GEORGE MASON
UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN
DEVELOPMENT GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
PhD Education, Program in Education
Policy

EDUC 797 001: Special Topics in Neighborhoods, Community Development, and Social Policy
3.0 Credits, Fall 2014
Tuesdays, 4:30pm – 7:10pm, Thompson, L004

PROFESSORS(S):
Name: Rodney Hopson
Office hours: Tuesdays, 2:00 – 4:00pm and as requested
Office location: West Building, 2102
Office phone: 703.993.4178
Email address: rhopson@gmu.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION:
A. Prerequisites/Corequisites
None
B. University Catalog Course Description
Advanced study of selected topics in education preparing students for doctoral studies
or who have been admitted to the PhD program in education.

Notes: May be repeated for credit with GSED approval.

C. Expanded Course Description

This special topics course will explore the intersection of historical, social, political,
and economic policies and conditions of neighborhoods and communities in the United
States. By focusing domestically, the course intends to understand historical and
contemporary trends in the formation of urban neighborhoods and the development of
American cities and communities. Students will have the opportunity to examine the
politics and policies of particular neighborhoods and communities, including
understanding the dynamic realities and changes around topics such as education,
health, immigration, citizenship, crime, religion, wealth, housing and poverty. Of
particular focus will be those individuals and groups who tend to be minoritized,
marginalized, and/or vulnerable in the context of incredible wealth, privilege, and status
in the U.S.

LEARNER OUTCOMES or OBJECTIVES
This course is designed to enable students to:
1. Identify and analyze salient historical, social, political, and economic factors that affect
neighborhoods and communities domestically in the United States, especially as they
influence educational issues and conditions;
2. Apply understanding and interpretation of policy to contextual and historical understanding of neighborhoods and communities and the educational settings and institutions they serve;
3. Identify, distinguish, and apply theoretical and methodological approaches to study of neighborhoods and communities;
4. Understand and appreciate the complexity and formation of neighborhoods and communities in the United States, with particular focus to how those minoritized, marginalized, and/or vulnerable served through schools and educational institutions.

PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS:
The course is a required course of the PhD in Education (Education Policy specialization) and is linked to the goals of the Graduate School of Education (GSE) and the mission of the Center for Education Policy and Evaluation (CEPE). Additionally, student outcomes are both linked to the mission and values of GSE and CEPE. Refer to the GSE website (http://cehd.gmu.edu/values/) and the CEPE website (http://cehd.gmu.edu/centers/edpolicy/home) for more information about their goals, core values, and mission.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

Recommended and additional texts and readings to be provided during course Blackboard site as needed.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS AND EXAMINATIONS:
You will be expected to complete several assignments that constitute your course grade. They include a series of prompts or discussion board postings, course participation, and a research paper/project. Each of the following is described briefly below, with more discussion and additional specifics as questions arise in class:

* Reading/Discussion Prompts. As part of this assignment, you will be expected to provide a summary or analysis in response to a series of questions based on readings, class topics, and other
course material. Prompts will constitute 30% of your course grade.
* Course Participation. Course participation is a critical aspect of the course and will be important in maintaining an informed and critical analysis of issues and material that arise in the course. At the end of the semester, you will be requested to provide a self-evaluation of your course grade based on criteria determined in class. Course Participation will constitute 20% of your course grade.

* Research Paper/Project. You will be expected to prepare a paper or project about a specific neighborhood or community in the United States related to a theme, issue, or idea within the course content and/or objectives. The paper should pose a question and show evidence of scholarly research related to the neighborhoods and communities. The paper should be prepared in the latest version of APA, be 20-25 pages in length (not including references and appendices or tables/figures), and turned in near the end of the semester. An outline will be expected at the midpoint of the course and presentations should be expected in the final two classes of the semester. Research papers/projects will constitute 40% of your course grade and presentations will constitute 10% of your course grade.

The following grading scale will be used for all class assignments:

A 93 - 100
A- 90 - 92
B+ 87 - 89
B 83 - 86
B- 80 - 82
C+ 77 - 79
C 70 - 76
F Below 70

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/honor-code/](http://oai.gmu.edu/honor-code/)).


