

**GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY**  
**COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT**  
**UPDATED - EDLE 634: Contemporary Issues in Education Leadership**  
**Section 601/Fairfax Cohort X - Spring 2014**

**Instructor Information**

**Instructor:** Dr. Phyllis Pajardo (Dr. Phyll)  
**Office:** Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS)  
Gatehouse Administration Center (GAC), Human Resources, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
**Office Hours:** By appointment  
**Phone:** 571-423-3150 (O); 703-909-9448 (C)  
**Fax:** 571-423-5053  
**Email:** [phyllis.pajardo@fcps.edu](mailto:phyllis.pajardo@fcps.edu) or [ppajardo@gmu.edu](mailto:ppajardo@gmu.edu)  
**Mailing Address:** 8115 Gatehouse Road, Second Floor  
Falls Church, VA 22042-1203  
**Website:** <http://www.taskstream.com>

**Schedule Information**

**Location:** GAC, room # 3050-51 (Jan – Feb classes)  
GAC, room 5050 (Feb 4, March – April classes)  
**Meeting Dates:** January 14 – April 8, 2014 (Tuesdays); exceptions noted below  
**Meeting Time:** 4:45 – 7:45 pm  
**NOTE:** *On **March 4, 2014**, class will held virtually via a Blackboard Collaborate session. Specifics will be shared closer to the date.*

*The Annual FCPS Pathways to Leadership Conference will be held Tuesday, **March 11, 2014, 4-6 pm**. Registration is required. In lieu of the first part of class, all students are expected to attend the conference. Class will convene at 6:30 pm, The Ridge, C-07.*

**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 research on student achievement when influenced by race, gender, and poverty.

**Nature of Course Delivery**

A variety of instructional methods are used in this course to deepen students' understanding of the course content and create a dynamic, interactive learning community. The instructional methods will include lecture, cooperative learning structures, large- and small-group discussion/presentations/activities, print and electronic media, guest practitioners, and individual research.

## **Course Materials**

Required: Noll, James (2013). *Taking sides: Clashing views on educational issues*. (17<sup>th</sup> edition). New York: McGraw-Hill.

Recommended: Marx, Gary (2006). *An overview of sixteen trends: Their profound impact on our future*. Alexandria, VA: Education Research Service.

Classroom Materials: Additional readings as assigned.

Other Resources: To complete required assignments, students will need access to a personal computer with Internet as online access is vital for the various aspects of the course. Students should be able to access and use Microsoft Office 2010 products. Additionally, student should have an active GMU email account.

All students are required to use <http://www.taskstream.com> as part of this course. TaskStream will be used to facilitate communication, access assignments and handouts, and submit written work for feedback and assessment.

## **Student Outcomes**

Students will be able to:

1. Explain several major issues/trends and their implications for society at large and schools and school districts in particular.
2. Demonstrate the ability to make educational decisions that are supported by data rather than only personal opinions.
3. Connect and apply knowledge from prior courses.
4. Synthesize recent research relative to student achievement with particular attention to the relationships between student achievement and gender, race, and poverty.
5. Identify current issues in education (locally and nationally) and consider the implications for school districts.
6. Identify effective ways to communicate to various stakeholders and groups.
7. Describe rights, regulations, philosophies, and methods used in educating diverse groups such as Limited English Proficient and Students with Disabilities.
8. Utilize various data sources to predict future issues/trends in education and to improve student achievement.
9. Work independently and interdependently to successfully accomplish group projects.
10. Listen to multiple perspectives, consider suggestions, seek common ground, and maintain objectivity.
11. Articulate a vision for leadership in future roles as educational leaders.

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

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 21<sup>st</sup> century.

In relationship to professional standards, participants 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, and 2.4); instructional leadership (3.3, 3.4); organizational leadership (7.2, 7.4, and 9.3).

## **GMU Policies and Resources for Students**

- Students must adhere to the guidelines of the George Mason University Honor Code [See <http://oai.gmu.edu/honor-code/>].
- Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing [See <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/responsible-use-of-computing/>].
- 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.
- 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/>].
- 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 stating that all sound emitting devices shall be turned off during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.

- 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/>].

### **Professional Dispositions**

Students are expected to exhibit professional behaviors and dispositions at all times.

### **Core Values Commitment**

The College of Education and Human Development is committed to collaboration, ethical leadership, innovation, research-based practice, and social justice. Students are expected to adhere to these principles.

### **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, will lose participation points.

Assignments are to be completed by the due date outlined. Assignments submitted late will 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.

### **Course Activities**

Since this is a graduate-level class, high quality work on all assignments and meaningful class participation are expected. Rubrics will be used in the evaluation of required course work.

