EDUC 6311
Issues and Trends in Curriculum & Instruction

University of St. Thomas
School of Education

Professor
Dr. C. Gardner

E-Mail
gardnecd@stthom.edu

Place and Time
Online
Summer 2015
May 26th - August 8th

Office Phone:
512-850-4300
Hours:
M-W-F 9:00am-3:00pm

For Assistance
UST IT Help Desk: 713-525-3544

REQUIRED TEXTS
No Book(s). All articles to be read can be found posted on Black Board.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

EDUC 6311 Issues and Trends in Curriculum & Instruction. This course emphasizes analysis and appraisal of curriculum reform in efforts to study persistent and critical issues in education that affect the teaching/learning process. Opportunities are provided to study current trends and social issues impacting Curriculum & Instruction with reference to various specialties of students enrolled.

Issues and Trends in Curriculum & Instruction is intended to guide students in the process of identifying and analyzing emerging and developing issues in curriculum design, curriculum development, curriculum implementation, and curriculum evaluation. Such curricular issues include but are not limited to state/national academic standards, demographics and diversity, 21st century technology, high stakes testing and assessment, innovative programs, and state and federal legislation. The course includes other issues such as identifying curriculum sources, trends that influence curriculum, the impact of curricular trends on student achievement, and what professionals such as principals, supervisors, curriculum developers, teacher-leaders, and teachers must be aware of to promote and improve student learning.

COURSE TOPICS TO BE DISCUSSED

Social impacts on Curriculum & Instruction
The purpose(s) of curriculum & high stakes testing
Implementing curricular changes
Curriculum and critical thinking
Curriculum and impact on student learning
Curriculum and instructional approaches for diverse school settings
Curriculum, instruction, and contemporary issues
Curriculum assessment and evaluation
Curriculum and technology
Curriculum and demographic changes

SPECIFIC COURSE COMPETENCIES
Based on these competencies, students will work successfully:

COGNITIVE GOALS
Students will:
- read, summarize, and critically analyze journal articles, book chapters, and books related to specific educational topics examined in the course;
- increase their general knowledge of curricular educational issues, including outside factors that affect implementation of curriculum, assessment strategies, education for all, and other recent developments;
- increase their general knowledge of recent educational innovations and alternatives, including (but not limited to) school choice, school finance, multicultural education, technology, social issues, differentiated issues in school systems;
- increase and demonstrate his or her skill in critical evaluation of educational trends; and
- demonstrate preparation for active discussion of educational issues through notes, lists of questions, outside research, careful analysis of reading materials, research papers, etc.

AFFECTIVE GOALS
Students will:
- actively participate in online discussions related to educational innovations, issues, and alternatives;
- develop an appreciation for a variety of educational philosophies and agendas;
- recognize and encourage diverse opinions and suggestions;
- work cooperatively and collaboratively with peers in large and small group settings;
- volunteer to share knowledge gained through outside readings relevant to the issues discussed in class;
- collaborate in group activities to develop, maintain, and reinforce peer learning and professional development; and
- understand and appreciate the perspectives of colleagues who teach across various grade levels and content areas.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

On successful completion of this course, you should be able to do the following:

- Identify and analyze the sources of curriculum as a means of understanding and applying emerging trends and initiatives to improve student learning;
- Evaluate current theories and approaches in curriculum and teaching to determine the effectiveness of various instructional methods and classroom practices;
- Compare and contrast learning theories and curriculum practices that promote student learning and achievement;
- Develop a rationale for specific curriculum programs and instructional methods for such audiences as at-risk students, diverse learners, disadvantaged students, the disabled, and others;
- Adopt evaluation and assessment methods and practices that are reliable and valid means of determining the effectiveness of curriculum programs and instructional methods;
- Explain and discuss the emerging policies and regulations that influence curriculum design, development, implementation, assessment, technology and evaluation;
- Construct a personal and professional approach to identifying and analyzing future trends and issues in curriculum; and
- Demonstrate an ability to investigate, analyze, and express yourself professionally in terms of the issues and trends likely to emerge in the field of curriculum.
BLACKBOARD USE
This course is not face-to-face nor a hybrid class (combination face-to-face and online). This class is total online. The student must log-in to Blackboard on a weekly basis and regularly check their UST e-mail in order to stay current with the course. All course changes and announcements will be placed in the announcements section of Blackboard.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS
The following assignments are required to have been accepted as master’s level work in order to receive at least a B- in this course. The professor expects all assignments are submitted when required by the syllabus unless otherwise renegotiated in writing with a student.

