EDUC 3005 - Policy as a Lever for Change
University of Pittsburgh - School of Education | Syllabus - Summer 2024

Navigating the Syllabus

Welcome to EDUC 3005! This syllabus provides an overview of the course. Details will be posted on Canvas. The syllabus is divided into multiple sections with corresponding headings, which you can view, search, and navigate by selecting the icon titled "Show Document Outline" on the left-hand side of this Google Doc. Headings are also color-coded, if you find this helpful: general information is blue, modules are yellow, readings are green, and assignments are pink. The syllabus may be updated periodically to meet class needs. Therefore, revisiting this Google Doc (rather than downloading it as a file) will ensure you have the most accurate information. **Link to this Google Drive Syllabus: EDUC 3005 Syllabus Summer 2024 Overview**

Contact Information
Co-Instructors:
- Dr. Joshua Bleiberg (he/him),email at jbleiber@pitt.edu
- Dr. Mariko Yoshisato Cavey (she/her), email at mcavey@pitt.edu

Course Description

EDUC 3005: In this class we will explore the foundations of the policy-making process. We will interrogate the views of decision-makers about how public policies are created. The course will highlight notable examples of both effective and ineffective policies in education and social services. Additionally we will critically examine policies which are evident in local and national realms for critical examination. We will also respond to problem-based learning scenarios to form and modify real-world examples of policies and regulations in education and related settings. Finally we will examine the links among effective policy, leadership, advocacy for children and families, and systems reform.

Course Goals and Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to (adapted from Garcia & Alberto, 2023):

- Recognize, identify, and analyze education policies at multiple levels (e.g., federal, state, local) that impact their area of study/professional context.
- Analyze the structural features of how policies are framed and communicated.
- Apply various theoretical lenses to critically analyze policy-making and implementation.
- Understand the role of leaders in creating and implementing policies equitably.
- Employ features of effective writing for advancing equitable policy change.

Course Materials

You do not need to purchase any texts for this course. Readings can be accessed through the University of Pittsburgh library, and will also be linked on the syllabus and uploaded to Canvas.

Course Meeting Structure

We will meet in-person once a month (four times throughout the summer). Attendance at these meetings is required. All other coursework will be done asynchronously online. Please complete all required readings and preparatory assignments by the time we meet for each class.

- Dates: May 4, June 1, July 13, August 3
- Time: 8:00 am - 12:00 pm
- Location: Lawrence Hall, Room 205

Usually, in-person classes will loosely follow a three-part structure, with breaks incorporated:

- Part 1: Group connection and orientation to the topics from the assigned module
- Part 2: Presentation and discussion facilitated by peer groups
- Part 3: Review upcoming assignments, work/collaboration time, and individual check-ins

Overall, everyone's engagement and participation sets the tone and foundation for our learning. Engagement and participation look different from person to person. Some students may have different comfort levels with the activities expected of the class. As a learning community, it is important for us to trust that individuals know how they can be most present with the group. Our hope is that our in-person sessions will offer a supportive environment in which everyone can contribute and have their strengths recognized, while creating space for uncertainty and growth. If you would like to discuss anything with us, please reach out to both of us on one email thread.

Attendance and Absences

In accordance with the EdD program design, attendance is required for the in-person class sessions held once a month. Absences will be addressed on a case-by-case basis, and students will be expected to make up any missed class session(s). If you are not able to attend a session, inform both instructors ahead of time via a joint email, and share the general context for why you cannot attend, to the extent this is relevant and you feel comfortable doing so. Disclosure is NOT required, but may help us understand how to best support your engagement in appropriate make-up activities based on your needs.

After each session we will contact all students that reported their expected absence in advance, along with any additional students that were unexpectedly absent that day, via a group email. All students who missed the class will find a separate time to meet as a group, for a self-facilitated make-up session. The group will complete three activities (specifics will be provided via email):

1. Review and discuss the slides from the in-person class
2. Share, summarize, and discuss each student's self-selected article chosen as part of the relevant module's assigned readings
3. Submit a Google Form summarizing individual thoughts about the group session

Grading Overview

We approach this course with hopes that you will feel pushed to your learning edge, find value in the concepts presented and discussed, make connections to your work and future research, and grow as a student, by engaging with curiosity and humility in critical thought, self-reflection, collaborative experiences, peer and instructor input, and support from the learning community.

