

**George Mason University**  
**College of Education and Human Development**  
**Secondary Education**

SEED 522 (Section 001)– Foundations of Secondary Education  
3 Credits, Fall 2022  
Fairfax Campus - Thompson Hall 1020  
Wednesdays 4:30-7:10 PM

**Faculty**

Name: Dr. Mark Helmsing  
Office Hours: By appointment Monday through Thursday in person or on Zoom  
Office Location: Thompson Hall 1807 (Fairfax Campus)  
Office Phone: 703-993-2384 (email is best method of communication)  
Email Address: [mhelmsin@gmu.edu](mailto:mhelmsin@gmu.edu)

**Prerequisites/Corequisites**

None.

**University Catalog Course Description**

Analyzes philosophical assumptions, curriculum issues, learning theories, and history associated with current teaching styles. Emphasizes applications to all disciplines taught in secondary schools. Examines current educational trends and issues in relation to sociology of secondary school settings.

**Course Overview**

*Foundations of Secondary Education* offers students an analysis of philosophical assumptions, curriculum issues, learning theories, and histories of secondary education. This course emphasizes applications to all disciplines taught in secondary schools and examines current educational trends and issues in relation to secondary school settings.

**Course Delivery Method**

This course will be delivered using a lecture/seminar approach with multiple course activities required each session. Some class sessions will be held online asynchronously as noted in the syllabus.

**Learner Outcomes or Objectives**

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

1. *Acknowledge* and evaluate the varied, competing, and changing purposes of American public education.
2. *Have* an introductory knowledge of the foundations of secondary education in the United States, including the history and sociology of schools,

- philosophical assumptions and learning theories underlying instructional practices, and curricular trends/issues.
3. *Recognize* the diversity in American schools, especially as it regards race, ethnicity, gender, social class, language, and ability.
  4. *Be aware of* the systematic and differing educational opportunities and outcomes available to students, and the forces which alter existing practices in schools.
  5. *Analyze* teaching behaviors and categorize them according to their relationships to research- based practice and major educational philosophies.
  6. *Examine* the relationships among philosophy, curriculum issues, learning theories, history, and teaching styles.
  7. *Take* positions on selected issues in education and analyze how those positions relate to teaching style preferences.
  8. *State* their own philosophical positions in regard to the following questions:
    - o What is the nature of one subject matter area you wish to teach?
    - o What are the possibilities of that subject matter area for guiding students toward meaningful learning experiences?
    - o What kinds of teaching behaviors will you exhibit to exemplify your philosophical position?

### **Professional Standards**

InTASC Model Core Teaching Standards and Learning Progressions for Teachers.

Upon completion of this course, students will have met the following professional standards:

- Standard #3: Learning Environments. The teacher works with others to create environments that support individual and collaborative learning, and that encourage positive social interaction, active engagement in learning, and self-motivation.
- Standard #5: Application of Content. The teacher understands how to connect concepts and use differing perspectives to engage learners in critical thinking, creativity, and collaborative problem solving related to authentic local and global issues.
- Standard #9: Professional Learning and Ethical Practice. The teacher engages in ongoing professional learning and uses evidence to continually evaluate his/her practice, particularly the effects of his/her choices and actions on others (learners, families, other professionals, and the community), and adapts practice to meet the needs of each learner.
- Standard #10: Leadership and Collaboration. The teacher seeks appropriate leadership roles and opportunities to take responsibility for student learning, to collaborate with learners, families, colleagues, other school professionals, and community members to ensure learner growth, and to advance the profession.

## Required Readings

No books are required for purchase. All readings will be made freely available online and posted in the Blackboard course. All other resources will be provided digitally through the Blackboard course.

## Course Performance Evaluation

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

## Assignments

Assignment	Points
<b>(1) Participation &amp; Reflection</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Reflective Journaling (ongoing, in class)</li><li>• In-class discussions (ongoing, in class)</li><li>• Online discussions (when/if assigned)</li></ul>	10
<b>(2) Social Justice Instructional Video</b> (due October 12)	20
<b>(3) CLT Learning Segment</b> (due November 9)	20
<b>(4) Digital Portfolio</b> (due November 23) <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Resume</li><li>• CLT Learning Segment</li><li>• Course Reflection Statement</li><li>• Philosophy of Teaching Document</li><li>• Other artifacts from this and other courses</li></ul>	30
<b>(5) Foundations of School Clinical Experience Project</b> (due December 7) <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Final Report</li><li>• Project Presentation</li></ul>	20
<b>Total Points Possible</b>	<b>100</b>

**(1) Participation & Reflection (10 points)**SEED seed addressed: *Inquiry & Reflection*

Rationale: Inquiry and reflection are essential in your training and professional development as a teacher. Actively participating in discussions about your learning, reading, thinking, and teaching are important in your work as a teacher with your colleagues and school.

