

**George Mason University**  
**College of Education and Human Development**  
**Graduate Certificate in Education Policy**

EDPO 604 - 001 – Education Policy Implementation  
3 Credits, Fall, 2019  
Tuesdays, 7:20 p.m. – 10:00 p.m., Van Metre Hall 310  
Arlington Campus

**Faculty**

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**Prerequisites/Corequisites**

None.

**University Catalog Course Description**

Focuses on the implementation stage of the policy process and examines the interactions among education policies, stakeholders, and places. Provides students with an understanding of the contexts and factors that impede or promote the implementation of education policies and considers strategies for effectively achieving the desired policy objectives. Offered by Graduate School of Education. May not be repeated for credit.

**Course Overview**

Implementation failure is often why well-intentioned education policies do not yield the results expected. However, implementation is a complex change process that operates within several contexts, occurs at multiple levels, and involves a set of dynamic interactions among many policy actors, organizations, and locations. This course examines the importance of implementation in the education policy process, as well as its complexities and subtleties, and focuses on the critical factors that impede or promote ability of educational agencies and communities to accomplish the objectives of adopted public policies. By looking closely at the “who, what, why, how, and for whom” and tracking the evolution of policy implementation in education, including using case studies, this course will identify and analyze areas for potential improvement, discuss lessons learned to inform education policy design, and explore the implications for policy and practice.

**Course Delivery Method**

This course will be delivered using a lecture, group collaboration, and seminar format.

## Learner Outcomes or Objectives

This course is designed to enable students to do the following:

1. Gain an understanding of the contexts of implementation and its relation to policy.
2. Interrogate and examine the role of politics and stakeholders in the policymaking process.
3. Gain an understanding of the evolution of policy implementation in education.
4. Hone critical thinking skills through class discussions and writing assignments.

## Professional Standards

Not Applicable.

## Required Texts

Honig, M. I. (Ed.) (2006). *New directions in education policy implementation: Confronting complexity*. Albany, NY: The State University of New York Press.

Viennet, R., & Pont, B. (2017). *Education policy implementation: A literature review and proposed framework*. OECD Education Working Papers, No. 162. Paris: OECD Publishing.

\*Additional required reading assignments are loaded in the **Content** section of Blackboard and will be assigned to the course calendar after the first week.

## Course Performance Evaluation

Students are expected to submit all assignments on time via Blackboard.

## Assignments

### 1. Group Project (30pts)

In this group presentation, students will present a specific case study of the implementation of a particular policy. Together, students will explore the intent of the policy, the stakeholders involved in implementation, and the outcomes. Groups will be determined during the first sessions of the semester.

### 2. Group Project: Write Up (20pts)

In this collaboratively written essay (8-10pp), students will write up the findings of their presentation highlighting the policy and the context in which it was created and the key policymakers and stakeholders. Students discuss the implementation of the policy, tracking the dynamics between policy actors and organizations. The essay will close with an evaluation of the implementation of the policy and a discussion of recommendations for relevant policymakers.

### 3. Policy White Paper (30pts)

In this white paper (8-10pp), students will identify an education policy (separate from the one they presented in their group project) and explore its implementation, highlighting the context and interactions of various policymakers and stakeholders. Students will address their white paper to a local, state, or federal school leader of their

choice. After establishing the policy and its original intent, the author will use at least 8 peer-reviewed articles and books to discuss the complex dynamics around implementation, including potential barriers and challenges. The author will close by offering at least 3 recommendations of how the school leader ought to consider implementing the policy in the future. An evaluation rubric for this assignment is included in this syllabus.

**4. Individual Presentation (20pts)**

During the final class of the semester, students will deliver a 15-minute presentation based on the white paper.

**Other Requirements**

1. 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 handouts from a colleague.
2. Students are expected to read all assignments prior to class and bring copies (either hard or electronic copy) to class.
3. Students are expected to actively participate in discussions and activities and to treat one another with respect, both in class and on-line.
4. All assignments must be submitted on time. Unless prior arrangements are made, late work will be penalized by 2pt/day.

