EDUC 6220
ISSUES OF EDUCATIONAL LAW AND POLICY

Spring 2018  N. Nelson
W 5:30-8:20 p.m.  Matthews Hall 207
Wooten Hall 310  (940) 565-2843
nancy.nelson@unt.edu
Office Hours: W 1:00-4:00
or by appointment

Catalog Description

Consideration of current issues of educational law and policy that are of concern to the general public as well as to policymakers and educators. Emphasis is on such issues as educational reform and accountability, language management, and equality of educational opportunity. Attention goes to historical background of the issues and to different approaches to policy analysis.

Some Thoughts about Policy

“As politicians know only too well but social scientists too often forget, public policy is made of language. Whether in written or oral form, argument is central in all stages of the policy process.” Giandomenico Majone, *Evidence, Argument, and Persuasion in the Policy Process*, p. 1

“Policy is more like an endless game of Monopoly than a sewing machine repair. . . . The process of choosing and implementing the means of policy is political and continuous. The actions we commonly call ‘new policies’ are really somebody’s next move, and in politics, as in a good game, nobody’s move completely determines anybody else’s future move.” Deborah Stone, *Policy Paradox and Political Reason*, p. 208

“The policy-making process in the United States is an adversarial process, characterized by the clash of competing and conflicting viewpoints and interests rather than an impartial, disinterested, or ‘objective’ search for ‘correct’ solutions for policy problems.” James Anderson, *Public Policy Making*, p. 163

“Research, by itself, rarely leads to policy recommendations. Research has to be ‘translated’ into policy recommendations, and different actors are likely to interpret any body of research somewhat differently.” Richard Allington, “Crafting State Educational Policy,” p. 459

“Educational policies need to be viewed in more than a national context. There are global forces at work which constrain and direct the nation state, and which have profound effects upon the type and quality of education it provides for its citizens.” Mike Bottery, *Education, Policy and Ethics*, p. 215

Instructor’s Objectives

For you, as a graduate student taking the course,
1. To have a fuller understanding of the educational policies guiding curriculum and pedagogy—their origins as well as their current status,
2. To learn and to apply procedures for analyzing those policies historically and rhetorically,
3. To investigate some interesting aspect of the policymaking or policy implementation process through a qualitative research approach,
4. To develop knowledge of major policies in your area of specialization that have been established by various entities (federal and state government, local school boards, and professional organizations), and
5. To make a contribution to the ongoing discussion in the literature regarding one particular policy of importance and interest to you.
## Requirements and Expectations

1. Participation in Weekly Discussions and Activities  
   (includes leading discussion at one class meeting)  
   **20%**

2. Report Based on Qualitative Research (oral and written)  
   Either: Report of Policy Impact on Stakeholder(s)  
   (based on interview/s)  
   Or: Report on Policymaking Session  
   (based on observation and field notes)  
   **20%**

3. Co-authored Report Focused on an Educational Policy in  
   Another Country  
   **15%**

4. Occasional Critiques and Syntheses  
   including review of film Selma (due Feb. 11)  
   **15%**

5. Final Project: Analysis of an Educational Policy  
   (oral and written—together count as final exam)  
   The topic here is an issue or question that is of interest to you and is relevant to your professional career. I’d like to meet with you to discuss your project and help determine its focus and scope.  
   **30%**

See class policies on written assignments.

## Grading

A=90-100, B=80-89, C=70-79, D=60-69, F=below 60  
Three absences for any reason will lower your grade one letter.

