Division: Administrative and Organizational Studies

Program Area: Educational Leadership & Policy Studies

Course #: EPS 9620

Course Title: Seminar in Education Policy Initiatives

Section #: 001

Term/Year: Winter 2016

Instructor: Dr. Ben Pogodzinski

Office Address: 377 Education

Office Hours: Tuesdays & Thursdays 1-4pm (or by appointment)

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Course Description

The course will explore recent policy initiatives in elementary and secondary education, with some attention to higher education. Techniques of policy analysis are utilized to understand policy development, implementation, and effects.

Course Outcomes

1. Review of policy initiatives related to recent national educational reforms (e.g., Race to the Top, NCLB and waivers, and most recently ESSA).

2. Discuss and understand trends in Michigan related to educational reforms – with particular attention given to responses to national policy reforms (e.g., RTT, NCLB waivers, and Common Core).

3. Analyze and integrate the research and theory base for the key thematic variables which contribute to policy development, implementation, and effectiveness. These major themes or groupings include but are not limited to: pre-k education, school accountability, teacher preparation, teacher effectiveness, curricular reform, school funding, equitable access to effective education, and higher education accountability.

4. Discussion of current periodical and articles that identify the associations between focal policy initiatives and relevant outcomes.

5. Continued formulation of a research focus and direction building, extending, or replicating the research and theory base that will be further refined in EDA 8180-Research Seminar and become the focus of extended evaluation of the literature in EDA 8710-Readings in General Administration.

Required Text:

No Required Textbook – we will be utilizing several academic journal sources.
Course Assignments

Student evaluation will be based on the following:

Class Participation – 30 pts.

You are expected to read all of the required readings listed in the syllabus. The readings are essential for actively participating in class discussions. Your class participation will be based upon attendance, active contributions to activities and discussion, and completion of 1-2 page (double spaced) responses to questions posted weekly (email these to me at least 24 hours before the start of the week’s class).

It is important to attend each class, because I will be supplementing the information presented in the required readings. I ask you to notify me of an absence in advance, if possible. If you miss more than 2 classes you may fail the class.

Policy Analysis – 70 pts.

Part 1 – Choosing the Topic: You are to submit a 1-2-page double-spaced paper identifying an educational problem to study and explaining why it is a policy problem that justifies government attention. This is due on Thursday Feb 4th, and is worth 10 points.

Part 2 - Policy History & Development: Provide information on the history of policy development and implementation as it pertains to your topic. Answer the following questions:

a) How did your topic become a public policy problem by discussing the root causes of the problem, as well as the proximate causes.

b) Second, how did it get placed on the policy agenda and by whom?

c) Third, what is the policy history of your problem? What institutions (formal and informal) have acted upon it in the past?

For example - Has Congress passed laws? Did the Supreme Court rule on the issue? What has been the impact of various presidents or governors on the process? How have the bureaucracies assigned to implement the policy performed?

d) Finally, where do we stand currently? That is, as of January 2016 what is the current policy?

Your history must be long enough to give the reader a full idea of the scope and policy activity regarding your topic (~ 5 pages double spaced). This is due on March 3rd, and is worth 20 points.

Part 3 – Policy Solutions: In the education policy subsystem, there are always policy alternatives to consider to address a particular education problem. Critically analyze the current policy and at least two policy alternatives. For each, address the following:

a) Identify the solution and how it works.

b) Strengths and weaknesses of the policy alternatives.

c) The political feasibility of the policy alternative.

This should be ~ 5 pages double spaced, is due on March 31st, and is worth 20 points.

Part 4 – Policy Analysis: For this last part, weigh in on the issue and express your own opinions on the issue. What do you believe is the best policy alternative and why? What evidence is there to support your position, or not support your opinion? Lastly you must fully discuss how this policy might be implemented and what institutions would have jurisdiction over this policy
solution. This part should be ~ 5 pages double spaced, is due on April 14th, and is worth 20 points.

**Part 5** – Presentation: For this final part, you are to create a presentation to give in class (e.g., Power Point) which combines the previous three sections. Provide an overview of the history of the policy development and implementation, policy alternatives, and your case for a specific policy alternative (including the evidence to support your case). Presentations should be ~ 15 minutes long, presentations will occur on the last day of class April 21st, and is worth 20 points.
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<th>Topics</th>
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<td>Feb 18</td>
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<td>March 17</td>
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**Grading**

Your grade will be determined as follows:

- Class participation 30 pts
- Policy Analysis 70 pts

**Grading Scale:**

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**Class Policy**

You are expected to attend all class sessions, to arrive on time, and to be present for the entire session. Class activity will consist of informal lectures and discussion based, in large part, on the readings. You are expected to participate in the discussion.

Laptops are to be used for class work only (e.g., taking notes, accessing articles), and not for emailing, searching the Internet, grading papers, or any other non-class related activities. Cell phones, smart phones, etc. should be placed on silent mode and be kept put away during class time.

If you bring in food/drink please clean up after yourself.

**Confidentiality**

Your experiences are an important part of your professional learning and you will likely be discussing them in this course. Just as administrators and teachers are expected to respect the privacy and dignity of the children and families with whom they work, so we expect you to use discretion in discussing your experiences. In class, casual conversations, or social situations, do not relate stories from classrooms or schools that may be embarrassing to teachers or students or that include sensitive information about a child, family, or coworkers.

**Plagiarism:**

Plagiarism includes copying material (any more than 5 consecutive words) from outside texts or presenting outside information as if it were your own by not crediting authors through citations. It can be deliberate or unintended. If you're in doubt about the use of a source, cite it. Students caught plagiarizing information from other sources will receive a failing grade in the course. University policy states that students can be subject to multiple sanctions, from reprimand to expulsion as a consequence of academic dishonesty. To enforce this policy, all outside references must be submitted with assignments.
Withdrawal Policy
- Students who withdraw from a course after the end of the 4th week of class will receive a grade of WP, WF, or WN.
  - WP will be awarded if the student is passing the course (based on work due to date) at the time the withdrawal is requested
  - WF will be awarded if the student is failing the course (based on work due to date) at the time the withdrawal is requested
  - WN will be awarded if no materials have been submitted, and so there is no basis for a grade
- Students must submit their withdrawal request on-line through Pipeline. The faculty member must approve the withdrawal request before it becomes final, and students should continue to attend class until they receive notification via email that the withdrawal has been approved. Withdrawals can be requested at any point from the fifth week of class through the study day.

Attention Students with Disabilities:
If you have a documented disability that requires accommodations, you will need to register with Student Disability Services (SDS) for coordination of your academic accommodations. The Student Disability Services (SDS) office is located at 1600 David Adamany Undergraduate Library in the Student Academic Success Services department. SDS telephone number is 313-577-1851 or 313-577-3365 (TDD only). Once you have your accommodations in place, I will be glad to meet with you privately during my office hours to discuss your special needs. Student Disability Services’ mission is to assist the university in creating an accessible community where students with disabilities have an equal opportunity to fully participate in their educational experience at Wayne State University.

Please be aware that a delay in getting SDS accommodation letters for the current semester may hinder the availability or facilitation of those accommodations in a timely manner. Therefore, it is in your best interest to get your accommodation letters as early in the semester as possible.

Religious Observance Policy:
Because of the extraordinary variety of religious affiliations represented in the University student body and staff, the Wayne State University calendar makes no provision for religious holidays. It is University policy, however, to respect the faith and religious obligations of the individual. Students who find that their classes or examinations involve conflicts with their religious observances are expected to notify their instructors well in advance so that alternative arrangements as suitable as possible may be worked out.