**Grading**

This course uses the university-wide system for grading graduate courses. See <http://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/academic/grading/> Cumulative points corresponding to each grade are as follows:

A+	97-100	B+	87-89	C	70-79
A	93-96	B	83-86	F	≤ 69
A-	90-92	B-	80-82		

**Professional Dispositions**

See <https://cehd.gmu.edu/students/policies-procedures/>

## Class Schedule

Class Session	Topic	Readings*
Aug 27	Introduction – Building relationships; Setting groups; Assignment expectations; Education policy brainstorming	No Readings
Sept 3	The Lifecycle of Public Policy	McLaughlin et al. (2016)
Sept 10	Complexity and Policy Implementation	Honig, Cpt. 1; Mason (2016)
Sept 17	Federalism: Policy Implementation	Ward (2018); Ferguson (2017)
Sept 24	Federal School Reform through the Local Lens	Honig, Cpt. 6**
Oct 1	Communities of Practice	Honig, Cpt. 2**
Oct 8	The Roles of Cognition, Language, and Politics	Honig, Cpts. 3, 4, and 5 (excerpts)
Oct 15	<i>Fall Break – No Class</i>	No Readings
Oct 22	Organizational Learning	Honig, Chapter 7**
Oct 29	Group Presentations	No readings
Nov 5	Critical Policy Analysis Approach	Honig, Chapter 8**
Nov 12	Economic Approach	Honig, Chapter 9**
Nov 19	The Role of Social Capital	Honig, Chapter 10, 11
Nov 26	Individual Paper Consultations	No Readings
Dec 3	Looking Forward	Viennet & Pont**
Dec 10	Student Presentations	No Readings

\*Assigned readings are to be read *prior* to the class session date. The schedule is intended to indicate the topics to be discussed as opposed to what is for homework.

\*\* Additional articles may be assigned on these days – announced well in advance.

Note: Faculty reserves the right to alter the schedule as necessary, with notification to students.

## 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/>.

## GMU Policies and Resources for Students

### *Policies*

- Students must adhere to the guidelines of the Mason Honor Code (see <https://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/honor-code-system/>).
- 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 <https://ds.gmu.edu/>).
- Students must silence all sound emitting devices 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/>.
- For information on student support resources on campus, see <https://ctfe.gmu.edu/teaching/student-support-resources-on-campus>

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

**Rubric: White Paper Assignment**

	<b>Meets Standards for Full Credit</b>
<b>Executive Summary</b> <i>5 points</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Author identifies policy audience;</li><li>• Author provides relevant background;</li><li>• Author provides an overview of the white paper and its primary contribution.</li></ul>
<b>Articulation of Problem</b> <i>5 points</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Author clearly articulates and describes a current education policy;</li><li>• Author examines the nature of the problem, exploring who is involved and where;</li><li>• Author discusses the significance of the problem.</li></ul>
<b>Discussion of the Implementation</b> <i>5 points</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Author introduces and explores some of the competing stakeholders involved in implementing the policy, highlighting converging and diverging perspectives;</li><li>• Author explores context in which implementation of policy takes place.</li></ul>
<b>Perspectives on the Problem</b> <i>5 points</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Using at least 8 peer-reviewed articles and books, the author explores various perspectives on the core policy and related implementation endeavors;</li><li>• Author crafts a thesis-driven argument about the nature of implementation.</li></ul>
<b>Recommendations</b> <i>5 points</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Author provides at least 3 clear recommendations to current policymakers;</li><li>• Author considers competing perspectives.</li></ul>
<b>Writing</b> <i>5 points</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Writing is clear, logical, and error free;</li><li>• Writing adheres to APA style guidelines;</li><li>• White paper is 8-10pp long;</li><li>• Author cites and draws from at least 8 peer-reviewed secondary books and articles.</li></ul>

**Additional assignment rubrics will be made available at the beginning of the semester.**