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 (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 http://gse.gmu.edu/.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic/Learning Experiences</th>
<th>Readings and Assignments</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>August 26</td>
<td>Topic 1: Introduction to Course: Why Neighborhoods, Communities, and Social Policy?</td>
<td>Read Kozol, Ch. 1 – 3; Skolnick &amp; Currie, Part 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>September 2</td>
<td>Topic 1A: Building rationale and historical sections of your neighborhood study/Discussion of neighborhood areas and topics of study</td>
<td>Read Kozol, Ch. 4 – 6; Skolnick &amp; Currie, Part 2 &lt;br&gt;HW: Prompt 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>September 9</td>
<td>GIS Training, Part 1</td>
<td>Read Kozol, Ch. 7 – 9; Skolnick &amp; Currie, Part 3</td>
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<td>September 16</td>
<td>Topic 2: Historical and Contextual Understandings of Neighborhoods and Communities</td>
<td>Read Kozol, Ch. 10-12, Epilogue, Skolnick &amp; Currie, Part 4 &lt;br&gt;Sharkey, Ch. 1-2 &lt;br&gt;HW: Prompt 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>September 23</td>
<td>Topic 2A: Situating historical context of neighborhoods and communities</td>
<td>Begin Wilson, Part 1 (Ch. 1 – 5); Skolnick &amp; Currie, Part 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>September 30</td>
<td>Topic 2B: Situating a policy context of neighborhoods and communities</td>
<td>Read Skolnick &amp; Currie, Part 6 &lt;br&gt;Sharkey, Ch. 3-4 &lt;br&gt;HW: Prompt 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 7</td>
<td>Topic 3: Theoretical and Methodological Approaches to Study of Neighborhoods and Communities</td>
<td>Complete Wilson, Part 1 (Ch. 1 – 5); Skolnick &amp; Currie, Part 7 &lt;br&gt;HW: Draft Paper Outline</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 14</td>
<td>GIS Training, Part 2</td>
<td>Read Skolnick &amp; Currie, Part 8 &lt;br&gt;Sharkey, Ch. 5-7 &lt;br&gt;HW: Prompt 4</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 21</td>
<td>Topic 3A: Developing theoretical frameworks in neighborhood research and study</td>
<td>Start Wilson, Part 2; Skolnick &amp; Currie, Part 9d</td>
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<td>October 28</td>
<td>Topic 4: Communities, Neighborhoods and the Minoritized, Marginalized, and Vulnerable</td>
<td>Finish Wilson, Part 2; Skolnick &amp; Currie, Part 10 &lt;br&gt;HW: Prompt 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 4</td>
<td>Topic 4A: Building contexts and frameworks for understanding the poor and marginalized in neighborhood research study</td>
<td>Skolnick &amp; Currie, Part 11-12</td>
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<td>November 11</td>
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<td>HW: Paper Presentations</td>
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<td>November 18</td>
<td>Course Summary</td>
<td>HW: Paper Presentations and Evaluations (Faculty and Student)</td>
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<td>December 2</td>
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<td>HW: Final Papers Due</td>
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### ASSESSMENT RUBRIC(S):

**Rubric for Prompts/Discussion Responses**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Levels of Performance</th>
<th>(D) Unsatisfactory</th>
<th>(C) Basic</th>
<th>(B) Proficient</th>
<th>(A) Distinguished</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Attention to Question/Prompt</strong></td>
<td>The paper misses the focus of the questions/prompts.</td>
<td>The paper addresses the questions/prompts in a general and vague manner.</td>
<td>The paper addresses nicely and clearly the questions/prompts provided.</td>
<td>In addition to proficient, the paper illustrates how the prompt/question is tied to the course topic and objectives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Relevance to Course Materials and Readings</strong></td>
<td>The paper does not make relevance to course materials and readings.</td>
<td>The paper provides vague relevance to course materials and readings.</td>
<td>The paper provides clear and poignant relevance to course materials and readings.</td>
<td>In addition to the Proficient criteria, there is clear reference and relevance to course materials and readings in and beyond class.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Quality of Writing</strong></td>
<td>Writing contains many grammar and syntax errors. Repeated patterns of mechanical and usage errors seriously interfere with writer’s purpose. Vocabulary is not on a professional, formal level; may be inappropriate, vague, or used incorrectly.</td>
<td>Grammar and syntax are correct. Professional vocabulary is limited but appropriately used. Most thoughts are expressed formally. APA format is used correctly.</td>
<td>Writing is on a formal and professional level. Communication of ideas is clear and accurate. Language reflects correct usage of a professional vocabulary. APA format is used correctly in the text and reference page.</td>
<td>The language used reflects a careful choice of words and a vocabulary that documents a growing professional knowledge base. APA format is used correctly in the text and reference page.</td>
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### Rubric for Course Participation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Levels of Performance</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>(F) Unsatisfactory</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Attendance &amp; Participation</strong></td>
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## Rubric for Research Paper/Project

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Levels of Performance</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>(F) Unsatisfactory</strong></td>
<td><strong>(C) Basic</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Introduction</strong></td>
<td>The Introduction is unorganized and unclear.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Problem Statement</strong></td>
<td>The problem statement included is vague and unorganized.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Purpose Statement and Research Questions</strong></td>
<td>The purpose statement and research questions included are vague and unorganized.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theoretical Framework</strong></td>
<td>The theoretical framework is vague and unorganized.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Data Collection, Use, and Analysis</strong></td>
<td>There is limited to no clear use and application of data collection and analysis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Quality of Writing</strong></td>
<td>Writing contains many grammar and syntax errors. Repeated patterns of mechanical and usage errors seriously interfere with writer’s purpose. Vocabulary is not on a professional, formal level; may be inappropriate, vague, or used incorrectly.</td>
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