Course Syllabus

Course prerequisite: Admission to the Ph.D. in Education program.

Course Description

This doctoral seminar invites candidates to examine policy making in education with a specific focus on the historical development of programs for language minority students (LMS) attending public schools in the United States. Candidates will study how policy is made and explore education policy issues at national, state, and local levels as they affect the education of LMS and English language learners (ELLs). Discussions will address research, federal and state legislation, and court decisions from the 1960s to the current day.

Policy issues to be examined include: systems analysis and systemic change processes; the role of the federal and state governments in influencing educational policy; the role of program evaluation and basic research; language planning; legal rights of immigrant and native-born language minority students; the standards movement and related assessment policies, including high-stakes, large-scale and local testing for identification and placement in language programs; effective programs for language minority students; program placement policies (gifted and talented, special education); mental models of learning and teaching, and future research needs.

Instructional approaches include case studies, student-led discussions, simulations, field projects, peer feedback sessions, guest speakers, and mini-lectures. Each candidate’s work will be assessed using criterion-based scoring rubrics. Leading class discussions and interacting in productive ways with other doctoral candidates during each class session are essential for success in this course.
Course Objectives*

Doctoral candidates completing this seminar will be able to:

1. Define concepts and terminology used in systems analysis and policy making in education;

2. Describe the complex nature of the education policy making process;

3. Cite and analyze major legal decisions relating to the education of language minority students (LMS) and corresponding actions in U.S. courts of law taken by the U.S. Dept. of Education’s Office for Civil Rights (OCR);

4. Critically review and analyze federal and state legislation related to the education of LMS and English language learners (ELLs);

5. Analyze the roles of basic and federally-funded research in policy making;

6. Apply mental models of learning and teaching to research and policy making for LMS and ELLs; and

7. Gather field data and make policy recommendations on issues relating to the education of LMS and ELLs.

*Candidates will be asked to use a personal computer for preparing course projects and for engaging in dialogue with the instructor and classmates through e-mail.
Course Requirements*

1. **Focus Session** 30% Teach one-hour class session on a syllabus topic (schedule to be set in Week 2)

2. **Field Project** 35% Collect and analyze data from the field on a policy issue (due Week 8)

3. **Final Project** 35% Research a policy issue and make policy recommendations (due Week 15)

*One of the three requirements may be conducted with up to 2 others on a team (see Guidelines for Working in Teams).

Textbooks

All books listed have been ordered through the GMU Bookstore.

**Required**


**Course Schedule *** Revised Feb. 12, 2004**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week/Date</th>
<th>Topics &amp; Reading Assignments</th>
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<tr>
<td>1 1/22</td>
<td>Overview of seminar. Policy issues affecting language minority and English language learners. Identifying the players and the processes.</td>
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  Read: Wirt & Kirst, Chs. 1-2 |
  
  Read: Crawford, Intro., Chs. 1 & 2, & Glossary of program models |
  
  Read: Crawford, Chs. 3 - 4, Appendix C; Wirt & Kirst, Chs. 10-11 |
| 5 2/19    | Update on ESEA 2002 (NCLB) & Title III. Accountability for language minority and English language learners. New assessment requirements.  
  
  Read: Critiques & Analyses of NCLB - you find at least one to discuss on federal policy (professional journal articles) |
  
  Read: Crawford, Chs. 5-7 |
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| 7 3/4     | State role in education policy. Standards movement. **Peer feedback on Field Projects.**  
*Read: Wirt & Kirst, Chs. 8-9, 13* |
| 8 3/11    | **Class meets during GMU Spring Break - No class instead on 4/1**  
State assessment policies affecting English language learners.  
Assessment policy & practice for identification and placement.  
High-stakes testing for ESEA 2002 (NCLB). VA’s SOLs Testing.  
Bilingual/ESL teacher licensing. **Field Projects due.**  
*Read: O’Malley & Pierce, 1994; Critiques & analyses of NCLB - you find at least one to discuss on state policy* |
| 9 3/18    | Local policy making. School boards and education reform.  
*Read: Wirt & Kirst, Chs. 3-5* |
*Read: Crawford, Ch. 11; Wirt & Kirst, Chs. 6-7.* |
| 11 4/1    | **No Class - TESOL Annual Convention, Long Beach, CA** |
| 12 4/8    | Case studies. Access to content area instruction. **Peer feedback on Final Projects.**  
*Read: Crawford, Chs. 8-10.* |
The public image of Bilingual Education. California’s Proposition 227.  
*Read: Crawford, Chs. 12-13* |
| 14 4/22   | Intergovernmental politics in education policy. **Peer Feedback on Final projects.**  
*Read: Wirt & Kirst, Ch. 12* |
Last class session. Class Presentations on Final Projects. Course evaluations. Feedback forms. Materials release forms. Final Projects accepted on or before this date.

“...although actions are important, the thinking that influences and shapes what we do is far more critical.”


“How a nation responds to diversity is fundamentally a question of values. Values do not change overnight.”


“...politics is a form of social conflict rooted in group differences over values about using public resources to meet private needs.”


**Seminar**

*An advanced or graduate course often featuring informality and discussion; a group of advanced students studying under a professor with each doing original research and all exchanging results through reports and discussions.*

*May you live in exciting times.* Old Jewish proverb.