EDAD 6325: K-16 Policy Analysis Research

Instructor Information:

Instructor: Dr. Maria Adamuti-Trache
Office: Trimble Hall #103F
E-Mail: mtrache@uta.edu

Phone: 817-272-2109
Fax: 817-272-2127
Mailbox: 19575

Office Hours: Monday, Tuesday & Thursday 3-5pm (please call or email before coming); or by arrangement

Course Information:

Course Title: K-16 Policy Analysis Research
Course Number: EDAD 6325
Semester: Fall 2013
Course Location and Time: Santa Fe facility, Room 122; Mondays 5-7:50pm

Requirements: Students must attend class on Monday nights, specifically for this course: August 26, September 9, 23; October 7, 21; November 4, 18, 25. Students have to actively participate in Blackboard activities and class discussions. If a class is unexpectedly cancelled due to bad weather conditions, online activities will be made available.

Catalog Description

A study of principles and practices involved in policy analysis research in educational settings. The course is designed to introduce students to educational policy debates, with a particular focus on the major issues and challenges facing policymakers in the United States and other countries. The course will explore theories and practices related to the development and implementation of educational policy in schools and post-secondary institutions with attention to matching appropriate policy research designs to policy goals and organizational contexts. Teaching and learning will be approached within a K-16 (and beyond) perspective.

Course Prerequisites:

No prerequisites. Students must be formally admitted into the K-16 Educational Leadership PhD program.
**Student Learning Outcomes:**

Since education is one of the largest budget items for governments, policymakers, academics and practitioners require better tools and information in order to make data-driven decisions about educational expenses while serving the public in the best manner possible. Research is essential in providing better information to educational leaders and policymakers. The main goal of the course is to prepare students to reflect on relevant contemporary educational issues in schools and post-secondary institutions, to identify educational policy and innovations, to conduct critical assessment of some of these policies, and propose innovative, research driven public policy recommendations.

1. To analyze recent research and evaluation literature which informs policy analysis and innovations in K-16 education settings.
2. To critique the overall quality of research-base and evaluation designs used to advance educational policy innovations.
3. To engage in dialogues to understand the institutional, economic, social and political contexts in which the educational policy innovations occur.
4. To develop research analyses of promising K-12 and postsecondary education policy innovations.

Course learning objectives will provide the tool for examining policy issues relevant to school and post-secondary education, and explore policy in relation to research areas of interests. The course will prepare the students to identify and discuss current educational issues within a K-16 (and beyond) perspective, and reflect on the policy and practice implications of their own research interests.

**Textbook(s) and Materials:**

**Required Text**


The textbook will be used as a central material for class discussion. Other resources will be made available, and students will be expected to search for various references to complete their assignments.