Coursework is graded for full credit on a "satisfactory/unsatisfactory" basis. Assuming all of your assignments are "satisfactory," you can expect to earn an overall "A" grade in the course. If your assignment does not meet the requirements for "satisfactory" credit, you will be offered the opportunity to incorporate feedback, make improvements, and resubmit it to meet expectations.

The listed due dates are intended to help everyone stay "on track" with overall course pacing, and allow ample time for feedback to be offered as needed before in-person class sessions. If you find it challenging to meet a due date, you may still submit the assignment later (and earn full credit, as long as it is complete). If we see missing assignments from you, we may reach out to check in about your plan/timeline for submission. However, we encourage you to proactively inform us of your need for an extension so that we can support you to the best of our ability.

Assignment	Percentage of Grade	Due Date
Module 1: Introduction to Education Policy (20% Total)		
Reading Commentary (Google Form)	10%	5/14
Reflection Check-In (Google Form)	5%	5/14
Group Teach-Out (In-Class Activity)	5%	5/4
Module 2: Introduction to Theory of Change (20% Total)		
Reading Commentary (Google Form)	10%	5/28
Reflection Check-In (Google Form)	5%	5/28
Group Teach-Out (In-Class Activity)	5%	6/1
Module 3: Introduction to Implementation (20% Total)		
Reading Commentary (Google Form)	10%	7/9
Reflection Check-In (Google Form)	5%	7/9
Group Teach-Out (In-Class Activity)	5%	7/13
Module 4: Introduction to Evaluation (20% Total)		
Reading Commentary (Google Form)	10%	7/30
Reflection Check-In (Google Form)	5%	7/30

Group Teach-Out (In-Class Activity)	5%	8/3
Comprehensive Assignments (20% Total)		
Policy Working Paper (Draft)	5%	6/25
Policy Working Paper (Revised)	10%	7/23
Community Learning Event (In-Class)	5%	8/3

Course Modules and Pacing

The course content is divided into four modules. We will focus on one module per class session. Each module has consistent expectations for reading, writing, reflecting, and presenting.

You will **read** 2-3 assigned texts, and one publication of your choice, for each module. These required readings provide a foundation for class assignments, activities, and discussions. Optional readings are offered as supplemental resources that may support your learning/action.

You will **write** a commentary on the assigned texts and/or your self-selected reading for each module, which will be submitted via short answers to prompts on a Google Form.

You will **reflect** on your course progress by responding to check-in questions on a Google Form.

You will **present** a "teach-out" with a small group during each class session, which involves collaboratively presenting and discussing a topic relevant to your program area, and connected to the readings. When not presenting, you will participate in others' teach-out facilitation.

To connect the modules, you will write a paper and engage in a community learning event.

For more details about these expectations, see the sections at the end of the syllabus, titled: "Module-Based Assignment Guidelines" and "Comprehensive Assignment Guidelines".

See the following sections for a summary of readings and assignments for Modules 1-4.

Module 1: Introduction to Education Policy (May 4)

Link to Module 1 Slides EDUC 3005 Module 1 Slides

Required Readings:

1. Douglass Horsford, S. D., Scott, J. T., & Anderson, G. L. (2018). The politics of education policy in an era of inequality. In *The politics of education policy in an era of inequality: Possibilities for democratic schooling* (pp. 1-20). Routledge.

2. Douglass Horsford, S. D., Scott, J. T., & Anderson, G. L. (2018). Critical policy analysis: Interrogating process, politics, and power. In *The politics of education policy in an era of inequality: Possibilities for democratic schooling* (pp. 21-46). Routledge.
3. Douglass Horsford, S. D., Scott, J. T., & Anderson, G. L. (2018). National or special interests? Federal and state education policy and reform. In *The politics of education policy in an era of inequality: Possibilities for democratic schooling* (pp. 69-88). Routledge.

