

**George Mason University
College of Education and Human Development
Education Leadership Program**

EDLE 812 001 82323 Education Law and Society
3 Credits, Fall 2023
Course Term – August 23, 2023, through December 2, 2023

Wednesdays, 4:30 - 7:10 Fairfax Campus – Thompson Hall – Room 1010

Faculty

Name: Regina D. Biggs
Office Hours: By Appointment
Office Location: Thompson Hall, Suite 1010, Fairfax Campus
Office Phone: 703-993-4679
E-mail Address: rbiggs@gmu.edu

Prerequisites/Corequisites

None

University Catalog Course Description

Provides an understanding of the legal foundations of U.S. public schools and higher education through examination of general principles of statutory and case law and application of judicial decisions to educational environments. Focuses on legal responsibilities, constraints, and opportunities of public school officials and requires students to conduct research regarding legal issues and apply legal analysis and reasoning to a variety of situations.

Course Overview

This course will facilitate students' capacities to become better consumers of research on education law, learn how to apply that research to school operations, and how to conduct legal research. All of the EDLE program goals are active, to a greater or lesser extent, in this course.

Course Delivery Method

This course will be delivered in a hybrid format to include face-to-face on the Fairfax campus, synchronous and asynchronous online sessions. A variety of instructional methods are used in this course, including lectures, discussions, case studies, presentations, cooperative learning activities, Internet assignments, guest practitioner presentations (if possible), role-play, and written and verbal assignments.

Under no circumstances may students participate in online class sessions (either by phone or Internet) while operating motor vehicles. Further, as expected in a face-

to-face class meeting, such online participation requires undivided attention to course content and communication.

Technology Requirements

This course will be delivered on Mason's Blackboard platform, so students are required to have access to Blackboard. A Blackboard site is available to all students enrolled in the course at <http://mymason.gmu.edu>. You need to log on using your GMU username and password. To participate in this course, students will need the following resources:

- High-speed Internet access with standard, up-to-date browsers. To get a list of Blackboard's supported browsers, see: https://help.blackboard.com/Learn/Student/Getting_Started/Browser_Support#supported-browsers
- To get a list of supported operating systems on different devices, see: https://help.blackboard.com/Learn/Student/Getting_Started/Browser_Support#tested-devices-and-operating-systems
- Students must maintain consistent and reliable access to their GMU email and Blackboard, as these are the official methods of communication for this course.
- Students may be asked to create log-ins and passwords on supplemental websites and/or to download trial software to their computer or tablet as part of the course requirements.
- Students may use ZOOM, Screencast-O-Matic, or similar platforms to record videos and presentations consistent with assignment descriptions and instructions.
- The following software plug-ins for Pcs and Macs, respectively, are available for free download by clicking on the link next to each plug-in:
 - Adobe Acrobat Reader: <http://get.adobe.com/reader/>
 - Windows Media Player: <https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/help/14209/get-windows-media-player>
 - Apple QuickTime Player: www.apple.com/quicktime/download/
- **Email:** All students are required to activate and monitor their GMU email accounts. Per university policy and in compliance with federal law, I will only communicate with candidates via their GMU email accounts. I will not respond to emails from other accounts (i.e., Gmail, Yahoo, work email, etc.). Any announcements concerning the course will be sent to your GMU email address. I will respond to emails within one business day of email receipt (i.e., excluding holidays and weekends).
- **Video Conferencing:** Students may schedule ZOOM appointments with the instructor to discuss issues and questions pertaining to the course.
- **Microsoft Office:** All students will require access to Microsoft Office. We will be using Word for this course. If you do not have access to this software, you must

obtain it within the first two weeks of the course. Having the most recent software version is best but not required.

- **Google Account:** We will use Google Drive to organize our collaborative work this semester. Students will post work products on Blackboard Discussion Boards for class commentary and assessment. All students are required to have an active Gmail account to participate in these activities. This Gmail account should be distinct from your school email address, even if you have access to Google through your school account (email should end in @gmail.com).