**Other course materials**


**Tentative reference list (will be made available on Blackboard)**


### Tentative lecture/topic schedule:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week/Date</th>
<th>Weekly topic</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
<th>Readings*</th>
<th>Online (in-between classes)</th>
<th>Class</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 1: August 26</td>
<td>Course introduction, overview, expectations Research, policy and practice issues; Case studies</td>
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<td>Discuss research interests from a policy perspective</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 3: September 23</td>
<td>Policymaking process&lt;br&gt;Problem definition, agenda, formulation Policy adoption, implementation, evaluation</td>
<td></td>
<td>Ch 3,4,5</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 4: October 7</td>
<td><strong>Part 2: Case studies</strong>&lt;br&gt;Educational governance and policy College access and stratification* Policies for improved curriculum, standards and testing</td>
<td><strong>Assignment 1</strong> (1000w)&lt;br&gt;Critical analysis paper (due October 14)</td>
<td>Ch 6,7</td>
<td>Reflective policy question RPQ2 (Oct 7-Oct 20)</td>
<td>2 reading leaders (Ch 6 &amp; Ch 7 or PSE article)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 5: October 21</td>
<td>Accountability and school improvement Outcomes and accountability in PSE* Teacher personnel policies Teacher preparation*</td>
<td><strong>Assignment 2 draft 1:</strong> share with colleagues</td>
<td>Ch 8, 9</td>
<td>Discussion final paper</td>
<td>Discuss RPQ2 &amp; 2 reading leaders (accountability &amp; teachers)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 6: November 4</td>
<td>School finances&lt;br&gt;School equity&lt;br&gt;PSE affordability, student aid*</td>
<td><strong>Assignment 2 draft 2:</strong> share with colleagues</td>
<td>Ch 10</td>
<td>Discussion final paper</td>
<td>2 reading leaders (Ch10 &amp; PSE article)</td>
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<td>Week 7: November 18</td>
<td>Charter schools, alternative education&lt;br&gt;Future policies better schools and NCLB</td>
<td><strong>Assignment 2 draft 3:</strong> share with colleagues</td>
<td>Ch 11, 12</td>
<td>Discussion final paper</td>
<td>1 reading leader (Ch11)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 8: November 25</td>
<td>Presentations&lt;br&gt;Course evaluation</td>
<td><strong>Assignment 2</strong> (4000w)&lt;br&gt;Policy inquiry paper (due December 6)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Discussion final paper</td>
<td>Presentations - policy issue or final paper</td>
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* Selection of articles to be announced in class
Grade Calculation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>% of final grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance/Participation in class discussions</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posting 2 reflective questions (online) and leading discussion - group work</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading leaders -- Weeks 3-7</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignment 1: Critical analysis paper on a K-16 issue (Oct 14; 1000w)</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assignment 2: Policy inquiry paper on same K-16 issue (Dec 6; 4000w)</td>
<td>40%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paper presentation (Week 8)</td>
<td>15%</td>
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Online activities will help students with the readings and literature search.

At the end of the semester you will be given an opportunity to evaluate course contents and the quality of instruction provided.

Assignments:

1. Attendance/Participation in class discussion - 10 points

This course will be run as a professional community, and you are expected to attend all classes. We should all be prepared to participate in class discussions.

2. Posting reflective questions on BB – 10 points (group work)

You will work in groups of three and each group will propose two reflective policy questions (about 50 words) based on readings, your research interest or own experience that will be discussed during the next class. As a group, you should be prepared to take the lead to discuss your policy question and make an argument about the importance of the policy issue. Try to identify questions at the intersection of your research interests, or look for current events of interest for your practice. These are informal discussions of no more than 10-15 minutes each.

3. Readings Leader Assignment – 10 points

This assignment consists in leading the class discussion based on the textbook chapters and/or articles selected for discussion. As detailed in the schedule of classes, one or two students will be responsible for leading discussion or designing and delivering a class activity for about 45-60 minutes based on the assigned readings. The point of these questions or activities is to promote reflective discovery for the group. All students must be active (and supportive) during the class sessions. This is your opportunity to let me and your colleagues know that you have read the material and recognize ways in which it conflicts or agrees with your assumptions about the current policy issues in education. There is no standard format for this assignment. Each of you will lead part of class once during the term.


This is an introductory written assignment that could be the basis for your Policy Inquiry Paper. You are expected to write a short essay (no more than 1000w) in which you identify a K-16 education policy issue and bring evidence regarding the issue from policy documents (e.g., reports, discussion papers, policy briefs). Then, you select one major journal article pertaining the policy issue of interest to critically analyze. Ideally, the topics or literature addressed in the critical analysis papers should also inform your literature search for the Policy Inquiry Paper.

A critical analysis paper is a concise summary and reflective critique/discussion of a refereed journal article, published book chapter, or recently published national report (do not select non-refereed literature or unpublished reports). Although CAPs are individual contributions, students are encouraged to work in groups (two, maximum three) on topics of similar interest.
**CAP should be organized in the format outlined below.** The numbers in parentheses represent the maximum point value for each portion of the assignment. Each paper should be prepared as a Word document, and submitted by email.

