Instructor Information:

Sophia Rodriguez, Ph.D.
Department of Teacher Education
School of Education Building, Room 326
86 Wentworth St
rodriguezs1@cofc.edu
(843) 953-0830 (office)

Course Description:

This course traces the historical, philosophical and cultural underpinnings of contemporary educational policies in American public education. The history of educational policy since the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965 will be thoroughly examined through intensive reading. Students will gain an understanding of the various theoretical frameworks for studying and analyzing education policy, and be challenged to take a critical perspective. In studying education policy and reform, we will examine the challenging and complex term “urban education,” from a sociological perspective. The sociological perspective on cities, and on city schools, requires us to look broadly at what is involved in urban education. Such an examination of city schools’ complex ecology must consider the history of schooling in cities, urban demography and politics, and how urban educational policy is developed and implemented. In this context, one can take a more measured approach to understanding contemporary phenomena such as graduation rates that are lower than the nation’s average, the proliferation of charter schools in cities and the increasing emphasis on student test scores as a component of teachers’ performance evaluations. We will consider schooling in a number of American cities including Chicago, Philadelphia, Detroit and New Orleans all cities with rich and recent challenges related to school reform. This course also examines current issues focusing on those that challenge today’s students, teachers, and the teaching profession including but not limited to the Achievement Gap, Title I, re-segregation, merit pay, and school choice.

Essential Questions for the Course:

- Why has choice become so popular as an educational policy?
- Why has school closure a policy become a remedy to save students from harm or makes matters worse from them?
- If schools are legally integrated, then why do we still have an “achievement gap” between students of different races?
- What is the role of race in urban schools today?
- How do youth respond to inequalities in educational policy?
- What explains the popularity of Teach for America as a route towards teacher certification, and how much does it differ from other teacher training programs?

Required Texts:


Recommended (We will read several chapters from these book)

* All books are available for purchase at the bookstore.
**Supplemental course readings will be posted on OAKS

Course Goals:
As a graduate course, I have specific goals for students. First, I hope that students will increase their knowledge about various topics related to the social and historical foundations and socio-political context of educational policy and practice. This is not a methods course, so it’ll be my hope that students instead engage in questions about the study of educational policy, the role of teachers as advocates in our current educational system, the relationship between society and schools, and the ways in which various groups receive differential education. Second, I hope that students will read critically and consistently ask questions or talk back to the readings in the course. This will enable students to investigate, analyze and communicate effectively on topics related to the policy context, practice and profession of teaching. Third, I want students to use the reading and other course materials to think methodologically about their own future independent research in MTLA. The use of research will enable students to strengthen their thinking about current problems and challenges in our educational policies, practices, and contexts. Due to the goals in this course, this course will consist of substantial reading on a range of topics. The reading will allow you observe models of excellent empirical research that is theoretically and conceptually informed so that you too will be able to build your own independent research skills as graduate students.

Course Objectives
1. Develop a critical understanding of the underlying philosophical, historical, and cultural underpinnings of contemporary educational issues and policies (e.g., standards; testing and accountability; teacher recruitment, retention and evaluation; school structure and finance) (EHHP 7, ETC 3)
2. Understand how policies are developed, disseminated, and implemented and the influences on this process (EHHP 7, ETC 3)
3. Be able to place issues and policies in state, national, and international context (EHHP 7, ETC 3)
4. Be able to see multiple sides to issues (EHHP 7, EHHP 4, ETC 3)
5. Be able to distinguish between opinion and research in relation to educational issues and policies (EHHP 7, EHHP 4, ETC 3)
6. Be able to analyze and synthesize professional literature and produce a coherent literature review, clearly identifying and substantiating a compelling problem. (EHHP 5, ETC 3)

Course Outcomes
All teacher education programs in the School of Education are guided by a commitment to Making the Teaching and Learning Connection. Teachers who make the teaching and learning connection:
1. Understand and value the learner;
2. Know what and how to teach and assess and how to create an environment in which learning occurs, and
3. Understand themselves as professionals.

These three elements of teacher competency are at the heart of the EHHP conceptual framework and guide what you will learn and how your learning will be assessed. Each course in the teacher education programs provides opportunities for you to develop and extend your knowledge, skills and dispositions needed to become an effective teacher.

