ED119: Education Policy and School Improvement in a Multicultural Society
Tuesdays 1-4pm School of Education, Room 1315

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Instructor:</th>
<th>Graduate Student Instructor:</th>
<th>Darrell Allen</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chandra L. Alston, PhD</td>
<td>Email: <a href="mailto:elalston@umich.edu">elalston@umich.edu</a></td>
<td>Email: <a href="mailto:allendar@umich.edu">allendar@umich.edu</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Office:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>SEB Room 4045</td>
<td>Brandon Center, Room 2007</td>
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<tr>
<td>Office hours:</td>
<td>Thursdays 12:30 – 2:00p and by appointment</td>
<td>Mondays 11:00 – 12:30 and by appointment</td>
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</table>

I will use email and the course Canvas as the main methods of communications. Please check Canvas regularly for announcements, information, and updates. It is your responsibility to be up-to-date on all course communications when you come to class.

**COURSE OVERVIEW**
ED119: Education Policy and School Improvement in a Multicultural Society explores policy and school improvement in the U.S. public school system, with an emphasis on equity and access. The course begins by asking: “what is public education for?” and then considers educational policies – federal, state, and local – to understand their impact public schooling, with a particular focus on equitable access to educational opportunities. Much of this work will revolve around issues of inclusion, power, access, and privilege. The goals for student learning are to further develop students’ skills of analysis and interpretation in both written and oral presentations and to develop a stance of critical inquiry in relation to assumptions about the role of policy in teaching and learning.

**Course Activities**
To investigate these questions, we will read; analyze and interpret texts, evidence, and experience; work and think with others; and write. Below we describe our explicit goals for your engagement with each of these modes of learning.

**Reading:** We will read a wide variety of texts, including empirical, conceptual, and historical work about schools, teaching, learning, and about different people’s experiences of all of these. To develop the resources and to probe different types of sources, we will also read fiction and journals of culture and ideas, newspapers, philosophy, and even dictionaries. We will examine artifacts of popular culture, including films, cartoons, and advertisements. The work of the class will depend on reading interactively, on bringing both collective and individual goals to reading, considering, and reconsidering texts. In its most straightforward expression, this involves bringing questions to think about while preparing to read something, reading a text, and reflexively placing what one has read in the context of both the texts and one’s own experiences. You are also resources for one another, both as a function of your differences and one another’s responses to what we read.

**Analyzing and interpreting:** We will ask you to make and appraise arguments and interpretations. Creating thoughtful arguments requires making conjectures and offering justification for them. Sometimes justification comes from the texts—specific references to an argument that an author has made well. At
other times, justification is based on the logical analysis of a term or set of ideas. One goal this semester is to extend and apply your analytic and interpretive skills in the context of questions about education.

**Working and thinking with others:** Building the culture of the class so that genuine inquiry is possible will take all of our efforts. Because we rely on everyone’s contributions, one responsibility you have is to come to class with the readings prepared, and to bring questions, insights, and issues. We will be doing work in class that is interactive, and takes advantage of working with others.

**Writing:** This course involves a significant amount of writing of different kinds. Writing is an important vehicle for exploring and clarifying ideas, for trying out interpretations and arguments, and for representing ideas and communicating with others. The course will provide occasions to focus on and develop new aspects of your writing, and the writing assignments are structured to provide guidance and resources, as well as the opportunity for comments and suggestions.

**CLASSROOM COMMUNITY**

One of our central practices is supporting students in developing their skills as speakers and listeners. This requires each of us to consider our skills as speakers and listeners and the ways we afford space and opportunities for others to join the conversation. We will endeavor to have our course as a model for the ways you might work to accomplish this in your own classroom. In order to create community and spaces where people feel safe and supported to share their ideas and views and are open to hearing others, there are tenets we must adhere to.

- Respect – We must respect and value the efforts, identities, capacities, and ideas that each of us brings into the space.
- Curiosity/Openness – We must be open to alternative views, experiences, and perspectives and curious to learn about, from, and with one another.

**Gender Pronouns:** All people have the right to be addressed and referred to in accordance with their personal identity. In this class, we will share the name we prefer to be called and, if we choose, share the pronouns with which we would like to be addressed. Students can indicate their personal pronouns via Wolverine access, using the Gender Identity tab under Student Business. As instructors, we will do our best to address and refer to all students accordingly and support classmates in doing so as well.

**Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:** If you need an accommodation for a disability, please let us know at your earliest convenience. Some aspects of this course—the assignments, the in-class activities, and the way we teach—may be modified to facilitate your participation and progress. We will treat any information you provide as private and confidential.

