The University of St. Thomas

Ethical Leadership Doctoral Program

EDUC 8323 Educational Politics & Leadership

Spring 2018 Semester

Ray Garcia, Ed.D.
Professor & Director of Ed.D. Program in Ethical Leadership
School of Education and Human Services
University of St. Thomas

Office: Education Annex Building
Office Hours: By Appointment
Email: garciarc@stthom.edu
Phone: 713-525-3846

MISSION

The mission is to prepare and influence bold, socially responsible leaders who will transform organizations. Our central role is to ignite the leadership capacity needed to create vital, democratic, and caring institutions and systems. In keeping with this role, the central focus of our Ed.D. in Ethical Leadership are social justice and equity.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

With a focus on scrutinizing how the larger political economy of educational systems, popular culture and politics of a society impact the dynamics of how educational environments are constructed, this course engages students in a sustained debate about the core questions of political power in education and other education-affiliated public sector agency relationships. Calling for the redirection of the dominant political paradigm governing the U.S., this course examines how relations of power in the context of community pressures and needs shape and impinge upon the internal workings and purposes of educational institutions. This course also familiarizes students with community power structures and how these political forces shape education legislative provisions leading to a call for political advocacy for enabling the less privileged.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE COURSE

The conceptual framework for this course is guided by the application of the critical realist approach. Cardoso & Shah (2016) argue that a critical realist approach is best suited within the broad field of critical theory to mapping the contingent interactions that exist between education and, in this case, political conflict. Critical realism understands reality as stratified and composed of: 1. The real, or the structures, mechanisms and powers that exist by virtue of politics nature but that may or may not be
activated; 2. The **actual**, which are the potential events and outcomes that could occur if and when particular powers and mechanisms are activated, and which happen continuously whether we experience them or not; and, 3. The **empirical**, which is what we experience and observe of the world, either directly or indirectly (Pawson et al., 2005).

**SOCIAL JUSTICE PRINCIPLES**

Subsidiarity - Educational institutions should be organized and governed as much as possible by the community being served; education should only be controlled at high levels of society when it cannot be done effectively locally.

Dignity and rights of children - Children possess full human dignity and are bearers of rights which should be recognized and upheld in the educational process.

People have a right to an education – All people have a responsibility, for the good of society, to contribute to and foster education.

**PROGRAM GOALS**

1. Ethical Leadership: Develop educational leaders who exhibit and promote trust, respect, integrity, honesty, fairness, equity, justice, and compassion as underpinnings in society, including within their professional relationships.

2. Social Justice: Develop educational leaders versed in providing equal opportunities for all individuals regardless of socio economic status as well as providing and developing skills to become successful academically and economically.

3. Interpersonal Collaboration: Develop greater self-awareness, intentionality of action, and stronger relationships with others that lead to constructive interpersonal collaboration.

4. Catholic Intellectual Tradition: To develop reflective, multifaceted, cultural catalysts who integrate faith and culture in their leadership, who internalize their role as one in service of the mind, heart, and spirit, who understand and live what it means to be Catholic in the modern world, and who intentionally lead with an ability to make connections between faith and reason in a technology-rich society—to lead in service of the gospel.

5. Research: Develop reflective scholar-practitioners who conduct research collaboratively and ethically, thereby contributing to the academic body of knowledge, improving professional practice, and promoting positive systemic change.
STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Learning Outcomes</th>
<th>Addressed in This Course</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.5 Examine obstacles that polarize discussion and undermine effective action, and ineffective or one-dimensional approaches to organizational and cultural change.</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5 Leaders will identify systematic patterns of inequities in their respective settings and create a plan on how this will be justly addressed.</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1 Develop a practice of mindful reflection to enhance self-awareness and explore personal value, assumptions (world view), biases, ethics, and inner control to discover how one’s self influences individual actions and impacts relationships with others.</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4 Exhibit knowledge of competent, change agency committed to advocacy and action, and attentive to social justice issues.</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.5 Exhibit commitment to the role of evaluator as demonstrated by the use of multiple avenues to create and share knowledge about local, state, and national educational issues.</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A-Acquisition; B- Application; C-Assimilation; D-Adaptation
(Reference the Rigor & Relevance Framework)

In addition to the identified Student Learning Outcomes, this course addresses the following **Texas Superintendent Competencies**:

(e) Learner-Centered Policy and Governance: A superintendent is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by understanding, responding to, and influencing the larger political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context and by working with the board of trustees to define mutual expectations, policies, and standards.