Description: Participation in this course includes completion of the Reflective Journal, in-class discussions, and online discussions. The Reflective Journal is a personal space for you to ask questions, reflect, challenge beliefs, make connections, and develop your philosophy as a teacher. You will receive your journal on the first day of the course, and you should bring it with you to each class session as well as to any clinical experiences or field work opportunities. Each class, you will be given prompts and time to work in your journal. These reflections will act as a springboard for discussion, whether in-class or online. In addition to reflective value, the Reflective Journal is designed to help you develop your *Philosophy of Education*, a component of the culminating assignment in this course, the *Digital Portfolio*. Some prompts will ask you to consider using a specific form in your Reflective Journal, while others will allow you to choose any form you'd like. We hope the form and function of the Reflective Journal will allow us to model the myriad of ways reflective journaling can be used in the secondary classroom.

Discussions of course topics (in-person and online) will take place during each class. These discussions are important to develop and articulate your thoughts, reflections, and connections regarding course topics and readings and your own experiences/anticipated experiences with teaching, teachers, and school. Active participation – speaking and listening with full attention – are expected in this graduate-level course.

Evaluation Criteria: 10 points – 10% of overall course grade

1. Quality of participation, reflections, and discussions (clarity, detail, effort)
2. Content of participation, reflections, and discussions (accuracy, relatedness)
3. Evidence of engagement with classmates in participation, reflections, and discussions

## **(2) Social Justice Instructional Video (20 points)**

SEED seed addressed: *Social Justice*

Rationale: There are many complex injustices that impact schools and education of which teachers should be aware. The **Social Justice Instructional Video** assignment provides an opportunity to dig deeper into a social justice-related topic of your choice, plan, and facilitate a discussion or activity designed to educate others on this topic. What do teachers/future teachers need to know about this topic? How does it impact teachers' or students' lives or the wider community?

Description: Students will sign up for their chosen topic during the first few weeks of class and work in pairs (or small groups) to research the topic and design a short **instructional video**, which will be recorded and shared with the entire class to view as a video resource.

To prepare, students will work together to locate three sources (e.g., research or news article, podcast, video, lecture, etc) about their chosen topic. Each group will plan and produce a 10-15 instructional video related to the social justice-related topic.

**Each group will also prepare a one-page handout of information for the class, including a list of references (minimum of three sources cited in APA style).**

Evaluation Criteria: 20 points – 20% of overall course grade

1. Evidence of engagement with topic (accuracy, relevance, coherence)
2. Structured instructional video explaining content that is relevant to topic
3. Document with references to relevant sources (at least three, cited in APA)
4. Evidence of full and equal participation of all group members

## **(3) CLT Learning Segment (20 points)**

SEED seed addressed: *Partnership & Collaboration*

Rationale: Teaching, at its best, is a highly collaborative process. In secondary schools, educators often work in Collaborative Learning Teams (CLTs) to plan and evaluate instruction. This assignment is designed to simulate the CLT expectations and environment to give students a glimpse into how working with a CLT may impact and enhance one's teaching.

Description: Students will be grouped into a CLT based upon content areas (to the extent possible) and assigned a subject/level/grade and design a learning segment that the CLT will draft in interactive segments during Weeks 5-11, adding a new component to the learning segment each week (e.g., curriculum, assessment, differentiation, etc.)

Evaluation Criteria: 20 points – 20% of overall course grade

1. Evidence of full and equal participation of all group members
2. Incorporation of teaching practices referenced in course readings, discussions, and topics as addressed in Weeks 5 through 11

**(4) Foundations of School Clinical Experience Project (20 points)**

SEED seed addressed: *Advocacy & Agency*

Rationale: Spending time in schools is an essential component of a teacher's education. This clinical experience involves immersing yourself in a school's or school community's culture, speaking with young people, teachers, or other school staff.

Description: To help ground your clinical experience, you will choose an area of focus early on in this course: Which **ONE** aspect of secondary schools do you want to know more about? What is a feature of secondary education that you consider foundational, important, or challenging? During your clinical experience, you will fully immerse yourself in your chosen topic, conducting observations and research, gathering artifacts, and speaking with stakeholders to better understand your chosen feature of school. **Possible topic choices will be discussed in class.**

During our last class session, you will present a final report to the class (and other community members). Your **final report** on your topic can take any form but it should be a **multimedia or multi-genre presentation** that includes a synthesis of the following sources:

- At least one interview with a young person, ideally one who is approximately the same age as the students you teach or hope to teach (family members are permitted).
- At least one interview with an educator.
- At least one interview with a community member or stakeholder, someone who is involved or concerned with your topic of choice.
- Artifacts – pictures, recordings, handouts, items, etc. – collected during your clinical experience.
- A reflection (~500 words) on major takeaways from your experience, including how it has informed your understanding of the history and/or purpose of public school and how it will inform your future teaching.

