

**GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY**  
**COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT**  
**EDLE 634: Contemporary Issues in Education Leadership**  
**Section 602/Fairfax Cohort XI - Spring 2017**

**Instructor Information**

**Instructor:** Dr. Phyllis Pajardo (Dr. Phyll)  
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**Schedule Information**

**Location:** Oakton HS, Library  
**Meeting Dates:** January 10 – April 18, 2017 (Tuesdays); exceptions noted below  
**Meeting Time:** 4:45 – 7:45 pm  
**NOTE:** *Class will meet at **Baileys Upper Elementary** on **February 28**  
Class will **not be held on April 11** as that's FCPS spring break.*

**Course Description**

This course examines current and emerging issues and trends impacting education: inquiring into demographic shifts; globalization; technology; data-based decision-making; inclusion of diverse learners in American schools; and research on student achievement when influenced by race, gender, and poverty.

**Nature of Course Delivery**

A variety of instructional methods are used in this course to deepen students' understanding of the course content and create a dynamic, interactive learning community. The instructional methods will include lecture, cooperative learning structures, large- and small-group discussion/presentations/activities, print and electronic media, guest practitioners, and individual research.

**Course Materials**

Required: **FCPS News Clips** (daily online listings of local, regional, state, and national educational news stories). Free subscription; registration required. Email [Mary.Shaw@fcps.edu](mailto:Mary.Shaw@fcps.edu), communications specialist.

**Marshall Memo** (weekly online synopsis of K-12 educational articles/research). Subscription fee (\$50 for individual, fee decreases with multiple registrations). Register via <http://www.marshallmemo.com/>

Optional: Koonce, Glenn (2015). *Taking sides: Clashing views on educational issues*. (18<sup>th</sup> edition). New York: McGraw-Hill.

Classroom Materials: Additional readings as assigned.

### **Learner Outcomes**

Students will be able to:

1. Explain several major issues/trends and their implications for society at large and schools and school districts in particular.
2. Demonstrate the ability to make educational decisions that are supported by data rather than only personal opinions.
3. Connect and apply knowledge from prior courses.
4. Synthesize recent research relative to student achievement with particular attention to the relationships between student achievement and gender, race, and poverty.
5. Identify current issues in education (locally and nationally) and consider the implications for school districts.
6. Identify effective ways to communicate to various stakeholders and groups.
7. Describe rights, regulations, philosophies, and methods used in educating diverse groups such as Limited English Proficient and Students with Disabilities.
8. Utilize various data sources to predict future issues/trends in education and to improve student achievement.
9. Work independently and interdependently to successfully accomplish group projects.
10. Listen to multiple perspectives, consider suggestions, seek common ground, and maintain objectivity.
11. Articulate a vision for leadership in future roles as educational leaders.

### **Relationship to Program Goals and Professional Standards**

This course is intended as one of two culminating courses in the Masters in Education Leadership Program. Course content focuses on key contemporary issues in public education, both current and emerging. At the conclusion of the course, participants are expected to demonstrate knowledge and skills that increase their effectiveness when working in diverse school settings, an expected hallmark of education in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

In relationship to professional standards, participants will demonstrate proficiency in appropriate VA DOE competencies and Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (formerly ISSLC standards). VA DOE: 1-d, 1-e, 2-c, 2-d, 3-g, 4-a, 5-c, 6-e, 6-f. ISLLC: 1-K1, 1-K4, 1-K5, 2-K7, 2-K10, 2-P5, 2-P6, 2-P9, 2-P16, 2-P18, 3-K8, 3-P3, 3-P16, 3-P17, 4-K1, 4-K2, 4-P11, 5-K3, 5-P12, 6-K6, 6-K8, 6-P2, 6-P4, 6-P5.

With regard to NCATE Curriculum Guidelines, candidates in this course will demonstrate an understanding of, and capabilities in, all four areas of education leadership: strategic leadership (1.3, 1.6, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, and 2.4); instructional leadership (3.3, 3.4); organizational leadership (7.2, 7.4, and 9.3).

### **GMU Policies and Resources for Students**

- Students must adhere to the guidelines of the Mason Honor Code (see <http://oai.gmu.edu/the-mason-honor-code/>).
- Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing (see <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/responsible-use-of-computing/>).
- Students are responsible for the content of university communications sent to their Mason 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.
- Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with George Mason University Disability Services. Approved accommodations will begin at the time the written letter from Disability Services is received by the instructor (see <http://ods.gmu.edu/>).
- Students must follow the university policy stating that all sound emitting devices shall be silenced during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.