**Small group project/presentation** on assigned issue: Work in groups of 3-4, with defined roles. Prepare a 30-minute interactive presentation with visuals/PPT, on assigned topic, which is to be defined/described. Include relevant related research. Discuss topic's implications and potential impact on education. Multiple perspectives from key stakeholders should be presented. Possible topics: Bullying, legal and ethical issues, technology, administrator or teacher credentialing, high stake testing, parent/community involvement, etc. **30 points**

**Stakeholder Interviews:** To expand and/or deepen your understanding of the issue/trend examined in your group presentation, students will conduct one-on-one interviews with at least two education stakeholders, each of who hold competing perspectives on the issue you're studying. These stakeholders may be school board members, local politicians, parents, community organizers, business leaders, educational researchers, school or central-office administrators, school or central-office staff, etc. The assignment requires you to submit a summary of the data collected from your interview, along with your interview transcripts and interview protocol. **25 points**

**Individual Issue Paper:** Students will select an issue that is of high Interest and write a 3-5 page paper which shows evidence of readings, connects and relates your paper to major trends and contemporary issues in educational leadership, analyses the issue, and presents possible recommendations. Key points are presented in a clear, compelling manner with supporting details. **25 points**

**Class participation, discussion and attendance:** Actively participate in class and online discussions, and in group activities, share current issues from news media/pending or current legislation, and serve as critical friends to other students. Attendance is expected for all classes. **20 points**

### **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 points  
A = 95 - 99 points  
A - = 90 - 94 points  
B+ = 87 - 89 points  
B = 83 - 86 points  
B - = 80 - 82 points  
C = 75 - 79 points  
F = 0 - 74 points

**Stakeholder Interviews - 25 points each – Due: February 4**

In order to expand and/or deepen student’s understanding of the issue/trend examined in the small group presentation, each student will conduct one-on-one interviews with at least two education stakeholders, each of who hold competing perspectives on the issue you’re studying. These stakeholders may be school board members, local politicians, parents, community organizers, business leaders, educational researchers, school or central-office administrators, school or central-office staff, etc. The assignment requires you to submit a summary of the data collected from your interview, along with your interview transcripts and interview protocol.

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Objective Not Met 1</b>	<b>Objective Partially Met 2</b>	<b>Objective Met 3</b>	<b>Objective Met/Exceeded 4</b>
Understands the issue being advocated and its importance to education. (possible 5 pts)	Demonstrates severe misconceptions.	Displays incomplete understanding of concepts.	Displays complete and accurate understanding of important concepts.	Provides new insights and important concepts.
Presents stakeholders with divergent viewpoints. (possible 5 pts)	Does not introduce the interview subjects; does not use viewpoints.	Provides a vague introduction of the subjects; uses viewpoints which are not divergent.	Introduces the subjects and presents divergent perspectives.	Introduces and describes the subjects; articulates clear, multiple and diverse perspectives on the issue.
Presents interview data. (possible 5 pts)	Presents information in isolated pieces, in a random fashion; does not quote interviewees.	Presents important interview information in an unclear theme/structure; does not quote interviewees.	Presents the interviewees’ points in an unbiased manner; does not quote interviewees.	Presents the interviewees’ points, uses quotes that contains rich, vivid and powerful detail.
Interview Transcripts	Does not include the interview transcripts.		Includes the interview transcripts.	
Interview Protocol	Does no include the interview protocol.		Includes the interview protocol (at least 5 questions)	
Creates quality product.	There are frequent errors in spelling, grammar, and punctuation.	Errors in grammar and punctuation are present, but spelling has been proofread.	There are occasional grammatical errors and word choice.	The paper is nearly error-free and reflects clear understanding and thorough proofreading.

**Individual Issue Paper - 25 points each – Due February 25**

Each student will select an issue that is of high interest and write a 3-5 page paper. The paper should: describe the issue, underlying assumptions, and arguments; present divergent points of view; integrate current research, shows evidence of readings, connect and relate to major trends and contemporary issues in educational leadership, analyze the issue, and present possible implications or recommendations. Key points are presented in a clear, compelling manner with supporting details.

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Objective Not Met 1</b>	<b>Objective Partially Met 2</b>	<b>Objective Met 3</b>	<b>Objective Met/Exceeded 4</b>
Understands the issue being advocated and its importance to education. (possible 5 pts)	Demonstrates severe misconceptions.	Displays incomplete understanding of concepts.	Displays complete and accurate understanding of important concepts.	Provides new insights into some aspect of important concepts.
Presents divergent viewpoints.	Does not use viewpoints.	Uses viewpoints which are not divergent.	Presents divergent perspectives.	Articulates clear, multiple and diverse perspectives on the issue.
Expresses ideas clearly.	Communicates information as isolated pieces in random fashion.	Communicates important information but not a clear theme or overall structure.	Clearly communicates main idea or theme and provides suitable support and detail	Provides support that contains rich, vivid and powerful detail.
Effectively translates and integrates research into meaningful summary.	Does not translate research or prior readings into summary that is clearly defined.	Translates research and readings into summary that has poorly defined conclusions with little or no data or research.	Consistently translates research and prior readings into summary that has clearly defined conclusions.	Anticipates and articulates outcomes of research and readings on issues.
Presents implications and recommendations.	Does not offer a statement or examination.	Offers vague implications and recommendations.	Offers implications and recommendations with few details.	Offers clear and specific implications and recommendations.
Creates quality product.	There are frequent errors in spelling, grammar, and punctuation.	Errors in grammar and punctuation are present, but spelling has been proofread.	There are occasional grammatical errors and word choice.	The paper is nearly error-free and reflects clear understanding and thorough proofreading.