ETC 1-Outcomes related to understanding and valuing the learner: The course will examine current issues and policies within and outside of school that influence student learning. The ultimate goal is to help you advocate for children by gaining a better understanding of how policies impact on them.

ETC 2-Outcomes related to knowing what and how to teach and assess and how to create an environment in which learning occurs: The course will provide a better understanding of the connection between policy and classroom practice. We will examine how policies created at the district, state and national levels impact classroom practice as well as how teachers’ decisions in the classroom influence how policies are implemented. Specific attention will be paid to policies related to curriculum, assessment and school climate. The ultimate goal is to help you advocate for meaningful and appropriate curriculum, instruction and assessment by understanding current policies and how teachers can influence policy development and shape implementation.

ETC 3-Outcomes related to understanding self as a professional: The course will focus deeply on the current emphasis on teacher quality in state, national and international policy. These policies include those affecting teacher training, certification, retention, and evaluation. You will be better prepared to advocate for the teaching profession by understanding the influences on current policies and the research used to support and challenge current policies.

Course Requirements

Demonstration of SOE Dispositions and how students express them in this course:
- Belief that all students can learn (attitudes expressed about students and learning)
- Value and respect for individual differences (participation in class discussions)
- Value of positive human interactions (participation in class discussions)
- Exhibition and encouragement of intellectual curiosity, enthusiasm about learning, and willingness to learn new ideas (participation in class discussions; completion of reading assignments; quality of course projects)
- Dedication to inquiry, reflection, and self-assessment (quality of course assignments; active participation in class discussions; support and encouragement of diverse ideas)
- Value of collaborative and cooperative work (participation in class activities)
- Sensitivity toward community and cultural contexts (insights expressed in class discussions and reflected in course assignments)
- Engagement in responsible and ethical practice (performance on course assignments and contribution to class activities)
- Development of professional mastery over time (performance over time on all assignments)

Students are responsible for:
- Completing all assigned readings and projects on time. Late assignments are accepted only at the instructor’s discretion. Points will be subtracted from late assignments.
- Attending to all course content (lecture, text, outside reading, handouts, research)
- Retrieving all missed assignments/notes from someone in class, not the instructor
- Utilizing internet, word processing, email and OAKS. Please consult with instructor to arrange tutoring if you are unfamiliar with any of these applications.
• Attending regularly and on time and actively participating in class (YOU CAN MISS NO MORE THAN ONE CLASS SESSION)

• Assuring that all work is their own and that sources are properly cited and credited (see http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/pamphlets/plagiarism.shtml for examples of acceptable and unacceptable use of sources.

The professor is responsible for:
• Being prepared and actively engaged in all classes
• Being accessible to students outside of class
• Facilitating safe and stimulating classroom discussions
• Providing timely and constructive feedback on student work

Attendance:

Attendance will be taken every class meeting via a sign-in sheet. Students are responsible for signing in each class. One absence will be granted, either excused or unexcused. After one absence the student’s final grade will drop by 10 points. After two absences, will be dropped from this course regardless of the time of the semester. Students are responsible for documenting the absence with an Absence Memo through Student Affairs.

Tardiness: If you are more than five minutes late to class, this will count as an absence for each tardy after the first one. Please arrive on time. Additionally, if you leave 15 minutes or more before class ends, it counts as an absence. If you need to leave class early in an emergency, please notify the professor.

No texting or use of social media in class. If you choose to engage in personal communication during class, you will be asked to leave and marked absent.

Participation:

As graduate students, you are responsible for completing all reading in preparation for class. This course will emphasize a seminar style that is very interactive and places high value on every student’s voice. The professor will provide structured lectures and planned activities for each course, but she will also expect shared, rigorous conversation. To accomplish this, graduate students will need to engage in thoughtful, detailed reading of assigned texts and make multiple contributions in class each week. If you are using an electronic copy of the text, please make sure it is accessible to you at the beginning of class. If you miss a class, and if you miss a class I ask that you write a brief 2 page (1000 words max) reaction paper to the assigned readings to ensure you are engaging with course material and the professor despite an absence. All writing assignments must be submitted by the deadlines. No late work is accepted. If an emergency occurs, please consult the professor to make arrangements.