A fundamental value in this course is that students want to learn for learning’s sake and for professional development and that students pursue education for its own sake, not only for grades, prestige, or any other external motive.

Attendance, Readings, and Engagement
Students are expected to be present for and participate in all class discussions online via BB. All readings are expected to have been completed in preparation of your midterm and final exams. Students are expected to be engaged in the class and group conversation. The assignments and the final examination are designed in such a way that students will be able to achieve master’s level work only when they have completed all reading assignments on time and have engaged in the conversations with other students and the professor in every class on Bb.

Absence
Absence, which means students are not present /logged in the online class, as required, can result in the renegotiation of this contract. After two absences from Bb, the student will be administratively withdrawn from the class. After the first absence, the professor and student will have an online conference to discuss the future of the student’s enrollment in this class. This conference is not a guarantee of staying in the class; the student is expected to keep abreast of the readings and other responsibilities of enrollment in this class. Again, if a student is absent twice from Bb, the student will be administratively dropped from the course. If the time has passed when an administrative withdrawal can take place, unless students with one absence can be withdraw from the class, the grade for the class will be a failure. This is UST policy.

Communication
This is an online course. The professor is always available via e-mail and will try to answer all e-mail inquiries within 48hours. In the event of extreme circumstances or emergencies, the professor will provide a contact number and hours. Please be respectful of the office hours set forth. The professor will make every effort to reply to all phone messages within 48hours as well.

Assignments
1. Issues & Trends Paper (30%) You will identify an issue in our schools you have seen and would like to explore. This issue can be poverty, technology, gang activity, teacher apathy, high stakes testing, English Language Learners, Special Education students, etc.; b) you will conduct research on your topic/issue and have at least seven resources from which you can draw your information. These seven sources will be in the text as well as in your reference page; c) you will then organize your paper by headings and subheadings. Your headings and subheadings are the things you want to bring out and present to me the reader; d) you should address how this issue has an impact on curriculum, on teaching, on learning, on school climate, etc.; e) what trends do you see based on your literature? You will write these trends out; and last f) what recommendations do you make to
address this issue and trends and its impact on Curriculum. You are required to use APA format in organizing your paper and for any citations.

2. Journal Curricular Issues (20%). Curricular issues are constantly addressed in the news. Families often see educators as authorities and may ask about topics they see in the popular press. For this project you will browse through books, journals, magazines, newspapers, popular press magazines/media/ or websites, for articles related to curriculum and instruction in relation to students, theory, practice, program, innovation, testing, evaluation, etc. Select a topic from that of an above or different item. For your paper and find at least two popular press articles on different topics. Write a one-page summary of each and submit with article or provide link where I can access it. You will have a total of two summaries per submission. Please address the following questions: What information in the article was important to you? What surprised you? What did you agree with? Disagree? What disturbed you or was troubling? What would you like to learn more about after reading this article? Do you think the information was accurate? How do you know? How does this article relate to what you are learning in this class and/or other classes? Was this information helpful to you as a current or future educator? If so, how?

3. Topic Assignments/Discussion Boards (10%) Students are expected to be present for and participate in all Blackboard class discussions. If you do not post on Blackboard by the date designated, you are considered absent from class. If you post after the deadline, you will be considered absent and receive no credit/points for your postings. If you are ‘absent’ from Bb postings two times, I will administratively drop you from the class UNLESS you have made prior arrangements with me. Students who are absent from this course beyond the initial time (2 absences) will be administratively dropped OR lose one letter grade deduction from your overall final grade. Students are expected to be engaged in the class and group conversation.

Individual Bb postings: In this forum, you will discuss and address the prompt given. You should integrate your readings with your professional experiences. The discussion board is our place of student-to-student and student-to-professor interaction in Blackboard. Post something meaningful that caught your attention from your readings or something you read in relation to the topic. Your posting should vary from 8-10 lines minimum and contain academic language and all sources must be cited in order to receive points/credit. Discuss your answers to the questions posed in the assignment. After your initial posting, you then respond to at least two peers. You may have more but minimum is three total for each thread. In total, you will have three posts per thread. Keep in mind the assignments and the final examination are designed in such a way that students will be able to achieve a passable grade when they have completed all reading assignments on time and have engaged in the conversations with other students and the professor in every Bb class. Students must be able to navigate Blackboard and its related features. All e-mail communication for the professor must be sent using your stthom.edu e-mail account. You will also be able to keep an account of all grades via Black board.

