

**GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY**  
College of Education and Human Development

Education Reform and Teacher Policy in Historic Perspective  
EDUC 797.001  
Spring 2013

Tuesday 4:30-7:10  
Hanover Hall L003

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**Course Description:**

Teachers sit at the center of current educational reform as policy makers trace the deficiencies of the nation's public schools back to practitioners. The notion of the "highly qualified teacher," new evaluation systems, the increased regulation of teacher education, and the standardization of curricula among many other reforms all represent recent endeavors to improve the schools by improving teachers. Though cast as radical reform initiatives, teacher policy of this ilk is as old as the public schools. Since the rise of publicly supported education in the mid-1850s, policy makers called for better, more professional teachers and linked the shortcomings of the nation's schools to the caliber of the teaching population. Such critiques resulted in a bevy of reforms and regulations ranging from tenure to licensure. This course will examine education reform and teacher policy from a historic perspective. Students will study the historic precedents of current reforms and policies centering on teacher quality, evaluation, training and compensation among others. In addition, students will examine the development of large questions that shaped teachers' work from the first days of public schooling: What is a professional teacher?; How should teachers be managed, organized and trained?; What is the relationship between teachers and the communities they serve? From this vantage point, students will be positioned to evaluate and engage current policy debates by putting the past and present into conversation. The value of historical inquiry centers on its explanatory power. Beyond chronicling what happened, in this course students will account for why events and policies transpired as they have – and, most important of all, why the same debates and reforms surrounding teachers have persisted for more than a century.

*Prerequisites/Corequisites:* Admission to PhD in education program, or permission of instructor.

**Student Outcomes:**

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

1. Understand and analyze the current context of education reform and teacher policy, considering the ways in which social, political, and economic forces converge on the school and shape teachers' work lives.
2. Understand and analyze the historic context of education reform and teacher policy, considering the ways in which social, political, and economic forces converge on the school and shape teachers' work lives.

3. Use historical analysis to better understand and engage ongoing policy debates.
4. Analyze secondary scholarship, historic texts and policy documents.

### **Relationship to Program Goals and Professional Organizations:**

There are no specialized standards specific to education policy studies. However, most, if not all standards for educators expect professionals to be aware of the political, social, economic, legal and cultural context of public education in the United States. This course provides students with that background and understanding.

### **Nature of Course Delivery:**

This course is taught using lectures and discussions.

### **Required Readings:**

Rousmaniere, K. (1997). *City Teachers: Teaching and School Reform in Historical Perspective*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

*Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (6<sup>th</sup> ed). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

\*\*All other readings will be available on-line or distributed in advance of class\*\*

### **Course Requirements:**

- Students are expected to attend all classes. Please provide advance notice, when possible, if you must miss a class. On these occasions, please get notes and any handouts from a colleague.
- Students are expected to read all assignments prior to class and bring copies (either hard or electronic copy) to class.
- Students are expected to actively participate in class discussions and activities and to treat one another with respect.
- Students are expected to submit all assignment on time, unless prior arrangements are made:
  1. *Book Review* (30 points): In no more than 5 pages, review a book related to the history of teacher reform and policy. Your goal is to assess the book's strengths and limitations and to consider the ways in which this analysis pertains to the current context. Together in class, we will examine sample published book review essays. This assignment will be discussed in greater detail in class and a list of possible titles will be distributed. Book review essays are due April 2<sup>nd</sup>.
  2. *Presentation of Teacher Policy Problem* (10 points): On dates to be determined, students will present a current teacher policy problem or debate that they will examine throughout the course of the semester. Students will have no more than 15 minutes to discuss the key issues and context surrounding the policy. Students should provide a handout to accompany their talk and be prepared to field questions for 5-10 minutes.
  3. *Presentation of Findings* (10 points): Students will present the findings of their semester's-worth of inquiry into the history of a current teacher

policy for no more than 15 minutes. In addition to examining the historical context, students must highlight what can be learned from this disciplinary vantage-point. Suggest at least 3 ways in which this expanded perspective leads to either a better understanding of or recommended changes to the current policy. Students should provide a handout to accompany their talk and be prepared to field questions for 5-10 minutes. Presentations will take place on April 23<sup>rd</sup>.