Online Expectations

- **Participation:** Students are expected to actively engage in all course activities throughout the semester, including viewing all course materials, completing course activities and assignments, and participating in course discussions and group interactions.
- **Technical Competence:** Students are expected to demonstrate competence in using all course technology. Students struggling with the course's technical components are expected to seek assistance from the College or University technical services.
- **Technical Issues:** Students should anticipate some technical difficulties during the semester and should, therefore, budget their time accordingly. **Late work will not be accepted based on individual technical issues.**
- **Workload:** Please be aware that this course is **not** self-paced. **Students are expected to meet specific deadlines and due dates referenced in the Class Schedule presented on the Blackboard site.** It is the student's responsibility to keep track of the weekly course schedule of topics, readings, activities, and assignments due.
- **Instructor Support:** Students may schedule a one-on-one meeting to discuss course requirements, content, or other course-related issues. Students should use the link provided in Blackboard to schedule a one-on-one session.
- **Confidentiality:** By federal law, any materials that identify specific students (via their name, voice, or image) must not be shared with anyone not enrolled in this class.
 - Video recordings — whether made by instructors or students — of class meetings that include audio, visual, or textual information from other students are private and must not be shared outside the class
 - Live video conference meetings (e.g., Collaborate or Zoom) that include audio, textual, or visual information from other students must be viewed privately and not shared with others in your household or recorded and shared outside the class
- **Netiquette:** The course environment is a collaborative space. Experience shows that even an innocent remark typed online can be misconstrued. Students must

always re-read their responses carefully before posting them so others do not consider them personal offenses. *Be positive in your approach to others and diplomatic in selecting your words.* Remember that you are not competing with classmates but sharing information and learning from others. All faculty are similarly expected to be respectful in all communications.

- **Accommodations:** Online learners who require accommodations to ensure accessibility must be registered with George Mason University Disability Services and provide the instructor with a Faculty Contact Sheet. Academic accommodations are initiated through Faculty Contact Sheets, which are not retroactive.

Teaching and Learning

Each class will include a variety of activities and exercises. Out-of-class work will rely in part on the use of Blackboard and web-based resources. Specific process goals for the class are as follows:

1. Classes will reflect a balance of activities that encourage the exploration of the use of research in education law. To promote an atmosphere that allows us to accomplish this end, we will:
 - a. start and end on time;
 - b. maintain (flexibly) a written agenda reflecting objectives for each class;
 - c. agree to disagree respectfully during class discussions;
 - d. strive to be open to new ideas and perspectives; and
 - e. listen actively to one another.
2. Student work will reflect what is expected from leaders. As such, students are expected to:
 - a. write papers that are well researched, proofread, submitted in a timely fashion, and conform to APA guidelines;
 - b. participate actively in class discussions in a manner that challenges the best thinking of the class; and
 - c. provide constructive feedback to others both on their ideas and on their written work, striving to learn from each other and to test each other's ideas.
3. We will work to maintain a classroom climate that approximates what we know about learning organizations. As such, it is important that we create conditions that allow participants to try out new ideas and voice opinions without fear of ridicule or embarrassment. The hallmark of a learning organization is a balance between openness and constructive feedback; hence, everyone is expected to:
 - a. come fully prepared for each class;
 - b. demonstrate appropriate respect for one another;
 - c. voice concerns and opinions about the class process openly;
 - d. engage in a genuine inquiry;
 - e. recognize and celebrate each other's ideas and accomplishments; and
 - f. show an awareness of each other's needs.

Course Learning Objectives

The Education Leadership Program is devoted to improving the quality of PK12 education through teaching, research, and service. Students and practicing administrators engage in coursework devoted to experiential learning, professional growth opportunities, and doctoral research that informs practice. We educate exceptional leaders who act with integrity as they work to improve schools. All of these program goals are active, to a greater or lesser degree, in this course. Successful students will emerge from the course able to:

1. Engage in reflective practice about education law
2. Strengthen and improve their communication skills through class discussion and independent writing
3. Understand the legal implications and responsibilities associated with cultural, economic, and learning diversity;
4. Reflect on the ethical implications of applying education law to everyday situations in schools and school divisions; and
5. Learn how to research education law.