### *Campus Resources*

- Support for submission of assignments to Tk20 should be directed to [tk20help@gmu.edu](mailto:tk20help@gmu.edu) or <https://cehd.gmu.edu/aero/tk20>. Questions or concerns regarding use of Blackboard should be directed to <http://coursessupport.gmu.edu/>.
- The Writing Center 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/>).
- The 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/>).
- The Student Support & Advocacy Center staff helps students develop and maintain healthy lifestyles through confidential one-on-one support as well as through interactive programs and resources. Some of the topics they address are healthy relationships, stress management,

nutrition, sexual assault, drug and alcohol use, and sexual health (see <http://ssac.gmu.edu/>). Students in need of these services may contact the office by phone at [703-993-3686](tel:703-993-3686). Concerned students, faculty and staff may also make a referral to express concern for the safety or well-being of a Mason student or the community by going to <http://ssac.gmu.edu/make-a-referral/>.

For additional information on the College of Education and Human Development, please visit our website <https://cehd.gmu.edu/>.

### **Professional Dispositions**

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

### **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://cehd.gmu.edu/values/>

### **Course Schedule**

See page 10 of the syllabus.

### **Course Requirements and Procedures**

Students are expected to attend each class for its entirety. Students who must be absent from class are expected to notify the instructor in advance by telephone or email.

Students who miss more than one class, or who arrive late or leave early, will lose participation points.

Assignments are to be completed by the due date outlined. Assignments submitted late will have points deducted. Assignments submitted more than one week late may not receive credit. All written assignments are to be completed using standard word processing software or presentation tools and may be submitted in advance electronically.

### **Core Performance Evaluation/Course Activities**

Since this is a graduate-level class, high quality work on all assignments and meaningful class participation are expected. Rubrics will be used in the evaluation of required course work. Below is a brief summary of the assignment. Refer to the related rubric for more details on each assignment.

**Small group project/presentation** on current issue: Work in **30 points**  
groups of four, with defined roles. Prepare a 40-minute interactive presentation (which includes a Q & A) with visuals/PPT, on selected topic, which is to be defined/described. Include relevant related research. Discuss topic's implications and potential impact on education. Multiple perspectives from key stakeholders should be presented. See list of possible topics.

**Stakeholder Interviews:** To expand and/or deepen your understanding **20 points**  
of the issue/trend examined in your group presentation, students will conduct one-on-one interviews with at least two education stakeholders. Consider interviewing stakeholders who are likely to hold competing perspectives on the issue you're studying. These stakeholders may be school board members, local politicians, parents, community organizers, business leaders, educational researchers, school or central-office administrators, school or central-office staff, etc. The assignment requires you to submit the names of stakeholders interviewed, a 2-3 page summary of the data collected from your interview, and your interview questions.

**Individual Issue Paper:** Students will select an issue that is of high **25 points**  
interest and write a 4-5 page paper which shows evidence of readings, connects and relates your paper to major trends and contemporary issues in educational leadership, analyzes the issue, and presents possible recommendations. Key points are to be presented in a clear, compelling manner with supporting details.

**Class participation, discussion and attendance:** Actively participate in class **25 points**  
discussions, and in group activities, share current issues from news media/pending or current legislation, and serve as critical friends to other students. Each student will assist in leading/facilitating at least one discussion topic. Attendance is expected for all classes.

**Possible topics for issue paper/group presentations:** bullying, discipline, technology, administrator or teacher credentialing/selection/retention, professional learning, professional standards, student testing, assessment, common core, funding, school turn around, charter schools, graduation rates, gender equity, employee compensation, teacher leadership, innovation/maker space, one-to-one, parent/community involvement, etc. Contact the instructor if you would like to explore a topic that is not listed.

**Submission of assignments:** Email to [ppajardo@gmu.edu](mailto:ppajardo@gmu.edu) or provide a hard copy by the due date. Twelve-point font is preferred; however, students may use no less than 11 point font. Double spacing is preferred; however, students may use 1.5 line spacing. Designate one person in each group to submit the group presentation ensuring that each group member's name is included on the presentation document.

## **Grading**

Grades are based on each student's proficiency with respect to the learner outcomes noted on page 2. Outcomes typically have an oral (class participation) and a written component (assignments noted above).

