

**HIGHER EDUCATION POLICY
SYLLABUS**

Credit Hours:	3
Date/Time:	
Classroom:	Class will be taught by a mix of In-Person and Virtual Sessions In-Person Sessions (see schedule):
	Virtual Sessions: via Blackboard Zoom link
Website:	Blackboard
Instructor:	Anne Holton
Office:	Arlington Campus, Founders Hall 649
e-mail:	aholton2@gmu.edu
Cell Phone:	
Office Hours:	please email professor in advance to confirm - or anytime in-person/virtually by appointment

Prerequisites/Corequisites

Enrollment is limited to Graduate or Non-Degree level students.

University Catalog Course Description

EDPO 602 examines higher education policy issues, developments, trends and debates at the federal and state level. Discusses current debates and proposals for reform in the areas of postsecondary affordability, access, equity, quality, and accountability, with a focus on underserved populations, including low-income and minority students. Offered by Graduate School of Education. May not be repeated for credit.

POGO 750 Topics in Policy and Government: Focuses on selected topics in policy and government not covered in fixed-content Schar school courses.

Course Overview

This course examines current higher education policy issues, developments, trends and debates at the federal and state level, with a focus on enabling students to understand policymaking structures and processes and think critically about the challenges and opportunities facing the field today. In particular, we will examine higher education indicators and outcomes, review policies and proposals for reform to improve postsecondary affordability, access, equity, quality, and accountability, and consider the role of advocacy groups and research in shaping and advancing policy agendas. The course also explores connections between K-12 and higher education and discusses their impact. While a brief historical overview of higher education provides necessary context, the course primarily emphasizes recent trends and contemporary concerns, including federal and state policy deliberations and responses.

Course Delivery Method

This course will be delivered through a mixture of lecture and seminar. Class will meet in-person some weeks and virtually some weeks; see tentative schedule below.

Learning Outcomes/Objectives

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

1. Students will develop an understanding of how higher education policy is made in contemporary federal, state, and other settings, including landmark legislation, and the distinct roles and responsibilities of federal and state government and various other stakeholders.
2. Students will gain a basic fluency in higher education policy challenges confronting policymakers today, including emerging policy approaches and proposals to improve the higher education system's performance.
3. Students will develop practical skills for work in higher education policy including familiarity with higher education policy resources and the ability to research a problem, develop a specific policy proposal to address it, and advocate for it effectively in writing and orally.

Required Texts

All other assignments will be from open-access resources and/or available from the GMU library and posted to the class Blackboard site; see list of potential materials below.

Required assignments will be posted on a weekly basis at least two weeks in advance on the class blackboard site with links as needed. Illustrative assignments are listed under the ***Class Schedule*** below and/or will be selected from the lists below and/or comparable works identified by the professor. The professor reserves the right to supplement or otherwise change the assignments with reasonable notice. **The reading assignments listed below are tentative and for illustrative purposes only. Students should consult Blackboard for updated weekly assignments and links.** Where there are differences between the blackboard site and the syllabus, the blackboard site is controlling.

Course Performance Evaluation

Students are expected to submit all assignments on time using Blackboard. Details will be shared in class and assignment materials will be linked in Blackboard. All due dates will be announced well in advance.

Assignments and Expectations

All written materials are to be submitted via the class blackboard site no later than the assigned time and day unless otherwise specified. Written detailed instructions on all assignments will be provided under the Major Assignments page on Blackboard. Late submissions will be penalized 5 points (out of 100) for every 24 hours late, unless prior arrangements are made with the professor, which will be allowed only for good cause.

Policy Briefs and Presentation

Each student will be expected to do independent reading on a current policy issue in higher education, including research on evidence-based solutions.

Additional Assignments and Expectations

Class Participation

Students are expected to actively participate in class discussions.

Active engagement with classmates and the instructor during class sessions is critical to your and your

classmates' understanding and comprehension of the material in this course. Students will be assessed on attendance and participation. Participation will include occasional in-class assignments, such as a shared notetaking responsibility, and occasional discussion board entries as well.

In-Person and Online Sessions

To facilitate productive connections between and among students and the professor, while minimizing travel time to campus, this course will be held via a mix of in-person and online sessions. The tentative schedule for in-person vs online sessions is listed below. This may be adjusted as needed, for instance to accommodate guest speakers. If adjustments are made, students will be notified well in advance. If a student is unable to attend a session in-person as a result of such an adjustment, the student may join the in-person session via zoom with advance notice to the professor.

For online sessions, students are expected to have a quiet, appropriate location with stable internet connection from which to join the class, and to have their video on throughout the session so as to participate fully with the group.

HEALTH-RELATED ATTENDANCE POLICY ADJUSTMENT

One of the best ways to protect everyone from contagious health risks is to **STAY HOME IF YOU ARE SICK. Accordingly, I will not penalize anyone for failing to attend an in-person class session due to health reasons. However:** if you need to miss an in-person session because you are feeling unwell, or because you have to quarantine due to exposure to a potentially contagious illness, I expect you to make every effort to participate and make up work as fully as possible. Anyone who anticipates missing an in-person session for health reasons must send me advance notice via email; we can then make a make-up plan together. If you are unable to attend in person but well enough to participate remotely, you can participate remotely via zoom (details will be discussed at the first class).

Please plan to bring a laptop or tablet to class regularly if possible. In-class activities will use them on occasion.