4. MID-TERM and FINAL EXAMINATIONS (30% combined)

The Midterm exam covers material from module one until the week before the exam. The Final Exam covers material starting after the midterm until the end. The exams are essay style and/or short answer application. There will be no regurgitation of what students have learned. Application of content and process as experienced in this course will be expected. Cases, dialogues, and reflections may be part of the essays. Integration, creativity, and depth are indications of graduate level work. References must be cited using APA format.

5. Participation/attendance (10%). 10% of the students grade will be based on class participation both in person and online. The student is expected to actively participate and contribute to all discussions and forums. Any absence will result in automatic one letter grade deduction and continues to decline for every absence thereafter.

All assignments will be written in APA style, using Word, double spaced, Times New Roman, and 12-point. Students will submit written assignments on the day they are due according to the schedule.
GRADING AND EVALUATION

Class assignments:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation/attendance</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Curriculum Final Project</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>(Issues &amp; Trends Paper)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Topic Assignments/Discussion Board</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Journal Curricular Issues</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mid Term &amp; Final Exam</td>
<td>30%</td>
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100%

All assignments will receive a numerical grade of 0–100. You will receive a score of 0 for any work not submitted. Your final grade in the course will be a letter grade. Letter grade equivalents for numerical grades are as follows:

Grading and Point Equivalents

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Numerical Grade</th>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>4.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>3.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>3.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
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<td>B-</td>
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<td>F</td>
<td>0.0</td>
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<td>IP</td>
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Unusual and superior achievement
Satisfactory achievement
Below Standard
Failure
Incomplete (research in progress). Failure to complete research within one semester will result in automatic grade change to “F”. No audits are permitted at the graduate level.

HELPFUL WEBSITES

Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development
http://www.ascd.org/portal/site/ascd

Best practices and assessment framework:
http://www.just4kids.org/bestpractice/self_audit_framework.cfm?sub=tools

Curriculum Theory and Practice – Infed Encyclopedia,
http://www.infed.org/biblio/b-curric.htm

Curriculum Ideas - Eisenhower National Clearing House
http://www.goenc.com/

Curriculum Resources - Education for a Lifetime (Home-schooling information)
http://www.k12.com/

Curriculum Center – Kathy Schrock’s Guide for Educators
http://school.discovery.com/schrockguide/

The Integrated Curriculum – Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory,
http://www.nwrel.org/scpd/sirs/8/c016.html

Internet Resources/Sites that help Classroom Teachers and Administrators
Master’s Level Work is substantively and qualitatively more complex than Bachelors Level Work. It is never “from a book,” for example, demonstrative of having memorized lists or thoughts unchanged from a book. It shows depth, integration, and creativity. Depth requires showing understanding of complexity, comfort with ambiguity, or understanding uncertainty. Master’s Level Work integrates the domain of the course with students’ lived experiences both personal and professional. Creativity is demonstrated when students enhance scenarios or call up lived experiences related to the issues under consideration. Master’s Level Work demonstrates the ability to look within oneself, for example, reflecting on one’s own culture and how it influences one or engaging in meta-cognition regarding the history of oppression, privilege, racism, sexism, etc.

Incompletes are given only at the discretion of the professor for reasons that are serious. Only hospitalization or other equally serious life experiences can postpone a final examination. Again, the final decision rests on the professor of record.

PEDAGOGY
EDUC 6311 Issues & Trends in Curriculum & Instruction uses a Freirian model as its pedagogy. Consequently, the professor believes students and professor have equal responsibility for the success of this course. Our roles are different; our responsibilities are equally significant. In addition, the professor believes life experiences brought to the table in conversation are essential contributions to the development of the knowledge, abilities, and skills needed to succeed in this course. The role of the professor is to come to class prepared and to facilitate conversation, pace the class, and keep the conversation on topic. The role of students is to come to the table having completed and pondered the readings in order we can have a scholarly conversation with their classmates and professor and can integrate the readings with their professional lives and lived experiences.

