GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY

GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

Education Leadership Program

EDLE 634, Section DL1

Contemporary Issues in Education Leadership
Spring, 2022, 3 credit hours

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Course Term: January 24th through May 18th, 2022

I.   COURSE DESCRIPTION

University Catalog Course Description
Contemporary Issues in Education Leadership (3:3:0) Examines current and emerging issues and trends impacting education to include 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.

II.   COURSE DELIVERY METHOD

This course will be delivered 100% fully online using an asynchronous (not "real time") format via the Blackboard learning management system (LMS) housed in the MyMason portal. You will log in to the Blackboard course site using your Mason email name (everything before "@masonlive.gmu.edu") and email password. The course site will be available on or before January 21st, 2022.

Under no circumstances, may candidates/students participate in online class sessions (either by phone or Internet) while operating motor vehicles. Further, as expected in a face-to-face class meeting, such online participation requires undivided attention to course content and communication.

III.   **COURSE MATERIALS**

Required Texts

Frey, William H. (2018). *Diversity explosion: How new racial demographics are remaking America*. Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press.
(Note that there is a new 2018 edition)

Duncan, Greg J., and Richard J. Murnane. (2014) *Restoring opportunity: The crisis of inequality and the challenge for American education*. Harvard Education Press.

Other Assigned reading in Blackboard and Optional Sources

Assigned and optional source material will be available on their links listed on Blackboard. Assigned sources will also be listed on the tentative schedule below.

IV.   **COURSE CONTENT**

During the course students will learn about (1) the demographic shifts about school populations that have led to changes in current and projected student bodies; (2) research that examines causes of opportunity and achievement gaps in American education; (3) interventions related to reducing opportunity and achievement gaps by race/ethnicity, SES, dominant language, or disability; and (4) examining critical issues that occur in schools when managing staff and students as a school leader.

Teaching and Learning

Each class will include a variety of activities and exercises. Specific process goals for this class are as follows:

1. Classes will reflect a balance of activities that encourage the exploration of and the use of research in instructional leadership. To promote an atmosphere that allows us to accomplish this, we will:
    a. agree to disagree respectfully during class discussions;
    b. give others a charitable read by assuming good intentions;
    c. strive to be open to new ideas and perspectives; and
    d. listen actively to one another.

2. Candidate work will reflect what is expected from leaders. Hence, it is expected that candidates will:
    a. write papers that are well-researched, proofread, submitted in a timely fashion, and conform to APA guidelines;
    b. participate actively in class discussions in a manner that challenges the best thinking of the class; and
    c. provide constructive feedback to others both on their ideas and on their written work, striving to learn from each other and to test each other's ideas.

3. We will endeavor to create an online environment that approximate what we know about learning organizations. Consequently, it is important that we create a space that allows participants to try out new ideas and voice opinions without fear or ridicule or embarrassment. The hallmark of a learning organization is a balance between openness and constructive feedback; hence, everyone is expected to:
    a. demonstrate appropriate **respect for one another**;
    b. voice concerns and opinions about the class process openly;
    c. engage in **genuine inquiry**;
    d. recognize and celebrate each other's ideas and accomplishments;
    e. show an awareness of each other's needs; and
    f. **maintain strict confidentiality** regarding any information shared.

V.   COURSE OBJECTIVES

Students completing the course successfully will be able to:
- ✓ Access and manipulate GIS sites to retrieve and analyze demographic data.
- ✓ Convey and understanding of demographic changes that have occurred and are projected to occur in America including forces affecting the changing racial map, population shifts; cultural and generation gaps; and their impact on education.
- ✓ Analyze and explain research about education gaps related to race/ethnicity, disability, SES, or dominant language.
- ✓ Apply such research to a proposed plan to narrow at least one of these gaps.
- ✓ Consider the myriad number of challenges school leaders typically face when managing staff and students.

VI.   RELATIONSHIP TO PROGRAM GOALS

The following National Educational Leadership Preparation (NELP) and Education Leadership Constituent Council standard elements are addressed in this course:

NELP Standard 3: Equity, Inclusiveness and Cultural Responsiveness
- Component 3.1 Program completers understand and demonstrate the capacity to use data to evaluate, design, cultivate, and advocate for a supportive and inclusive school culture.
- Component 3.2 Program completers understand and demonstrate the capacity to evaluate, cultivate, and advocate for equitable access to educational resources, technologies, and opportunities that support the educational success and well-being of each student.
- Component 3.3 Program completers understand and demonstrate the capacity to evaluate, cultivate, and advocate for equitable, inclusive, and culturally responsive instruction and behavior support practices among teachers and staff.