## Schedule (subject to change)

I’ve considered organizing the course in various ways, all of which would be valid. My decision was to organize it by starting first with the U.S. context and then moving rather briefly to policy at our state level. We’ll conclude by looking more broadly at policy in global context.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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| 1 Jan. 17 | Course Overview  
Curriculum Policy in U.S., Considered Historically | Film in class: *School: The Story of American Education* |
| 2 Jan. 24 | Civil Rights  
Curricular Change | Spring, Ch. 1 and parts of Ch. 2. (See reading guide.)  
Sharp (2016)  
Darling-Hammond et al (2016)  
Film in class: *School: The Story of American Education* |
| 3 Jan. 31 | Policy Analysis: What Is It? | Rizvi, Ch. 1, also pp. 54-56  
Cohen (1990)  
Koo (2017) – just the article (not appendices)  
Guest Speaker: Dr. Yilmin Koo |
| 4 Feb. 7 | Diversity, Multiculturalism, and the Curriculum  
Language Policy: Bilingual Education, English Only | Spring, Chs. 3-7  
Guest Speaker: Dr. Rossana Boyd |
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
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<tr>
<td>Feb. 14</td>
<td>Accountability and Politics Neoliberalism</td>
<td>Selected sections of Cuban’s book</td>
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<td>Film in class: <em>Rise Above the Mark</em></td>
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<td>Feb. 28</td>
<td>Other Neoliberal Initiatives</td>
<td>Due: Qualitative Research Report</td>
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<td>Spring, Ch. 8</td>
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<td>March 7</td>
<td>State-level Policy Issues textbook selection (e.g., voucher legislation, special ed situation, House Bill 5, 10% policy)</td>
<td>Nelson &amp; Dixon (draft)</td>
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<td>Dixon (2014)</td>
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<td>Spring, Ch. 9</td>
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<td>TASA website (current and past postings)</td>
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<td>Webpages about House Bill 5 and Texas 10% policy</td>
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<td>March 14</td>
<td>Spring Break – No Class</td>
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<td>March 21</td>
<td>State-level Textbook Issues in Texas (e.g., Mexican American Studies book)</td>
<td>Film in class: <em>The Revisionaries</em></td>
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<td>Also everything that you can read about the textbook controversies in Texas</td>
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<td>Due: Initial plans for group report</td>
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<td>March 28</td>
<td>Globalization and Curriculum Policy Borrowing and Diffusion</td>
<td>Rizvi, Chs. 2, 3, 4, 5</td>
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<td>Spring, Ch. 11</td>
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<td>April 4</td>
<td>Global Perspectives</td>
<td>Due: Group Report of an Educational Policy in Another Country</td>
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<td>Guest Speaker: Adepeju Olaniyi</td>
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<td>April 11</td>
<td>Global Policy PISA Finland</td>
<td>Film in class: <em>Finnish First: Dan Rather Reports</em></td>
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<td><em>Finn and fun</em> web article</td>
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<td><em>What the world can learn from Finland</em> web article</td>
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<td>OECD (2015)</td>
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<td>Prior to April 18 class: Conferences in my office (Bring draft of major paper.)</td>
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<td>April 25</td>
<td>No Class Meeting</td>
<td>Continue work on final paper.</td>
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<td>May 2</td>
<td>Transnational Policy</td>
<td>Writing workshop in class (Bring copies of draft to class.)</td>
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<td>Webpages of UNESCO, Council of Europe, European Union, African Union</td>
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<td>May 9</td>
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<td>Due: Presentations and Final Paper</td>
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**Required Books**


**Required Articles and Reports**

Please print the shorter articles, annotate them as you read them, and bring them to class the evenings that they will be discussed. Have the longer ones available on your laptop.


Texas Association of School Administrators. (n.d.). *TASA charts: HB 5 requirements*. 
Examples of Policy Studies Focused on Stakeholders (also Cohen 1990)


Websites


LEISD explains Texas House Bill 5 graduation requirements: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k02ZZeV4HUE

Pearson article: http://fortune.com/2015/01/21/everybody-hates-pearson/

Texas and federal laws: https://tea.texas.gov/index2.aspx?id=2147509089

Texas Association of School Administrators: https://www.tasanet.org

UNESCO: https://en.unesco.org


Films

*Finnish First: Dan Rather Reports*

*The Revisionaries*

*School: The Story of American Public Education*. PBS

Class Policies

*Preparation for Class.* Please come to class prepared to contribute in a substantive way to our discussions. Make use of the reading guides that are provided and have “smart things” to say about the facets of the readings indicated there. Be an active reader and note-taker, and be organized. This is your seminar.