Optional Readings:

4. Congressional Research Service. (2022). *A summary of federal education laws administered by the U.S. Department of Education.*
5. Learning Policy Institute. (2020). *The federal role in advancing education equity and excellence.* [Policy brief]. LearningPolicyInstitute.org. https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/product/advancing-education-2020-brief
6. Lopez, D., Mallett Moore, E., & Nabors, A. (2024). *Systemic equity review: Reviewing education policies to advance equity.* WestEd. WestEd.org. https://www.wested.org/resources/systemic-equity-review-reviewing-education-policies-to-advance-equity/

Assignments Due AFTER Class *(for Modules 2-4, these will be due BEFORE class)*:

1. Reading Commentary: Due by 8:00 am on Tuesday, May 14 via this Google Form
2. Reflection Check-In: Due by 8:00 am on Tuesday, May 14 via this Google Form

Assignments Due During Class:

3. Group Teach-Out: Due by 12:00 pm on Saturday, May 4 via your group's Google Doc

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Module 2: Introduction to Theory of Change (June 1)

Link to Module 2 Slides EDUC 3005 Module 2 Slides

Required Readings:

1. Douglass Horsford, S. D., Scott, J. T., & Anderson, G. L. (2018). Building power: Community organizing, student empowerment, and public accountability. In *The politics of education policy in an era of inequality: Possibilities for democratic schooling* (pp. 191-208). Routledge.
2. Douglass Horsford, S. D., Scott, J. T., & Anderson, G. L. (2018). Reclaiming the power of public education: Possibilities for democratic schooling. In *The politics of education policy in an era of inequality: Possibilities for democratic schooling* (pp. 209-230). Routledge.
3. Self-select one journal article or other scholarly publication that helps you connect the assigned readings to your program area, place of practice, literature review milestone, or other relevant aspect of your experience. This self-selected reading will be discussed with your "teach-out" group. If you are not sure where to begin, consider choosing a source from the references list in one of the assigned texts for this module. You may

also use an article from another class, as long as the content is relevant to this module topic.

Optional Readings:

4. DeBray, E., Finnigan, K. S., George, J., & Scott, J. (2022). A civil rights framework for the reauthorization of ESEA. [Policy brief]. National Education Policy Center. nepc.Colorado.edu. https://nepc.colorado.edu/publication/reauthorization?utm_source=search&utm_campaign=nepc_visitors
5. Gienapp, A. & Hostetter, C. (2022). *Developing a theory of change: Practical guidance.* The Annie E. Casey Foundation. aecf.org. https://www.aecf.org/resources/theory-of-change
6. StriveTogether & PolicyLink. (2021). Policy toolkit: A guide for policy development. StriveTogether. StriveTogether.org https://www.strivetogether.org/policy-toolkit-a-guide-to-systems-transformation-through-policy-change/

Assignments Due Before Class:

1. Reading Commentary: Due by 8:00 am on Tuesday, May 28 via this Google Form
2. Reflection Check-In: Due by 8:00 am on Tuesday, May 28 via this Google Form

Assignments Due During Class:

3. Group Teach-Out: Due by 12:00 pm on Saturday, June 1 via your group's Google Doc

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Comprehensive Assignment - Major Progress Point

Policy Working Paper (Draft) - See Directions Below: Due by 8:00 am on Tuesday, June 25 Assignment expectations will be discussed on June 1, to help you prepare to write this draft.

For assignment instructions, see this document: Writing Guidelines Part 2 - Drafting

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Module 3: Introduction to Implementation (July 13)
Link to Module 3 Slides EDUC 3005 Module 3 Slides

Required Readings:

1. Felix, E. R. & Nienhusser, H. K. (2024). Humanizing policy implementation in higher education through an equity-centered approach. In L. W. Perna (ed.), *Higher education: Handbook of theory and research: Volume 39* (pp. 593-647). Springer Cham.
2. Viennet, R. & Pont, B. (2024). *Education policy implementation: A literature review and proposed framework.* Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Working Paper.

3. Self-select one journal article or other scholarly publication that helps you connect the assigned readings to your program area, place of practice, literature review milestone, or other relevant aspect of your experience. This self-selected reading will be discussed with your "teach-out" group. If you are not sure where to begin, consider choosing a source from the references list in one of the assigned texts for this module. You may also use an article from another class, as long as the content is relevant to this module topic.

Optional Readings:

4. **Suggestion:** Explore the work of various education policy research institutes/centers. There are many organizations that employ researchers, practitioners, and policymakers to study a breadth of policy-based challenges and implementation processes/outcomes. You might start by skimming the publications and/or many focus areas of the following major U.S.-based firms to support your own work, or learn about something new. And, you will likely find there are lots of others that specialize in a few key policy topics.
   a. American Institutes for Research (AIR): "Our rigorous, state-of-the-art research and evaluation work provides important evidence for education policymakers and practitioners to use when answering crucial questions about program implementation, challenges, and solutions."
   b. Education Commission of the States (ECS): "We provide personalized support and services to all 50 states, the District of Columbia and U.S. territories to help education leaders gain the insight and experience needed to create effective education policy for their constituents. Our expertise spans across the spectrum from early care and education to workforce development."
   c. The Education Trust (EdTrust): "The Education Trust is committed to advancing policies and practices to dismantle the racial and economic barriers embedded in the American education system. Through our research and advocacy, Ed Trust improves equity in education from preschool through college, engages diverse communities dedicated to education equity and justice, and increases political and public will to build an education system where students will thrive."

