ED928: Proseminar in Educational Policy Syllabus Version 1
Fall 2012
Friday 12:30-2:00 Erickson Hall Room: 130

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Course Description:

This yearlong course consists of a weekly seminar series for incoming Educational Policy students, and a set of workshops for the larger Educational Policy community. Students will be introduced to the sociology, politics, history, and economics of education, as well as to international educational issues. These areas will be covered in a series of tutorial seminars, and, along with the other required first-year courses, comprise the basis for Part I of the comprehensive exam, administered in late August following your first year in the program. Students will be given short readings that will supplement other coursework in these major fields within educational policy (TE901, EAD942, EAD943, CEP932, and CEP933).

This course will also introduce students to resources and faculty at Michigan State University. Various faculty members will present their current research throughout the year, and suggest research opportunities for students. Finally, the course helps students learn the culture, expectations, and structure of the Educational Policy program.

*Please Note: Because this course is “taught” by many different professors and guest lecturers, variation in style, content and expectations will occur. This is inevitable. But it also serves as an opportunity to explore different approaches to topics and teaching. If questions arise regarding this, please contact Professor Sedlak anytime.

Course Objectives:

1) To expose policy students to cutting edge research on some of the most current debates in education policy.
2) To provide students with an orientation to campus research resources and opportunities in education policy.
3) To help students prepare for Part I of their comprehensive exam.
4) To introduce students to the logistics of the policy program.

Course Requirements:

1. Class Participation and Attendance

Learning how to think and talk critically about ideas and evidence are central tasks for the advanced graduate student. Accordingly, it is very important that all members of the class do the required reading and do so before the class session at which it will be discussed. It is expected that students will bring questions related to the text to each class and make references to the reading during class discussions.

Regular on-time attendance and full participation in class is critical to learning. Of course, illness and other emergencies cannot be avoided (within reason). If you are unable to
attend a class session, you must email John and me in advance. If you miss more than one class, additional work will be expected to make up for the missed class sessions. Decisions for what is considered appropriate make up work will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis. Students are responsible for initiating this process.

We all take class participation seriously. That means having things to say (and questions to ask) that are interesting, original, and helpful to the other students. The professor reserves the right to adjust your grade as a response to absences or excessive tardiness.

2. Course Readings

Weekly readings will be provided by most of the guest lecturers through our office as email attachments, and posted to the ED928 Angel site no later than one week prior to when they are due. Papers that are received after this deadline will be considered optional readings.

3. Core Content Sessions and Preparing for the Comprehensive Examination

While all course sessions are designed to develop students as academics, some course meetings are specifically designed to help prepare the cohort for the comprehensive examination. These sessions will cover historical, sociological, political, economic, and international perspectives on education policy. The readings, presentations, and discussions for sessions specifically focused on comprehensive examination preparation will provide opportunities for students to develop their knowledge and background in these five areas. The core tutorial sessions are designated in the syllabus schedule with an asterisk (*).

Because these sessions are tied to the comprehensive exams, students are encouraged to consider the following “big ideas” during these sessions.

1. What are the major debates or discussions in this sub-field of education policy?

You will find that many major educational challenges (e.g. improving teacher quality, ensuring high quality education for all students, organizing schools more effectively) have been debated for decades (if not longer). However, society’s approach in addressing these challenges has changed considerably. These proposed approaches become major policy issues and come from a variety of sources: citizens, politicians, scholars, private foundations, entertainers, etc. What's more, major issues often emerge idiosyncratically from these sources. This course is designed to help you recognize the issues that have currently captured scholarly, political, or public attention and determine the source of these issues. However, we will also look at equally meritorious ideas that for whatever reason have fallen out of favor or been ignored.

Part of your job as a first year student is to jump into these debates and get your bearings as soon as you can. This class will help you identify some of these debates and introduce you to the major scholars on either side of the major issues. The three sub-questions below are designed to help you in this endeavor:

a. What are the different perspectives on the debates?
b. How have the debates evolved as we have learned more?
c. What were the major turning points in the debates and what caused the shift?
2. What theories or perspectives are commonly used in this sub-field of education policy?

