

**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):**

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**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:**

Frankenberg, E., & Orfield, G. (2012). *The resegregation of suburban schools: A hidden crisis in American education*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard Education Press. (recommended)

Kozol, J. (2005). *The shame of the nation: The restoration of apartheid schooling in America*. NY: Crown.

Pattillo, M. (2013). *Black picket fences: Privilege and peril among the black middle class*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Sharkey, P. (2013). *Stuck in place; Urban neighborhoods and the end of progress toward racial equity*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Skolnick, J.H. & Currie, E. (2010). *Crisis in American institutions*, 15<sup>th</sup> ed. Boston: Pearson.

Wilson, W.J. (1996). *When work disappears: The world of the new urban poor*. NY: Knopf.

Yeakey, C.C. (2012). *Living on the boundaries: Urban marginality in national and international contexts*. Bingley, UK: Emerald. (on reserve and recommended)

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/> ).
- b. Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing (See <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/responsible-use-of-computing/> ).
- 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/>.**

## PROPOSED CLASS SCHEDULE

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

**ASSESSMENT RUBRIC(S):**

**Rubric for Prompts/Discussion Responses**

|   | <b>Levels of Performance</b>  |  |   |  |
|---|---|--|---|--|
|   | <b>(D) Unsatisfactory</b>   | <b>(C) Basic</b>   | <b>(B) Proficient</b>   | <b>(A) Distinguished</b>   |
| <b>Attention to Question/Prompt</b>               | The paper misses the focus of the questions/prompts.  | The paper addresses the questions/prompts in a general and vague manner.   | The paper addresses nicely and clearly the questions/prompts provided.  | In addition to proficient, the paper illustrates how the prompt/question is tied to the course topic and objectives.   |
| <b>Relevance to Course Materials and Readings</b> | The paper does not make relevance to course materials and readings.   | The paper provides vague relevance to course materials and readings.   | The paper provides clear and poignant relevance to course materials and readings.   | In addition to the Proficient criteria, there is clear reference and relevance to course materials and readings in and beyond class.   |
| <b>Quality of Writing</b>                         | 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. | Grammar and syntax are correct. Professional vocabulary is limited but appropriately used. Most thoughts are expressed formally. APA format is used correctly. | 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. | 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. |

## Rubric for Course Participation

|                                       |  |  |  |  | <b>Levels of Performance</b>  |   |  |  |  |  |
|---------------------------------------|--|--|--|--|---|---|--|--|--|--|
|                                       |  |  |  |  | <b>(F) Unsatisfactory</b>   | <b>(C) Basic</b>  | <b>(B) Proficient</b>  | <b>(A) Distinguished</b>   |  |  |
| <b>Attendance &amp; Participation</b> |  |  |  |  | Rarely takes an active role in their own learning and learning of their classmates. Participates and asks questions infrequently. Hesitates to share ideas and may not always listen to or respect the opinions of others. Usually participates only when called upon. As a result of assignments being sometimes incomplete or missing, may not be prepared to answer thoughtfully with detail or substance. | Sometimes takes an active role in own learning and learning of classmates, sharing relevant ideas and asking appropriate questions. Contributes regularly to class discussions. Listens to classmates and respects their opinions. As a result of having completed assignments, student is prepared to answer questions and help others master concepts when called upon. | Usually takes an active role in their own learning and the learning of others in the class. Participates regularly in class and Blackboard work (if applicable), asks thoughtful questions, and defends opinions. Listens respectfully to classmates and is willing to share ideas as a result of having completed readings and assignments. Demonstrates a consistent commitment to make the most out of class time each and every day. | Consistently takes a voluntary, thoughtful, and active role in their own learning and the learning of their classmates. Through participation and inquiry, consistently demonstrates a genuine desire to learn and share ideas with the class. Initiates discussions, asks significant questions, and acts as leader within the group, including participation in Blackboard work. Willing to assert an opinion and support it, and to listen actively to others. Consistently well-prepared to contribute to the class as a result of having thoughtfully completed readings and assignments. Thoroughness of the work demonstrates a high regard for learning. |  |  |



## Rubric for Research Paper/Project

|   | <b>Levels of Performance</b>  |  |   |   |
|---|---|--|---|---|
|   | <b>(F) Unsatisfactory</b>   | <b>(C) Basic</b>   | <b>(B) Proficient</b>   | <b>(A) Distinguished</b>  |
| <b>Introduction</b>                             | The Introduction is unorganized and unclear.  | The Introduction is organized and clear.   | The introduction is well written and organized and clearly articulates the purposes of the essay.   | In addition to proficient, the introduction provides detail about the essay.  |
| <b>Problem Statement</b>                        | The problem statement included is vague and unorganized.  | The problem statement included is general and organized.   | The problem statement included is clearly articulated and include specific examples.  | In addition to the Proficient criteria, there is a sufficient reference and application of the problem statement to the theoretical underpinnings of the paper.   |
| <b>Purpose Statement and Research Questions</b> | The purpose statement and research questions included are vague and unorganized.  | The purpose statement and research questions included are general and organized.   | The purpose statement and research questions included are clearly articulated and include specific examples.  | In addition to the Proficient criteria, there is a sufficient reference and application of the purpose statement and research questions included are aligned to the theoretical underpinnings of the paper. |
| <b>Theoretical Framework</b>                    | The theoretical framework is vague and unorganized.   | The theoretical framework is general and organized.  | The theoretical framework is clearly articulated and includes specific examples.  | In addition to the Proficient criteria, there is a sufficient reference and application of the theoretical framework to relevant literature in the field.   |
| <b>Data Collection, Use, and Analysis</b>       | There is limited to no clear use and application of data collection and analysis.   | There is clear use and application of data collection and analysis.  | The data collection and analysis section is clearly articulated and includes specific examples.   | In addition to the Proficient criteria, the data collection and analysis section provides ample discussion of how the data align to the previous sections of the paper.                                     |
| <b>Quality of Writing</b>                       | 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. | Grammar and syntax are correct. Professional vocabulary is limited but appropriately used. Most thoughts are expressed formally. APA format is used correctly. | 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. | 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.                    |