

**GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY**  
**COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT**  
**Education Leadership**  
**EDLE 634.602 Contemporary Issues in Education Leadership**  
**Spring, 2011**

**Instructor:** Dr. Alan Sturrock  
**Office:** Commerce II, Room 113  
**Office Hours:** Mondays, 2 to 4pm; before, after class; by appointment  
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**Schedule Information**

**Location:** Leis Center  
**Meeting Times:** January 24<sup>th</sup> – May 2nd, 2011 (Mondays)  
4:45 to 7:45pm.

**Course Material**

Textbook: [i]Marx, Gary, Sixteen Trends: Their Profound Impact on Our Future, Arlington, VA, Education Research Service, 2006.  
[ii] <http://www.ted.com/>  
[iii] **Class BLOG:** <http://>

Additional readings, web sites, etc. as assigned by the Instructor.

**Course Description**

This course examines current and emerging issues and trends impacting education: inquiring into demographic shifts; globalization; technology; data-based decision-making; inclusion of diverse learners in American schools; and recent research on student achievement when influenced by race, gender, and poverty.

**Student Outcomes**

Students will

1. Be able to explain several of the seismic shifts and major trends and their implications for society at large and schools and school districts in particular.
2. Define and consider significant issues in education and identify connections to student achievement.
3. Craft informed arguments through the synthesis of recent research found in scholarly literature and current news sources.
4. Demonstrate an understanding of the history, progression, and contemporary significance of an education issue viewed as impacting student achievement.

5. Demonstrate the ability to make educational decisions which are supported by data rather than only personal opinions.
6. Communicate a well-developed argument through rhetoric appropriate to realistic audiences.
7. Provide clear guidance for decision-makers through substantial evidence, analysis, and argument.
8. Demonstrate the ability to be forward-looking by predicting future trends in education.
9. Draw upon concepts explored in previous classes (i.e. ethics, re-framing, learning theory) and apply to arguments concerning specific current issues.

### **Relationship to Program Goals and Professional Organization**

This course is intended as one of two culminating courses in the Masters in Education Leadership Program. Course content focuses on key contemporary issues in public education, both current and emerging. At the conclusion of the course, participants are expected to demonstrate knowledge and skills that increase their effectiveness when working in diverse school settings, an expected hallmark of education in the 21st century.

In relationship to professional organization competencies, participants in this course will demonstrate proficiency in appropriate VA DOE competencies and ISLLC standards. VA DOE: 1-d, 1-e, 2-c, 2-d, 3-g, 4-a, 5-c, 6-e, 6-f. ISLLC: 1-K1, 1-K4, 1-K5, 2-K7, 2-K10, 2-P5, 2-P6, 2-P9, 2-P16, 2-P18, 3-K8, 3-P3, 3-P16, 3-P17, 4-K1, 4-K2, 4-P11, 5-K3, 5-P12, 6-K6, 6-K8, 6-P2, 6-P4, 6-P5. With regard to NCATE Curriculum Guidelines, candidates in this course will demonstrate an understanding of, and capabilities in, all four areas of education leadership: strategic leadership (1.3, 1.6, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4); instructional leadership (3.3, 3.4); organizational leadership (7.2, 7.4, 9.3).  
ELCC Standards – 4.1; 5.1; 5.5; 6.1; 6.2; 6.3

### **Nature of Course Delivery**

A variety of instructional methods are used in this course to cover the course content and create a dynamic, interactive learning environment. These methods might include large- and small-group instruction, cooperative learning, media access, Internet assignments, lecture, blogging, guest practitioners, group presentations and individual/and or group research.

**As with any graduate class at GMU, the challenge is to become a community of learners.**

### **Course Requirements and Procedures**

Students are expected to attend each class for its entirety. Students who must be absent from class are expected to notify the instructor in advance by telephone or email.

Students who miss more than one class, or who arrive late or leave early, *may* lose participation points.

Assignments are to be completed by the due date outlined. Assignments submitted late *may* have points deducted. Assignments submitted more than one week late may not receive credit. All written assignments are to be completed using standard word processing or presentation tools and may be submitted in advance electronically.

Assigned readings, etc. should be done *prior to their discussion in class.*

## Course Activities /Assignments

### Assignment #1 –2 parts-- (50%)

The school board has created a planning group to advise it on issues which may impact the district in the future. Students will act as Futurist Consultants.

