

## **Policy and Leadership in Public Education<sup>1</sup>**

**Course #90-865/90-463 (6 units), Fall 2021 Mini 1**

**Tuesdays, 6:20 – 9:10pm**

**HBH 1006**

**H. John Heinz III College of Public Policy and Management  
Carnegie Mellon University**

Tara Tucci-Exilus, Adjunct Instructor

Office Hours: By appointment

Phone: 412-539-5530

Email: ttucci@andrew.cmu.edu

### **Course Description**

This course introduces students to policy issues in public education while simultaneously building the skills to lead change through authentic assignments and in-class collaboration. The course addresses both the "what" and the "how" of leading policy change, combining content presentation and discussion with an iterative approach to each assignment. It is appropriate for students with an interest in education policy but not necessarily experience in the field.

The content of the course will include: 1) the basics: the purpose of schooling as well as the current structure and legislative landscape within K-12 public education in the United States, 2) what is taught: policy and practice around curriculum, standards, and assessment, 3) who teaches: human capital strategy and policy and 4) where does education take place: school design and structure, including opportunities for transforming how students learn.

Class activities and assignments are designed to mirror formats you will likely use regularly in your careers and serve to build skills that will serve you as future leaders in the field.

### **Meetings and Assignments**

This course will meet Tuesdays from 6:20-9:10pm. Class time will consist of any of the following on a given day: content overview and discussions, small group problem-solving activities, and workshops to make progress on the course's major assignments. These assignments will include:

- A 6-10 slide presentation or infographic
- Two 600-750 word opinion pieces
- 2-4 page memo

Out-of-class time will be divided between reading, writing short blog posts to prepare for class discussions, and working on the writing assignments.

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<sup>1</sup> Syllabus built in part based on S. Franklin's Fall 2016 Policy and Leadership in Public Education course. Portions of the syllabus are also pulled from CMU's Eberly Center design resources.

## Objectives

Objective (Students will be able to...)	Assessed through
Describe the basic features of public education in the United States including structure and major policy areas	Slide deck/infographic
Identify and compare the differing perspectives related to a particular policy issue and construct a compelling argument for a policy change related to that issue	Class participation, advocacy piece
Devise a strategy for effectively leading change in public education	Superintendent memo
Articulate complex ideas orally and through writing in an organized and clear manner	Three writing assignments, class participation

## Expectations

In addition to class participation, you are expected to complete work outside of class. In a typical week, this would include some time reading and preparing for class and some time working on a writing assignment.

In order for us to build a learning community together in which you can maximize your learning, both in and outside of class the following are expected:

1. **Participation and leadership.** Students will have a role in guiding the learning and achieving the vision of the course. You are expected to demonstrate initiative and leadership to maximize the value of the experience for themselves and others.
2. **Collaboration.** You are expected to build and maintain productive relationships with colleagues and engage positively during discussion about challenging and controversial topics.
3. **Effective process and project management.** You will complete assignments on time, come to class prepared, utilize class time productively, and meet deadlines.
4. **Professionalism.** You will communicate respectfully and professionally with colleagues, be on time for classes, and appointments. Let me know if you know you will be absent or need to leave early.

Beyond supporting your learning in class, these expectations are meant to be similar to those that you are likely to encounter in your careers.

## Evaluation/Grading

Grading for this course is based on:

1. Participation (10%)
2. Blog posts (15%)
3. First written assignment (15%)
4. Second written assignment (30%)
5. Third written assignment (30%)

### 1. **Participation** – 10% of course grade

All class sessions will be graded. Each session is worth up to 10 points. Attendance is taken at all classes. The participation grade for each class is based on attending and participating in class. For each class, the grade is determined as follows:

- 10 points – In attendance and engaged, participating fully in class activities and discussion
- 5 points – In attendance but disengaged in class activities and discussion, participating only when called on or not at all
- 0 points – Absent from class

Given the condensed nature of a mini course, a single absence would result in missing a significant portion of content. As a result, attendance is expected at each class. However, I do recognize that unpreventable situations may arise. If this is the case, please inform me with as much notice as possible, and it will be addressed on a case-by-case basis.