(Domain I: Competency 004)

1. Define and apply the general characteristics of internal and external political systems to the educational organization;
2. Demonstrate and apply appropriate knowledge of legal issues affecting education;
3. Provide leadership in defining superintendent and board of trustee’s roles, mutual expectations, and effective superintendent-board of trustees working relationships;
4. Determine the political, economic, and social aspects and/or needs of groups in the community, and those of the community at large, for effective and responsive decision making;
5. Prepare and recommend school district policies to improve student learning and school district performance in compliance with state and federal requirements;
6. Use legal systems to protect the rights of students and staff and to improve learning opportunities;
7. Apply laws, policies, and procedures fairly, wisely, and considerately; and,
8. Access state and national political systems to provide input on critical educational issues.
COURSE REQUIREMENTS

• **Literature Review (30%)**: The Mini Lit Review is converted into an authentic Literature Review during the spring 2017 semester. Students, therefore, are expected to meet benchmark standards for each component of the literature review through consultation with their respective academic advisor as well as through the Peer-Review Process (PRP). The PRP requires a ‘student-to-student’ scrutiny of each of the components of the Literature Review manuscript. The PRP is a quality control measure that ensures the facts presented in the Literature Review are based on solid, scientific studies -- not opinions and that APA style is adhered to. Additionally, the PRP constitutes a method for evaluating scholarly work that meets the criteria for each benchmark in the Literature Review. This major course requirement culminates in a blind-review of the student’s manuscript by three professors attesting to the student meeting benchmark standards. Results of the blind-review will be made available to students after May 31st.

• **Participation in Class & Think Tanks (15%)**: Learning is a reciprocal process. Accordingly, your informed involvement is not only essential, but also required. Informed involvement necessitates that your review assigned readings prior to class, and be prepared to discuss their strengths, weaknesses, and potential relevancy to evidence-based educational practices during classes. Absences will put the student in a disadvantaged posture given the breadth, depth, and intensity of the course. Absences will be negotiated with your professor.

• **Think Tank Discussion Prompts & Thematic Questions (15%)**: The Think Tank Discussion Prompts and the Thematic Questions serve as drivers as well as the enablers for our work on a weekly basis. These loaded, and at times thought provoking, inquiries are designed to promote breakthrough dialogues. A Think Tank Discussion Prompt will be found at the conclusion of each session. Think Tank members are expected to respond to the TT Discussion Prompt through the use of the video tool available via the TT Discussion Board. Each of the three modules for this course is culminated by a Thematic Question. Students are expected to respond to the Thematic Question in a manner that reflects a thoughtful, scholarly response to the question while embedding tenets of research from our readings, class discussions, online excursions, etc. Additionally, students are also expected to acknowledge other students’ perspectives by raising new or unique ideas or applications.

• **Power Mapping (20%)** – Power maps are strategic tools by which actors within political fields try to assess the social terrain in which they exist, and how they can best move forward their personal or their organization’s agenda within that terrain. Power mapping identifies key actors within a particular field of action, defines the power that these actors have in relation to particular decisions or resources, and assesses the relationships of these actors with each other and with oneself. Reference the Noy (2008) research article for a complete explanation of the power mapping process. With colleagues in your Think Tank and using creative technological tools/applications, develop a power map of the education political system in the U.S. inclusive of the federal, state, and local level players.
• Pro-Con Debate (20%) - In their research on intergovernmental relations, Marsh & Wohlstetter (2013) characterized current education policy initiatives to illustrate the dynamic interactions among the three levels (federal, state, and local) of government and the ways in which local policy actors have retained and, in some cases, gained power despite new federal assertions of authority. These three levels of government substantiate the complexity of relationships between local actors and the other levels that claim governance authority over them. In some cases, local actors work cooperatively with their states to challenge federal control, whereas in other instances they work against their state to pursue their own interests. Not to exceed forty (40) minutes, Think Tanks will be paired-off and will develop a lively debate undergirded by the validity of the intergovernmental interactions asserted by Marsh & Wohlstetter. The Pro-Con Debate exercise provides an opportunity for students to illustrate opposing perspectives on the implications of the power dynamics. The responses/exchanges in these debate forums will reflect a student’s blending of concepts from the research articles, class discussions, as well as insights from practice. See Appendix A & B for a detailed outline of this exercise.

Module 1: Leadership and Politics: The Incoherent Calculus

Danermark et al. (2002) assert that the role of the researcher is to investigate and identify relationships and non-relationships, respectively, between what we experience, what actually happens, and the underlying mechanisms that produce the events in the world, through what is labeled a process of *retroduction*. Additionally, Cardozo & Shah (2016) argue that critical realism allows us to work backwards from what we see within the educational landscape to the mechanisms and power relations which underpinning this, making visible what may otherwise remain invisible with positivist and problem-solving lines of inquiry. Using these frames of reference, this initial module focuses on the various forms of inquiry to deepen our understanding of how education works in relation to politics and vice versa. The readings in this module highlight how political dynamics undergird the context and structures of educational institutions – particularly educational outcomes. Additionally, these readings lend to an analysis of the symbiotic relationship between education and politics through an examination of structures, mechanisms, discourses, and beliefs/values.