*Part I:* Students will select an issue that is of high interest to them and write a position paper [8 to 10 pages] which [a] shows evidence of reading and thorough research on the topic; [b] connects to research/thought/ examples in contemporary examples of practice; and [c] which analyses the prevailing issue[s] and presents at least 3 recommendations as possible solutions. [25 points]

*Part II:* Students will present research and argument to the School Board Planning Group (the rest of the class) on their chosen topic. In order to prepare the Planning Group for the presentation students will locate and assign readings to be completed by the class prior to the presentation. Remember- the school district is paying big bucks for your consulting services. The presentation should be worth it. [25 points]

Possible Topics:

ESOL

Graduation Rates

Gender Equity

Gifted Programs

Disabilities

Standards

Assessment

Low Performance in Urban Areas

Low Performance in Rural Areas

AYP as defined by NCLB

Teacher Education

Teacher Quality

Pre – Education

Sex Education

Religious Expression

Effective Practices

Teacher Pay

Teacher Assignments

Class Size

High School Reform

Grouping and Tracking

Standardization vs. Variation

Retention and Promotion

Centralization vs. Decentralization

Charter Schools

School Choice and Vouchers

Privatization

Home Schooling

Evolution

Zero Tolerance

Role of Scientific Research in School Reform

Comprehensive School Reform

**Assignment #2: ‘Chapter 17’ (30%)**

Using ONE of the listed ‘trends’ in the Appendix [pages 341 to 348], students should create a chapter outline which includes the following: [i] description of Trend; [ii] rationale for inclusion; [iii] current thinking on Trend[multiple viewpoints]; [iv] implications for society-at-large; [v] essential questions and key considerations/implications for future educators; and [vi] select bibliography.

**Class Participation** [includes helping to lead a class discussion on an assigned ‘micro issue’, a *minimum* of 3 quality blog entries] and attendance. **(20%)**

**Grading**

Students’ grades are based on their proficiency with respect to the student outcomes stated above. Outcomes typically have an oral (class participation) and a written component.

*Grading Scale*

A+ = 100 percent  
 A = 95 - 99 percent  
 A - = 90 - 94 percent  
 B+ = 87 - 89 percent

B = 83 – 86 percent  
 B- = 80 – 82 percent  
 C = 75 – 79 percent  
 F = 0 – 74 percent

Assignment #1: Consultant Position Paper Rubric [Part I]  
25 points

CRITERIA	Exceeds Expectations	Meets Expectations	Approaching Expectations	Falls Below Expectations
<b>Introduction and Thesis Statement (10)</b>	The introduction provides a clear roadmap for the reader, foreshadowing what the paper is intended to cover. The thesis appears as the last sentence of the introductory paragraph.	Introduction serves as a roadmap for paper; strong thesis included.	Introduction serves as a roadmap for understanding.	Introduction is both general and vague; no thesis included.
<b>Rationale/Justification (20)</b>	Position is supported with well-developed and thought out reasons (minimum of three). Reasons show strong analysis and conclusions based on the information.	Position is supported and developed throughout. 1 or 2 reasons support analysis.	Position is hinted at and barely developed; general support given by analysis.	Little thought given to supportive positions; little connections made via reasoning or analysis.

<b>Evidence of reading and research on the topic (25)</b>	Position is supported in depth with a variety of sources. Substantial valid and accurate information in the form of expert opinion, statistics, research studies, etc. has been used throughout the paper. Information is relevant and supports the writer's ideas.	Position is supported by a variety of information sources [at least 2 relevant sources are cited]. Information provided is mostly relevant.	Position attempts to connect to valid & accurate information/expert opinions. Some connections made to support main thesis.	Position is overgeneralized and vague. No connections made to accurate information/expert opinion.
<b>Conclusion and recommendations (20)</b>	The paper concludes in a manner that is persuasive to the reader and leads to broader thinking on the topic. The conclusions drawn follow logically from the body of the paper, and begin with a re-statement of thesis	Conclusions are drawn from evidence/expert opinion provided and connect back to main thesis.	Conclusion hinted at but not directly stated. Vague references cited to support main thesis.	\ No conclusion provided.
<b>Organization of paper (15%)</b>	Paper is powerfully organized and fully developed	Paper includes logical progression of ideas aided by clear transitions	Paper includes brief skeleton (intro, body & conclusions) but lacks transitions	Paper lacks logical progression of ideas
<b>Mechanics (10%)</b>	Nearly error-free which reflects clear understanding and thorough proofreading	A few errors and questionable word choice	Errors in grammar and punctuation that detract from message	Frequent errors in spelling, grammar, and punctuation---lack of proofreading

