GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
Educational Psychology, Research Methods, and Education Policy

EDEP 650: C01 High Stakes Assessment and Accountability Systems
3 Credits, Summer 2014
Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays 4:00-6:40pm, Thompson 1018

PROFESSOR
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I. COURSE DESCRIPTION
A. Prerequisites: None

B. Catalog Description: Focus on school effectiveness tools and accountability models being implemented on state and national levels. Explores issues and methods relevant to educational policy, standardized testing, and classroom assessment.

C. Course Description: Students will examine the issues, policies, and implementation strategies associated with the modern public school reform movement. While some attention will be given to the historical context of public school reform in the United States, the major focus will be on issues, controversies, policies, and research related to state standards, accountability, and testing systems. This course will identify, and examine with depth, these differences as well as their implications for the future of American public school education.

II. NATURE OF COURSE DELIVERY
Students will engage in small group and whole class discussion as the primary basis for in-class learning. Mini-lectures will supplement activities and discussions. Students will apply what they have learned in class to a focused study of a school or school district. Students will use Blackboard to facilitate a small number of lessons and activities during certain class sessions, as identified in the syllabus. These online sessions will be asynchronous and will support your learning within the face-to-face sessions.

III. STUDENT OUTCOMES
At the end of the course, students will be able to demonstrate:
1. Understanding of the political, social, and economic goals of public education and how these have led to the current public school reform movement;
2. Comprehension of the basic principles of the Theory of Change as a conceptual framework for the critical analysis of public school reform;
3. Understanding provisions of federal and state policy pertaining to accountability;

4. Knowledge of scholarly criticisms related to accountability from the point of view of schools as complex organizations;
5. Overall general knowledge of the accountability methods adopted by the states;
6. In-depth knowledge of high-stakes testing systems in response to accountability;
7. Understanding of the uses, advantages, and limitations of high stakes testing as tools for public school accountability.

IV. REQUIRED TEXTS

American Psychological Association. (2009). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th ed.). Washington, DC: Author.

Bryk, A. S., Sebring, P. B., Allensworth, E., Luppescu, S., & Easton, J. Q. (2010) Organizing schools for improvement: Lessons from Chicago. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press. ISBN-13: 978-0-226-07800-7 ISBN-10: 0-226-07800-0

Fuhrman, S. H., & Elmore, R. F. (Eds). Redesigning accountability systems for education. New York, NY: Teachers College Press. ISBN-13: 978-0-8077-4425-3

Popham, W. J. (2005). America's "failing" schools: How parents and teachers can cope with *No Child Left Behind.* New York, NY: Routledge. ISBN 0-415-95128-3

V. COURSE ASSIGNMENTS, POLICIES, AND GRADING: All assignments must be written in Times New Roman 12 point font, double-spaced, and follow APA (6th edition) formatting guidelines. **Assignments must be submitted electronically via the students' GMU email account and are due by class time on the date indicated.** Failure to turn in an assignment by the assigned date will result in a 10% reduction of the total points for the assignment each day it is late. If there is an emergency contact me as soon as possible. **All assignments should be submitted with the following naming convention: student's last name and the title of the assignment**. For example:

E.g. Beck_CaseStudy

Failure to follow any of these guidelines will result in a reduction in points for the assignment.

Absentee Policy: I understand that we all get sick and busy. However, our class meets during a compressed summer session so missing one class is roughly equivalent to missing a week's worth of class. If you are absent more than once, I will deduct points from your class participation grade as a result. You can't contribute to class if you do not attend.

Technology Policy: Electronic devices may only be used for class-related activities. Please be respectful of your peers and your instructor and do not engage in activities that are unrelated to class. Such disruptions show a lack of professionalism and may affect your participation grade.

Assignment Name	Evaluation Points
1. Classwork and Homework Assignments	10 points
2. Case Study	50 Points

3. E-Portfolio	20 points
4. Presentation of E-Portfolio	10 points
6. Class Participation	10 points
	Grand total: 100 points

1. Classwork and Homework Assignments (10 points)
A variety of assignments will be assigned in class and for homework, including online assignments which will take the place of our Friday class meetings. Each assignment will be described in detail. Altogether these assignments will be worth 10 points.