NELP Standard 7: Policy, Governance, and Advocacy
- Component 7.1 Program completers understand and have the capacity to collaboratively develop the school's professional capacity through engagement in recruiting, selecting, and hiring staff.
- Component 7.2 Program completers understand and have the capacity to develop and engage staff in a collaborative professional culture designed to promote school improvement, teacher retention, and the success and well-being of each student and adult in the school.

- Component 7.3 Program completers understand and have the capacity to personally engage in, as well as collaboratively engage school staff in, professional learning designed to promote reflection, cultural responsiveness, distributed leadership, digital literacy, school improvement, and student success.

VII.   **TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS**

This course will be delivered on GMU's Blackboard platform, so students are required to have access to Blackboard. A Blackboard site is available to all students enrolled in the course at http://mymason.gmu.edu. You need to log on using your GMU username and password. To participate in this course, students will need the following resources:
- High-speed Internet access with standard up-to-date browsers. To get a list of Blackboard's supported browsers see: https://help.blackboard.com/Learn/Student/Getting_Started/Browser_Support#supported-browsers
To get a list of supported operation systems on different devices see: https://help.blackboard.com/Learn/Student/Getting_Started/Browser_Support#tested-devices-and-operating-systems
- Consistent and reliable access to their GMU email and Blackboard (at least daily access on weekdays), as these are the official methods of communication for this course.
- Students may be asked to create logins and passwords on supplemental websites and/or to download trial software to their computer or tablet as part of course requirements.
- The following software plug-ins for PCs and Macs are available for free download by clicking on the link next to each plug-in:
  - Adobe Acrobat Reader: http://get.adobe.com/reader/
  - Windows Media Player: https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/help/14209/get-windows-media-player
  - Apple QuickTime Player: www.apple.com/quicktime/download/
- You may use **Google Docs** to complete select assignments and to participate in various learning activities throughout the semester.
- **Video/Screencasting Tools:** You may use Kaltura, Jing, Camtasia, or Screencast-O-Matic to record videos throughout the semester.
- **A headset microphone** for use with Zoom, to engage with the instructor. These can also be useful when recording videos for the course.

Email: Per university policy and in compliance with federal law, I will only communicate with candidates via their GMU email accounts and will be unable to respond to emails sent from other accounts (i.e., Gmail, yahoo, work email, etc.).
- **All candidates are required to activate and monitor their GMU e-mail accounts.**
- Any announcements concerning the course will be sent to your GMU email address.
- I will respond to emails within one business day of email receipt (i.e., excluding weekends).

- Video Conferencing: Students are encouraged to communicate with each other and the instructor using Blackboard tools for both group collaboration sessions and the instructor's virtual office hours.

Microsoft Office: It is my expectation that all students have access to Microsoft Office. We will be using Word and Excel for this course. If you do not have access to this software, you are required to obtain it within the first two weeks of the course. It is best, but not required, to have the most recent version of the software.

VIII. **COURSE REQUIREMENTS, PERFORMANCE-BASED ASSESSMENT, AND EVALUATION CRITERIA**

General Expectations

Consistent with the expectations of a Master's level course in the Education Leadership program, grading is based heavily on student performance in written assignments. The assignments constructed for this course reflect a mix of skills associated with the application of research to education leadership contexts. Overall, written work will be assessed using the following broad criteria:

- Application of concepts embedded in assigned readings and other materials and reinforced in class activities
- The quality of analysis, synthesis, and application
- The ability to write in a clear, concise, and organized fashion

Additionally, a significant portion of the class grade will be based on participation and the contribution you make to class discussion.

Specific Performances and Weights

The overall weights of the various performances are as follows:

Class participations - 125 points

Candidates are expected to participate actively in class discussions, small group activities, and in serving as critical friends to other colleagues. The participation rubric is available on the course site. Participation points will be assessed as part of each unit and the activities are as follows.

Orientation (5 points)

- Syllabus quiz

Unit 1: Diversity Explosion (50 points)
- Group discussions, in-class activities, quizzes and peer review

Unit 2: The Opportunity and Achievement Gap (50 points)
- Group discussions, in-class activities, quizzes and peer review

Unit 3: Critical Issues in Education (20 points)
- Group discussions, in-class activities, quizzes and peer review

Written Assignments - 375 points

You will have **three major assignments** during the course. The <u>first</u> paper involves reporting a demographic analysis. The <u>second</u> is a proposal on a specific achievement gap, including the nature of this gap and what research suggests might help close it, followed by a set of proposed actions to narrow it in your setting. The <u>third</u> is a descriptive analysis of a contemporary issue from your school/campus. A description of each assignment and a rubric for grading each assignment are included at the end of this syllabus.