Evaluation Criteria: 20 points – 20% of overall course grade

1. Evidence of engagement with topic (accuracy, relevance, coherence)
2. Evidence of immersion in school culture and community
3. Synthesis of all required components (interviews, artifacts, reflection)

## **(5) Digital Portfolio (30 points)**

SEED seed addressed: *Respect & Relationships*

Rationale: Understanding your conception of and relationship to teaching is a vital part of your development as a teacher. Articulating these components in your teaching philosophy is often an important step in the employment process, whether it is communicated via your resume, a cover letter, or in a teaching interview. The Digital Portfolio serves as both the culminating assignment for this course and a space for you to begin to formulate your teaching philosophy, a living document that can grow with you through the program and eventually be shared with a future employer.

Description: Students will create their Digital Portfolio in any **free** online web space (e.g., Google Sites, Wix, Weebly, Squarespace, Adobe Portfolio, etc.). In its final form, it should include the following components, some of which will be part of other course assignments:

- I. Resume
- II. CLT Learning Segment
- III. Foundations of School Clinical Experience Project
- IV. Course Reflection Statement (1-2 pages single spaced)
- V. Philosophy of Teaching Document (2-4 pages single spaced)
- VI. Other artifacts/evidence from this and any other relevant course

### Component I: Resume

Detailing education, skills, awards/certificates, and any relevant job or volunteer experiences.

### Component II: CLT Learning Segment

A link to or file upload of the CLT Learning Segment you create with your CLT.

### Component III: Foundations of School Clinical Experience Project

A link to or file upload of any materials related to your Foundations of School Clinical Experience Project final presentation and report.

### Component IV: Course Reflection Statement

In 1-2 single-spaced pages (maximum length), describe takeaways and insights you developed from the course. Your reflection should address any of/all the following essential questions:

1. What is the purpose of school in the past, present, and possibly in the future?
  - a. How do schools *work*? What are the routines, norms, and challenges currently facing schools and teachers? What social agreements are essential to school functionality?
2. What *should* the purpose of school be, for students and communities?
  - a. What roles do teachers play in schools, both in the past and in the present? How do these roles exist both ideally (as intended) and realistically (as enacted)?

- b. What roles will YOU play as a teacher? What is your teaching mission? What sustains or impedes that mission? How does your philosophy of teaching inform your mission?

#### Component V: Philosophy of Teaching Document

In 2-4 single-spaced pages (maximum length), describe and illustrate your philosophical approaches to teaching based on the issues addressed in class. In your paper, respond to **a minimum of three** of the guiding questions listed below. In addition to these guiding questions, you can add your own questions to answer. You are encouraged to seek relevant outside sources for additional information and guidance, such as articles in journals, chapters in books, essays and writing online, etc. You are encouraged to examine the standards of an effective teacher from InTASC as well as standards of learning for your specific content area in order to help guide you in the development of your teaching philosophy.

Guiding questions:

1. Who are you *now* as a teacher?
  - What is the role of the teacher with respect to motivation, instruction, assessment?
  - What is the role of the teacher in the community and in society?
2. How will you communicate who you are as a teacher with your students?
  - How will we build a community that honors our students' cultures & lives?
  - How do we organize our classrooms to best serve our students and our profession?
3. What is/are/should be the purpose(s) of school?
  - What is the purpose of your subject matter area to you and to your future students?
  - What are the most important skills our students need to be empowered citizens?
4. What are the myths and assumptions about school you hope to challenge?
  - What are the assumptions our teaching practices and education policies make about our students and their communities?
  - What roles will you and your students play in considering, contributing to, and challenging education policies?
5. Who do you *want to be* as a teacher?
  - What is the best evidence of our students' learning?
  - What is the best evidence of your success as a teacher?
  - How will you best be sustained to remain in the teaching profession?
  - How will you continue to grow as a teacher during the first five years of your career? In the years following?