Preparation, Positive Relationships, and Appreciation of Diverse Viewpoints

It is critical that every student comes to class well prepared, ready to interact with classmates, and prepared to ask relevant questions and share perspectives. In this course we assume positive intentions no matter what experiences students might be coming from. In any course associated with public policy there is likely to be a wide range of perspectives. This is good! It allows for rich discussion and opportunities to explore a broad range of opinions. Open mindedness, listening, and a willingness to understand each other are vital to positive outcomes.

Anti-Racism Statement

As a member of the George Mason University community, I will work to create an educational environment that is committed to anti-racism and inclusive excellence. I affirm that in this class, faculty and students will work together to interrupt cycles of racism against Black individuals, indigenous people, and other people of color so as to cultivate a more equitable, inclusive, and just learning environment for all participants, regardless of racial background. In the class we also seek particularly to welcome and value individuals and their differences, including gender expression and identity, race, economic status, sex, sexuality, ethnicity, national origin, first language, religion, age and ability. This is particularly important in a topic such as ours where racial injustice has played such a large role over many decades and in many ways. Our discussions will often touch on the influence of race in education in America, and we can all best learn together by being kind, listening well, and valuing each other's perspectives.

Basic Course Technology Requirements

Activities and assignments in this course will regularly use the Blackboard learning system, available at

<https://mymason.gmu.edu>. Students are required to have regular, reliable access to a computer with an updated operating system (recommended: Windows 10 or Mac OSX 10.13 or higher) and a stable broadband Internet connection (cable modem, DSL, satellite broadband, etc., with a consistent 1.5 Mbps [megabits per second] download speed or higher. You can check your speed settings using the speed test on this website.)

Activities and assignments in this course will regularly use web-conferencing software (Blackboard Collaborate / Zoom). In addition to the requirements above, students are required to have a device with a functional camera and microphone. In an emergency, students can connect through a telephone call, but video connection is the expected norm.

Course Materials and Student Privacy

In-person and virtual synchronous class sessions may be recorded for the benefit of the instructor and enrolled students. These materials will be stored on Blackboard or another secured, private site, accessible only to the students enrolled in the course. Video recordings of class meetings that are shared only with the instructors and students officially enrolled in a class do not violate FERPA or any other privacy expectation. To protect the privacy rights of everyone in the class, they must not be shared with anyone not enrolled in this class.

Grading Scale:

Specific rubrics will be provided for each major assignment as needed. Grades will be weighted based on the following:

Masters' Students:

Doctoral Students:

Academic Accommodation for a Disability

If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see the instructor and contact the Office of Disability Services. All academic accommodations must be arranged through Disability Services (<http://ds.gmu.edu>).

GMU/Schar Policy on Plagiarism

The profession of scholarship and the intellectual life of a university as well as the field of public policy inquiry depend fundamentally on a foundation of trust. Thus, any act of plagiarism strikes at the heart of the meaning of the university and the purpose of the Schar School. It constitutes a serious breach of professional ethics and it is unacceptable. **Plagiarism is the use of another's words or ideas presented as one's own.** It includes, among other things, the use of specific words, ideas, or frameworks that are the product of another's work. Honesty and thoroughness in citing sources is essential to professional accountability and personal responsibility. Appropriate citation is necessary so that arguments, evidence, and claims can be critically examined.

Plagiarism is wrong because of the injustice it does to the person whose ideas are stolen. But it is also wrong because it constitutes lying to one's professional colleagues. From a prudential perspective, it is shortsighted and self-defeating, and it can ruin a professional career.

The faculty of the Schar School takes plagiarism seriously and has adopted a zero tolerance policy. Any plagiarized assignment will receive an automatic grade of "F." This may lead to failure for the course, resulting in dismissal from the University. This dismissal will be noted on the student's transcript. For international students who are on a university-sponsored visa (e.g., F-1, J-1 or J-2), dismissal also results in the revocation of their visa.

To help enforce the Schar School policy on plagiarism, all written work submitted in partial fulfillment of course or degree requirements must be available in electronic form so that it can be compared with electronic databases, as well as submitted to commercial services to which the School subscribes. Faculty may at any time

submit student's work without prior permission from the student. Individual instructors may require that written work be submitted in electronic as well as printed form. The Schar School policy on plagiarism is supplementary to the George Mason University Honor Code; it is not intended to replace it or substitute for it. [Schar Student Guide | Schar School of Policy and Government \(gmu.edu\)](#)

Resources:

GMU Writing Center <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/>

GMU Libraries <http://library.gmu.edu/>

GMU Counseling and Psychological Services <http://caps.gmu.edu/>

GMU Emergency Preparedness Guides <https://ehs.gmu.edu/emergencymanagement/plans-guides/>

CEHD 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/CEHD Policies

- **Notice of mandatory reporting of sexual assault, sexual harassment, interpersonal violence, and stalking:** As a faculty member, I am designated as a “Non-Confidential Employee,” and must report all disclosures of sexual assault, sexual harassment, 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 or support measures from Mason’s Title IX Coordinator by calling 703-993-8730, or emailing titleix@gmu.edu.
- 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 <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

- 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](#)

Professional Dispositions

Students are expected to exhibit professional behaviors and dispositions at all times. See <https://cehd.gmu.edu/students/policies-procedures/>.

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