LANGUAGE DIVERSITY

The University of Saint Thomas values the speaking of one or more than one or two languages. The Masters programs at the University of Saint Thomas are especially sensitive to issues of language diversity, both on behalf of students for whom English is not their first language and in preparation to work with students for whom English is not their first language. The Tutoring Center is always available to assist students who might need help with written English. In addition, it is recommended that students who are monolingual, bilingual or multilingual bring these gifts to the table in their journey through this course and the Master of Education Program.

RETENTION

For retention in EDUC 6311 Issues & Trends in Curriculum & Instruction and the School of Education at the University of Saint Thomas “candidates must continue to demonstrate academic qualities, personal and social qualities, and physical and mental health indicators of fitness for the profession” (University of Saint Thomas School of Education Catalog 2006-2008, p. 4)

This class functions on the honor system. Students are expected at all times to meet the requirements of the honor system. The professor has the discretion to fail students who violate the honor system.

Integrity is the most important quality for success in this class and in the School of Education at the University of Saint Thomas. Integrity requires students to be authentic and honest in all academic, professional, and affective work. Integrity implies students become familiar with and practice at all times the Codes of Ethics of their professions.

Professionals perform their service in an environment of trust. They have the potential to do great good and great harm. Integrity is absolutely essential for the adequate performance of their profession. Consequently, the professor has the discretion to fail in this course or dismiss from this course students who violate their integrity. Dismissal is not limited to academic dishonesty and plagiarism.

Plagiarism is taking credit for any thought, idea, written or spoken work that does not come from the student. When writing any paper, reference information, websites, books, etc., if a student paraphrases, then the reference must be given. If a student quotes, quotation marks plus reference and page number(s) must be given. There must be a one-to-one correspondence between what is cited in the body of the text and what is placed on the reference page. It is very tempting to copy and paste works from the internet, borrow the work of friends, rephrase another paper that students have written in the past, or change a few phrases here and there. Students are required to meet the standards explained in the APA Manual (2010) regarding avoiding plagiarism.

Copying a paragraph or more and changing words here and there is also plagiarism. Paraphrasing a paragraph or more is also plagiarism. Paraphrasing an idea with proper citing is not plagiarism. To avoid plagiarism close all sources while writing. Master’s Level Work requires integration of information. Plagiarism is a serious offense that will result in students’ failing the course, being dismissed from the School of Education as well as from UST. Plagiarism is a serious violation of integrity. It is not tolerated in the School of Education. Students who engage in plagiarism have demonstrated that they do not have the moral standards necessary to be
trusted. Students who engage in plagiarism will be dismissed from the School of Education as well as the University.

**AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT**

In accordance with Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the professor will make all possible and reasonable adjustments in policies, practices, services, and facilities to ensure equal and optimal educational programs and activities. Whenever a special accommodation is necessary in order to ensure access to full participation by students with disabilities, the student must inform the professor of any disability or needed accommodations.

The University Office for ADA Compliance may ask to seek proof of disability and specify accommodations as requested by students. Students contact the professor immediately if they have needs. All information is confidential. Students can see the professor before or after class or request another time to discuss any matters. Any student with documented special needs requiring academic adjustments or accommodations for enhancing potential for success in this course is requested to speak to me during the first two weeks of class. In addition, students with special needs will contact the Office of Counseling Services for Students with Special Needs by calling 713-525-3162 or 6953. The accommodations will become official when the professor received word in writing from the officer in charge of ADA compliance.

**TOPICAL OUTLINE**

*Course assignments are subject to change on short notice. All changes will be communicated in writing via Blackboard*

**These readings are expected to have been completed at the time class begins. These readings include those posted on Blackboard in the Course Documents.**