Professional Standards

This course treats scholarship that addresses, in part, each of the following National Educational Leadership Preparation (NELP) Program Recognition Standards (NELP) components. Upon completion of this course, students will have met the following specific professional standards' components:

- 2.1: understand and demonstrate capacity to reflect on, communicate about, cultivate, and model professional dispositions and norms (e.g., fairness, integrity, transparency, trust, collaboration, perseverance, reflection, life-long learning, digital citizenship) that support the educational success and well-being of each student and adult.
- 2.2: understand and demonstrate capacity to evaluate, communicate about, and advocate for ethical and legal decisions.
- 2.3: understand and demonstrate the capacity to model ethical behavior in their personal conduct and relationships and to cultivate ethical behavior in others.
- 5.1: understand and demonstrate the capacity to understand and collaboratively engage diverse families in strengthening student learning in and out of school
- 5.2: understand and demonstrate the capacity to understand, collaboratively engage and cultivate relationships with diverse community members, partners, and other constituencies for the benefit of school improvement and student development.
- 5.3: understand and demonstrate the capacity to collaboratively engage the larger organizational and policy context to advocate for the needs of their school and community.
- 6.3: understand and demonstrate the capacity to reflectively evaluate, communicate about, and implement laws, rights, policies, and regulations to promote student and adult success and well-being.

Required Texts

There is no textbook required for this course. Assigned readings will consist of selected articles and judicial syllabi that will be posted on the Blackboard course site.

Recommended Text

The American Psychological Association (2020). *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (7th edition). Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association.

Text is available in the GMU Bookstore in the Johnson Center. Additional materials and hand-outs will be posted on Blackboard and/or distributed in class.

Suggested Resources

Virginia Code: <http://legis.state.va.us/Laws/CodeofVa.htm>

United States Code: <http://uscode.house.gov/search/criteria.shtml>

U.S. Dept. of Education: <http://www.ed.gov/index.jhtml>

George Mason University Library/LexisNexis Academic: <http://library.gmu.edu/>

Technical Requirements

To participate in this course, students will need to satisfy the following technical requirements:

- High-speed Internet access with standard up-to-date browsers. To get a list of Blackboard's supported browsers, see: https://help.blackboard.com/Learn/Student/Getting_Started/Browser_Support#supported-browsers
- To get a list of supported operation systems on different devices, see: https://help.blackboard.com/Learn/Student/Getting_Started/Browser_Support#tested-devices-and-operating-systems

Students are required to use Blackboard as part of this course. Vital information for the course will be posted on the Blackboard site. Students are required to submit their course assignments electronically using the Blackboard website. Student work will be archived on this site for purposes of course, program, and college assessment. **All students are required to activate and monitor their GMU e-mail accounts. Correspondence by e-mail will only be acknowledged and transmitted through your Mason e-mail account.**

Cancellation Policy

If a cancellation is necessary, the class will be made up via an electronic activity. Specifically, students are expected to log on to the computer to participate in an electronic discussion/activity as directed, which will replace the missed class.

Course Performance Evaluation

Attendance

General Expectations

Class discussion is at the heart of this course; therefore, you are required to attend each class, prepared to contribute. What we do in the course of our class meetings will determine a significant portion of your grade.

Students are expected to submit all assignments on time in the manner outlined by the instructor (e.g., Blackboard, VIA. Hard copy).

Consistent with expectations of a doctoral-level course in the Education Leadership program, grading is based heavily on student performance and on written assignments. The assignments constructed for this course reflect a mix of skills associated with the application of research to education leadership contexts. Overall, written work will be assessed using the following broad criteria:

1. Application of concepts reflected in class discussion and readings
2. Creativity and imagination
3. The ability to write in a clear, concise, and organized fashion

The overall weights of the various performances are as follows:

Class participation 20 points

Students are expected to be an active participant in class discussions, in group activities, and in serving as critical friends to other students. Prompt attendance is expected for all classes. I understand that sometimes emergencies or other unexpected circumstances arise that make attendance that day impossible, or require early departure. If this is the case, please notify me by email as soon as possible. (this provision will not apply to non-emergencies). If you will be absent from a class for a required professional assignment, please make arrangements with me — beforehand — regarding any coursework you might miss.

Written assignments 80 points

Three performance-based assignments will be completed during the semester. The directions for each assignment and a rubric for grading each assignment are described in detail on the Blackboard course site.