**COURSE POLICIES**

*Preparation Expectations:* You are responsible for completing all readings, written, and/or reflection tasks before the class session for which they are assigned. We expect that your writing will demonstrate a careful analysis of the required readings and a sincere attempt to “puzzle” over the focus issues. These responses will be considered evidence of preparation for class. In addition, being prepared for class requires bringing all needed materials, including assignments and readings with you to each class session.

We expect that all assignments for this course will be turned in on time. If extenuating circumstances prevent you from turning in an assignment on time, please contact an instructor via email prior to the
submission deadline for an extension. **Unexcused late assignments** will be penalized one grade per day that they are late (i.e. from an A to an A-, an A- to a B+, a B+ to a B, etc.).

*Academic and Professional Integrity:* It is expected that each member of the course will submit original work and will appropriately cite others’ work referenced in assignment submissions. If you are unsure about how to correctly cite others, please ask. Any excerpts from the work of others must be clearly identified as a quotation, and a proper citation provided. You may obtain copyediting assistance, and you may discuss your ideas with others, but all substantive writing and ideas must be your own, or be explicitly attributed to another. An exception is group work, which is assumed to be collaborative, involving all group members. See the LSA Office of the Assistant Dean for Academic Affairs website (http://www.lsa.umich.edu/academicintegrity/examples.html) for definitions of plagiarism, and associated consequences. Any violation of standards for academic integrity will result in severe penalties, which might range from failing an assignment to failing the course.

**COURSE ASSIGNMENTS**

**Reading Reflections (40 points)**
For each week’s readings there are a set of questions related to the readings and the larger themes concerning educational policy that they investigate. You will be responsible for completing reading reflections for eight (8) of the eleven weeks of the course. I strongly urge you use these questions to guide your reading and preparation for each week’s class even if you are not submitting the reflection. Reading reflections questions can be found on Canvas. You should submit your reflection on Canvas before each class session to receive credit. **No late work will be accepted.** Each reflection is worth 5 points. A ✓ is 5 points; a ✓- is 3 points.

For your reflections:
- Use references: source, page number, quotations.
- Style, clarity, complete ideas, and complete sentences are important.
- Answer all parts of questions.
- Be concise and to the point.
- Use evidence to back up your claims.
- The issues we study are complex; be careful of generalizations.
- Embed quotes in your own words.

**Analytic Memos (30 points; 15 points each)**
To synthesize your learning and understanding about major areas of education policy, you will write two (2) analytic memos. No more than 1,500 words, memos should be clear statements that analyze a particular issue across readings. **Memos should not be summaries of the readings.** The memo should respond to the assigned question by: 1) taking a stance on an issue; 2) presenting evidence from the readings and class discussions in support of that stance; and, 3) offering your analysis of the evidence. This assignment is geared to push your thinking on a topic, encourage you to engage more substantively with the readings, and help you formulate an argument.

Memo 1: Due February 19. Select on of the following prompts:
- Given our course readings, what is your take on whether and how education policy has, does, can shift classroom practice?
Given our course readings, what is your take on what policymakers need to consider in terms of what enactors (teachers, principals, school boards, superintendents, etc.) need in order to instantiate policy with fidelity?

Memo 2: Due April 2. Select one of the following prompts:

- Given our course readings, what are the levers that need to be investigated in order to improve teacher quality as it relates to educational access and equity? Make sure to define what you mean by teacher quality and consider how the readings present similar or different interpretations of what is meant by teacher quality.
- Given our course readings, what are the ways in which policymakers might work to balance school choice and equity? What levers would you suggest that policy focus on and why?

Draft Policy Brief (20 points)
Your final assignment will be a policy brief in which you will draw on evidence from the course as well as other resources to make recommendations to a decision-maker (such as a school principal, a state lawmaker, or a district superintendent) regarding an educational policy issue and its impact on marginalized populations. The assignment will include:

- the policy brief itself (1,000 words)
- an annotated bibliography of at least 5 sources (not assigned as course content) that informed your writing of the memo.
- a 300-500 word reflection on the considerations that informed your writing of the memo (e.g. the audience, your personal values, experiences, and beliefs, evidence and concepts from the course, compromises you had to make)

Possible Policy Areas for Final Policy Brief: This is not an exhaustive list, but ideas to get you started. You will need to submit a brainstorm of your top two (2) choices for feedback from instructors to help you select a topic that will be both expansive enough but concrete enough for the final policy brief assignment. You should start with a policy area, like the ones listed below, and select a particular policy (at the state or local level) to investigate further.

- Standards (Common Core State Standards, NGSS (science), C3 Framework (social studies)
- Particular curriculum and programs (e.g., IB, AP, Dual Enrollment, STEM, inquiry)
- Student Assessment (NCLB/ESSA testing, state testing, standardized testing)
- Teacher Evaluation and Assessment
- Teacher recruitment, retention, induction
- Teacher Pay
- Teacher Unions
- School Funding
- School Segregation
- School Choice, Magnet Schools, Charter Schools
- Tracking
- School Disciplinary policies (zero tolerance, restorative justice)

Final Policy Brief (40 points)
Your final policy brief should follow the requirements stated above and include attention to feedback given from your instructor on your draft.
Policy Panels (20 points)
You will be grouped with peers who wrote policy briefs on similar topics. In those groups, each person will take 5-7 minutes to present to the audience their policy recommendation and argument for that recommendation. The goal is to present your recommendation clearly and concisely. You will be graded on clarity and concision of your presentation during the panel. After each panelist presents, there will be a moderated discussion of the policies and recommendations presented. One of the course instructors will moderate the panel discussion. Peers will have time for questions, comments, and discussion. Panels will take place on April 16 and April 23, our last two class meetings. Students will be randomly selected to be on panels on those days. You will be informed in advance which day you will be expected to present.

Community Engagement & Reflection (Extra Credit)
Attend an education-related community event (PTO meeting, School Board meeting, etc., in Ann Arbor, Ypsilanti, Dexter, Chelsea, Saline, Detroit) and write a reflection (no more than 750 words) that includes a very short (no more than 100 words) summary of the event and describes your reaction to/reflection on the event and its connection to the concepts that we have covered in class. If you are unsure if the event you’d like to attend is encompassed in the above listing, please email me your request at least a week prior to the date. If done, the extra credit assignment must be submitted to Canvas by Tuesday, April 23, 1:00pm.

Your grade for this course will be based on the following distribution:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date Due*</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Select 8 of the 11</td>
<td>Reading Reflection</td>
<td>40 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memo 1: Tuesday, February 19</td>
<td>Analytic Memo</td>
<td>30 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Memo 2: Tuesday, April 2</td>
<td>Draft Policy Memo</td>
<td>20 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday, April 16</td>
<td>Final Policy Memo</td>
<td>40 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday, April 16 and April 23</td>
<td>Policy Panels</td>
<td>20 points</td>
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<td><strong>Total Points</strong></td>
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<td><strong>150 points</strong></td>
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*Assignments must be submitted via Canvas at the beginning of class on the due date, unless noted otherwise on syllabus.

Grades are intended to give you a sense of the quality of a particular piece of work: roughly speaking, a B means that you have done a good job with the writing, the ideas, and the organization of the work; a C conveys that the work lacks some important qualities and has some problems, while an A means that the work is exemplary in some key ways: the writing is particularly clear, the ideas thoroughly treated, and the organization of the presentation well considered and effective.

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<tr>
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<th>Total possible points = 150</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>142 - 150</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>135 - 141</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>130 - 134</td>
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<td>B</td>
<td>125 - 129</td>
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<td>B-</td>
<td>120 - 124</td>
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<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>115 - 119</td>
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<td>C</td>
<td>110 - 114</td>
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<td>C-</td>
<td>105 - 109</td>
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<td>90 - 104</td>
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A few comments about evaluation in this course: We want your experiences in EDUC 119 to contribute to your growing capacity to do excellent work. To support that, we are asking you to analyze, consider alternative perspectives, write, construct and consider arguments, and talk.

You can use your work in this course to help you to improve your sense of what good work consists of, and how to produce it. This includes writing good sentences and paragraphs, using words carefully, and treating ideas with discipline and respect. We will strive to make these standards as concrete as possible, and to make visible strategies for achieving them. As you develop your sensibilities, you will be able to do more and more as your own critic and editor.

One reason to take your work seriously is that the ability to write and communicate is fundamental to your effectiveness personally and professionally. Good use of language and clarity of thinking is unfortunately less common than it ought to be. Much writing is clumsy, obscure, and littered with jargon. Some problems are technical or literary: incorrect grammar, a passion for the passive voice, and needless words. Many other problems are intellectual: arguments that wander, implausible assumptions, paragraphs that do not cohere, and a failure to consider other views respectfully. People who communicate in such ways are less able to make connections with others, to be persuasive about things they care about, or simply to think well.

**CAMPUS SUPPORT SERVICES**

**Office of Services for Students with Disabilities** [http://ssd.umich.edu](http://ssd.umich.edu)
Offers selected student services, which are not provided by other University offices or outside organizations. Services are free of charge. Assists students in negotiating disability-related barriers to the pursuit of their education. Strives to improve access to University programs, activities, and facilities for students with disabilities.
Location: G-664 Haven Hall 505 South State Street
Hours: 8:00AM-5:00PM Mon-Fri
Phone: (734) 763-3000
E-mail: ssdoffice@umich.edu

**Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)** [https://caps.umich.edu](https://caps.umich.edu)
Offers a variety of support services aimed at helping students resolve personal difficulties and strengthen the skills, attitudes and knowledge that will enable them to take full advantage of their experiences at the University of Michigan. University of Michigan is committed to advancing the mental health and wellbeing of its students. If you or someone you know is feeling overwhelmed, depressed, and/or in need of support, services are available. You can also see [University Health Service (UHS)](https://www.uhs.umich.edu/mentalhealthsvcs) at (734) 764-8320

For alcohol or drug concerns, see [www.uhs.umich.edu/aodresources](http://www.uhs.umich.edu/aodresources)
For a listing of other mental health resources available on and off campus, visit: [http://umich.edu/~mhealth](http://umich.edu/~mhealth)
Location: Third floor of the Michigan Union (Room 3100)
Hours: 8:00AM-7:00PM Monday-Thursday and 8:00AM-5:00PM Friday
Phone: (734) 764-8312

**Support for students experiencing food insecurity**
Any student who faces challenges securing food, housing or other basic needs is urged to contact the Dean of Students Office (734-764-7420; deanofstudents@umich.edu; 609 Tappan Street) for support.
ITCS Computing Assistance Hotline  [http://its.umich.edu/help](http://its.umich.edu/help)
Provides support for various computer resources and services at the University of Michigan.
Monday–Friday: 7:00 a.m.–6:00 p.m.
Sunday: 1:00 p.m.–5:00 p.m. (email only)
(734) 764-HELP

**Sweetland Center for Writing**  [http://www.lsa.umich.edu/sweetland/](http://www.lsa.umich.edu/sweetland/)
Sweetland offers a variety of writing courses and support for undergraduate and graduate students.
Location: 1310 North Quad
Hours: For hours each semester, click on “Schedule a Writing Workshop Appointment” under the “For Students” tab. Avoid waiting until the last minute to schedule appointments so you can get your work read in a timely manner.
Phone: (734) 764-0429
Email: sweetlandinfo@umich.edu

**TENTATIVE COURSE CALENDAR**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part I: Foundations</th>
<th>What is the role of schooling? What is teaching? What do these have to do with educational policy?</th>
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<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Readings and Foci</th>
<th>Assignments due</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class 1:</td>
<td>What is the role of schooling? What is the role of educational policy?</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 15</td>
<td>Course intro; a primer on the history of US education</td>
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<td>Introductions to the course and to one another</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Overview of course scope, purposes, and work; guiding orientations to and norms for our work together</td>
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<td><strong>Questions:</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>1. What is the current status of schools in the U.S., considering context and opportunity and how those vary?</td>
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<td>2. Considering the instructional triangle, where are the points of interaction (and therefore the points where change can – and must -- be made to support change and improvement?)</td>
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<td>In class work:</td>
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<td>Autobiography of yourself in a school district: Write about a policy in your home district from when you were a student. How did this policy impact you? How might it have impacted someone not like you? What would you need to know and understand to answer these questions?</td>
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<td>Class 2:</td>
<td>What is the role of schooling?</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 22</td>
<td>A primer on teaching: the instructional triangle from a policy lens</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Questions:</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
1. What is the current status of schools in the U.S., considering context, and opportunity and how those vary?
2. Considering the instructional triangle, where are the points of interaction (and therefore the points where change can—and must--be made to support change and improvement?

**Readings:**

- Policy: Ann Arbor Schools of Choice [https://www.a2schools.org/Page/5355](https://www.a2schools.org/Page/5355)
- Choose and read ONE of the following:

**Part II:** What is the purpose/role of education policy and reform, and for whom? What are its parameters and limits? Who makes policy, and how is this decided? Who implements, and how is this decided? What’s the process? What are the levers used in implementing policy reforms?

| Class 3: January 29 | What is the purpose/role of education policy and reform, and for whom? How do we investigate the potential of an education policy?

**Questions:**
1. What do you ask of policy in a multicultural society, in pursuit of equity?
2. How does policy affect change in teaching and learning?
3. How does policy get inside teaching?

**Readings:**


**Guest Lecturer: Gabriel Dellavecchia**

**Discuss final policy memo assignment**
### Class 4: February 5

Considering deficit models of educational reform. What is the purpose/role of education policy and reform, and for whom?

**Questions:**
1. How do deficit models of educational reform characterize urban communities?
2. How do counter-narratives of urban educational communities shift approaches to policy?

**Readings:**

In class:
- CBS Sports Video (5 min): Aaron Maybin, Baltimore Teacher
- Video via Twitter: [https://tinyurl.com/ybc2fxro](https://tinyurl.com/ybc2fxro)
- Video via Facebook [https://tinyurl.com/ydbn5aaj](https://tinyurl.com/ydbn5aaj)

### Class 5: February 12

Why has change been so elusive?

**Questions:**
1. Return to the policies discussed in weeks 1-4, and map out why change has been so elusive. Ask, together:
   - a. Why didn’t we get what we wanted?
   - b. What inhibited implementation?
   - c. What would have been needed, by whom, when, including resources, and development?
   - d. Why weren’t those there?

**Readings:**

Submit brainstorm idea(s) for policy brief
New Haven, CT: Yale University Press. The following pages: 287-325,
- Skim pp. 287 through 305 to learn the goals of the lesson.
- Closely read pp. 305-325 to get a sense of the different practices Lampert used in the classroom to meet these goals.
- As you read, concentrate on Saundra’s work learning and Lampert’s work teaching Saundra mathematics.

**Part III: Leveraging the instructional triangle to consider reform efforts and investigate the likelihood that they will improve students’ opportunities to learn.**

**Class 6: February 19**

Standards: What are standards? Why do we need standards? What kinds of standards do we need, and for what? What is the purpose of standards? How are standards different from curriculum?

**Questions:**
1. How does policy affect what gets taught, and what does this mean for children and what they learn?
2. Who determines what is taught and to whom?
3. How do standards get decided?
4. What about rigor? How does the policy process delimit or support rigor?

**Readings:**

**Memo 1 Due**

Feedback on policy brief ideas returned

**Class 7: February 26**

Teacher Quality: Standards for Teacher Recruitment and Initial Preparation

**Questions:**
1. How does policy affect the preparation of teachers?
2. Who gets to decide what teachers have to know?
3. How do these policies influence what children learn?
4. What are the theories of change regarding recruitment and preparation?

Readings:

- Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) 2018 K-6 Elementary Teacher Preparation Standards (pp. 7-34). Read each standard, SKIM supporting explanations for each standard.  
- 2015 NCTQ State Teacher Policy Yearbook National Summary, Executive Summary (pp. i-xiv)  

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Break – no class Tuesday, March 5, 2019</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Class 8:</strong> March 12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teacher Quality: Pathways into teaching and State to State variance in policy</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Questions:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>1. What is the theory of action in expanding pathways/routes into teaching?</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. What do these various routes mean for children’s learning?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Readings:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>- New York Times Story on SUNY CSI by Kate Taylor</td>
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<td>Class 9: March 19</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Questions:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>1. How can policy influence retention of teachers?</td>
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<td>2. What happens when we have a perfectly reasonable policy that’s under-resourced and under-elaborated?</td>
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<td><strong>Readings:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<th>Class 10: March 26</th>
<th>Teacher Quality: Teacher Evaluation and Incentives</th>
<th>Draft policy brief due.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Questions:</strong></td>
<td>Considering the environment:</td>
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<tr>
<td>1. How are policies of teacher evaluation determined?</td>
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<td>2. What are the levers and incentives that can be designed to increase retention, especially in schools that, on average, lose the most teachers?</td>
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<td>3. What do policies tell us, and what do they afford, to whom?</td>
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<td>4. What happens when we have a perfectly reasonable policy that’s under-resourced and under-elaborated?</td>
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<td><strong>Readings:</strong></td>
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| Class 11: April 2 | School choice and segregation  
**Questions:**  
1. How has education policy responded to the environments in which schools reside: the communities and populations that schools serve?  
2. What is the current state of school choice and segregation? How are these two related?  
3. What policies are in place to lessen school segregation, and how well are they working?  
**Readings:**  
  https://www.propublica.org/article/segregation-now-the-resegregation-of-americas-schools  
  https://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2016/01/the  
**Memo 2 Due**  
Feedback on policy brief draft returned |
| --- | --- |
| Class 12: April 9 | Immigration, citizenship, and opportunities to learn in school  
**Questions:**  
1. How does immigration status pose challenges for youth, families, and schools?  
**Readings:**  
  https://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2016/01/the **Review AAPS school of choice policy from week 2** |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class 13: April 16</th>
<th>Policy panels</th>
<th>Final policy brief due</th>
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<td>Class 14: April 23</td>
<td>Policy panels</td>
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