<u>Submitting papers:</u> All papers must be submitted **on time, electronically via Blackboard.**

<u>Late work:</u> Students' work is expected to be on time, meaning no later than midnight of the due date. Late assignments will not be accepted except in an emergency situation that have been discussed and approved by the instructor in advance of the due date. Please take advantage of instructor availability to get assistance prior to assignment deadlines.

<u>Grade Appeals:</u> Grade appeals will only be granted when the number of points awarded for the assignment is less than 75 percent of the possible points available. Grade appeals will only be allowed for the first two written assignments. Students must resubmit the assignment within two weeks of receiving their original grade in order to receive a new grade. If the resubmission represents a substantial improvement over the original assignment, students will be eligible to receive up to half of the points they didn't earn on their first attempt.

<u>Grading Scale:</u>
A+ = 500+ points
A   = 475 - 499 points
A- = 450 - 474 points
B+ = 435 - 449 points
B   = 415 - 434 points
B- = 400 - 414 points
C   = 375 - 399 points
F   = Below 375 points

IX.   ONLINE EXPECTATIONS

<u>Course Week:</u> Because online courses do not have a "fixed" meeting day, our week will generally **start** on ***<u>Monday</u>*** and **finish** on ***<u>Sunday</u>***, with exceptions communicated to students via email.

Log in Frequency: Students must actively check the course Blackboard site and their GMU email for communication from the instructor, **at a minimum this should be three times per week**.

Participation: Students are expected to actively engage in all course activities throughout the semester, which includes viewing of all course materials, completing course activities and assignments, and participating in course discussions and group interactions.

Technical Competence: Students are expected to demonstrate competence in the use of all course technology. Students are expected to seek assistance from the instructor or GMU IT if they are struggling with the technical components of the course.

Technical Issues: Students should expect to experience some technical difficulties at some point in the semester and should, therefore, budget their time accordingly. Late work will not be accepted based on individual technical issues.

Workload: Expect to log in to this course **at least three times a week** to read announcements, participate in discussions, and work on course material. Remember, this course **is not self-paced.** There are **specific deadlines** and **due dates** listed in the **CLASS SCHEDULE** section of the syllabus and the weekly to do lists on Blackboard to which you are expected to adhere. It is the student's responsibility to keep track of the weekly course schedule of topics, readings, activities, and assignments due. **Plan to spend about 10 hours a week to complete all course activities.**

Advising: If you would like to schedule a one-on-one meeting to discuss course requirements, content, or other course-related issues, we can meet via telephone or web conference. We can meet during the online office hours using Zoom. Send an email to schedule a one-to-one session if you are unable to meet during office hours, and including your preferred meeting method and suggested dates/times.

Netiquette: Our goal is to **collaborate**. Experience shows that even an innocent remark in the online environment can be misconstrued. A following is a list of suggestions for interacting with others online:

- Re-read your responses carefully before you post.

- Be positive in your approach to others and be diplomatic with your words.

- Remember, you are not competing with each other. You are sharing information and learning from one another as well as the instructor.

- Use descriptive subject lines. Give readers a clue about what's inside.

- Do not use all caps.

- Avoid slang, abbreviations, and acronyms.

- Avoid sarcasm, joking, or other communication styles reliant on visual cues.

- Avoid multiple exclamation points.

- Assume good intentions. Err on the good side of all contributors.

- If you are referring to something that was said or read on the online forum, "cite" the original source to give credit to who originally shared the idea.

- Accommodations:
  Online learners who require effective accommodations to insure accessibility must be registered with George Mason University Disability Services.

X.   GMU POLICIES AND RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS

Policies

- Students must adhere to the guidelines of the Mason Honor Code **(see** https://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/honor-code-system/**).**

- 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 Mason 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 with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with George Mason University Disability Services. Approved accommodations will begin at the time the written letter from Disability Services is received by the instructor (see http://ods.gmu.edu/).

- Students must follow the university policy stating that all sound emitting devices shall be silenced during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.