**Session 1 (Saturday, January 20, 2018, 1:00 – 4:00)**

• Course Expectations: Unpacking the Syllabus
• The Ecology of Politics (Session Slides)
• BayCES Lenses
• Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Resolution Exercise

**Session 2 (Saturday, February 3, 2018, 1:00-4:00)**

• Class participation in the Information Session for Cohort 3 (3:00 – 4:00)


**Session 3 (Saturday, February 17, 2018, 1:00-4:00)**

- **Guest Speaker: Dr. Nicole Walters, Assistant Dean, School of Education & Human Services (1:30-2:30)**

- **Debate #1**


**Module 1 Thematic Question:**

Whether one is alluding to public, private or higher education, political relationships between the federal, state, and local governments greatly shape education policy in the United States. These relationships, according to Marsh & Wohlstetter (2013), have also sparked perennial debates focused on
the exerting of power and over questions of who should decide what is taught and tested in our schools, inclusive of higher education, and what level of government should be responsible for matters of standards, curriculum, testing, and accountability. Spring (2014) maintains that political education in American schools is plagued by controversies over its content. Many students seem to leave school with a concept of citizenship focused on obedience to the law and authority in contrast to community activism. What role should educational institutions play in reaching consensus of political values in the U.S.? Furthermore, who or what government agency should determine the political values taught in educational institutions?

Module 2: Governance & Political Structures in Education

According to Sum (2015), institutional mechanisms, processes and practices involve actors framing political imaginaries (e.g., competitiveness, development, modernization, nationalism, poverty, crisis, hope, etc.). These social phenomena dictate how educational systems operate. How the polity lends meaning to how education is described and constructed is the focus of this module. The research articles profiled in this module unpack the process of sense-making critical to understanding the nuances that perpetuate the political phenomena in educational institutions.

Session 4 (Saturday, March 3, 2018, 1:00-4:00)

• Debate #2


Session 5 (Saturday, March 24, 2018, 1:00-4:00)

• Debate #3


**Module 2 Thematic Question:**

Unpacking the common assumptions about intergovernmental relations in education engages a sustained debate about salient questions of political power in education and other public sector agency relationships. Often the incubation nexus for political power, the infrastructure of educational institutions prohibits meaningful change. Spring (2014) characterizes state and federal politicians as increasingly involved in issues of curriculum, methods of instruction, testing, and educator certification. The trend, the researcher posits, is for more federal and state involvement in these areas. Should there be a nationalized system of schooling? A pressing issue for the future is deciding whether there should be limits to political involvement in education – inclusive of higher education. Should federal and state politicians determine the content and the methods of instruction?

---

**Module 3: Power & Politics**

Ravitch (2013) cautions that the current perceptual crisis in schools can be attributed to the persistent, orchestrated attacks on them and their teachers and principals, and attacks on the very principles of public responsibility for public education. These attacks, the researcher discloses, create a false sense of crisis and serve the interests of those who want to privatize the public schools. Focusing on the unrelenting tug-of-war between power and politics, this module dissects how and why researchers study the political machinations behind the development of educational policy, problems associated with its implementation, and the technical innovations that make political systems reliable. The readings in this module collectively advocate for *institutional theorizing* as an analytical tool for examining the relationship between power and politics in the realm of education.

**Session 6 (Saturday, April 7, 2018, 1:00-4:00)**

- Guest Speaker: Dr. Richard Ludwick, President, University of St. Thomas (1:30-2:30; Confirmation Pending)


Session 7 (Saturday, April 21, 2018, 1:00-4:00)

•Virtual Speaker


Session 8 (Saturday, May 5, 2018, 1:00-4:00)

•Think Tank Student Learning Outcomes Evaluation (See Appendix C)
•Power Mapping Exercise
•End of Course Celebration

Module 3 Thematic Question:

Neal and Neal (2011) suggest that the tension between empowerment and power originates from the variety of meanings that have been applied to the construct of power. Three conceptions of ‘power over’ have been offered in community psychology: social power, psycho-political power, and relational power. Because each of these conceptions has its own orienting stance, definition of power, and central focus, it is difficult to understand precisely what it is that empowerment provides to individuals, organizations, and communities. In the context of educational institutions and in light of the
marginalization of various facets of the community: (a) Where should empowering processes be targeted? (b) How can we facilitate empowering processes? and, (c) When do empowering processes result in empowered outcomes?

-------------------

STUDENT ACCOMMODATIONS

If you have a documented disability that may impact your performance in this class, please contact me to discuss your needs. Additionally, you will need to register with the Counseling and Disability Services Office in Crooker Center, 713.525.6953 or 3162.

USE OF UST EMAIL ACCOUNTS

All email correspondence will be through the my.stthom email system. Please check your email through your my.stthom account daily for correspondence and announcements.