**Small Group Project Presentation Rubric – 30 points – Due: March 25 or April 1**

Students will work in groups of 3-4, with defined roles. Each group will prepare a 30-minute interactive presentation with visuals/PPT, on an assigned educational issue, which is to be defined/described. Relevant related research should be included. Topic's implications and potential impact on education should be discussed. Multiple perspectives from key stakeholders should be presented. At least four minutes of the presentation should be devoted to Q & A. Possible topics: Bullying, technology, administrator or teacher credentialing, teacher/principal evaluation, high stake testing, parent/community involvement, etc.

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Objective Not Met 1</b>	<b>Objective Partially Met 2</b>	<b>Objective Met 3</b>	<b>Objective Met/Exceeded 4</b>
Length of Presentation	Less than 20 or More than 40 Minutes	Less than 25 or More than 35 Minutes	25 -35 minutes	30 minutes
Interactive Presentation	No engagement	Less than half of class participates	Every class member participates	Half of class participates more than once
Research-based information (possible 6 points)	No research cited	Missing one or more important study	Basic and current research included	Critical research included
Necessary/integral information on assigned topic	Information lacking or not on topic	Topic not clearly described and only partial information provided	Topic clearly described and necessary information provided	Topic clearly described and implication for future changes or uses outlined
Presentation content	Provides misconceptions of issues	Provides incomplete understanding of issues	Provides complete and accurate understanding of issues	Provides new insights into issues
Group member participation	One member	Half of the members	All members	All members have a unique role
Response to questions	No response or inaccurate answers	Some questions not responded to or some responded to inaccurately	All questions responded to	All questions responded to clearly and accurately

## Participation – 20 points

Students are to actively participate in class and online discussions, as well as in group activities. They will share current issues from news media, from pending or current legislation, and other sources. Students are to serve as critical friends to other students. Students are expected to attend each class.

<i>Levels:</i>	<b>Objective Met/Exceeded</b>	<b>Objective Met</b>	<b>Objective Partially Met</b>	<b>Objective Not Met</b>
<i>Criteria:</i>	4	3	2	1
<b>Attendance</b>	Exemplary attendance; no tardies	Near perfect attendance; few tardies	Occasional (2-3) absences or tardies	Frequent (>3) absences or tardies
<b>Questions and Interactions</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>Online comments/entries</b>	Completes all online entries; makes substantial contributions.	Completes a <i>minimum</i> of 2 entries/comments; some submitted assignments give evidence of substantial contributions.	Completes 1 entry which was submitted with minimum contribution.	No entries were completed or submitted.

## Course Schedule

Session	Date	Topic	Reading/ Assignment Due	Guest Practitioner(s)
1	Jan 14	Course Introduction and Overview  Demographic Shifts	Noll, Introduction; Marx, Introduction, Trends 1 and 5	Richard Culp, PLA
2	Jan 21	Diversity, Poverty, Failing Schools, and the Achievement Gap Current Issue(s)	Marx, Trends 2 and 14; Noll, Issue 9	Instructional Leader Panel
3	Jan 28	Technology and its Impact on Achievement Current Issue(s)	Marx, Trend 4; Noll, Issue 20	Information Technology and Instructional Services staff
4	Feb 4	Inclusive Classrooms Current Issue(s)	Noll, Issue 14; <b>Stakeholder Interview Due</b>	Special Services Staff
5	Feb 11	Teacher Certification, Recruitment, Selection, Evaluation and Compensation	Marx, Trend 16; Noll, Issue 16	Human Resources Staff
6	Feb 18	NCLB and other Educational Legislation and Policies	Noll, Issues 8 and 10	SB member Asst. Supt, PLA
7	Feb 25	Current issues	<b>Individual Issue Paper Due</b>	Administrator Panel
8	March 4	<b>Blackboard Collaborate Session</b> – Standardized Curriculum and Universal Preschool	Noll, Issues 2 and 12	Superintendent Noonan
9	March 11	<b>Pathways to Leadership Conference</b> Careers and Leadership Development	Marx, Trend 15	N/A
10	March 18	Zero Tolerance and 21 <sup>st</sup> Century Skills	Noll, Issues 18 and 21	Superintendent's Office staff
11	March 25	Group Presentations	<b>Group Projects Due</b>	Superintendent Garza
12	April 1	Group Presentations	<b>Group Projects Due</b>	N/A
13	April 8	Course Wrap-up; Evaluations	N/A	CAS