*Written Assignments:* For all assignments, please provide hard copies rather than electronic copies. The version you submit should accord with academic discourse conventions and should employ APA style for heading and subheadings, citations, and references. All papers must be typed, grammar-checked, and spell-checked. Each paper should have a good title, and pages should be numbered. If the final version of a paper has careless typos or mechanical problems, it will not be accepted.

*Late Assignments:* All papers and projects should be submitted on the date that they are due, and thus late assignments may not be accepted. Of course, there are some events in life that may cause a delay in work products; this will be taken into consideration on an individual basis. If a late paper is accepted, points will be subtracted.
**Academic integrity:** Academic integrity is essential to this course, as in other work that you do in your doctoral program. In Policy 18.1.16, UNT has described academic integrity as follows:

Academic integrity emanates from a culture that embraces the core values of trust and honesty necessary for full learning to occur. As a student-centered public research university, the University of North Texas promotes the integrity of the learning process by establishing and enforcing academic standards. Academic dishonesty breaches the mutual trust necessary in an academic environment and undermines all scholarship.

You must be sure to avoid plagiarism, which is defined in the following way in that policy:

Use of another’s thoughts or words without proper attribution in any academic exercise, regardless of the student’s intent, including but not limited to:

1. the knowing or negligent use by paraphrase or direct quotation of the published or unpublished work of another person without full and clear acknowledgement or citation.
2. the knowing or negligent unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or by an agency engaged in selling term papers or other academic materials. [http://vpaa.unt.edu/academic-integrity.htm](http://vpaa.unt.edu/academic-integrity.htm)

It is important to avoid plagiarism not only in your writing but also in slides that you use for presentations. Published works and web material, including photos, must be credited. The penalty for plagiarism in EDUC 6220 is a grade of F for the course.

**Students’ Disabilities:** UNT complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act in making reasonable accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. If you need disability accommodations in this class, please see me as soon as possible and bring your verification form from the Office of Disability Accommodations. If you suspect that you may have a disability (e.g., physical impairment, learning disability, psychiatric disability), please contact the ODA.

**Observation of Religious Holiday.** If you plan to observe a religious holiday that coincides with a class day, please notify me as soon as possible.

**Civility.** UNT is committed to equity and diversity and to a student-centered environment that is conducive to learning. Students and faculty are expected to behave in a manner that is respectful and courteous to all people regardless of their ethnic/racial origin, their sexual orientation, their religious background, or disability. Actions or words that infringe on the rights of another individual will not be tolerated. In accordance with this emphasis on respectful attention to others, you are expected to not to take messages or text on your cell phone during class unless this medium is being used for some class activity. The Code of Student Conduct can be found at [https://deanofstudents.unt.edu/conduct](https://deanofstudents.unt.edu/conduct).

**Student Perceptions of Teaching:** The SPOT evaluation is a requirement for all organized classes at UNT. This short survey will be made available to you at the end of the semester, providing you a chance to comment on how this class is taught. I am very interested in the feedback I get from students, as I work to continually improve my teaching. I consider the SPOT to be an important part of your participation in this class.

**Specifics on Assignments**

**Report on Policymaking Session**

Your written report (at least 8 pages of text, not including cover page and references) should be based on your observations of a policymaking session relevant to education. Be sure to give the paper a good title and to number the pages. Do not use a running head, since you’re not submitting the paper for publication at this point.
1. Begin with background on the particular policy as well as the controversy that surrounds it. Demonstrate background reading that you’ve done, and include citations of important literature dealing with the particular issue. Don’t rely only on Internet sources. Use the library’s database and find published articles. Explain what you were interested in learning—either the questions guiding your inquiry or your purpose in conducting the inquiry.

2. Describe the particular policymaking session that you attended. Provide information about the policymaking group—its history, its composition, its function, etc. Give particulars about the session (time, place, attendance) that you attended.