Assignment #1 : Consultant Presentation Rubric [Part II]

25 points

CRITERIA	Exceeds Expectations	Meets Expectations	Approaching Expectations	Falls Below Expectations	Score
<b>Presentation Content (5 pts)</b>	Provides new insights into issues and makes suggestions for future plans.	Provides complete and accurate understanding of issues	Provides incomplete understanding of issues	Provides misconceptions of issues	
<b>Data analysis (5 pts)</b>	Analysis of data is persuasively presented, and application is made to a "big picture" context	Analysis of significance is presented clearly and succinctly.	Basic facts are present	Information is incomplete	
<b>Handouts, Visuals and Reading Assignments (5 pts)</b>	Provides support to presentation that contains rich, vivid and powerful detail	Clearly communicates main idea of presentation with suitable support and detail	Information is not clear	Information results in an isolated and random format	
<b>Presentation Delivery (5 pts)</b>	Presentation was clearly done by professional consultants. The School Board spent its money wisely.	The presentation was adequate but the delivery could be a bit more polished..	The presentation appeared to have been done by a group of students .	The delivery of the presentation came across as poorly planned and not rehearsed.	
<b>Audience Involvement (5 pts)</b>	The presentation involved the audience throughout and they gave a standing ovation.	The audience was involved in the presentation.	Some attempts were made to involve the audience in the presentation.	No attempts were made to involve the audience in the presentation.	

Assignment #2: **'Chapter 17'** – (30%)

Assessment Rubric CRITERIA	Exceeds Expectations	Meets Expectations	Approaching Expectations	Falls Below Expectations	Score
<b>Introduction (Statement of purpose) ( 6 pts)</b>	Contains a sharp focus and a clearly identifiable statement of purpose.	Contains a focus	Contains an unengaging or poorly focused statement of purpose.	Does not present a thesis or purpose statement that is clearly identifiable or developed.	
<b>Interview Summary (including PIM) ( 6 pts)</b>	Major points are strong and supported by examples	Major points are given	Major points lack clarity	Major points are missing	
<b>Directions for Schools ( 10 pts)</b>	Concepts are insightful, inspiring are thoroughly detailed.	Concepts are good The implications of these insights for the respondent's overall teaching practice are presented, as applicable.	Concepts do not go beyond the obvious	Concepts are missing or underdeveloped	
<b>Reflection ( 5 pts)</b>	Response demonstrates an in-depth reflection on, and personalization of the trend and/or strategies presented in the course materials to date. Viewpoints and interpretations are insightful and well supported. Clear, detailed examples are provided, as applicable.	Response demonstrates a general reflection on, and personalization of, the trend and/or strategies presented in the course materials to date. Viewpoints and interpretations are supported. Appropriate examples are provided, as applicable.	Response demonstrates a minimal reflection on, and personalization of, the trend. Viewpoints and interpretations are unsupported or supported with flawed arguments. Examples, when applicable, are not provided or are irrelevant to the assignment.	Response demonstrates a lack of reflection on, or personalization t Viewpoints and interpretations are missing, inappropriate, and/or unsupported. Examples, when applicable, are not provided.	
<b>Mechanics ( 3 pts)</b>	No errors	A few minor errors	Several distracting errors	Many major mechanical errors	

**Participation (20%)**

<i>Levels:</i>	<b>exceeds expectations</b>	<b>meets expectations</b>	<b>approaching expectations</b>	<b>falls below expectations</b>
<i>Criteria:</i>				
<b>Attendance</b>	Exemplary attendance, no tardies	Near perfect attendance, few tardies	Occasional (2-3) absences or tardies	Frequent (>3) absences or tardies
<b>Quality of questions and Interaction</b>	Most queries are specific and on point. Deeply involved in class dialogue. Challenges ideas, seeks meaning.	Often has specific queries, stays involved in class dialogue, though sometimes tentative or off-base.	Asks questions about deadlines, procedures, directions or for help with little specificity. Little discussion of ideas.	Rarely asks questions of any quality.
<b>Effort</b>	Willingly participates when asked. Plays a leadership role in groups. Engages and brings out the best in others.	Willingly participates when asked. Takes on group tasks. Engages others.	Reluctantly participates when asked. Seeks easiest duties in groups. Tolerates others.	Actively avoids involvement when possible. Complains about others. Has large set of excuses.
<b>Engagement</b>	Enthusiastically initiates discussion. Personalizes and takes ownership of activities. Always knows where class or group is.	Sometimes initiates discussion and always works well with direction. Generally knows what's going on.	Seeks direction, but does not initiate discussion. May know where class or group is.	Waits for direction. Knows little of what is going on. Cannot describe where class or group is.