Theoretical or conceptual frameworks offer the researcher a way of seeing the world or understanding a phenomenon. Identification of theories and perspectives is a key part of understanding existing debates, taking sides on issues, and adding your own scholarly contribution when the time comes.

3. How does theory shape the questions asked and evidence gathered?

Most researchers will generate research questions, gather and analyze data, and draw conclusions in line with a dominant theoretical framework. In other words, theory most often drives research, and it is important to understand the theoretical underpinnings that drive the research we will be reading.

4. What policy issues are currently being explored by scholars of this sub-field of education policy? What’s not being discussed?

As with anything, it is rare to be able to do it all. This is true for education researchers as well. You will find that particular sub-fields often specialize in particular kinds of policy related questions. Developing this expertise can also mean scholars in a particular sub-field do not address other, equally important questions. In order to situate your research interests in the larger education research community, knowing who is addressing which issues is important.

4. Research Seminars: Discussions with Faculty about their Work

5. Conference Research Session

Presenting our hypotheses and findings publically for review is a critical component to the research process. But education policy research does not have a singular outlet for such conversations. Therefore, students will explore the different conferences available for education policy research. Each student will examine a conference and then present their assessment to the class. Start a discussion with your advisor about his or her recommendations for high priority conferences.

You should locate the following information for the conference you research in preparation for class:

• who presents at this conference;
• what topics or policy issues are covered;
• what theoretical frameworks are used;
• who attends (academics only or policy makers and practitioners too);
• what data are used as evidence; and
• what are the nuts and bolts of the conference (proposal process and timeline, fees, graduate student scholarships/fellowships, organizational structure, etc.)

6. EPC, IRTL, RCR, and IRB Session

Educational Policy students are typically supported for significant portions of their program by the Educational Policy Center. It is valuable to get a sense of its mission, approaches, current projects, and dissemination practices. Students often seek support for their research projects through competitive research grants. Finding the right fit for your project idea is critical to successfully obtaining funding. But where should you begin looking for the right
funding source? The Institute for Research on Teaching and Learning helps to organize, fund, and coordinate all externally supported projects (contracts and grants) in the College, and provides considerable assistance to doctoral students in identifying possible sources of additional funding. All graduate students at MSU must meet expectations about research integrity, ethics, and dealing with human subjects. RCR training and certification helps to assure the University of such competence. Most research requires working with and gathering data from human subjects or gathering data from datasets that contain sensitive and restricted information. Because these types of research projects pose potential risks to participants, all research Universities have established an Internal Review Board (IRB), which regulates research endeavors. Before gathering any data, researchers, including students, must complete the IRB approval process.

We have organized a session to introduce you to the four essential acronyms.

7. Course Evaluation

This course uses the pass/fail grading system. Students will receive one grade for spring semester 2012 that will reflect both fall and spring participation.

Grading will be based on attendance, participation and successful completion of assignments.

Other Important Information:

Students with disabilities: We will make reasonable accommodations for persons with documented disabilities. Please feel free to speak with me if there are issues of which I should be aware.

Academic Honesty and Integrity: We assume that students are honest and that all course work represents the student’s own work, prepared and submitted for this course exclusively, unless a prior arrangement has been made. Violations of the academic integrity policy such as cheating, plagiarism, selling course assignments or academic fraud are grounds for academic action and/or disciplinary sanction as described in the University’s student conduct code.

Incidents of Plagiarism: They will be taken very seriously and will be pursued. Students are strongly cautioned not to copy any text verbatim without appropriate quotations and source citations.

For University regulations on academic dishonesty and plagiarism, please refer to: http://www.msu.edu/unit/ombud/plagiarism.html
Course Schedule: Fall 2012

**Week 1 (8.31)**
Educational Policy Orientation with Associate Dean and Professor Michael Sedlak
Panel of Policy Students – What to expect during your first year

**Week 2 (9.7)**


Hammer, Jan, *Theme Song for Miami Vice*.


**Week 3 (9.14)**
Walter Cook, second-year educational policy student, Michigan State University
Flow Theory and Student Grouping in Secondary Mathematics:


Carey, Nancy, and Elizabeth Farris, *Curricular Differentiation in Public High Schools*, National Center for Education Statistics (December, 1994).