### 2. **Blog posts** – 15% of course grade

This course is designed to be collaborative and to provide opportunities for participants to articulate and defend ideas orally and through writing. To prepare for certain classes noted in the schedule above, all students must post thoughts on the class session's reading assignment to Canvas **by 6pm on the evening before the class meets**. I will often use your posts as jumping off points for class discussion, and as evidence that you completed and engaged critically with the week's readings. Therefore, late blog posts will not be accepted. However, recognizing that the unexpected can always happen, please let me know as soon as possible should you encounter extenuating circumstances that prevent you from submitting your blog post on time and I will handle these on a case-by-case basis.

For more information on expectations regarding blog posts, see Appendix I.

### 3. **Three written assignments** – 75% of course grade

Three written assignments are due during the mini. To maximize learning, each piece will go through at least one reviewed draft. The following schedule will note when drafts are due to me to review and provide feedback for you to consider as you finalize the piece. Drafts will not be graded. This process is intended to reflect a feedback cycle you might experience when preparing materials for your supervisor or other colleagues in your career.

The focus of the pieces are aligned to the content of the course and will require you to demonstrate your mastery of the course's learning objectives. Each will be graded on a rubric that is provided in Appendix II and available on Canvas, and which is focused on the extent to which the piece includes quality presentation, meets basic requirements, and demonstrates mastery of content. As each is assigned, I will provide more details on the requirements as well as samples, where available.

Timeliness is important with these assignments, as meeting deadlines will be a required expectation of you in your careers and will aid in your success in the field. Late submissions of drafts will likely mean that I will not be able to offer you feedback before you submit for a grade. Late submission of final

assignments will be accepted with a 10% penalty for each day that it is late (i.e. up to 24 hours late, you will be eligible for 90% of the total points, between 24 and 48 hours late will result in eligibility for 80% of total points). Again, recognizing that the unexpected can always happen, please let me know as soon as possible should you encounter extenuating circumstances that prevent you from submitting your assignment on time and I will handle these on a case-by-case basis.

The assignments will include the following:

- A. A 6-10 slide PowerPoint or infographic describing the basic features of the U.S. public education system (15% of overall course grade)
- B. A pair of 600-700 word (each) opinion pieces (op-eds) taking opposing stands on a single policy issue (30% of overall course grade)
- C. A 2-4 page strategy memo to a superintendent of schools laying out an approach to lead change (30% of overall course grade)

### COVID-19 Precautions

Per the university guidelines, all students are required to wear facial coverings during class. Please refer to the [COVID-19 Updates page](#) for the most recent student requirements on COVID-19 testing, vaccines, and other protocols.

### Accommodations

If you have a disability and have an accommodations letter from the Disability Resources office, I encourage you to discuss your accommodations and needs with me as early in the mini as possible. I will work with you to ensure that accommodations are provided as appropriate. If you suspect that you may have a disability and would benefit from accommodations but are not yet registered with the Office of Disability Resources, I encourage you to contact them at [access@andrew.cmu.edu](mailto:access@andrew.cmu.edu).

### Academic Statement

Honesty and transparency are important features of good scholarship. At the same time, plagiarism and cheating are serious academic offenses with serious consequences. You are responsible for knowing and adhering to all University policies on academic integrity. For a clear description of what counts as plagiarism, cheating, and/or the use of unauthorized sources, please acquaint yourself with the [University's Policy on Academic Integrity](#).

This course is designed to be collaborative during class meetings to help foster an environment that maximizes your learning and growth. In addition, I encourage you to make use of campus resources such as Academic Development, the Global Communication Center, and the Intercultural Communication Center. I also encourage you to discuss amongst yourselves the readings and themes of the course to better understand the content and to help you crystallize the topics and perspectives of your writing assignments.

However, in order for me to fairly and accurately assess your progress towards our learning objectives and assign an appropriate grade, it is important that all graded work is your own. This means that all written assignments and blog posts should be written by only you and that you should be able to independently defend the main points presented therein if/when asked. Any plagiarism will result in

zero credit for the assignment and your case will be referred to the Associate Dean, who may decide to take further action.