*Grading Scale*

A+ = 100 points  
A = 95 - 99 points  
A - = 90 - 94 points  
B+ = 87 - 89 points  
B = 83 - 86 points  
B - = 80 - 82 points  
C = 75 - 79 points  
F = 0 - 74 points

**Stakeholder Interviews - 20 points each – Due: February 21**

In order to expand and/or deepen student’s understanding of the issue/trend examined in the small group presentation, each student will conduct one-on-one interviews with at least two education stakeholders, who are likely to hold competing perspectives on the issue you’re studying. These stakeholders may be school board members, local politicians, parents, community organizers, business leaders, educational researchers, school or central-office administrators, school or central-office staff, etc. The assignment requires you to submit the names of stakeholders, a 2-3 page summary of the data collected from your interview, and your interview protocol/questions.

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Objective Not Met 1</b>	<b>Objective Partially Met 2</b>	<b>Objective Met 3</b>	<b>Objective Met/Exceeded 4</b>
Understands the issue being advocated and its importance to education	Demonstrates severe misconceptions.	Displays incomplete understanding of concepts.	Displays complete and accurate understanding of important concepts.	Provides new insights and important concepts.
Presents stakeholders with divergent viewpoints	Does not introduce the interview subjects; does not use viewpoints.	Provides a vague introduction of the subjects; uses viewpoints which are not divergent.	Introduces the subjects and presents divergent perspectives.	Introduces and describes the subjects; articulates clear, multiple and diverse perspectives on the issue.
Presents interview data	Presents information in isolated pieces, in a random fashion; does not quote interviewees.	Presents important interview information in an unclear theme/structure; does not quote interviewees.	Presents the interviewees’ points in an unbiased manner; does not quote interviewees.	Presents the interviewees’ points, uses quotes that contains rich, vivid and powerful detail.
Interview Protocol/questions	Does not include the interview protocol.			Includes the interview protocol.
Creates quality product	There are frequent errors in spelling, grammar, and punctuation.	Errors in grammar and punctuation are present, but spelling has been proofread.	There are occasional grammatical errors and word choice.	The paper is nearly error-free and reflects clear understanding and thorough proofreading.

**Individual Issue Paper - 25 points each – Due March 21**

Each student will select an issue that is of high interest and write a 4-5 page paper. The paper should: describe the issue, underlying assumptions, and arguments; present divergent points of view; integrate current research, show evidence of readings, connect and relate to major trends and contemporary issues in educational leadership, analyze the issue, and present possible implications or recommendations. Key points are presented in a clear, compelling manner with supporting details.

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Objective Not Met 1</b>	<b>Objective Partially Met 2</b>	<b>Objective Met 3</b>	<b>Objective Met/Exceeded 4</b>
Understands the issue being advocated and its importance to education (possible 5 pts)	Demonstrates severe misconceptions.	Displays incomplete understanding of concepts.	Displays complete and accurate understanding of important concepts.	Provides new insights into some aspect of important concepts.
Presents divergent viewpoints	Does not use viewpoints.	Uses viewpoints which are not divergent.	Presents divergent perspectives.	Articulates clear, multiple and diverse perspectives on the issue.
Expresses ideas clearly	Communicates information as isolated pieces in random fashion.	Communicates important information but not a clear theme or overall structure.	Clearly communicates main idea or theme and provides suitable support and detail	Provides support that contains rich, vivid and powerful detail.
Effectively translates and integrates research into meaningful summary	Does not translate research or prior readings into summary that is clearly defined.	Translates research and readings into summary that has poorly defined conclusions with little or no data or research.	Consistently translates research and prior readings into summary that has clearly defined conclusions.	Anticipates and articulates outcomes of research and readings on issues.
Presents implications and recommendations	Does not offer a statement or examination.	Offers vague implications and recommendations.	Offers implications and recommendations with few details.	Offers clear and specific implications and recommendations.
Creates quality product	There are frequent errors in spelling, grammar, and punctuation.	Errors in grammar and punctuation are present, but spelling has been proofread.	There are occasional grammatical errors and word choice.	The paper is nearly error-free and reflects clear understanding and thorough proofreading.

**Small Group Project Presentation Rubric – 30 points – Due: April 4**

Students will work in groups of four, with defined roles. Each group will prepare a 40-minute interactive presentation with visuals/PPT, on an educational issue, which is to be defined/described. Relevant related research should be included. Topic’s implications and potential impact on education should be discussed. Multiple perspectives from key stakeholders should be presented. Ten of the 40 minutes of the presentation should be devoted to Q & A.