4. *Annotated Bibliography* (15 points): Students must annotate at least 6 sources pertaining to their selected teacher policy. At least 3 sources must pertain to the history of the issue and at least 3 must pertain to the current context. Annotated bibliographies are due February 26<sup>th</sup>.
5. *Final Essay* (35 points): In a 10 page essay, students will use history to cast fresh light on a selected current teacher policy. Where did this policy come from? In what ways is the current policy similar to or different from earlier forms? What do we learn from this legacy? The goal of this essay is to use an historical context to engage current educational policy making. Students will work on this essay over the course of the semester. Final papers are due on April 23<sup>th</sup>.

### **Evaluation:**

An evaluation rubric for this class is attached to this syllabus. All papers must be typed and formatted according to the *APA Manual of Style, 6<sup>th</sup> Ed.*

### **Grading Scale:**

A = 96-100

A- = 92-95

B+ = 89-91

B = 80-88

C = 75-79

F = 74 and below

### **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/honorcode/>].
- b. Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing [See <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/1301gen.html>].
- 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 turned 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 & 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 [See <http://gse.gmu.edu/>].**

## **Course Calendar:**

### **January 22 – Course Introduction**

### **January 29 – Conceptual Frameworks: Linking History and Education Policy**

- Dougherty, “Conflicting Questions,” in *CLIO at the Table: Using History to Inform and Improve Education Policy*.
- Vinovskis, “The Uses of History in Educational Policy Making,” in *History and Educational Policy Making*.
- Tyack and Tobin, “The Grammar of Schooling: Why has it Been so Hard to Change?” *American Educational Research Journal*.

### **February 5 – The Rise of Common Schooling and the Feminization of Teaching**

- Bernard and Vinovskis, “The Female School Teacher in Ante-Bellum Massachusetts,” *Journal of Social History*.
- Strober and Langford, “The Feminization of Public School Teaching: A Cross-sectional Analysis, 1850-1890,” *Signs*.

### **February 12 – Gender and the Organization of Teaching**

- Apple, “Controlling the Work of Teachers,” in *Teachers and Texts*.
- Strober and Tyack, “Why do Women Teach and Men Manage? A Report on Research on Schools,” *Signs*.
- Preston, “Gender and the Formation of a Woman’s Profession: The Case of Public School Teaching,” in *Gender Inequality at Work*.

### **February 19 – Teacher Training & Certification, I: Historical Underpinnings**

- Angus, *Professionalism and Public Good: A Brief History of Teacher Certification*.
- Labaree, “Too Easy a Target: The Trouble with Ed Schools and the Implications for the University,” *Academe*.

### **February 26 – Teacher Training & Certification, II: NCATE and Alternate Routes**

*Guest Speaker: Dr. Libby Hall, Director, Office of Education Services, GMU*

- *Annotated Bibliography Due*
- Kane, “What does Certification Tell us about Teacher Effectiveness? Evidence from New York City,” *Economics of Education Review*.
- Darling-Hammond, “Who Will Speak for the Children? How Teach for America Hurts Urban Schools and Students,” *Phi Delta Kappan*.

### **March 5 – Reform and Teachers Work Lives, I: Historical Underpinnings**

- Rousmaniere, *City Teachers: Teaching and School Reform in Historical Perspective*.