## **Respect in the classroom**

We are diverse in many ways, and this diversity is fundamental to building and maintaining an equitable and inclusive campus community. Diversity can refer to multiple ways that we identify ourselves, including but not limited to race, color, national origin, language, sex, disability, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, creed, ancestry, belief, veteran status, or genetic information. Each of these diverse identities, along with many others not mentioned here, shape the perspectives our students, faculty, and staff bring to our campus. We, at CMU, will work to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion not only because diversity fuels excellence and innovation, but because we want to pursue justice. We acknowledge our imperfections while we also fully commit to the work, inside and outside of our classrooms, of building and sustaining a campus community that increasingly embraces these core values.

It is my intent that students from all diverse backgrounds and perspectives be well served by this course, that students' learning needs be addressed both in and out of class, and that the diversity that students bring to this class be viewed as a resource, strength, and benefit. It is my intent to present materials and activities that are respectful of diversity: gender, sexuality, disability, age, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, race, and culture. Your suggestions are encouraged and appreciated.

## **Support yourself and your success**

You can only do your best work when you adequately take care of yourself. Do your best to maintain a healthy lifestyle this semester; this will help you achieve your goals and cope with stress. All of us benefit from support during times of struggle. There are many helpful resources available on campus and an important part of success in school or in work is learning how to ask for help. Asking for support sooner rather than later is almost always helpful. If you or anyone you know experiences any academic stress, difficult life events, or feelings like anxiety or depression, I strongly encourage you to seek support. Counseling and Psychological Services (CaPS) is here to help: call 412-268-2922 or visit their website at <http://www.cmu.edu/counseling/>. Consider reaching out to a friend, faculty, or family member you trust for help getting connected to the support that can help. Please know I am available if you need to discuss anything with me.

If you are worried about affording food or feeling insecure about food, there are resources on campus who can help. Email or call the CMU Food Pantry Coordinator to schedule an appointment: [cmu-pantry@andrew.cmu.edu](mailto:cmu-pantry@andrew.cmu.edu) and 412-268-8704 (SLICE office).

Further, if it would be beneficial to you, please consider accessing the [Student Academic Success Center](#) (SASC) for a variety of supports, including Communication Support. This includes free one-on-one communication consulting as well as group workshops to support strong written, oral, and visual communication in texts including thesis-driven essays, data-driven reports, oral presentations, posters and visual design, business and public policy documents, data visualization, and team projects. Appointments are available to undergraduate and graduate students from any discipline at CMU.

## Book Purchase List

There is no required book to purchase for this course. Readings will be a variety of different resources, all available on the web or provided as a pdf on Canvas.

## Class Schedule

Note: Assigned readings are subject to change and updated reading lists may be provided for certain weeks. Links to readings and pdfs are available on the class Canvas site. The readings have been chosen to provide a variety of perspectives on important issues within education policy and are not intended to imply or encourage a given viewpoint.

Date	Content/Session Overview	Preparations/Assignments Due
August 31	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Introductions</li><li>• Review Syllabus</li><li>• Policy Solution Web</li><li>• Stakeholder Map</li></ul>	n/a
September 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Purpose and history of public education in U.S.</li><li>• Structure and current state of public education in U.S.</li><li>• Key legislation and current policy landscape</li><li>• Introduce first writing assignment</li></ul>	<p><b><i>Submit blog on reading before 6pm on evening before class (See Appendix 1)</i></b></p> <p><b>Purpose and history of education</b> Read: Schooling America pp. 1-6 (pdf on Canvas)</p> <p>Read: <a href="#">Is the purpose of public education work?</a></p> <p>Read: <a href="#">The Purpose of Education – According to Students</a></p> <p>Read: Pedagogy of the Oppressed pp. 11-16, 52-67 (pdf on canvas)</p> <p><b>Structure of education system</b> Read: <a href="#">The Federal Role in Education</a></p> <p>Read: <a href="#">State Boards of Education</a>; <a href="#">State Education Governance at a Glance</a></p> <p>Read: <a href="#">Education Governance in America (page 1-10)</a></p> <p>Read: <a href="#">A K-12 Funding Primer</a></p> <p><b>Scan of key legislation</b> Skim: <a href="#">Laws and Guidance</a> (just to get a sense of the span of federal-level legislation regarding education; Optional: click within individual pieces of legislation to learn more)</p> <p>Read: <a href="#">Elementary and Secondary Education Act</a></p>