- Brief introduction (250w) outlining the K-16 education issue of interest that is presented in the CAP and related to the refereed journal article selected (3 points).
- Summary: a 200 word narrative highlighting the problem addressed in the journal article selected, inquiry methods used, and key findings and recommendations (2 points)
- Critique and Implications: a 600 word analysis of the study focusing on the quality and feasibility of the findings and recommendations for improving educational policy and/or practice. In this section, please cite other studies, policies or practices in educational settings that support or contradict the findings or recommendations. A well-written critique meets the following criteria: Are all of the major assumptions and pertinent limitations clearly acknowledged by the author? To what extent were the investigation methods appropriate and rigorous? Do the findings support, contradict, or extend existing theories, research, policy, and/or practice? What are the implications, beyond those cited by the author(s), for improving educational practice, policy and/or future research? (6 points)
- Conclusion: In no more than 50-100 words provide the essence of the article analyzed as if it was part of a literature review related to the educational issue of interest (1 point).
- Supporting References--a list of references used in the analysis, critique, and discussion of the primary document. Reading material assigned for the seminar should be cited where appropriate. The references used by the author(s) of the article examined cannot be used as supporting references in your Critique and Implications section, since they were used to inform the arguments and assumptions presented in the original manuscript (2 point)
- The full and correctly formatted APA citations for references used in the CAP (1 point).

5. **Policy Inquiry Paper -- 40 points**

An Inquiry Paper focuses on a policy innovation that attempts to respond to an educational problem (e.g., K-16 policy initiative, charter schools, remedial education, language policy, NCLB policy). Students should consider paper topics that examine the theoretical and stakeholder perspectives on a particular educational policy innovation of broad interest.

The 12-page paper (about 4000 words, excluding references and attachments) should follow the typical education research protocol:
- Executive Summary or Abstract
- Introduction
- Importance/Significance
- Problem Statement & Inquiry Questions
- Major Themes & Key Findings
- Discussion, Conclusions, Implications, Recommendations
- References
- Appendices or Attachments (optional)

Please cite and list any references in APA format, 6th edition format. Drafts of the Inquiry papers will be shared in class and online during the last 4-6 weeks in order to receive feedback from peers.

6. **Presentation -- 15 points**

Finally, a Power Point should be prepared to support a 15-minute presentation of the policy issue explored in your paper. Students who worked on similar topics are encouraged to organize panels of 3-4 presentations and engage the class in discussing the policy topic -- like presenting in an organized session at a conference.
Email Communication:

UTA e-mail will be considered the official means of communication between the university and students. Utilize your UTA e-mail for all communications. You are responsible if you do not receive information because you do not regularly check your UTA email.

Attendance Policy: Regular and prompt attendance is expected. As doctoral students, you understand the importance of participation in class discussion, including participation in Blackboard activities which continue the discussion of topics covered in class. When you miss taking part in these discussions, we lose out on hearing your ideas and you miss out on hearing ours.

Course Late-Work Policy: If you are unable to submit a paper the evening it is due, your paper will receive a 1-point deduction every day it is late (e.g., assignment 1 will receive maximum 9 points if received next day). Please contact the instructor to discuss any issue related to your assignment’s submission.

Grading Policy:

A = 90-100
B = 80-89
C = 70-79
D = 60-69
F = 0-59

Drop Policy: Students may drop or swap (adding and dropping a class concurrently) classes through self-service in MyMav from the beginning of the registration period through the late registration period. After the late registration period, students must see their academic advisor to drop a class or withdraw. Undeclared students must see an advisor in the University Advising Center. Drops can continue through a point two-thirds of the way through the term or session. It is the student’s responsibility to officially withdraw if they do not plan to attend after registering. Students will not be automatically dropped for non-attendance. Repayment of certain types of financial aid administered through the University may be required as the result of dropping classes or withdrawing. For more information, contact the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships (http://wweb.uta.edu/ses/faq).

Americans with Disabilities Act: The University of Texas at Arlington is on record as being committed to both the spirit and letter of all federal equal opportunity legislation, including the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). All instructors at UT Arlington are required by law to provide "reasonable accommodations" to students with disabilities, so as not to discriminate on the basis of that disability. Any student requiring an accommodation for this course must provide the instructor with official documentation in the form of a letter certified by the staff in the Office for Students with Disabilities, University Hall 102. Only those students who have officially documented a need for an accommodation will have their request honored. Information regarding diagnostic criteria and policies for obtaining disability-based academic accommodations can be found at www.uta.edu/disability or by calling the Office for Students with Disabilities at (817) 272-3364.

Academic Integrity: At UT Arlington, academic dishonesty is completely unacceptable and will not be tolerated in any form, including (but not limited to) “cheating, plagiarism, collusion, the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts” (UT System Regents’ Rule 50101, §2.2). Suspected violations of academic integrity standards will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct. Violators will be disciplined in accordance with University policy, which may result in the student’s suspension or expulsion from the University.