2. Case Study (50 points)
The major project for this course is a case study of a specific school district's accountability system as it is currently operating. Data collection will come primarily from the Internet, although contact with district personnel responsible for accountability will also be required. The project will culminate with a written report to be submitted to the Instructor (see course schedule) and an e-portfolio that will serve as the basis for student presentations on the last night of class. Each portion of the case study will be submitted to the instructor for formative feedback on the deadline indicated:

Part I: Introduction and Statement of the Learning Problem
The goal of this portion of the case study is two-fold: provide context (i.e., federal, state, local policy) surrounding the learning problem. Then, provide a clear statement regarding what the learning problem is and how you plan to explore this issue.

Part II: Literature Review
This will be a coherent synthesis of at least 10 research articles from respected journals. The review must go beyond summarizing the articles and must demonstrate higher-level thinking such as analysis and critique. The literature review should connect logically to the learning problem and methods of data collection.

Part III: Participants
Clearly describe the district you have chosen, but ensure that the school or district is not identifiable (i.e., ensure confidentiality). Information that you may provide here would include the demographics of the school or school district, percentage of students who receive free and reduced-price lunch, and the number of students who qualify for special education services.

Part IV: Data Collection and Analysis
Clearly describe what data will be collected (e.g., district report card data, interview data, etc.) and how it will be collected. Describe how these data will be described transparently so that the study could potentially be replicated.

Part V: Conclusions and Implications
Delineate what conclusions can be drawn from the findings of each research question. Then, connect these to implications for practice, policy, or research.

Criteria	Outstanding	Competent	Minimal	Unsatisfactory

	(4)	(3)	(2)	(1)
Introduction and Statement of the Learning Problem	The introduction provides a clear and complete synthesis of the background of the problem. No extraneous text is included. The description of the learning problem is clear and complete.	The introduction may have minor issues with clarity or extraneous text. The introduction is mostly complete, but may lack a piece of key information about the background of the problem. The description of the learning problem is mostly complete, but may lack a piece of key information about the learning problem. More than one example is used to explain the problem, but they are lacking in details or clarity.	The introduction has several issues with clarity and/or extraneous text. The introduction is incomplete, lacking more than one piece of key information about the background of the problem. The description of the learning problem is incomplete, lacking more than one piece of key information about the learning problem. One example is provided, with some details. The example may not be clear.	The introduction is unclear and/or too brief to completely communicate information about the background of the problem. The description of the learning problem is unclear and/or too brief to completely communicate information about the learning problem.
Literature Review	The learning problem is relevant to the area of education research and is described in a parsimonious, yet complete, manner. The literature review completely, clearly, and cohesively addresses the purpose of the study, includes only relevant theory and research and leads to the research questions.	The learning problem is relevant to the area of educational research. The problem and literature review are overall well described, but there may be minor issues with clarity, extraneous text, or lacking information.	The learning problem is relevant to the area of educational research, but does not clearly or completely address the purpose of the study. The literature review includes information about the topic, but is missing significant information, is unclear, or includes extraneous text.	The learning problem is not quite relevant to the area of educational research, or insufficiently described. The literature review does not support the purpose of the study, lacks cohesion, or is unclear. Or it is too brief to completely communicate information about the study.

Methods	Data collection and analysis is easily executable, clear, complete, and appropriate. The description of all steps taken is clear and complete and includes relevant resources. The methods and sample are appropriate to the research questions.	Data collection and analysis has minor issues related to execution, clarity, missing details, or appropriateness. The description of most of the steps to be taken is clear. There may be minor issues or a step missing within the description. Relevant resources may be incomplete. The methods or sample may contain minor errors.	Data collection and analysis appears to be executable, however more than one step is missing, steps are unclear, and details are missing. One or more components may not be implemented appropriately, or the data analysis may not be appropriate. The description has a major issue related to clarity or missing steps. One or two resources may not be relevant or may be incomplete. The methods and sample contain errors.	Data collection and analysis does not appear to be executable. Multiple steps are missing, unclear, or lacking details. More than one step in the data collection or analysis is incorrect or inappropriate. The description has multiple issues with clarity and/or many steps are missing. Most of the resources are not relevant, or resources are missing. Methods or samples may be missing or contain multiple errors.
Results	Clear, accurate, and complete presentation of relevant results by project research questions. The tables and/or figures include all necessary information.	Accurate presentation of relevant results by project research questions, with some minor errors in clarity or completeness. There are minor errors in the tables and/or figures, such as tables are missing minor pieces of necessary information, an extraneous table is included, or a	Results are presented by research questions, but some results are irrelevant and/or there are significant problems with clarity, accuracy, or completeness. The tables and/or figures do not include all necessary information, or there may be more than one missing	The presentation of the results is not organized by research questions, some results are irrelevant, and there are serious problems with clarity, accuracy, and completeness. The tables and/or figures are missing much information or are unclear. There are multiple tables/figures missing, or too many