Course Performance Evaluation Weighting:

A+	=	100 percent	B+	=	89 - 86 percent	C	=	79 - 75 percent
A	=	99 - 95 percent	B	=	85 - 83 percent	F	=	74 percent or below
A -	=	94 - 90 percent	B-	=	82 - 80 percent			

Course Policies

Assignments are due by 11:59 p.m. on the dates listed on the syllabus. Late assignments will not be accepted except in emergencies that have been discussed and approved by the instructor in advance of the due date. Papers are due as indicated on the class schedule that follows. ALL ASSIGNMENTS must be submitted **electronically, either through Blackboard or VIA**. If you happen to be absent on the day an assignment is due, the due date remains unchanged.

VIA Performance-Based Assessment Submission Requirement:

Every candidate registered for any Education Leadership course with a required performance-based assessment (designated as such in the syllabus) is **required to submit these assessments to VIA through Blackboard**. In EDLE 812, the required performance is **An Analysis and Evaluation of the Legal Treatment of an Education Issue**. This performance **must** be submitted to VIA through Blackboard (regardless of whether a course is an elective, a one-time course, or part of an undergraduate minor.) Evaluation of the performance-based assessments by the course instructor will also be completed in VIA through Blackboard.

Failure to submit the assessment to VIA through Blackboard will result in the course instructor reporting the course grade as Incomplete (IN). Unless the IN grade is changed upon completion of the required VIA Blackboard submission, the IN will convert to an F nine weeks into the following semester.

Professional Dispositions

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

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/>.

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 e-mail 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 e-mail 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 are invited to share their name and gender pronouns with the instructor and how best to address you in class and via email. I use she/her for myself, and you may address me as “Regina Biggs” or “Dr./Professor Biggs.”
- Students must silence all sound-emitting devices during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.

Campus Resources

- Support for submission of assignments to VIA should be directed to viahelp@gmu.edu or <https://cehd.gmu.edu/aero/assessments>. Questions or concerns regarding the use of Blackboard should be directed to <https://its.gmu.edu/knowledge-base/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 703-993-2380. You may also seek assistance from Mason’s Title IX Coordinator by calling 703-993-8730 or e-mailing titleix@gmu.edu.

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

GMU Add/Drop Policy

The last day to drop this class without any penalty is provided on the GMU academic calendar page <http://registrar.gmu.edu/calendar/>. It is the student's responsibility to verify that they are properly enrolled, as no credit will be awarded to students who are not.

Plagiarism

Students must avoid plagiarizing the work of others. Specifically, when referencing a source or author, students must give appropriate source documentation. When using direct quotes, students must use quotations, provide page numbers, and ensure that credit is given to the author of quoted material. If a candidate's work contains plagiarism, the candidate will receive no credit for the assignment.

Copyright

Copyright rules also apply to Internet users who cite from Internet sources. Information and graphics accessed electronically must also be cited, giving credit to the sources. This material includes but is not limited to e-mail (don't cite or forward someone else's e-mail without permission), newsgroup material, and information from Web sites, including graphics. Even if you give credit, you must get permission from the original source to put any graphic you did not create on your web page unless the materials are made available through a fair use claim or consistent with the TEACH Act.

Academic Integrity & Inclusivity

This course embodies the perspective that we all have differing perspectives and ideas and deserve the opportunity to share our thoughts. Therefore, we will conduct our discussions with respect for those differences, meaning we each have the freedom to express our ideas, but we should also do so keeping in mind that our colleagues deserve to hear differing thoughts in a respectful manner, i.e. we may disagree without being disagreeable. <http://integrity.gmu.edu/>

Diversity, Religious Holiday

Please refer to George Mason University's calendar of religious holidays and observations (<http://ulife.gmu.edu/calendar/religious-holiday-calendar/>). It is the student's responsibility to speak to the instructor in advance should their religious observances impact their participation in class activities and assignments.

Student Privacy Policy

George Mason University strives to fully comply with FERPA by protecting the privacy of student records and judiciously evaluating requests for the release of information from those records. Please see George Mason University's student privacy policy <https://registrar.gmu.edu/students/privacy/>