At the discretion of the professor, other readings may be assigned that are not on this list. Anytime that happens, the readings will be distributed before the reading is due.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Module</th>
<th>Day/Date</th>
<th>Instructional Focus</th>
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| Orientation Module    | 5/26-5/31 | • Read the syllabus in its entirety.  
• Email the professor your name and contact information  
• Make note of your assignments and when they are due.  
• Introduce yourself in Discussion Board. Get to know the persons you will be working with for the semester. (This will account for attendance. Post must be in Bb no later than May 31, 2015 @ Midnight or you will be counted absent.)  |
| LM1                   | 6/1-6/7   | • View the Lecture in the Learning Module  
• Read: Power and Influence in Organizations  
• *(Individual Response)* Discussion Question:  
  **Post on the following based on what you read** *(make sure to indicate which topic you are posting on and address the colleague to who’s post you are responding in the subject heading)*  
• As a future Curriculum specialist, what will be your source of power (p.168) and influence strategy (p.166) in Management vs. Leadership styles (p.181)?; 2) When you view Benevolent and Malevolent Power (p.171) and contrast that to Toxic Leaders (p.184), why is it
**Important** that as future Curriculum Specialists, you perform in a manner that is most ethical?

Following your initial post, You will respond to at least two peers post and give your reaction to their post along with any other research based factors that may validate your stance on the topic. Posts are due 6/7/15 @11:59pm.

| LM2       | 6/8-6/14 | - Read: Political Dimensions of Curriculum Decision Making  
- **Discussion Question**  
  Post on the following:  
  1) As a Curriculum Specialist, speak on the importance of being politically proactive instead of reactive; and 2) As a Curriculum Specialist, how can we ensure politics or personal ideology does not influence the decisions we make in ensuring all students receive an optimal education?  
- Read: Validity and Accountability in High-Stakes Testing  
  **Discussion Question:**  
  Post on the following:  
  As a curriculum specialist, and based on what you read, how would you address the following before a meeting with your school board:  
  a) Why is high-stakes testing so political?  
  b) How would you address explain the STAAR being a contradiction when it comes to accountability and validity? |

| LM3       | 6/15-6/21 | - The New Demography of America’s Schools: Immigration and the No Child Left Behind Act  
- **Discussion Question:**  
  Post on the following: Due to a sharp rise in the numbers of children of immigrants who now compose one fifth of all USA school-age children, as a curriculum specialist address the following: a) What curricular challenges are most pressing in your view? b) What are some strategies/techniques you would implement to address the language/content issue of many of these students who grapple with English? |

| LM4 Mid-Term Exam | 6/22-6/28 | - Exam availability date will be announced via Blackboard  
- Final Exam covers all materials LM 1 to LM 3.  
- You have 3 hours to complete  
- Select a situation with no distractions or interruptions  
- When you complete the exam, hit the SUBMIT button  
- **Exam is due 6/28/15@11:59pm** |

| LM5       | 6/29-7/5 | - Education and Poverty: Confronting the Evidence  
- **Discussion Question:**  
  In looking at the effects that poverty has on education, address the following: a) Explain from your educational expertise why policies, with good intentions, tend to omit some of the most salient variables the article spoke about? b) In your professional view, how has the NCLB failed our students? And c) As a curriculum specialist, why should we keep in mind the issues raised in this article? |

| LM6       | 7/6-7/12 | - Read: Diversity & Inclusion: Toward a Curriculum for Human Beings  
- **Discussion Question:**  
  Based on what you read and bringing it all together, reflect on Elizabeth Minnich’s comment about curriculum: …remains within a system built
on principles of exclusion and characterized by the conceptual errors that those principles necessitate and perpetuate. How should we approach curriculum to ensure we provide a Central curriculum, a Real curriculum, a Human Reality curriculum for all students?

- The Wrong Solution to the Teacher Shortage
- Journal Curricular Issues Due! 7/12/15 @11:59pm

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<td><strong>Discussion Question:</strong> As a future curriculum specialist in your district, speak on what key components are essential when meeting with teachers from different campus on a given grade level and educating them about how curriculum and assessment does help strengthen classroom practices.</td>
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<tr>
<th>LM8</th>
<th>7/20-7/26</th>
<th>Does Teacher Preparation Matter? Evidence about Teacher Certification, Teach for America, and Teacher Effectiveness</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Trends that Will Shape the Future of Curriculum</td>
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<td>Issues &amp; Trends Paper Due! 7/26/15 @11:59pm</td>
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| LM9 | 7/27-8/2 | Global Trends in Education |
|-----|----------| Using Curriculum Assessment to Strengthen Classroom Practices |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LM10 Final Exam</th>
<th>8/3-8/8</th>
<th>Exam availability and due date will be announced via Blackboard</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>Final Exam covers all materials covered this semester.</td>
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