#### Evaluation Criteria: 30 points – 30% of overall course grade

1. Inclusion of all required components (resume, philosophy of teaching, CLT lesson plan, clinical experience project, reflection)

2. Incorporation of teaching roles, practices, and philosophies referenced in course readings and/or discussions (with references appropriately cited)
3. Professional writing quality (formal language, clarity, evidence of proofreading)
4. Thoughtful and professional design (clean, accurate, attention to detail)

## Grading

Graduate:	Undergraduate:
A = 95-100%;	A = 93-100%
A- = 90-94%;	A- = 90-92%
B+ = 87-89%;	B+ = 86-89%
B.= 83-86%;	B = 82-85%
B-= 80-82%;	B-= 80-81%
C.= 70-79%;	C = 70-79%
F = Below 70%	D- 60-69%
	F = Below 60%

IN: Incomplete

AB: Absent with permission

## Professional Dispositions

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

## Class Schedule

*\*This schedule is subject to change. If any changes are made, students will be notified*

August 24    **Class #1: Introduction**

August 31    **Class #2: Middle School**

The past: “[History of the Junior High School Movement](#)”

The present: NMSA’s “[This We Believe](#)” Statement

The future: “[middle schools think about a future beyond the pandemic](#)”

September 7    **Class #3: High School**

The past: “[The American High School has Failed its Mission](#)”

The present: “[12 Teenagers on What Adults Don’t Get About Their Lives](#)”

The future: “[What if America Didn’t Have Public Schools?](#)”

September 14    **Class #4: SEED Workshop Session & Clinical Experience Debrief**

Materials from the SEED program will be provided

September 21    **Class #5: Curriculum**

The past: “[Cardinal Principles of Secondary Education](#)”

The present: [FCPS Portrait of a Graduate](#) and [LCPS Profile of a Graduate](#)  
“[Curriculum, Conflict, and Critical Race Theory](#)”  
The future: “[Teaching the Right Stuff](#)”

September 28 **Class #6: Instruction** (*piloting Lesson Plan ideas*)

The past: “[A Timeline of Teaching](#)”  
The present: “[Traits of Effective Teachers](#)”  
The future: “[Coming to Terms with the Power of Teaching](#)”

October 5 **Class #7: Assessment**

The past: “[A true test: Towards more authentic and equitable assessment](#)”  
The present: “[What reality TV taught me about everyday assessment](#)”  
The future: “[Possible futures for equitable educational assessment](#)”

October 12 **Class #8: Differentiation**

The past: Defining Culturally Responsive, Relevant, Sustaining Pedagogy  
The present: Excerpts from [Fires in Our Lives](#) book  
The future: “[The Myth of ‘Learning Styles’](#)”

October 19 **Class #9: Accommodation**

The past: “[A Brief History of Special Education in Schools](#)”  
The present: “[What a Good IEP Looks Like](#)”  
The future: Excerpts from *Equity-centered Trauma-Informed Education*

October 26 **Class #10: Motivation**

The past: 1947 film [Maintaining Classroom Discipline](#)  
The present: “[Loud, proud, and love a crowd: African American girls and school discipline practices](#)”  
The future: “[Instilling Hope in Students](#)”

November 2 **Class #11: Collaboration**

The past: “[Parent Involvement in American Public Schools: A Historical Perspective 1642—2000](#)”  
The present: “[Improving how schools engage families in 9th grade](#)”  
The future: “[Culturally Responsive and Asset-Based Strategies for Family Engagement in Odds-Beating Secondary Schools](#)”

November 9 **Class #12: Administration**

The past: “[The School Principal as Leader](#)”  
The present: “[What One Assistant Principal Learned from a Student](#)”  
The future: “[Education After the Pandemic](#)”

November 16 **Class #13: Professionalization**

The past: excerpt from [Blaming Teachers](#) book

The present: “[The case for collaborative professionalism](#)”

The future: “[Attacks on Teachers Threatens the Future of Public Schools](#)”

November 23 **No Class (Thanksgiving Recess)**

November 30 **Class #14: Dispositions**

Links for dispositions will be posted on Blackboard

Attend “Research in Secondary Education” Research Fair during class

December 7 **Final Class Session (sharing Clinical Experience Project)**  
**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 <https://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 <https://its.gmu.edu/knowledgebase/blackboard-instructional-technology-support-for-students/>. ○ For information on student support resources on campus, see <https://ctfe.gmu.edu/teaching/student-support-resources-on-campus>

**Notice of mandatory reporting of sexual assault, interpersonal violence, and stalking:**

As a faculty member, I am designated as a “Responsible Employee,” and must report all disclosures of sexual assault, interpersonal violence, and stalking to Mason’s Title IX Coordinator per University Policy 1202. If you wish to speak with someone confidentially, please contact one of Mason’s confidential resources, such as Student Support and Advocacy Center (SSAC) at 703-380-1434 or Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) at 703-9932380. You may also seek assistance from Mason’s Title IX Coordinator by calling 703-9938730, or emailing [titleix@gmu.edu](mailto:titleix@gmu.edu).

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