The author offers readers a roadmap of the paper.	The paper begins with a general overview of the issue but fails to do so succinctly and with specific details. The author provides a thesis statement, but does not offer readers a sense of what will come next in the paper.	The core issue is unclear. The thesis statement is vague or unclear. There is no roadmap.	The author does not offer an accurate and succinct overview of the issue. There is no thesis.
<b>Synthesis of knowledge of 21 trends and 3 peer-reviewed research articles (20%)</b>	The author highlights key points derived from the 21 trends and research (at least three peer-reviewed journal articles) and integrates these components into an organized and logical discussion. The author highlights salient points of continuity and divergence.	The author highlights key points from the 21 trends and research (at least three peer-reviewed journal articles) but does not put these two components into conversation.	The author speaks generally about the research and trends but is unable to derive larger lessons learned from these.	The author does not speak about both the trends and the research.

<b>Policy intervention (25%)</b>	The author offers a logical and well-conceived policy intervention that specifically attends to the core issue and takes into consideration both the knowledge of the 21 trends and the research. The author's plan is specific and outlines what action ought to be taken, by whom, and at what potential cost (either financial or other).	The author offers a general policy intervention with some details. The intervention seems to attend to the core issue, but the author considers only the trends or the research. The author's plan generally outlines what action ought to be taken, by whom, and at what potential cost (either financial or other).	The author offers a vague policy intervention. It is not clear how the intervention takes into consideration the perspectives gleaned from the trends and research. The author's plan only vaguely mentions what action ought to be taken, by whom, and at what potential cost (either financial or other).	The author does not offer a clear policy intervention.
<b>Reflection (15%)</b>	The author reflects on the data collected over the term (knowledge of trends and research) and considers what is learned from this collective body. The author reflects on how his/her position has evolved or adapted since the first position paper in thoughtful and meaningful ways. These reflections on lessons learned directly correlate to the policy intervention.	The author offers a general reflection on the data collected and offers some broad ideas about the lessons learned. The author offers general comments regarding how his/her position has evolved over time, but links this only in broad terms to the intervention proposed.	The author offers a vague reflection on the data collected. The larger lessons learned are unclear. The author makes vague comments about the ways in which his/her thinking on the topic has evolved over time, but does not link this to the proposed intervention.	The author does not reflect on the body of data collected over the term and offers no statement of larger lessons learned.
<b>Mechanics (10%)</b>	The paper is nearly error-free which reflects clear understanding and thorough proofreading.	There are occasional grammatical errors and questionable word choice.	Errors in grammar and punctuation are present, but spelling has been proofread.	There are frequent errors in spelling, grammar, and punctuation
<b>Associated Presentation (20%)</b>	The presentation clearly highlights essential points of paper. Demonstrates attention to high quality standards visually, technologically, and creatively. Engages classmates in discussion of topic.	The presentation highlights essential points of paper and engages classmates in discussion of topic.	The presentation highlights content of research paper, but does not engage classmates in discussion.	The presentation did not highlight content of research paper nor engage classmates in discussion.