### **March 12 – GMU SPRING BREAK: No Class**

### **March 19 – Workshop**

### **March 26 – Reform and Teachers Work Lives, II: NCLB and Teacher Evaluation**

*Guest Speaker: Scott Thompson, Deputy Chief, Teacher Effectiveness Strategy, DCPS*

- Cochran-Smith and Lytle, “Troubling Images of Teaching in No Child Left Behind,” *Harvard Educational Review*.
- Valli and Buese, “The Changing Roles of Teachers in an Era of High-Stakes Accountability,” *American Educational Research Journal*.
- Harris and Sass, *What Makes for a Good Teacher and Who Can Tell?*

### **April 2 – Teacher Associations, I: Historical Underpinnings**

- *Book Review Essay Due*
- Murphy, “Collective Bargaining: The Coming of Age of Teacher Activism,” in *Blackboard Unions: The AFT and The NEA, 1900-1980*.

### **April 9 – Teacher Associations, II: Current Role in Education Reform and Politics**

*Guest Speaker: Steven L. Greenburg, President, Fairfax County Federation of Teachers*

- Kerchner, “Union-Made Teaching: The Effects of Labor Relations on Teaching Work,” *Review of Research in Education*.
- Antonucci, “The Long Reach of the Teachers Union,” *Education Next*.

### **April 16 – Recruitment and Hiring Practices, Then and Now: Who Teaches and Why**

- Rury, “Who Became Teachers?: The Social Characteristics of Teachers in American History,” in *American Teachers: Histories of a Profession at Work*.
- Daly and Keeling, “Hiring for Teacher Quality at the District Level: Lessons From the New Teacher Project,” in *Measurement Issues and Assessment for Teaching Quality*.
- Boyd, et.al., “The Preparation and Recruitment of Teachers: A Labor Market Framework,” in *A Qualified Teacher in Every Classroom?: Appraising Old Answers and New Ideas*.
- Corcoran, “Women, the Labor Market and the Declining Relative Quality of Teachers,” *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*.

### **April 23 – Using the Past to think about the Present: Student Findings**

- *Final Essay Due*

### **April 30 – The Question of Profession**

- Noddings, “Feminist Critiques in the Professions,” *Review of Research in Education*.
- Ingersoll, “The Status of Teaching as a Profession,” in *Schools and Society: A Sociological Approach to Education*.

**Grading Guidelines**  
**EDUC 797: Education Reform and Teacher Policy in Historic Perspective**

<b>Grade/Points</b>	<b>Quality of Work</b>	<b>Completeness of Work</b>	<b>Timeliness</b>	<b>Participation</b>
A 96 – 100  A- 92 – 95	Exceptional quality and insight; a rare & valuable contribution to the field.  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.	100% complete and error free  Accurate & seamless writing; virtually a complete product	100% on time  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.	Outstanding; facilitates and promotes conversation focused on the topic; questions & comments reveal thoughtful reaction. Good team participant  Well above average doctoral student; actively helps move group toward goal.
B+ 89 –91  B 80 – 88	Competent; provides credible evidence of understanding and application; some lapses in organization, citations and/or writing clarity.  Evidence of understanding presented but incomplete; writing indicates gaps in logic; grammar and/or spelling errors distract the reader. Weak or insufficient citations.	Moderate shortcomings; minor elements missing that distract the instructor’s ability to see the product as a whole.  Evidence of effort but one or more significant and important points are missed or not addressed.	Assignments late more than once or without prior conversation with instructor; not necessarily chronic.  More than half the assignments are late, but none are excessively late.	Reliable and steady worker; questions and comments reveal some thought and reflection.  Doesn’t contribute often, but generally reveals some thought and reflection. Follows rather than leads group activities.
C 75 - 79	Undergraduate level and quality; unsophisticated; assignments show little or not connection to course content or concepts.	Insufficient evidence of understanding and application; important elements missing or difficult to find.	Excessively or repeatedly late.	Weak or minimal participation; passive; often sidetracks group.
F below 74	Unacceptable	Difficult to recognize as the assigned task.	Missed or not submitted. Incompletes not made up.	No constructive participation; destructive; demeaning toward other