3. Describe your method. How did you go about observing the session? What role did you assume? How did you take notes? How long did you stay? Then explain how you analyzed your notes. What portion of the notes did you use for this report? What were you looking for? How did you discern patterns? (If only part of the meeting dealt with the particular policy that interests you, there is no need for you to analyze notes from the whole session.)

4. Provide findings. If possible, describe the group dynamics as well as the content of the interaction (the how as well as the what). What did you learn about the way in which policy is made or interpreted by this particular group? This, of course, is the most important part of the report.

5. Tie everything together with a conclusion. In concluding the paper, consider the following: Did your inquiry show the same sort of controversy discussed in the literature on the issue? Were there additional facets of the controversy that emerged as important in your inquiry? What “contribution” are you making to what is known about this sort of policy.

Report on Stakeholder Interview

Your written report (at least 8 pages of text, not including cover page and references) should be based on your inquiry into the impact of a particular policy. Be sure to give the paper a good title and to number the pages. Do not use a running head, since you’re not submitting the paper for publication at this point.

1. Begin with background on the particular policy as well as the controversy that surrounds it. Demonstrate background reading that you’ve done, and include citations of important literature dealing with the particular issue. Don’t rely only on Internet sources. Use the library’s database and find published articles. Explain what you were interested in learning—either the questions guiding your inquiry or your purpose in conducting the inquiry.

2. Describe your interview method. What sort of interview/s did you conduct? What approach did you take to transcription and analysis? Did you also look at any artifacts the stakeholder may have had?

5. Provide findings. What did you learn about the way in which policy is interpreted by this individual or these individuals? This, of course, is the most important part of the report. Organize this part in some means other than simply providing the answer to one question you asked after another.

4. Tie everything together with a conclusion. In concluding the paper, consider the following: Did your inquiry show the same sort of issues that have been discussed in the literature? Were there additional facets of the matter that emerged as important in your inquiry? What “contribution” are you making to what is known about this sort of policy?
Report on Policy in Another Country

This report too (at least 8 pages of text, not including cover page and references) should be based on your reading of scholarship focused on an educational policy in another country or on a transnational policy. See if you can find a statement of the policy itself, but be sure to use several sources that provide different perspectives on the policy.

Final Paper: Policy Analysis

Your written report (at least 12 pages of text, not including cover page and references) should be based on an analysis of an educational policy that is of interest to you. Be sure to give the paper a good title and to number the pages. Do not use a running head, since you’re not submitting the paper for publication at this point.

1. Begin with some background on the particular policy on which you have focused your attention and also address the controversy that surrounds it. Demonstrate background reading that you’ve done, and include citations of important literature dealing with the particular issue. Don’t rely only on Internet sources. Use the library’s database and find published articles and also consider books. Explain what you were interested in learning—either the questions guiding your inquiry or your purpose in conducting the inquiry.

2. Describe the particular policy on which you are focusing. Provide such information as its history, its policymakers, its stakeholders, its function.

3. Describe your method. How did you go about analyzing the policy? What were you looking for? How did you discern patterns?

For your analysis, you might want to consider one of the following: (1) the specialized (perhaps loaded) use of particular words that are prominent in the policy, (2) the intertextual connections to other policies and documents, (3) the ways in which the “carrots” and “sticks” are presented, (4) the ways in which particular people are presented, (5) unacknowledged or unrecognized contradictions or gaps, (6) use of figurative language (e.g., metaphor), or (6) the warrants or assumptions that undergird the policy. We’ll look at studies using frame analysis, which is an approach you might use. You could also look at recontextualization or analyze intertextual links.

4. Provide findings. This, of course, is the most important part of the report. Include some examples to support points you made.

5. Tie everything together with a conclusion. In concluding the paper, consider the following: What did your inquiry show that throws some light on the controversy discussed in literature on the issue? Were there additional facets of the controversy that emerged as important in your inquiry? What “contribution” are you making to what is known about this sort of policy?

6. Include a reference list, and attach a copy of the policy.

Note: This syllabus is a plan for the course and, as such, is subject to modification as the course progresses.