

**George Mason University  
Education Policy**

EDPO 603: Conflict and Consensus: Education, Interest Groups, and Advocacy  
EDPO 886: School Reform in the US: Politics and Policies  
POGO 750 DL1: School Reform in the US: Politics and Policies  
3 Credits, Spring 2023

Thursdays 4:30pm – 7:10pm  
Online – Synchronous

**Faculty**

Name: Prof. David Houston  
Office Hours: By Appointment  
Office Location: Van Metre 736  
Email: [dhousto@gmu.edu](mailto:dhousto@gmu.edu)

**Note About Cross-listing**

This course is cross-listed as EDPO 603, EDPO 886, and POGO 750 to facilitate various students' course requirements. Doctoral, Masters, and Graduate Certificate students are all welcome to enroll in this class. Masters and Graduate Certificate students in the College of Education and Human Development will typically enroll in EDPO 603. Doctoral students in CEHD will typically enroll in EDPO 886. Masters and Doctoral students in the Schar School of Policy and Government will typically enroll in POGO 750. Please email the instructor if you have any questions.

**Prerequisites/Corequisites**

None

**University Catalog Course Description**

EDPO 603: Explores points of conflict and consensus across the education landscape. Examines the role of interest groups and advocacy in education reform and policy.

EDPO 886: Explores a broad range of reform initiatives shaping public education and examines the ways politics infuses education policy. Investigates the disciplinary and methodological frameworks scholars have used to study school reform.

**Course Overview**

This seminar offers an in-depth introduction to the study of the politics of education. Topics will include (but are not limited to): the multiple and often contradictory goals of education,

measuring school quality, school choice, racial segregation, competing interest groups, school board politics, and public opinion. Students will engage with major theoretical contributions from the discipline of political science to help make sense of contemporary developments in education reform.

### **Course Delivery Method**

This course will be delivered using a seminar format.

### **Learner Outcomes or Objectives**

EDPO 603: This course is designed to enable students to do the following:

1. Gain an understanding of the political contexts of schooling.
2. Interrogate and examine points of conflict and consensus in education policy.
3. Gain an understanding of the role of interest groups and advocacy in education.
4. Hone critical thinking skills through class discussions and writing assignments.

EDPO 886: This course is designed to enable students to do the following:

1. Demonstrate a detailed and sophisticated understanding of major reform issues in U.S. education.
2. Analyze and describe the political and social forces that influence decision making on these issues.
3. Understand and explain the intersection of school reform and educational policy at various levels (local, state, federal).
4. Analyze existing scholarship around school reform initiatives and develop a new research agenda.

### **Professional Standards**

Not applicable

### **Course Performance Evaluation**

Except when explicitly stated otherwise, students are expected to submit all assignments via Blackboard prior to the beginning of the class session when the assignment is due.

#### *Participation*

This is a participation-intensive class. Students are expected to:

1. Attend all classes and provide advance notice, if possible, if you must miss a class
2. Read all assignments prior to class and bring copies to class
3. Actively participate in discussions of the readings and treat one another with respect

4. Submit all assignments on time. Late work will be penalized by 2pts/day, unless prior arrangements are made

Note: Faculty reserves the right to alter the schedule as necessary, with notification to students.

### **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: <http://cehd.gmu.edu/values/>.

### **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/> <http://oai.gmu.edu/the-mason-honor-code/>).
- Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing (see <https://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 <https://ds.gmu.edu/>).
- Students must silence all sound emitting devices during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.

#### *Campus Resources*

- Support for submission of assignments to VIA should be directed to [viahelp@gmu.edu](mailto: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/>.
- For information on student support resources on campus, see <https://ctfe.gmu.edu/teaching/student-support-resources-on-campus>

### **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](mailto:titleix@gmu.edu).

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