Course Title: *Advanced Policy Issues in Education*
EDUC 871 Sec: A01
Summer 2004

Instructor: Dr. Penelope M. Earley  
Class Date & Time: TBC  
Class Location: 245 Robinson A  
Contact Information:  
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Office Hours: By Appointment

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course focuses on in-depth analysis and study of selected education policy issues. Review of various points of view on the issues is considered. Particular attention will be given to interactions and connections between selected education issues, and the similarities and differences in policy approaches at the K-12 and higher education levels. Prerequisite: Admission to the Ph.D. program and completion of EDUC 870 or equivalent doctoral-level policy coursework. Note: Certain assignments may be conducted electronically. Please see the instructor if this expectation will present a problem for you.

**STUDENT OUTCOMES**

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

1. Demonstrate a detailed and sophisticated understanding of major policy issues.
2. Analyze and describe the legal and political forces that influence decision making on these issues.
3. Understand and explain the intersections of various policy issues (for example, teacher recruitment for general and special education classrooms).
4. Understand and explain how and why different levels of education may approach these policy issues in a different manner.
5. Demonstrate ability to describe and analyze the research bases for major policy issues.

**RELATIONSHIP TO PROGRAM GOALS AND PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS**

There are no specialized standards specific to education policy studies. The conceptual framework for this course is linked to the mission of the Center for Education Policy as outlined in its Charter: (1) Translate education research into policy options and
recommendations for a variety of audiences (decision makers, practitioners, and the public); (2) Conduct timely, sound, evidence-based analysis; and (3) Develop interdisciplinary and cross-sector policy networks. The student outcomes (in particular 3, 4, and 5) are linked to this mission as are the analytic assignments.

NATURE OF COURSE DELIVERY

This course is taught using lectures and discussions supplemented with outside speakers.

TEXTS AND READINGS


Education Policy Analysis Archives (EPAA), available on-line: [http://www.epaa.asu.edu](http://www.epaa.asu.edu)

*Educational Researcher*, available on-line: [http://www.aera.net](http://www.aera.net)


COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Paper 1: Identify and analyze policy implications of an article in any peer-reviewed education journal on a topic related to this course. See the accompanying grading guidelines for expectations of written work. (4 – 7 pages double spaced) 25 points.

Paper 2: Discuss and analyze conceptual and policy connections between any two issues that are the focus of this course. See the accompanying grading guidelines for expectations of written work. (4 – 7 pages double spaced) 25 points.

Paper 3: Discuss and analyze policy issues related to one of the topics that are the focus of this course as they show themselves at different levels of education (PreK through 16). Include consideration of different or similar ways policy decisions are made at these levels. See the accompanying grading guidelines for expectations of written work. (4 – 7 pages double spaced) 25 points.

Class Activities: Design and present a policy advocacy power point on one of the topics covered in this class (05 points). Develop and present a policy PSA (15 points). Class participation (5 points).
EVALUATION

An evaluation rubric for this class is attached. All written work must be completed on a typewriter or a word processor and must be within the page limits established by the instructor.

Grading Scale:

\[\begin{align*}
A &= 96-100 \\
A- &= 92-95 \\
B+ &= 89-91 \\
B &= 85-88 \\
B- &= 80-84 \\
C &= 75-79 \\
F &= \text{74 and below}
\end{align*}\]

Point assignments for work:

- Paper 1: 25 points
- Paper 2: 25 points
- Paper 3: 25 points
- PowerPoint: 5 points
- PSA: 15 points
- Class participation: 5 points

COURSE SCHEDULE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Topic and Readings</th>
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| Class 1 – Introduction to the Class | ▪ Defining the terms in PreK-12 and higher education  
▪ Thinking horizontally and vertically about education policy  
▪ NCLB as an example  
▪ Consideration of Debate Over High States Testing: What are the central arguments on each side of this issue? | **Assignment:** *Scrooge Meets Dick and Jane* and *Taking Sides, Issue #9* |
| Class 2 – Interactions Between Testing Policy in PreK-16 Settings and Across Disciplines | ▪ Discuss *Scrooge Meets Dick and Jane*  
▪ What should higher education administrators know about K-12 testing and why?  
▪ What are implications for Pre-K children?  
▪ How is testing policy changing the role of K-12 teachers, counselors, and administrators?  
▪ What are the implications of testing policy on special education and LEP children? | **Assignment:** Find position statements on high stakes testing policy from at least two education organizations (PreK-16). Be prepared to lead a discussion of who each organization represents and its position on high stakes testing.
Class 3 – High Stakes Testing and Education Policy
- Presentation of interest group position statements.
- Discussion of testing provisions in Title II of the Higher Education Act.
- Group discussion question: Should colleges and universities be ranked according to how students perform on a standardized test? Why and Why not?

Assignment for September 11: *Big Brother and the National Reading Curriculum, Introduction and Part I*

Class 4 – Literacy and Reading Policy
- Discussion of *Big Brother and the National Reading Curriculum*
- What are Allington’s concerns?
- Why has reading become an ideological battle ground?

Assignment: Read *Big Brother and the National Reading Curriculum, Part II and Conclusion*. Each student will prepare a PowerPoint presentation (4 – 8 slides) on one of the following: (1) Supporting the Administration’s Position regarding reading instruction; (2) Opposing the Administration’s Position regarding reading instruction; (3) Staking out a middle ground.

Class 5 – Literacy and Reading Policy
- Presentation of power points
- What Reading Methods Should Education Schools Teach and Who Decides
- Speaker (tentative): Dr. Elizabeth Sturtevant, Associate Professor GSE

Assignment: Read *Taking Sides Issue 14. Find and read at least a summary of H.R. 1350 and S. 1248 (IDEA reauthorization bills). CEC website or Thomas are good sources of information*.