Student Support Services: UT Arlington provides a variety of resources and programs designed to help students develop academic skills, deal with personal situations, and better understand concepts and information related to their courses. Resources include tutoring, major-based learning centers, developmental education, advising and mentoring, personal counseling, and federally funded programs. For
individualized referrals, students may contact the Maverick Resource Hotline by calling 817-272-6107, sending a message to resources@uta.edu, or visiting www.uta.edu/resources.

**Electronic Communication:** UT Arlington has adopted MavMail as its official means to communicate with students about important deadlines and events, as well as to transact university-related business regarding financial aid, tuition, grades, graduation, etc. All students are assigned a MavMail account and are responsible for checking the inbox regularly. There is no additional charge to students for using this account, which remains active even after graduation. Information about activating and using MavMail is available at http://www.uta.edu/oit/cs/email/mavmail.php.

**Student Feedback Survey:** At the end of each term, students enrolled in classes categorized as lecture, seminar, or laboratory will be asked to complete an online Student Feedback Survey (SFS) about the course and how it was taught. Instructions on how to access the SFS system will be sent directly to students through MavMail approximately 10 days before the end of the term. UT Arlington’s effort to solicit, gather, tabulate, and publish student feedback data is required by state law; student participation in the SFS program is voluntary.

**Final Review Week:** A period of five class days prior to the first day of final examinations in the long sessions shall be designated as Final Review Week. The purpose of this week is to allow students sufficient time to prepare for final examinations. During this week, there shall be no scheduled activities such as required field trips or performances; and no instructor shall assign any themes, research problems or exercises of similar scope that have a completion date during or following this week *unless specified in the class syllabus*. During Final Review Week, an instructor shall not give any examinations constituting 10% or more of the final grade, except makeup tests and laboratory examinations. In addition, no instructor shall give any portion of the final examination during Final Review Week. During this week, classes are held as scheduled. In addition, instructors are not required to limit content to topics that have been previously covered; they may introduce new concepts as appropriate.

**Emergency Exit Procedures:** Should we experience an emergency event that requires us to vacate the building, students should exit the room and move toward the nearest exit. When exiting the building during an emergency, one should never take an elevator but should use the stairwells. Faculty members and instructional staff will assist students in selecting the safest route for evacuation and will make arrangements to assist handicapped individuals.

**Librarian to Contact:** Our research librarian is

Andy Herzog, MLS  
Reference/Instruction Librarian  
Central Library, Rm. 313, University of Texas at Arlington  
amherzog@uta.edu  
http://libguides.uta.edu/profile.php?uid=33755  
817.272.7517

**University Mission:**

*The mission of The University of Texas at Arlington* is to pursue knowledge, truth and excellence in a student-centered academic community characterized by shared values, unity of purpose, diversity of opinion, mutual respect and social responsibility. The University is committed to lifelong learning through its academic and continuing education programs, to discovering new knowledge through research and to enhancing its position as a comprehensive educational institution with bachelor’s, master’s, doctoral and non-degree continuing education programs.

**College Mission:**

*The mission of the UTA College of Education* is to develop and deliver educational programs that ensure the highest levels of teacher, administrator, and allied health science practitioner preparation and performance. As a recognized contributor to the fields of education and allied health science, the
College engages in effective teaching, quality research, and meaningful service. The College is committed to diversity and to the advancement of active teaching and learning in all educational environments and at all levels.

**Core Values:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Core Value</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Excellence</td>
<td>Student-Centered Environments,</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research</td>
<td>Collaboration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversity</td>
<td>Technology</td>
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<tr>
<td>Field Experiences</td>
<td>Life-Long Learning</td>
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**Conceptual Framework:**

The work of the College of Education is grounded in constructivism as a theory of teaching and learning and is done in a spirit of expectation that all involved in the College of Education, whether candidate, faculty or administrator, will hold the following as important: **Excellence, Student-Centered Environments, Research, Collaboration, Diversity, Technology, Field Experiences and Life-Long Learning.**

Partners for the Future serves as the theme of the College of Education and epitomizes the understanding that it takes a village of partners to insure the future of education for all.