UNIVERSITY of HOUSTON | EDUCATION

Course Name: ELCS 8355
Politics, Policy, and Governance

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Class Sections	Days and Times	Room	Instructional Mode
ELCS 8355	Thursday 5:30 - 8:30 pm	N/A	Online/Virtual

Course Description:

The course is designed for school administrators, central office leaders, and aspiring researchers to extend their knowledge and understanding about education policies, politics and governance. We will review and discuss major U.S. education policies from the early 20th century up to the present at the federal, state and local levels while considering larger social contexts. Our focus will be on equal access and equity issues including, but not limited to: race, gender, sexual orientation, disability, language-minority status, immigration status, religion and social class. The course is interdisciplinary in approach, blending elements of law, philosophy, history, and policy research. It will equip students with basic knowledge to enter and participate in policy formation, explore how political systems respond to needs and initiatives, and generate ideas about how to analyze and evaluate policy implementation and provide useful feedback to policy makers.

Learning Objectives/Outcomes:

Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:
1. Produce a final written piece that demonstrates knowledge and understanding of course content.
2. Learn the process and understand the importance of policy making in education.
3. Understand the roles of values and ideology in the policy making process
4. Understand the social, cultural, economic, organizational and political environments shaping the evolution of contemporary education programs and institutions.
5. Demonstrate an understanding of who decides and how decisions are affected by multiple forces in a pluralistic democracy.
6. Describe the basic functions of government and the roles of federal, state, and local agencies in education policy.
7. Explain the direct and indirect ways in which government action affects the operation of schools and school systems. (And to show the intended and unintended outcomes of policies.)
8. Understand the implications of policy decisions at different levels (for students, schools, districts, and beyond).
9. Explain how symbols, language, information, and media relate to the distribution of power and allocation of results in the political arena.
10. Understand and be able to use policy analysis and policy evaluation methods.

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11. Be able to reflect and become knowledgeable about the role of educational leaders in the policy making process.

Texas State Code
Superintendent's Certificate Standards
(a) Superintendent Certificate Standards. The knowledge and skills identified in this section must be used by an educator preparation program in the development of curricula and coursework and the State Board for Educator Certification as the basis for developing the examinations required to obtain the standard Superintendent Certificate. The standards also serve as the foundation for the individual assessment, professional growth plan, and continuing professional education activities required by §242.30 of this title (relating to Requirements to Renew the Standard Superintendent Certificate).

(b) Learner-Centered Values and Ethics of Leadership. A superintendent is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner. A superintendent understands, values, and is able to:
(b)(1) model and promote the highest standard of conduct, ethical principles, and integrity in decision making, actions, and behaviors;
(b)(2) implement policies and procedures that encourage all school district personnel to comply with Chapter 247 of this title (relating to Educators' Code of Ethics);
(b)(3) serve as an articulate spokesperson for the importance of education in a free democratic society;
(b)(4) enhance teaching and learning by participating in quality professional development activities, study of current professional literature and research, and interaction with the school district's staff and students;
(b)(5) maintain personal physical and emotional wellness; and
(b)(6) demonstrate the courage to be a champion for children.

(c) Learner-Centered Leadership and School District Culture. A superintendent is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students and shapes school district culture by facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared and supported by the school community. A superintendent understands, values, and is able to:
(c)(5) institute and monitor planning processes that include strategies designed to ensure the accomplishment of school district goals and objectives to achieve the school district's vision;
(c)(7) recognize and celebrate contributions of staff and community toward realization of the school district's vision;
(c)(8) demonstrate an awareness of emerging issues and trends affecting the education community;
(c)(9) encourage and model innovative thinking and risk taking and view problems as learning opportunities; and
(c)(10) promote multicultural awareness, gender sensitivity, and the appreciation of diversity in the education community.

(d) Learner-Centered Human Resources Leadership and Management. A superintendent is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by implementing a staff evaluation and development system to improve the performance of all staff members, selects and implements appropriate models for supervision and staff development, and applies the legal requirements for personnel management. A superintendent understands, values, and is able to:
(d)(7) demonstrate use of school district and staff evaluation data for personnel policy development and decision making.

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(e) Learner-Centered Policy and Governance. A superintendent is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by understanding, responding to, and influencing the larger political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context and by working with the board of trustees to define mutual expectations, policies, and standards. A superintendent understands, values, and is able to:

(e)(1) define and apply the general characteristics of internal and external political systems to the educational organization;

(e)(2) demonstrate and apply appropriate knowledge of legal issues affecting education;

(e)(3) provide leadership in defining superintendent and board of trustees roles, mutual expectations, and effective superintendent-board of trustees working relationships;

(e)(4) determine the political, economic, and social aspects and/or needs of groups in the community, and those of the community at large, for effective and responsive decision making;

(e)(5) prepare and recommend school district policies to improve student learning and school district performance in compliance with state and federal requirements;

(e)(6) use legal systems to protect the rights of students and staff and to improve learning opportunities;

(e)(7) apply laws, policies, and procedures fairly, wisely, and considerately; and

(e)(8) access state and national political systems to provide input on critical educational issues.