Class 6 – Special Education
- What special education issues are important in PreK and Higher Education settings?
- What are the policy interactions between NCLB and IDEA? Have bills to reauthorize IDEA resolved these issues?
- Discussion of IDEA Reauthorization

Class 7 – Special Education
- What recommendations would you propose for IDEA reauthorization?
- Speaker (tentative): Dr. Mark Goor, past president CEC-TED

Assignment: Read *Taking Sides, Issue 7 and Issue 16; read Conflicts of Interest, Chapters 2 and 11*.

Class 8 – Children with Special Needs: English Language Instruction for non-English Proficient Children.
- Consideration of Federal Policy (NCLB) and Instruction for non-English Proficient Children
- What are the interactions between NCLB and IDEA regarding LEP children?
- What are the policy issues for postsecondary education policy?
- What is Joel Spring’s perspective on bilingual/bicultural education?

Assignment: Read *Conflict of Interests Chapters 1, 6, and 9*
Class 9 – Evidence and Educational Research
- What is the Role of Decision Makers in Deciding Research Issues and Methodologies?
- What is the nature of the current debate over educational research methods?
- Speaker (tentative): Dr. Joe Maxwell

Class 10 – Creating PSAs
- Discussion of PSA assignment
  Assignment: Read Conflict of Interests, Chapter 10; Taking Sides, Issues 4 and 13; Find and read a summary of the facts in Elk Grove USD v. Newdow.

- What are the issues in Elk Grove v. Newdow?
- What did the lower courts decide?
- What are the broader implications of the Supreme Court’s decision regarding public education and religion?
  Assignment: Read Taking Sides, Issue 19.

Class 12 – Virtual Learning Environments
- What are the implications of virtual learning environments for the structure of PreK-12 education?
- What are the implications for the roles of teachers, counselors, and administrators?
- What are the implications for colleges and universities?
- Speaker (tentative): Dr. Priscilla Norton

Class 13 – Connecting the Dots
- Presentation of PSAs
- If there are conceptual and policy connections across Education disciplines and levels, why is education policy fragmented? What are possible solutions?

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR ALL GSE STUDENTS

The Graduate School of Education (GSE) expects that all students abide by the following:

- Students are expected to exhibit professional behavior and dispositions. See gse.gmu.edu for a listing of these dispositions.

- Students must follow the guidelines of the University Honor Code. See http://www.gmu.edu/catalog/apolicies/#TOC_H12 for the full honor code.

- Students must agree to abide by the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing. See http://mail.gmu.edu and click on Responsible Use of Computing at the bottom of the screen.

- Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with the GMU Disability Resource Center (DRC) and inform the
instructor, in writing, at the beginning of the semester. See
www.gmu.edu/student/drc or call 703-993-2474 to access the DRC.

Approved March 2004
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade/Points</th>
<th>Quality of Written Work</th>
<th>Completeness of Work</th>
<th>Timeliness</th>
<th>Team Assignments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A 96 – 100</td>
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<tr>
<td>A- 92 – 95</td>
<td>Exceptional quality and insight; a rare &amp; valuable contribution to the field.</td>
<td>100% complete</td>
<td>100% on time</td>
<td>Outstanding; facilitates and promotes conversation focused on the topic; questions &amp; comments reveal thoughtful reaction. Good team participant</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Convincingly on target; demonstrates evidence of understanding and application; clear and concise writing; the reader is not distracted by grammar and/or spelling and citation errors.</td>
<td>Accurate &amp; seamless writing; virtually a complete product</td>
<td>Almost always on time; rare but forgivable tardiness (such as serious personal or family illness). Instructor is notified in advance that a paper may be late.</td>
<td>Well above average doctoral student; actively helps move group toward goal.</td>
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<td>B+ 89 – 91</td>
<td>Competent; provides credible evidence of understanding and application; some lapses in organization, citations and/or writing clarity.</td>
<td>Moderate shortcomings; minor elements missing that distract the instructor's ability to see the product as a whole.</td>
<td>Assignments late more than once or without prior conversation with instructor; not necessarily chronic.</td>
<td>Reliable and steady worker; questions and comments reveal some thought and reflection.</td>
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<td>B 85 – 88</td>
<td>Evidence of understanding presented but incomplete; writing indicates gaps in logic; grammar and/or spelling errors distract the reader. Weak or insufficient citations.</td>
<td>Evidence of effort but one or more significant and important points are missed or not addressed.</td>
<td>More than half the assignments are late, but none are excessively late.</td>
<td>Doesn't contribute often, but generally reveals some thought and reflection. Follows rather than leads group activities.</td>
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<td>B- 80 – 84</td>
<td>Barely passable for graduate credit; only enough to get by; little evidence of understanding; assignments lack clarity and organization; little evidence of proof reading. Citations absent or inaccurate.</td>
<td>Barely sufficient; work is the least that could be done to justify graduate credit.</td>
<td>Excessively or repeatedly late.</td>
<td>Few meaningful contributions to class discussions. Little evidence of participation.</td>
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<td>C 79 and below</td>
<td>Undergraduate level and quality; unsophisticated; assignments show little or no connection to course content or concepts.</td>
<td>Insufficient evidence of understanding and application; important elements missing or difficult to find.</td>
<td>Excessively or repeatedly late.</td>
<td>Weak or minimal participation; passive; often sidetracks group.</td>
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<td>F</td>
<td>Unacceptable</td>
<td>Difficult to recognize as the assigned task.</td>
<td>Missed or not submitted. Incompletes not made up.</td>
<td>No constructive participation; destructive; demeaning toward other points of view.</td>
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