Assignments Due Before Class:

1. Reading Commentary: Due by 8:00 am on Tuesday, July 9 via this Google Form
2. Reflection Check-In: Due by 8:00 am on Tuesday, July 9 via this Google Form

Assignments Due During Class:

3. Group Teach-Out: Due by 12:00 pm on Saturday, July 13 via your group's Google Doc

Comprehensive Assignment - Major Progress Point

Policy Working Paper (Revision) - See Directions Below: Due by 8:00 am on Tuesday, July 23 Assignment expectations will be discussed on July 13, to help you move from draft to revision.

For assignment instructions, see this document: Writing Guidelines Part 3 - Revising

Module 4: Introduction to Evaluation (August 3)
Link to Module 4 Slides: EDUC 3005 Module 4 Slides

Required Readings:

1. Floden, R. E. (2007). Philosophical issues in education policy research. In Fuhrman, S. H., Cohen, D. K., & Mosher, F. (Eds.). *The state of education policy research* (pp. 3-15). Routledge.
2. Jabbar, H., & Menashy, F. (2022). Economic imperialism in education research: A conceptual review. *Educational Researcher, 51*(4), 279-288.
3. Self-select one journal article or other scholarly publication that helps you connect the assigned readings to your program area, place of practice, literature review milestone, or other relevant aspect of your experience. This self-selected reading will be discussed with your "teach-out" group. If you are not sure where to begin, consider choosing a source from the references list in one of the assigned texts for this module. You may also use an article from another class, as long as the content is relevant to this module topic.

Optional Readings:

4. Borgman-Arboleda, C. & Clark, H. (n.d.). *Considering evaluation: Thoughts for social change and movement-building groups.* Center for International Media Action.
5. **Suggestion:** Explore research published in education policy journals. While you can find policy studies through a variety of scholarly outlets, some journals specifically focus on this topic, often highlighting a unique analytic lens. You might start with one of these:
   a. Critical Policy Studies: "Critical Policy Studies is a rigorous academic journal, and also pays special attention to the practical aspects of policy-making and analysis that confront real-world practitioners in different cultural contexts. While we emphasize academic articles, we explicitly welcome practical contributions that provide stories of insight related to efforts to transform domination or oppression in public policy practices and structures. In addition, the journal includes essays on current debates and opinions in the field, review articles that reflect on published research, and book reviews."
   b. Education Policy Access Archives (EPAA): "Education Policy Analysis Archives/Archivos Analíticos de Políticas Educativas/Arquivos Analíticos de Políticas Educativas (EPAA/AAPE; ISSN 1068-2341) is a peer-reviewed, open-access, international, multilingual, and multidisciplinary journal designed for researchers, practitioners, policy makers, and development analysts concerned with education policies."

Assignments Due Before Class:

1. Reading Commentary: Due by 8:00 am on Tuesday, July 30 via this Google Form
2. Reflection Check-In: Due by 8:00 am on Tuesday, July 30 via this Google Form

Assignments Due During Class:

3. Group Teach-Out: Due by 12:00 pm on Saturday, August 3 via your group's Google Doc
4. Community Learning Event: Due by 12:00 pm on Saturday, August 3 (in-class activity)

Module-Based Assignment Guidelines

Teach-Out Group Presentation (due during each class, based on each module)

These guidelines provide some basic parameters, and we encourage group creativity to make this activity relevant and meaningful in a way that matters to you and your peers. If you have any questions or concerns, reach out to us to discuss ideas and/or a facilitation plan in advance.

Find your group members in this spreadsheet: EDUC 3005 Class Groups
Find your group's prep docs in this folder: Teach-Out Groups and Working Docs

There are three aspects to this assignment:

1. **Preparation:** In the weeks ahead of each Saturday session, you will need to collaborate with your assigned teach-out group to plan for live discussion facilitation. Then, during class, two small groups will be paired together for this joint learning activity. At that time, your group will have **20 minutes** to support your peers' understanding of how the concepts raised in the assigned readings for the module relate to your program area.

2. **Facilitation:** Group learning can occur through a variety of activities, so to facilitate an engaging experience, you might consider doing question-and-answer, "think-pair-share," multimedia, delving into a compelling quote or passage, etc. As part of your facilitation, you must share **one article or other scholarly resource** that supports understanding of the module content, as related to your group's program area. Explain its relevance through your teach-out. You may agree to use a group member's self-selected reading for the module, material from another class, or something new.

3. **Assignment Credit:** To ensure every group member receives credit for this assignment, fill out your group's respective Google Doc before and during class. The Google Doc serves to gather individual group members' names, contributions to the teach-out, notes about your facilitation plan (before class), and takeaways from the activity (during class).

Reading Commentary via Google Form (due before each class, see modules for links)

Answer the questions provided about the assigned readings. This commentary serves as an initial exercise to kickstart your thinking about the course material. The Google Form is intended to collect your brief responses to the prompts. This assignment does not need to be written in a lengthy format as you would for a paper or other publication. However, if you would like to explore tips for writing commentaries as a contribution to the field, see this linked resource: Guidelines for Writing a Commentary.

Reflection Check-In via Google Form (due before each class, see modules for links)

Respond to the reflection prompts about your course experience. The Google Form is intended to collect your brief thoughts about your learning, and help the professors understand how

students are feeling about each module and the class overall. If you would like to discuss your reflections regarding support needs, please email the professors and/or schedule a time to meet via Zoom or after a class session.

You are invited to consider questions such as: How are you feeling at this point in the semester? What has the workload for this course been like for you? How has the course met, or not met, your learning goals? Self-reflecting on your own agency in your learning process, what strategies have helped you feel successful in this course thus far? What might you do differently in the future? What supports/resources might be helpful?

Rationale for Submitting Assignments via Google Forms:

While Canvas presents students' assignment submissions individually for instructors to view one by one, a Google Form presents all submissions together in an organized spreadsheet. Thus, Google Forms enable us (professors) to view all students' submissions collectively. We use Google's spreadsheet functions to analyze and synthesize responses, identify key themes, collaborate/plan synchronously and asynchronously, incorporate takeaways into the topics of upcoming class sessions, and more. With nearly 60 students enrolled in this course, we have found that this approach meets our co-teaching needs better than Canvas does presently.

Thank you for your flexibility and understanding regarding this process, which may be new or unexpected for you. If you have difficulty navigating Google Forms, you are welcome to ask us or a classmate for assistance. We also recognize that learning happens in a variety of ways, and this may be an opportunity for those unfamiliar with Google Drive to build exposure as one aspect of professional growth. In our experience across a breadth of education research, policy, and practice settings, Google Drive is commonly utilized in this field. So, it may be helpful for you to learn its tools, such as Google Forms and Google Docs. We invite you to give it a try!

Comprehensive Assignment Guidelines

Overview - Policy-Based Working Paper (draft due June 25, revision due July 23)

To connect the modules, you will complete a **policy-based working paper**, which is the major writing assignment for this course (assignment overview adapted from Garcia & Alberto, 2023).

You will develop a policy-based working paper that can support your Dissertation in Practice, offering an opportunity to synthesize the course content across modules and apply your learning to your area of study. The paper is intended to engage students in policy, its implications, and implementations as related to their professional context. The policy problem may be identical to your Problem of Practice (PoP), related to your planned Dissertation in Practice (DiP), or about a new area of policy that you choose to explore in this class. You are expected to include a minimum of 8 references to scholarly work in your paper. The writing format expectations are: 8-10 pages (not including the reference list), double-spaced, 12-point font, in APA style.

The policy-based working paper will be discussed in class, and written across several weeks. It will be submitted in two parts: draft and revision. The draft will be due after the second in-person session and the revision will be due before the fourth in-person session. The submission timeline is designed to allow you to receive and respond to feedback on your writing. At each

stage, it is understood that your paper will continue to be developed over time. To support your writing, guidelines for a three-step process of prewriting, drafting, and revising will be provided.

For further details, see this document: [Policy-Based Working Paper Guidelines](#)

Overview - Community Learning Event (in-class group activity due August 3)

To conclude the course, you will share a synthesis of your learning with your peers, in a creative format of your choice. The assignment expectations will be discussed in our July 13 class, and specifics will be confirmed and shared via a whole-class email the following week.