(f) Learner-Centered Communications and Community Relations. A superintendent is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by collaborating with families and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources. A superintendent understands, values, and is able to:

(f)(2) analyze community and school district structures and identify major opinion leaders and their relationships to school district goals and programs;

(f)(3) establish partnerships with parents, area businesses, institutions of higher education, and community groups to strengthen programs and support school district goals;

(f)(4) implement effective strategies to systematically communicate with and gather input from all stakeholders in the school district; and

(f)(5) communicate effectively with all social, cultural, ethnic, and racial groups in the school district and community.

Communication Guidelines and Feedback:

All technical error reports must include screenshot proof attached to an email message. Students are encourage to start assignments early to help reduce last minute technical issues.
PC/Windows tutorial: http://www.wikihow.com/Take-a-Screenshot-in-Microsoft-Windows
MAC/Apple tutorial: http://www.wikihow.com/Take-a-Screenshot-in-Mac-OS-X.

Materials / Required Readings:
The following books are available at the campus bookstore or for purchase from online vendors.
  * Mitra, D.L. (2017). *Educational Change and the Political Process*. Taylor & Francis.

Technology Requirements:
This face-to-face course uses a learning management system called Blackboard to post assignment details,

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announcements, and provide collaborative opportunities. This course is best viewed through the use of a full desktop or laptop computer. The use of mobile devices may prevent course materials to not display or work properly. Below are the minimum technology requirements to be successful in this course:

- Supported operating system (e.g. Windows/PC or Apple/MAC computer)
- USB Flash Drive (at least 1 GIG)
- Stable internet connection (ethernet connection preferred over wireless)
- CougarNet Login credentials http://accessuh.uh.edu
- Email account (UH alias or personal)
- Microsoft Office 2007 or later
- Adobe PDF Reader http://get.adobe.com/reader/
- Two supported internet browsers (e.g. Mozilla Firefox, Google Chrome)
- Pop-up blockers disabled for trusted sites (e.g UH, Blackboard)
- Cookies enabled for trusted sites (e.g UH, Blackboard)
- Java plug-in http://www.java.com/en/download/installed.jsp

Support Services:

Student assistance for Blackboard can be found by visiting http://www.uh.edu/blackboard/help/ , calling 713-743-1411, or emailing support@uh.edu. If you cannot purchase or download the suggested software programs, utilize the CITE computer lab for available computers (http://www.coe.uh.edu/cite). CITE is located on the third floor of Farish Hall in the suite 300N rooms. Software or hardware can be purchased at the UH Bookstore or UH CougarByte Discount website (http://www.cougarbyte.com/). Additional UH computer labs are available all over campus. Learn more by visiting http://www.uh.edu/infotech/services/facilities-equipment/comp-labs/

Technology Competencies/Skills:

Students enrolled in the course must be prepared to perform the basic tasks below.

1. Send and receive email;
2. Attach files to an email message;
3. Locate system information (e.g. browser version, operating system, etc) for trouble shooting;
4. Recognize, use, and create hyperlinks;
5. Use of basic Microsoft Office programs;
6. Download and install software (including utilities, plug-ins, and/or apps);
7. Copy and paste text using a computer;
8. Scan and remove computer viruses;
9. Plug in external devices to a computer ;
10. Save files to an external device (e.g. flash drive, CD, or DVD);
11. Use an internet search engine to locate online credible resources;
12. Post and reply to discussion forums or chat via instant messaging tool;
13. Send computer screenshot for technical assistance.

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Participation/Attendance:

Students are responsible for knowing and adhering to all university and college dates and deadlines. Such dates and deadlines include those for enrollment (registration), adding and dropping of courses, academic holidays, payment and refunds, and applying for graduation. Visit the following website for specific dates:
http://www.uh.edu/academics/catalog/academic-calendar/

In a case of emergency, it is the student's responsibility to keep posted on all official University alerts or closures by visiting: http://www.uh.edu/emergency.

Assessment details:

Participation/Attendance (10%) - Students are expected to be at class and participate in all class activities. Students must submit all online assignments. If a student is unable to attend a class, an alternate assignment will be given. This assignment must be submitted before the next class session.

HW Analysis (25%) - Online HW assignments will be posted on the date of the online class meeting. Students must provide a written response in Blackboard to the assignment and submit a final response before the date of the next class session.

Policy Analysis Presentations (15%) - You will provide a brief summary of key history, any underlying economic, political or ideological trends and current research relating to why the problem/policy/issue exists. A brief presentation of no longer than ten minutes will be shared with the class.