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Objective Not Met 1</b>	<b>Objective Partially Met 2</b>	<b>Objective Met 3</b>	<b>Objective Met/Exceeded 4</b>
Length of Presentation	Less than 20 or more than 40 minutes	Less than 25 or more than 35 minutes	25-35 minutes	40 minutes
Interactive Presentation	No engagement	Less than half of class participates	Every class member participates	Half of class participates more than once
Research-based information (possible 6 points)	No research cited	Missing one or more important research studies	Basic and current research included	Critical research included
Necessary/integral information on assigned topic	Information lacking or not on topic	Topic not clearly described and only partial information provided	Topic clearly described and necessary information provided	Topic clearly described and implication for future changes or uses outlined
Presentation content	Provides misconceptions of issues	Provides incomplete understanding of issues	Provides complete and accurate understanding of issues	Provides new insights into issues
Group member participation	One member	Half of the members	All members	All members have a unique role
Response to questions	No response or inaccurate answers	Some questions not responded to or some responded to inaccurately	All questions responded to	All questions responded to clearly and accurately

## Participation – 25 points

Students are to actively participate in class and online discussions, as well as in group activities. They will share current issues from news media, from pending or current legislation, and other sources. Students are to serve as critical friends to other students. Each student will assist in facilitating/leading one discussion topic. Students are expected to attend each class.

<i>Levels:</i>	<b>Objective Met/Exceeded</b>	<b>Objective Met</b>	<b>Objective Partially Met</b>	<b>Objective Not Met</b>
<i>Criteria:</i>	4	3	2	1
<b>Attendance</b>	Exemplary attendance; no tardies	Near perfect attendance; few tardies	Occasional (2-3) absences or tardies	Frequent (>3) absences or tardies
<b>Questions and Interactions</b>	Most queries are specific and on point. Deeply involved in class dialogue. Challenges ideas, seeks meaning.	Often has specific queries, stays involved in class dialogue, though sometimes tentative or off-base.	Asks questions about deadlines, procedures, directions or for help with little specificity. Little discussion of ideas.	Rarely asks questions of any quality.
<b>Effort</b>	Willingly participates when asked. Plays a leadership role in groups. Engages and brings out the best in others.	Willingly participates when asked. Takes on group tasks. Engages others.	Reluctantly participates when asked. Seeks easiest duties in groups. Tolerates others.	Actively avoids involvement when possible. Complains about others. Has large set of excuses.
<b>Engagement</b>	Enthusiastically initiates discussion. Personalizes and takes ownership of activities. Always knows where class or group is.	Sometimes initiates discussion and always works well with direction. Generally knows what's going on.	Seeks direction, but does not initiate discussion. May know where class or group is.	Waits for direction. Knows little of what is going on. Cannot describe where class or group is.

## Course Schedule

NOTE: The instructor reserves the right to alter the schedule as necessary, with notification to students.

Session	Date	Topic	Reading/ Assignment Due	Guest Practitioner(s)
1	Jan 10	Course Introduction and Overview Current Issues		Dr. Deborah Jackson
2	Jan 17	Multi-generational Educators Current Issues		Specialist, Professional Learning
3	Jan 24	Poverty, Priority Schools, and the Achievement Gap Current Issues		Executive Director, School Improvement
4	Jan 31	Cultural Competencies Current Issues		Manager, Cultural Competence Dr. Deborah Jackson
5	Feb 7	Educational Legislation and Policies Current Issues		At-large member, FCPS School Board
6	Feb 14	Virtual Class – Topic TBD Current Issues		
7	Feb 21	Charter/Specialty Schooling Current Issues	Stakeholder Interviews Due	Admin Panel Dr. Deborah Jackson
8	*Feb 28	Innovative Facilities & Learning Spaces Current Issues	Meet at Baileys Upper ES	Principal, Baileys Upper ES
9	March 7	Professional Learning and Leadership Development Current Issues		Dr. Deborah Jackson
10	March 14	Topic TBD Current issues		TBD
11	March 21	Inclusive Practices Current issues	Individual Issue Paper Due	Admin Panel
12	March 28	Professional Preparation/Mock Interviews Current Issues		HR Specialist, Admin Hiring
13	April 4	Group Presentations	Group Projects Due	
14	April 18	Group Presentations, if needed Course wrap-up		TBD