<b>Use of Blogs</b>	A minimum of 3 entries and 3 comments are submitted, all of which are substantial. Beyond the required five, your blog includes many more reflections.	A <i>minimum</i> of 2 quality blog entries and 2 comments are submitted, though not all of them may give evidence of a substantial contribution.	1 blog entry and comment have been completed.	No blog entries/comments submitted.
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### College of Education and Human Development Expectations

- Students must adhere to the guidelines of the George Mason University Honor Code [See <http://academicintegrity.gmu.edu/honorcode/>].
- Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with the George Mason University Office of Disability Services (ODS) and inform their instructor, in writing, at the beginning of the semester [See <http://ods.gmu.edu/>].
- Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing [See <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/1301gen.html>].
- Students are responsible for the content of university communications sent to their George Mason University email account and are required to activate their account and check it regularly. All communication from the university, college, school, and program will be sent to students solely through their Mason email account.
- Students must follow the university policy stating that all sound emitting devices shall be turned off during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.
- Students are expected to exhibit professional behaviors and dispositions at all times.

### Campus Resources

- The George Mason University Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) staff consists of professional counseling and clinical psychologists, social workers, and counselors who offer a wide range of services (e.g., individual and group counseling, workshops and outreach programs) to enhance students' personal experience and academic performance [See <http://caps.gmu.edu/>].
- The George Mason University Writing Center staff provides a variety of resources and services (e.g., tutoring, workshops, writing guides, handbooks) intended to support students as they work to construct and share knowledge through writing [See <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/>].
- For additional information on the College of Education and Human Development, Graduate School of Education, please visit our website [See <http://gse.gmu.edu/>].

## Course Schedule

### EDLE 634 Contemporary Trends in Education Leadership Spring, 2011

Instructor's Note: A syllabus created in a 'vacuum' is, by nature imperfect and subject to change...the expectation is that class members will be involved in any meaningful changes that foster better learning.

Session	Date	Topic & Readings	DUE dates/Presenter
1	1/24	Introduction; review of syllabus; course in 'miniature'; 'the future is here' [a school of the 'almost' future]	
2	1/31	BLOGS [introduction] Macro & Micro Issues A School of the Future [2]	BLOG entry[#1]
3	2/7	'Majorities & Minorities' <i>[Read main text, Trend #2]</i>	
4	2/14	'Polarization' [Cartesian Dualism, Redux] <i>[Read main text, Trend #11]</i>	Group-led 'micro' issue discussion #1 BLOG entry posted
5	2/21	'Caring for the Planet' <i>[Read main text, Trend #10]</i>	Group-led 'micro' issue discussion #2
6	2/28	'Scientific Discoveries/Ethical Choices' <i>[Read main text, Trend #9]</i>	Group-led 'micro' issue discussion #3
7	3/7	'The Poor we shall always have with us...' <i>[Read main text, Trend #14]</i>	BLOG entry[#2] posted <u>Assignment #1 [part 1] due</u>
8	3/14	'Social & Intellectual Capital' <i>[Read main text, Trend #3]</i>	Group-led 'micro; issue discussion #4 BLOG entry [#3] posted
9	3/21	<b>NO Class Session—<u>EDLE Spring Conference, 3/24 at Johnson Center [5:00pm]</u></b>	
10	3/28	Group Presentations	<u>Assignment #1 [Part 2] due</u>
11	4/4	Group Presentations	
12	4/11	'My Chapter 17' – The	

		<b>Value of Paradox</b>	
	<b>4/18</b>	<b>Spring Break</b>	<b>No Class</b>
<b>13</b>	<b>4/25</b>	<b>'Global Education'</b> <i>Read main Text, Trend #12</i>	<b><u>Assignment #2 due</u></b>
<b>14</b>	<b>5/2</b>	<b>Poster Session: Sharing Chapter 17</b>	

\*\*\*[If, for any reason, class is cancelled because of inclement weather, then a make-up session will be scheduled.]\*\*\*