Critical Standards Project Presentations (25%) - This is a virtual group presentation (2 students per group) that will take place the week of July 23rd. Each group will be given approximately 30 minutes for presentation, including time for questions and discussion. Provide handouts or visual aids if appropriate that will enhance your presentation. Include in your presentation the legislative priorities from your organization, some information about how your priorities will be implemented, i.e., the logistics of passing your legislation or implementing your proposal at the school, district, state, or federal level. Besides providing background information regarding legislative priorities, be an advocate for the specific policy recommendation you have chosen.

Final Exam (25%) - A Take Home cumulative Final Exam will be provided to students approximately two weeks before the due date. The exam must be submitted by August 9th.

Assignments are expected to be turned into Blackboard by the assigned due date. Technology failures will not be accepted as reason for missed assignment due dates. Therefore, do not leave anything to the last minute. Back up files frequently and in various locations so work is not lost. It is the student's responsibility to identify alternative ways to complete or submit an assignment. For example, if the Blackboard Learn system is offline consider emailing the assignment before the due date. Students are required to follow all UH deadlines:
http://www.uh.edu/academics/catalog/academic-calendar/

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Weekly Schedule:

Week	Date	Format	Topic	To Do List	Due Date @ 11:59 PM
1	June 4	Online	Intro to Ed. Policy	Article Analysis - "The Power Issue"	
2	June 11	Virtual	Federal/State Ed. Policy Issues	Mitra, D. (2017) Chapters 1 and 2, *Presentation of Policy Analysis Requirements*	
3	June 18	Online	Local Policies/Policy Actors	Mitra, D. (2017) Chapters 3 and 4 -- **HW Analysis 1**	6/25/20
4	June 25	Virtual	The Policy Process	Mitra, D. (2017) Chapters 5 and 6 *Presentation of Critical Standards Project Requirements*	
5	July 2	Online	Policy Formation & Implementation	Mitra, D. (2017) Chapters 7 and 8 **HW Analysis 2**	7/2/20
6	July 9	Virtual	Sustainability & Scale	Mitra, D. (2017) Chapter 9 **Policy Analysis Presentations**	
7	July 16	Online	U.S. Ideals	Mitra, D. (2017) Chapters 10 and 11 **HW Analysis 3**	7/23/20
8	July 23	Virtual	Policy Analysis	*Presentation of Take Home Exam Requirements* **Critical Standards Project Presentations**	7/23/20
9	July 30	Online	Equity	Mitra, D. (2017) Chapter 12 **HW Analysis 4**	8/6/20
10	August 6	Online	Take Home Exam	Take Home Exam (Online)	8/6/20

Evaluation:

Point Range	Grade	Description
	A	Excellent, superior achievement
	A-	
	B+	
	B	Good, exceeding all requirements
	B-	
	C+	
	C	Average, satisfactorily meeting all requirements
	C-	
	D+	
	D	Poor , unsatisfactory
	D-	
	F	Failing or withdrawal while doing failing work
	I	Incomplete

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This course follows all UH grade regulations, policies, and standards as stated in the student handbook. Review the catalog for conditions under which an incomplete may be granted. http://www.uh.edu/dos/studenthandbook/ and http://catalog.uh.edu/content.php?catoid=6&navoid=1077

Academic Honesty:

Plagiarism or cheating will not be tolerated. Notification to all concerned parties will be made immediately. http://catalog.uh.edu/content.php?catoid=6&navoid=1025

Accommodating Students:

In accordance with 504/ADA guidelines, reasonable academic accommodations will be provided to students who request and require them. Please call 713-743-5400 (http://www.uh.edu/csd/) for more assistance.

Student Responsibility:

A responsible student is a successful student. At the University of Houston, students are expected to conduct themselves in a mature and responsible manner, respect the opinions, rights, and personal property of others, and meet their financial obligations. Students are responsible for seeking help and guidance from all of the resources that the university makes available to them. They are expected to be proactive and remain informed about university dates and deadlines, and understand academic and disciplinary policies. They are responsible for communication with their professors, advisors, and university staff, and the commitment to being organized and prepared to learn. Above all, our students are expected to strive for honesty and academic integrity throughout their period of study at the University of Houston. http://catalog.uh.edu/content.php?catoid=6&navoid=1082

Online Student Etiquette:

This course may host synchronous online meetings. During those meetings consider the following:
- **Keep chats on topic.** Avoid inappropriate conversions that may distract others from the course topic or objective.
- **Avoid strong/loud language. Be polite.** Language can easily be misinterpreted in written communication. Before sending an email or chat message make sure it clearly conveys the intended feeling.
- **Use emoticons to express feelings.** Nonverbal cues can reinforce the feeling of a message. Use sparingly. :-)
- **Respect privacy of peers.** Do not post someone's personal information online without their expressed permission.
- **Use appropriate dress code on camera.** During a video conference dress as if attending a face-to-face class. Avoid offensive clothing.
- **Be mindful of background noise and scene/location.** Take advantage of quiet areas to avoid distractions to fellow classmates. Avoid offensive décor or noise.
- **Be helpful.** Assist fellow classmates in understanding course materials.

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