		table/figure is missing.	or extra table/figure.	tables/figures are included.
Conclusions and Implications	The conclusions and implications for policy, practice and research are complete, clear, cohesive, and address the impact and implications of the study. Additional research aptly supports the argument.	The conclusions and implications have minor issues in completeness, clarity, or cohesiveness. This section may not address all of the most salient points, or include minor extraneous details.	The conclusions and implications has multiple issues in completeness, clarity, or cohesiveness. This section makes some of the important points, misses others, or includes irrelevant points. More than one citation does not support the conclusions, or may be missing.	The conclusions and implications are not organized and do not appear to be related to the study. this section is incomplete, missing, or irrelevant. Multiple citations are missing, or those that are included do not support the conclusions.
APA Style	Writing is concise, coherent, well-organized, and aligns with APA 6th edition style guidelines. Citations and references are correct and complete.	Writing lacks some clarity or has minor organization problems affecting the overall coherence, and/or there are some errors in APA style, table/figures, citations, or references. There may also be a small number of missing citations or references.	Writing has multiple problems with clarity, coherence, and organization. there are many errors in APA style, tables/figures, citations, and/or references. Multiple references are missing or incomplete.	Writing lacks clarity, coherence, and/or no use of APA style. Tables/figures, citations, and/or reference are minimal or absent.

3. E-Portfolio (20 points)
Students will use Blackboard to post the various components of their case study including background information about the school, demographics, and representative perspectives from school personnel.

4. E-Portfolio Presentation (10 points)
Students will present their e-portfolios on the last night of the course (see course schedule).

5. Class Participation (10 points)

This is your class. The success of this course depends upon all students being prepared for class and contributing to discussions and activities. Attendance is *not* participation. Participation includes whole class and small group discussion and work.

	4 (10 points)	3 (7.5 points)	2 (5 points)	1 (2.5 points)
Content and Frequency	It is evident from the student's contributions that he/she is prepared for class and has completed the required readings. The student contributes to class discussions consistently.	It is evident from the student's contributions that he/she is mostly prepared for class and has completed most of the required readings. The student contributes to class discussions somewhat consistently.	It is not clear from the student's contributions that he/she has completed any of the required readings. The student contributes to class discussions intermittently.	It is clear from the student's contributions that he/she has **not** completed the required readings. The student never contributes to class discussions.

Assignments will be graded according to the rubrics provided in this syllabus. Course grades will be based on the following scale:

98-100	A+	80-82.49	B-
93-97.49	A	70-79.49	C
90-92.49	A-	Below 70	F
88-89.49	B+		
83-87.49	B		

VI. College of Education and Human Development Statements
a. Students must adhere to the guidelines of the George Mason University Honor Code [See http://oai.gmu.edu/honor-code/]

Please note that:
- "Plagiarism encompasses the following:
    1. Presenting as one's own the words, the work, or the opinions of someone else without proper acknowledgment.
    2. Borrowing the sequence of ideas, the arrangement of material, or the pattern of thought of someone else without proper acknowledgment."
    (from Mason Honor Code)
- Paraphrasing involves taking someone else's ideas and putting them in your own words. When you paraphrase, you need to cite the source.
- When material is copied word for word from a source, it is a direct quotation. You must use quotation marks (or block indent the text) and cite the source.
- Electronic tools (e.g., SafeAssign) may be used to detect plagiarism if necessary.
- Plagiarism and other forms of academic misconduct are treated seriously and may result in disciplinary actions.

b. Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing [See

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

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

I. Commitment to the field of Educational Psychology

   a. Excellence in applying research to teaching, learning, and assessment

   b. Contribute to the field of Educational Psychology

II. Commitment to ethical research with humans subjects

   a. Respect for persons. Individuals should be treated as autonomous agents; Persons with diminished autonomy are entitled to additional protections

   b. Beneficence. Do no harm; Maximize possible benefits and minimize possible harms

   c. Justice. Individuals and groups are treated fairly and equitably in terms of bearing the burdens and receiving the benefits of research.

