

EDF 485 – The Context of Educational Issues



Syllabus of Record

Catalog Description

This culminating education course will explore the context of contemporary educational issues. Students will analyze and critique current educational practices and policies, and draw upon foundational perspectives in addressing such issues. Prerequisite or co-requisite: ED 430 or ED 431. Offered fall and winter semesters.

Credits: 3

Unit Mission, Philosophy and Values

Our Mission

Teaching, Leading and Learning in a Democratic Society

The College of Education prepares candidates who enhance the individual growth of their students while working to establish policies and practices that promote the principles of democratic education. The College articulates this mission as Teaching, Leading, and Learning in a Democratic Society.

Philosophy

Student Potential, Ethical Implications

Believing that schools function as social and political entities as well as for the growth of individuals, the College of Education prepares teachers and leaders

- a) to enhance the academic and personal potential of their students.
- b) to evaluate the social and ethical implications of educational policies and practices.

Values

Expertise, Equity, Liberal Education, Social Responsibility

The College of Education values expertise to guide our practice, equity to guide our interactions, liberal education to guide our perspectives, and social responsibility to guide our commitment to democratic education. We value these ideals in our preparation of candidates, our development of faculty, and our relationships with the larger community we serve.

Unit and Programs Standards

- Standards for Initial Programs Preparing Teachers

- Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC)
- Council for the Social Foundations of Education (CSFE)

Course Standards and Assessments

Course Standards

Course Outcomes, from the Council for the Social Foundations of Education (CSFE):

- **Principle #1:** The educator understands and can apply disciplinary knowledge from the humanities and social sciences to interpreting the meanings of education and schooling in diverse cultural contexts.
 - The educator: Has developed habits of using this knowledge base in evaluating and formulating educational practice. (1.4)
- **Principle #2:** The educator understands and can apply normative perspectives on education and schooling.
 - The educator: Has developed habits of examining the normative and ethical assumptions of schooling practice and educational ideas. (2.5)
- **Principle #3:** The educator understands and can apply critical perspectives on education and schooling.
 - The educator: Can identify and appraise educational assumptions/arrangements in order to lead to changes in conceptions and values. (3.3)
- **Principle #4:** The educator understands how moral principles related to democratic institutions can inform and direct schooling practice, leadership, and governance.
 - The educator: Can evaluate the moral, social, and political dimensions of classrooms, teaching, and schools as they relate to life in a democratic society. (4.4)

Course Outcomes, from the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE)

- **Standard #9:** The teacher engages in ongoing professional learning and uses evidence to continually evaluate his/her practice, particularly the effects of his/her choices and actions on others (learners, families, other professionals, and the community), and adapts practice to meet the needs of each learner
 - 9(b) The teacher engages in meaningful and appropriate professional learning experiences aligned with his/her own needs and the needs of the learners, school, and system.
 - 9(n) The teacher sees him/herself as a learner, continuously seeking opportunities to draw upon current education policy and research as sources of analysis and reflection to improve practice.

- **Standard #10:** The teacher seeks appropriate leadership roles and opportunities to take responsibility for student learning, to collaborate with learners, families, colleagues, other school professionals, and community members to ensure learner growth, and to advance the profession.
 - 10(h) The teacher uses and generates meaningful research on education issues and policies.

Common Assessment

Research Project

Major Topics

Objectives

The students will be able to:

- Analyze and synthesize major issues reflective of current educational practice.
- Demonstrate in-depth skills of inquiry, decision making, and reflection.
- Create a culminating experience that allows students to extend their knowledge and interest in an area of practice.
- Connect theory and practice in education.
- Find and analyze scholarly literature.

Topics

- Poverty
- ESL language issues
- Immigration issues
- Cultural differences in schools and society
- Historical changes in school organization
- Purposes of school (underlying assumptions, relationship with economy, versus individual self-actualization)
- Interaction of teacher and student characteristics in social and academic achievement (ie, race, gender, or language characteristics and differences)
- Cultural competency/cultural proficiency
- Standard-based educational practice (Testing and accountability)
- Technology and education (impact of technology on the ways of teaching, ways of thinking, limitations)
- School choice

Methods of Evaluation

- Senior research project, including:
 - In-depth analytical paper on educational topic
 - Brief literature review
 - Final presentation to the class
- Several critiques of assigned articles

- Analytical paper
- Bibliography
- Detailed outline
- Initial class presentation
- Critiques of assigned articles

Course Knowledge Base

Students will draw from the University Library data bases for readings.