Assessment of Learning Overview with Suggested and Required Deadlines:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participation (including attendance)</th>
<th>100</th>
<th>N/A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assignment 1: Theoretical Approaches to Studying Education Policy</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Sunday, September 20, 2015 by 8pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignment 2: Policy Analysis Paper</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>Saturday, October, 17, 2015 by 8pm (Midterm)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignment 3: Critique of Research Article</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>Monday, November 23, 2015 by 5pm</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Assignment 1: Theoretical Approaches to studying education policy**

**Due: Sunday, September 20, 2015 by 8pm**

This short memo is intended to help you demonstrate your understanding of the theoretical approaches to studying education policy. You are expected to summarize each of the approaches we’ve discussed in the course thus far, and then apply them to a policy initiative that I will provide. In your memo, you should discuss how each of the frameworks would respond to this initiative. Things to consider: What type of questions would a “rationalist” ask? An institutionalist (sociologist) A critical race approach? How would each of these frameworks discuss the reasons for this initiative?

**Option 1:**
How does the contemporary American school reflect society’s values or desires? Please evaluate and discuss President Obama’s recent speech at Kenmore School, in Arlington, VA (accessible online at http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2011/03/14/remarks-president-education-arlington-virginia), or another specific statement, policy or program, current-day or historical, of your choice. If you choose a different program or policy to evaluate, please consult with me about your choice prior to beginning work on the assignment. Please evaluate President Obama’s comments (or the statement, policy or program that you choose to analyze) according to our course readings on how to approach educational policy statements like those made by our President. What is the rationale given for the actions or programs proposed? What would the authors we have read say in response, if they could? Can you identify consistencies or inconsistencies in the author’s/speaker’s statements? Do the statements in this speech reflect a rationalist approach to policy, an institutionalist/structuralist approach, or a critical race approach?

**Option 2:**
Analyze the text, “The Inner-City Prep School Experience,” accessible online at: http://www.nytimes.com/2009/09/27/magazine/27Boarding-t.html?pagewanted=1. In your analysis, please a) apply the following theoretical perspectives: rationalist, institutionalist/sociologist, and critical race theorist. How would these perspectives account for the school described in the article? This means, describe what each of the approaches to studying policy would point out about this Inner City Prep School Experience B) What is your approach to this initiative? Are you similar to/different from the theoretical approaches?

**Guidelines:**
- 3-5 double-spaced pages in length (not including references), using 12 point font and 1” margins.
- The memo should consist of 3 key parts: summary, application of concepts or theories, and your critical evaluation.
  - First, you will need to summarize the arguments of the authors (or policies or practices you describe, if these are relevant to the assignment) that you discuss in your memo. Please summarize your source documents briefly, describing their main argument(s), central points, and/or issues that pertain to your memo. This summary should concisely orient the reader to the material you are considering in this paper. It should be a minor part of your paper compared to the other components (from 2 paragraphs to 1 page at the very most).
  - Second, once you have clearly and succinctly summarized the materials to which you refer in this material, please apply the concepts or theories to the issue you wish to discuss. How do these
concepts or theories help you to interpret your chosen or assigned material? What can you see in this material through the lens of these concepts or theories? Interesting issues? Obvious problems? A good or poor fit? An opportunity to extend or challenge the concept or theory?

- Third, and most important, is your critical evaluation of the written material that you cite. This part of your memo builds upon the application of concepts and theories as discussed above. In this evaluation, please express your opinion of and reaction to the work. It is fine to say that you liked or disliked what you read, but please also offer your own analysis and critique of what you have read based on your perspective as a graduate student in education policy. You can apply discussions or perspectives you’ve learned about during our course, but you can also bring in other evidence, arguments or theoretical lenses if they fit your memo.

- Please cite all of your sources in APA style at the end of your memo.