III. Commitment to empirical inquiry

a. Appreciate and integrate multiple theoretical and methodological perspectives

b. Commitment to using research-based evidence to inform educational decisions

c. Value methodological rigor in research

IV. Commitment to the Learner-Centered Principles of the American Psychological Association (APA)

    a. Cognitive and Metacognitive Factors

        i. Nature of the learning process. The learning of complex subject matter is most effective when it is an intentional process of constructing meaning from information and experience.

        ii. Goals of the learning process. The successful learner, over time and with support and instructional guidance, can create meaningful, coherent representations of knowledge.

        iii. Construction of knowledge. The successful learner can link new information with existing knowledge in meaningful ways.

        iv. Strategic thinking. The successful learner can create and use a repertoire of thinking and reasoning strategies to achieve complex learning goals.

        v. Thinking about thinking. Higher order strategies for selecting and monitoring mental operations facilitate creative and critical thinking.

        vi. Context of learning. Learning is influenced by environmental factors, including culture, technology, and instructional practices.

    b. Motivational and Affective Factors

        i. Motivational and emotional influences on learning. What and how much is learned is influenced by the learner's motivation. Motivation to learn, in turn, is influenced by the individual's emotional states, beliefs, interests and goals, and habits of thinking.

        ii. Intrinsic motivation to learn. The learner's creativity, higher order thinking, and natural curiosity all contribute to motivation to learn. Intrinsic motivation is stimulated by tasks of optimal novelty and difficulty relevant to personal interests and providing for personal choice of control. Updated 4/26/10 2

        iii. Effects of motivation and effort. Acquisition of complex knowledge and skills requires extended learner effort and guided practice.

    c. Developmental and Social Factors

i. Developmental influences on learning. As individuals develop, there are different opportunities and constraints for learning. Learning is most effective when differential development within and across physical, intellectual, emotional, and social domains is taken into account.

ii. Social influences on learning. Learning is influenced by social interactions, interpersonal relations, and communication with others.

d. Individual Differences Factors

i. Individual differences in learning. Learners have different strategies, approaches, and capabilities for learning that are a function of prior experience and heredity.

ii. Learning and diversity. Learning is most effective when differences in learners' linguistic, cultural, and social backgrounds are taken into account.

iii. Standards and assessment. Setting appropriately high and challenging standards and assessing the learner as well as learning progress including diagnostic, process, and outcome assessment are integral parts of the learning process.

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://ceh.dgmu.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/.

VI. TENTATIVE COURSE ORGANIZATION AND SCHEDULE

Day	Topic/Activity	Readings/Assignments Due
Monday 6/30	- Guest speaker: Dr. Ellen Mandinach - Introduction to course - Expectations - Brief history of the political, social, and economic goals of public education - Wordpress and practice	Popham Preface, Introduction, and Ch. 1 Bryk et al. Prologue and Introduction Fuhrman and Elmore Ch. 1 and 2 **Doctoral students:** Flybjerg (2006)
Wednesday 7/2	- Accountability concepts and models - Locating school district information	Bryk et al. Ch. 1 Furhman and Elmore Ch. 2 Finish Popham by 7/7 **Doctoral students:** Becker (1990) **Due: Mandatory Training for Persons Conducting Human Subjects Research**

Friday 7/4	**No class: Fourth of July Holiday**	
Monday 7/7	- Framework for accountability and assessment	Bryk et al. Chs. 2 and 3 Furhman and Elmore Ch. 4 Finish Popham **Due: Rationale for selection of school district, and description of school district (up to 5 pages) due by class time**
Wednesday 7/9	- Organizational mechanisms	Bryk et al. Ch. 4 Furhman and Elmore Ch. 4
Friday 7/11	**Online**	**Due: Parts I and II due by Sunday 7/13 at 8:00 pm**
Monday 7/14	- Guest speaker: Alex Case - Unpacking data - Document analysis	Furhman and Elmore Ch. 10
Wednesday 7/16	- Standards and tests - History, concepts, models	Furhman and Elmore Chs. 5 and 7
Friday 7/18	**Online**	**Due: Parts III and IV**
Monday 7/21	- Organizational mechanisms, trust, size, and stability - Influences of community context	Bryk et al. Ch. 6
Wednesday 7/23	- Guest speaker: Traci Whiting - Special needs students	Furhman and Elmore Ch. 6
Friday 7/25	**Online**	Finish Bryk et al. **Due: Part V due by Sunday 7/27 at 8:00 pm**
Monday 7/28	- Peer review of case study - Consultations	
Wednesday 7/30	- Presentations of case studies	**Due: Presentations of case study**
Friday 8/1	**Online**	**Work on Completing the Case Study**
Monday 8/4	**Final Exam Period**	**Case Study due by 6:40 pm**