Campus Resources

- Support for submission of assignments to VIA should be directed to viahelp@gmu.edu or https://cehd.gmu.edu/aero/assessments. Questions or concerns regarding use of Blackboard should be directed to https://its.gmu.edu/knowledge-base/blackboard-instructional-technology-support-for-students/.

- **Notice of mandatory reporting of sexual assault, interpersonal violence, and stalking:** As a faculty member, I am designated as a "Responsible Employee," and must report all disclosures of sexual assault, interpersonal violence, and stalking to Mason's Title IX Coordinator per University Policy 1202. If you wish to speak with someone confidentially, please contact one of Mason's confidential resources, such as Student Support and Advocacy Center (SSAC) at 703-380-1434 or Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) at 703-993-2380. You may also seek assistance from Mason's Title IX Coordinator by calling 703-993-8730, or emailing titleix@gmu.edu.

- **For information on student support resources on campus, see**
  https://ctfe.gmu.edu/teaching/student-support-resources-on-campus

For additional information on the College of Education and Human Development, please visit our website https://cehd.gmu.edu/**.**

Plagiarism:

- Plagiarism Statement: Plagiarism means using the exact words, opinions, or factual information from another person without giving that person credit. Writers give credit through accepted documentation styles, such as parenthetical citation, footnotes, or endnotes; **a simple listing of books and articles is not sufficient.** Plagiarism is the equivalent of intellectual robbery and cannot be tolerated in an academic setting. Student writers are often confused as to what should be cited. Some think that only direct quotations need to be credited. While direct quotations do need citations, so do paraphrases and summaries of opinions or factual information formerly unknown to the writers or which the writers did not discover themselves. Exceptions for this include factual information which can be obtained from a variety of sources, the writers' own insights or findings from their own field research, and what has been termed common knowledge. What constitutes common knowledge can sometimes be precarious; what is common knowledge for one audience may not be so for another. In such situations, it is helpful, to keep the reader in mind and to think of citations as being "reader friendly." In other words, writers provide a citation for any piece of information that they think their readers might want to investigate further. Not only is this attitude considerate of readers, it will almost certainly ensure that writers will never be guilty of plagiarism. (Statement of English Department at George Mason University)

- Plagiarism and the Honor Code: George Mason University operates under an honor system, which is published in the University Catalog and deals specifically with cheating, attempted cheating, plagiarism, lying, and stealing. Please familiarize yourself with the honor code, especially the statement on plagiarism (http://www.gmu.edu/facstaff/handbook/aD.html). If you have questions about when the contributions of others to your work must be acknowledged and appropriate ways to cite those contributions, please talk with the professor or utilize the GMU writing center.

- Plagiarism and the Internet: Copyright rules also apply to users of the Internet who cite from Internet sources. Information and graphics accessed electronically must also be cited, giving credit to the sources. This material includes but is not limited to e-mail (don't cite or forward someone else's e-mail without permission), newsgroup material, information from Web sites, including graphics.

- If you have questions about when the contributions of others to your work must be acknowledged and appropriate ways to cite those contributions, please talk with the professor utilize the GMU Writing Center.

Academic Integrity & Inclusivity: This course embodies the perspective that we all have differing perspectives and ideas and we each deserve the opportunity to share our thoughts. Therefore, we will conduct our discussions with respect for those differences. That means, we each have the freedom to express our ideas, but we should also do so keeping in mind that our colleagues deserve to hear differing thoughts in a respectful manner, i.e. we may disagree without being disagreeable. http://integrity.gmu.edu/

Diversity, Religious Holiday: Please refer to George Mason University's calendar of religious holidays and observations (http://ulife.gmu.edu/calendar/religious-holiday-calendar/). It is the student's responsibility to speak to the instructor in advance should their religious observances impact their participation in class activities and assignments.

Student Privacy Policy: George Mason University strives to fully comply with FERPA by protecting the privacy of student records and judiciously evaluating requests for release of information from those records. Please see George Mason University's student privacy policy https://registrar.gmu.edu/students/privacy/ .

Professional Dispositions: Students are expected to exhibit professional behaviors and dispositions at all times. See http://cehd.gmu.edu/students/policies-procedures/.

Core Values Commitment: 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: http://cehd.gmu.edu/values/.

Other Concerns: If you have concerns or issues relating to the content or conduct of the class, please talk with me directly. Although the specifics of these conversations are entirely confidential, they may provide me with useful suggestions that may be shared indirectly with the class to improve the learning experience for all students. **As a matter of policy, I do not respond to anonymous e-mails.**