Helpful numbers:

1. UST Technology Help Desk: 713-525-6900
2. Blackboard help: 713-525-3153

*Note: The Course Outline is subject to change due to the learning pace of the cohort or other circumstances.
Appendix A

Think Tank Debate Structure*

The following is an outline/schedule for the debate. Please do a run through the opening and closing statements to make sure that adhere to the time frame. A coin toss determines which Think Tank goes first.

1) Team A presents their opening statement (4 minutes)
2) Team B presents their opening statement (4 minutes)
3) Team A presents their rebuttal (3 minutes)
4) Team B presents their rebuttal (3 minutes)
5) Team A asks 2 questions and the opposition answers (5 minutes)
6) Team B asks 2 questions and the opposition answers (5 minutes)
7) Closing statement (3 minutes)
8) Closing statement (3 minutes)
9) 3 questions from the audience who may ask either debate team questions (10 minutes)

It is up to your debate team (Think Tank) to decide who wants to take on specific roles. Members can be assigned an individual role based on a colleague’s special skills, abilities and interests. (For example: Someone who thinks quickly on his or her feet would be the best person to do the rebuttal). What is important is that every person contributes and participates equally.

*Source: NETworking: Using Debate in the Classroom (nd).
Appendix B

The following topics and debate questions are assigned to paired-Think Tanks. A flip of a coin determines which Think Tank assumes the pro and con stance.

**Debate #1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Market Reform: Privatization of Schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Context</td>
<td>Leaders of the privatization movement insist that public education is a failed enterprise and that all the reform strategies have been tried and failed. They assert that the best way to save education is to hand it over to private management and let the market sort out the winners and the losers. They wish to substitute private choices for the public’s responsibility to provide good schools for all children. They lack the understanding of the crucial role of public schools in a democracy (Ravitch, 2013).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debate Question</td>
<td>In light of the fact that public education is the state’s responsibility, should the private/for-profit sector be afforded opportunities to run certain aspects of public education?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Think Tanks</td>
<td>TBD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debate Date</td>
<td>February 17, 2018</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Debate #2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Separation of Church and State</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Context</td>
<td>The First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution states, “Congress shall make no laws respecting an establishment of religion...” Government support of religious schools is a contentious issue. The guiding principle for court decisions regarding government support of education and religion is a 1971 U.S. Supreme Court case, <em>Lemon v. Kurzman</em>, which established a three-part test for determining the constitutionality of government programs that benefit religion. Under the <em>Lemon</em> test, government aid to religious schools: a) must have a secular purpose; b) must not inhibit or advance religion; and, 3) must not cause excessive entanglement of government in religion (Spring, 2014).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debate Question</td>
<td>Should tax dollars be used to fund religious/private/chartered education?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Think Tanks</td>
<td>TBD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debate Date</td>
<td>March 3, 2018</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Debate #3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>The 14th Amendment &amp; Equality of Educational Opportunity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Context</td>
<td>The 14th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution provides that everyone should receive equal treatment by the law and no one should receive special privileges because of race, gender, religion, ethnicity, or wealth. This means that if a government provides a school system, then everyone should be treated equally by that system; everyone should have equal access to that educational system (Spring, 2014). Over 30% of the U.S. public schools are segregated lending to unequal school funding and school practices (National Center for Education Statistics, 2015).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debate Question</td>
<td>Should the current funding formulae for public school funding be changed to decrease the inequities in public schools in the U.S.?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Think Tanks</td>
<td>TBD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debate Date</td>
<td>March 24, 2018</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix C

Think Tank Evaluation of Student Learning Outcomes: On a scale of 1 - 5 (1 is low and 5 is high), rate how each of the following Student Learning Outcomes was covered in the delineated courses:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethical Leadership Student Learning Outcomes</th>
<th>EDUC 8320 Ethical Leadership in Education</th>
<th>EDUC 8330 Social Justice Principles</th>
<th>EDUC 8322 Leadership for Social Change</th>
<th>EDUC 8340 Educational Policy Development</th>
<th>EDUC 8310 Ethical Resource Allocation</th>
<th>EDUC 8323 Educational Politics &amp; Leadership</th>
<th>Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Develops perceptions of the self and explore perspectives of trust, respect, integrity, honesty, fairness, equity, justice, and compassion in action using faith and reason, central to the University of St. Thomas.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutionalize an ethical culture by analyzing and applying ethical philosophies and theories to decisions and behaviors of leaders in education and other organizations.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leaders will design strategies and articulate how culture, ethnicity, religion, and native language will be respected in their respective setting.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explore and articulate an understanding of cultural forces that have contributed to dominance and oppression in society, that promote cultural inconsistencies with ethical beliefs and teachings.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Examine obstacles that polarize discussion and undermine effective action, and ineffective or one-dimensional approaches to organizational and cultural change.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix D

References