I will grade your memos according to the presence and quality of the three components discussed above (summary: 3; application of concepts or theories: 3; and critical evaluation, 4. In addition, I will also evaluate the strength of your writing, including organization, clarity and conventions of writing (e.g., spelling, grammar, sentence structure, punctuation), worth 20% of each memo’s grade. The rubric I will use for evaluating your assignments follows at the end of this syllabus. My goal is to return your essay to you, with feedback, within two weeks. Students have the option of revising and resubmitting. Revisions are due one week after the date on which I return papers (with my feedback) to students. I will evaluate your papers using the “track changes” function in Microsoft Word. Please make subsequent changes to the copy I return to you, so that I can see in track changes where you have changed your original paper.

Assignment 2: Policy Initiative Analysis Paper
Due: Saturday, October 17, 2015 by 8pm (Midterm)
Choose a specific educational initiative happening in a specific urban district.

Your selection may be current or historical, as long as you have sufficient resources to inform your paper. Some examples (which you may use, but which are not intended to limit your choice) include: The movement to return to an elected school board in Chicago, homeless education initiatives in Seattle, parents’ and students’ organization to contest urban districts’ use of standardized testing, the role of teacher evaluation in teacher union contracts in any number of cities, including Baltimore, Boston and Chicago, or the proliferation of charter schools in Detroit and/or New Orleans, where more than half of the cities’ students attend charter schools. You can also examine specific charter school networks such as Knowledge is Power Program (KIPP), Noble Network, Achievement First, Alternative certification as a policy, examining Teach for America or the New Teacher Project, or community-school models such as the Harlem Children’s zone or the Federal Government’s Promise Neighborhood. This needs to be a specific local or state level policy initiative.

Guidelines:
Please write an 7-10 page paper (double-spaced, 1” margins, 12 point font) in which you analyze your chosen initiative/policy from each the following perspectives:

- The initiative’s/policy’s origins (How did it come to be? Who brought it to the city/district? Was its initiation wanted, contested, both?) (15% of grade)

- The initiative’s/policy’s intended outcomes (15% of grade)

- Recent historical, political and/or economic context (15% of grade)
- Relevant demographic trends in the city (e.g., population increases, decreases, or proportional shifts relative to race, ethnicity, language or immigrant status) (15% of grade)

- Given the initiative’s/policy’s origins (#1) and context (#3 and 4), what outcomes do you anticipate? Will the policy be able to unfold as intended (#2)? What potential resources or obstacles can you identify? If you are considering a historic case, you can look instead at intended and unintended outcomes, contextual influences, and resources and obstacles. (20% of grade)

- Quality of writing: the degree to which your paper is well-organized (including a thesis paragraph, body paragraphs/sections that articulate your findings, and a summarizing conclusion) and clearly written (with accessible language that effectively conveys your findings and points). (20% of grade)

Your paper’s grade will be based on how completely you address each of the above points. Your responses will need to be informed both by class readings and by the research you conduct on your chosen topic. Please incorporate at least 6 sources of empirical information on your chosen topic (e.g., journalistic accounts, research literature and/or historic narratives).

Assignment 3: Critique of Research Article
Due: Monday, November 23, 2015 by 5pm
Select one of the research articles you will use in your literature review and provide a detailed description of the following:
- Rationale for selecting this article (How does it fit with your topic?)
- Initial assessment of the article (Did you think it would support or oppose your argument?)
- Critique of literature review in article (What is the quality of literature cited? Are multiple arguments presented fairly?)
- Critique of the data presented (Is the data collection and analysis process described clearly? Are the data and literature review clearly related? Are the conclusions consistent with the data presented?)
Description of role article will play in your literature review (How significant is this article in supporting/refuting your argument? How does it relate to other research articles on this topic? What is especially useful or not useful about this article?)
Points: 100
Length: 3-4 pages double-spaced

Assignment 4: Literature Review
Due: December 14, 2015
You should select a topic that interests you for your capstone project so that the literature review can be used to support your research proposal and presentation of findings. The literature review should:
- Make a clear problem statement and provide a convincing thesis explaining the problem
- Present alternative conceptions of the problem
- Clearly present literature from multiple perspectives
- Critique the current literature on the problem
- Identify areas needing additional research
Points: 100
Length: 10-15 pages
Please Note: If you have already completed a literature review, you will be expected to complete a research proposal to be used in your capstone course. Completing this project requires personal approval of the professor.

**Evaluation Criteria:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Score Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93 - 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>88 – 92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>83 – 87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>78 – 82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>74 – 77*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*F= Any grade of a 74 or below is considered a failing grade for all graduate students.

**Honor System:**

All students are expected to comply with the honor code of the College of Charleston. Violations of the honor code, in particular plagiarism (including the first offense) will result in a grade of XF for the course.

**Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA):**

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), all qualified students enrolled in this course are entitled to reasonable accommodations. Please notify the instructor during the first week of class of any accommodations needed for the course. We are here to work with you and invite you to inform us of any accommodations you need. You can also contact the Office of Disability Services at 843.953.1431

**Reading due at the start of class.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Required Reading Due</th>
<th>Presentations/ Due dates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Tuesday 8/25 | Course Introduction and Syllabus The foundations of educational policy studies | What is the Foundations of Education?  
| Tuesday 9/1 | The foundations of educational policy studies               |  
  - Tyack, *Tinkering Toward Utopia*, prologue, chapters 1,  
  - Heck, Studying Education and Social Policy (ch. 1 Intro to Policy Making and its study and ch. 3. Studying policy development) |                          |
| Tuesday 9/8 | Theoretical approaches to studying education policy (Rational, Institutional, |  
  - Honig, M. Confronting Complexity: |                          |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Resources</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
Choose One Additional Approach to Present to your colleagues:  
- Critical Approach to Education Policy Implementation: Implications for the (Battle) Field Dumas and Anyon  
- An Economic Approach to Education Policy Implementation by Susanna Loeb and McEwan  
- Social Capital and the Problem of Implementation by Smylie and Evans  
In class:  
- Darling-Hammond, “Evaluating No Child Left Behind”  
Optional:  
| Tuesday 9/22 | On the foundations of education policy                                   | - Davies, *See Government Grow: Education Politics from Johnson to Reagan*, 29-74  
- Ravitch, *The Death and Life of the American School System*, chapters 1  
- Spillane, J. Selections on Sense-making theory in education policy.  
Choose your own policy  
- National Defense Act  
- ESEA  
- Brown v. Board  
- Busing as a strategy of integration  
- Bilingual Education  
- Sheff v. Oneil |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Tuesday 10/6 | Issues in Education Policy: Choice                  | - Fabricant, *Charter Schools*, 88-130 (Skim from p. 115-130)  
**Optional**  
| Tuesday 10/20 | Fall Break No Class                                 | Please Review How to Write a Literature folder on OAKS |

**Policy Initiative and Analysis**  
**Paper due (Midterm) due Saturday, October 17, 2015 by 8pm**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Readings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11/3</td>
<td>Choice and School Turnaround</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>Issues in Education Policy</td>
<td>• Kumashiro, K. (2012). Bad teacher! How blaming teachers distorts the bigger picture. P. 1-22)&lt;br&gt;<strong>Small Group readings (choose one)</strong>&lt;br&gt;• Rodriguez, S. (2015). “We Need to Grab Power Where We Can”: ”: Teacher Activists’ Responses to Neoliberal Policies during the Chicago Teacher's Strike of 2012-2013.&quot; <em>Workplace: A Journal for Academic Labor</em>&lt;br&gt;• Brookings, “Evaluating Teachers” (OAKS)&lt;br&gt;• Taylor and Tyler, “Can Teacher Evaluation Improve Teaching?”&lt;br&gt;<strong>Please email paper topics for final Literature review by the start of class on 11/10.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/10</td>
<td>Accountability, Merit Pay/Teacher Evaluation, and Testing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/24</td>
<td>Youth and Community Activism as an alternative to school reform</td>
<td><strong>Readings TBD</strong>&lt;br&gt;• Kirshner, B. (2015) Selections from <em>Youth Activism in an Era of Inequality.</em>&lt;br&gt;• Cammarota, J. Youth Participatory Action Research&lt;br&gt;• Warren, M.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/1</td>
<td>Current Status of Education Policy and</td>
<td>• Ravitch, Reign of Error Ch. 1 and 2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Event</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/8</td>
<td>College’s Reading Day</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Final Paper conferences</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/14 (Monday!)</td>
<td>Final Paper Due by 5pm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>