**Week 4 (9.21)**
Kristy Cooper, Professor, K-12 Educational Administration, Michigan State University
The Drop-out Crisis and Educational Reform


**Week 5 (9.28)**
Educational Policy Center, IRTL, RCR, IRB Orientation with Associate Dean and Professor Robert Floden and Marcy Wallace of the IRTL

**Week 6 (10.5)**
Conference Presentation Project
Week 7 (10.12)
Madeline Mavrogordato, Professor, K-12 Educational Administration, Michigan State University
Ready to Reclassify? The Influence of State Assessments, Student Characteristics, and Local Contexts on the Reclassification Process for English Language Learners in Texas


Week 8 (10.19)
*International Educational Core Session: Professor Amita Chudgar, K-12 Educational Administration, Michigan State University
International Education


Week 9 (10.26)
*International Education Core Session: Dr. Chudgar


Week 10 (11.2)
*Sociology of Education Core Session: Professor Dorothea Anagnostopolous, Teacher Education, Michigan State University


Week 11(11.9)
*Sociology of Education Core Session: Dr. Anagnostopolous

Week 12 (11.16)
Laura Holden, second-year Educational Policy student, Michigan State University
Neo-Liberal Theory and Global Educational Practice


**Week 14 (11.30)**

*Economics of Education Core Session: Professor David Arsen, K-12 Educational Administration, Michigan State University*

School Finance/School Choice


**Week 15 (12.7)**

*Economics of Education Core Session: Dr. Arsen*

School Finance/School Choice


**Week 16 (12.14)**
Economics of Education Speaker: Helen Ladd, Professor, Duke University

**Course Schedule: Spring 2013**

**Week 1 (1.11) No Class**

**Week 2 (1.18)**
Economics of Education Speaker: C. Kirabo Jackson, Assistant Professor, Northwestern University

**Week 3 (1.25)**
Jeffrey Bale, Assistant Professor of Teacher Education, Michigan State University
History and Policies Related to Second Language Education


Bale, Jeff, “‘Weg Da-Wir Lernen!’ Education Reform in Hamburg, Germany in Neoliberal Times,” *Teachers College Record* (2013): in press.

**Week 4 (2.1)**
Sun, Min, Professor at Virginia Tech University; alum of MSU's Educational Policy Program
“Effect of Schools' Failure to Make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) on Teacher Turnover,” Paper Presented at the 2013 Annual Meeting of the Association for Education Finance and Policy.

**Week 5 (2.8)**
* History of Educational Policy Core Session: Professor Michael Sedlak, Michigan State University
The Legacy of the Common School Movement and Its impact on School Learning.


**Week 6 (2.15)**
* History of Educational Policy Core Session: Professor Michael Sedlak
The Co-Construction of Educational Policy and the Unanticipated Consequences of Reform.


**Week 7 (2.22)**
* History of Educational Policy Core Session: Professor Michael Sedlak
The "Golden Age" of High School Learning[?] : Assumptions that Shaped the Educational Accountability and Standards Movement.


*Boston School Survey*, 1845.

**Week 8 (3.1)**
* Politics of Education Core Session: Professor Rebecca Jacobsen, Teacher Education, Michigan State University


**Week 9 (3.8) Spring Break!**

**Week 10 (3.15)**
John Lane, third year Educational Policy students
The Research Practicum Session

**Week 11 (3.22)**
Economics of Education Speaker: Caroline Hoxby, Professor, Stanford University

**Week 12 (3.29)**
* Politics of Education Core Session: Professor Rebecca Jacobsen

**Week 13 (4.5)**
AERA Panel Session:

**Week 14 (4.12)**
Kary Miller, Educational Policy Alum
The Educational Policy Dissertation

**Week 15 (4.19)**
Economics of Education Speaker: Jacob Vigor, Professor, Duke University

**Week 16 (4.26) No ED928 Class AERA**
Saturday, April 27-Wednesday, May 1

**Week 17 (5.3)**
Comprehensive Examination Panel Session: