ED 649: Foundational Perspectives on Educational Reform
Winter Short Session, ELMAC
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Office hours: 4033, by appointment

Course Overview
This course aims to develop in the career educator a broad and deep understanding of the tensions between ideas and practice, policy and implementation. In addition to developing the skills, knowledge, and dispositions to become a successful teacher, ELMAC students will benefit from the opportunity in this course to locate their prospective role in the bigger picture of the education sector in the United States. Arguably teachers are the people positioned best to influence “educational reform” as they have under their direct control the means and opportunities to work with students. Yet, teachers must contend with several (often competing) forces seeking to reform schools and schooling. The pervasive and ubiquitous sense that schools and student outcomes must change is based in large part on legacies of ideas about how and why change should happen. Despite, or perhaps because of, what has been referred to as “policy churn” (Cuban), there has been a persistent gap between policy and practice. This course is designed to equip teachers to participate in current debates about reforms – hopefully, positioning them to influence that gap. We examine some of the ideologies and levers used in past and current reform efforts with the intent of raising critical awareness of the dynamic environments in which teachers work.

Course Goals
This course aims to strengthen your ability to:
- Describe key concepts in educational reform efforts;
- Develop understanding of diverse perspectives and levers relied upon in reform agendas;
- Identify and explain tensions and implications of particular levers of reforms;
- Write and speak knowledgeably about education reforms from a broader perspective; and
- Influence and direct reform initiatives at various levels (state, district, or school).

Course Scope
This course is divided into 3 modules, each designed to help students probe into reform considerations at the level of the sector at large, a given internship site, and the personal self. Throughout the syllabus and the course, these levels will be referred to as “Self, Site, and Sector.” Module One, The Purpose of Schooling, invites students to explore various opinions on this topic, as well as their own. The second module, The Teaching Profession, allows us to consider the history and dynamic of teaching as the lens through which we will explore a range of education reform issues. Finally, the in the third module, Accountability, we will consider a variety of areas in which teachers are responsible for student learning, schooling, and their own professional identities. We will close the course with students presenting and exploring their own views on topics of interest moving forward.
**Course Session Meetings**
*(All Sessions meet from 1:00-4:00 p.m.)*

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Module</th>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Location</th>
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<td>1</td>
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<td>Tues. December 2</td>
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<td>Tues. December 16</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Tues. January 6</td>
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<td>Tues. January 13</td>
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<td>Tues. January 20</td>
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<td>Tues. January 27</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Fri. January 30</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Tues. February 3</td>
<td>Room 2241</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Fri. February 6</td>
<td>Room 2241</td>
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**Required Readings**
Course readings will be posted on CTools under the Resources section or occasionally given as a class handout. Based on class interests, I may adjust the required readings, and I will invite you to bring in articles of interest at times. Please see CTools for the current syllabus and readings. Readings on the syllabus are generally listed in the order recommended for reading.

**Assignments**
The assignments and weighting of grades for the course is as follows:

1. **The Purpose of Schooling** 25% Due: January 9, 11:59 p.m.
2. **Peeling-the-Onion Consultancies** 20% In class: February 6
3. **Op-Ed (1000-word limit)** 35% Due: February 13, 11:59 p.m.
4. **Class participation** 20% Throughout

- You’ll notice that class participation is valued in this course. Your engagement and participation in the whole group as well as in small group discussions are crucial to your success. Completion of assigned readings is key to the exchange of ideas and new ways of thinking that lead to an engaging and stimulating course. You are expected to have carefully read the assigned readings before class. I encourage you to take notes on the main ideas and arguments, as well as connections you see with your own experiences.

- Unless arrangements are made in advance, late work will receive no credit.
Grading
Consistent with Rackham guidelines, all coursework is graded with a letter (A, B, C, or D), with the use of “+” or “−” to add shades of grey. Letter grades are converted into "points" as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Equivalent</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>Outstanding work nearly free of critique; completes all the challenges of the assignment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A−</td>
<td>3.7</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>Good quality work absent systematic inadequacies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B−</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>Sub-standard work marked by systematic inadequacies in content, structure, and/or writing mechanics.</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C−</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>Unacceptable quality of work with significant, systematic inadequacies in content, structure, and writing mechanics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D−</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Correspondence and Attendance
All course communications will be sent through your U-M email address. You are responsible for everything sent to that address. I expect that you will check your U-M email daily. If you use another email address, you can configure your U-M account to forward all emails to that address.

Excellent attendance is assumed. More than one absence (planned or unplanned, excused or unexcused) risks receiving no credit for the course. Excused absences are granted for illness and family emergencies. The same holds for chronic lateness. For planned absences, contact me as soon as possible in advance of the class session (via e-mail or phone). For unplanned absences, if at all possible, please contact me that day (via e-mail or phone).

Academic Integrity and Support for Students
All university policies hold, including (and especially) those pertaining to academic integrity. See the following for the UM student handbook, which details students’ rights and responsibilities: [http://www.rackham.umich.edu/policies/academic_policies/](http://www.rackham.umich.edu/policies/academic_policies/). If you think you need an accommodation for a disability, please let me know at your earliest convenience. Some aspects of this course, the assignments, the in-class activities, and the way the course is usually taught may be modified to facilitate your participation and progress. As soon as you make me aware of your needs, we can work with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) to help us determine appropriate accommodations. SSD (734-763-3000; [http://www.umich.edu/sswd](http://www.umich.edu/sswd)) typically recommends accommodations through a Verified Individualized Services and Accommodations (VISA) form. Any information you provide is private and confidential and will be treated as such.
**Representing Others’ Research**
As part of engaging with the readings and the core themes of this course, I expect you to explicitly draw on ongoing conversations in academic and public discourse in our discussions and in your writing. When you draw on ideas in others’ research in your written assignments, please be sure to attribute that work correctly. For guidance about how to do this, please see the American Psychological Association’s *Publication Manual*.

**Use of Electronic Devices**
Appropriate use of electronic devices is also a part of your professional participation in our class. Using laptops or cell phones as tools for your learning is acceptable, as long as it is not distracting to your colleagues or your instructor. Examples of acceptable use of electronic devices include making records of your practice and consulting resources for work in class. Non-instructional texting, phone calls, social networking, shopping, and other non-instructional use of these devices are not acceptable in this class at any time, and will result in a reduction in your participation grade. If you are concerned about your ability to meet this professional expectation, please discuss your concern with me. Please let me know if there is an emergency that affects your need for using a phone during class time.
Course Calendar (slight modifications still possible)

Module 1: The Purpose of Schooling

Session 1: December 2, 2014
Introduction
Session 2: December 9, 2014
Democracy and Education
Required reading:
Guiding Questions:
- How might each author answer the question: “What is the purpose of schooling?”
- In regards to the purpose of schooling as laid out in these pieces, with what do you agree and with what might you argue?
- How shall we keep issues of equity and social justice at the heart of this conversation?

Session 3: December 16, 2014
“A Nation at Risk” & its Influence on Education Policy
Required reading:

Module 2: The Profession of Teaching

Session 4: January 6, 2015
A “Semi-Profession”
Required reading:

Session 5: January 9, 2015
Teacher Preparation
PURPOSE OF SCHOOLING ESSAY DUE, 11:59 P.M.
Required reading:
- Darling-Hammond, L. (2010). The flat world and education: how America’s commitment to equity will determine our future. Chapter 7. New York, NY: Teachers College Press. pp. 194-218. *Note: there are two sets of page numbers in the PDF. Please refer to the numbers at the top of the page, not at the bottom. Also note: you are reading the first half of
this chapter for this session; the second half, in the same PDF will be assigned later in the course and the PDF will be posted in both sessions on CTools.


Session 6: January 13, 2015

*Teachers Unions*

Required reading:

- [http://www.nea.org/](http://www.nea.org/)
  - Our Leaders
  - Our Members
  - Our History
  - Our Mission, Vision, and Values
  - About us: Mission, History, AFT Leadership
  - State and Local websites – read your state and if you think you know what local would be yours, read that too
  - Our Community: Reclaim the promise
- [http://www.turnweb.org/](http://www.turnweb.org/)
  - About
  - Watch a “Turn Talk” of Interest
  - Choose something of interest from here: [http://www.turnweb.org/great-lakes/](http://www.turnweb.org/great-lakes/)

Session 7: January 16, 2015

*Teacher Leadership and Activism*

Required reading:

  - Who We Are. Our Mission, choose one “Teacher Success”
  - Our Impact ➔ Policy ➔ Areas of Focus
  - News and Events: Choose at least one article from “Teacher Voice”
  - Home Page
  - About Us
  - Choose one item of interest under either “Solidarity with Chicago Teachers” or “No History is Illegal”


Special Guest: **Paul Tritter, Director of Professional Learning, Boston Teachers Union**
Module 3: Accountability

Session 8: January 20, 2015
An Assessment-Driven Culture

In-Class Op-Ed Writing Workshop: op-ed reading packet to be distributed before this class

Required reading:

Optional reading:

Session 9: January 27, 2015
Standards

Required reading:

Optional reading:

Session 10: January 30, 2015
In-Class Op-Ed Peer Review Workshop: please bring 3 printed drafts to class

Op-Ed DRAFTS DUE AT START OF CLASS

Diverse Models of School Accountability

Required reading:

Session 11: February 3, 2015
Evaluation

Required reading:
• Darling-Hammond, L. (2010). *The flat world and education: how America’s commitment to equity will determine our future*. Chapter 7. New York, NY: Teachers College Press. pp. 218-233. *Note: there are two sets of page numbers in the PDF. Please refer to the numbers at the top of the page, not at the bottom. Also note: this is the session for which you are reading the second half of the PDF.*

Conclusion

**Session 12: February 6, 2015**

*Consultancies*

**February 13, 2015**

More information on op-ed assignment to be distributed.

Possible topics include:

- Teaching as a Profession
- Teacher Preparation
- Teachers Unions
- Teacher Leadership
- Teacher Activism
- Assessment
- Standards
- Charter Schools
- Accountability

OP-ED FINAL DUE, 11:59 P.M.