		<p>Skim: <a href="#">Race to the Top Executive Summary</a></p> <p>Skim: <a href="#">Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund</a></p>
September 14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Key legislation and current policy landscape (cont. if necessary)</li> <li>• What is taught: Curriculum, standards, and assessment</li> <li>• Ppt/infographic workshop</li> </ul>	<p><b><i>Submit blog on reading before 6pm on evening before class</i></b></p> <p><b><i>Bring draft of ppt/infographic to class</i></b></p> <p><b>Standards/Curriculum</b>  Read: <a href="#">College- and Career-Ready Standards</a></p> <p>Read: <a href="#">Common Core State Standards Development Process</a></p> <p>Read: <a href="#">Common Core</a></p> <p>Read: <a href="#">How the Common Core Went Wrong</a></p> <p><b>Assessments</b>  Read: <a href="#">Testing, Testing 1-2-3</a></p> <p>Read: <a href="#">Standardized Testing is Overwhelming Nation's Public Schools</a> (pdf also on Canvas)</p> <p><b>Optional</b>  Read: <a href="#">What is Critical Race Theory and Why is it Under Attack?</a></p>
September 17 (Friday)	<b><i>PowerPoint/infographic due Friday, September 17 at 11:59pm</i></b>	
September 21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is taught: Curriculum, standards, and assessment (cont. if necessary)</li> <li>• Tying it all together: Implementation and accountability</li> <li>• Introduce second writing assignment</li> </ul>	<p><b><i>Submit blog on reading before 6pm on evening before class</i></b></p> <p><b>Implementation</b>  Read: <a href="#">Case Study of Three Districts Implementing CCSS</a> (read the first case study of Bayfield School District)</p> <p>Listen: <a href="#">Code Switch: To Fail or Not to Fail</a> or read <a href="#">transcript</a></p> <p><b>Accountability</b>  Read: <a href="#">New School Accountability in the States</a></p> <p>Read: <a href="#">ESSA statute</a></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Start on page 20 with "Sec. 111. State Plans" and stop on page 26 after "(cc)grades 10-12..."</li> <li>• Start on page 34 "(c) Statewide Accountability System..." and stop on page 40 after "(D) Special Rule..."</li> </ul>

		Read: <a href="#">Pennsylvania Consolidated State Plan</a> page 36 through 44 and 51 (Annual Meaningful Designation) through 59 (stop at G 4.3 State Support...)
September 28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Who teaches: Human capital and educator equity</li> <li>Opinion piece workshop</li> </ul>	<p><b><i>Submit blog on reading before 6pm on evening before class</i></b></p> <p><b><i>Bring draft of op-ed to class</i></b></p> <p>Read: <a href="#">The Widget Effect</a></p> <p>Read: <a href="#">Policy Snapshot: Teacher Evaluations</a></p> <p>Read: <a href="#">State ESSA Plans on Educator Equity</a></p> <p>Read: <a href="#">Pennsylvania Consolidated State Plan</a> page 67 through 84</p>
October 1 (Friday)	<b><i>Opinion pieces due Friday, October 1 at 11:59pm</i></b>	
October 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Where does education take place: School design and structure</li> <li>Introduce third writing assignment</li> </ul>	<p><b><i>Submit blog on reading before 6pm on evening before class</i></b></p> <p><b>Vouchers</b> Read: <a href="#">School Vouchers 101</a></p> <p>Read: <a href="#">PA's Opportunity Scholarship Tax Credit Program</a></p> <p><b>Charters</b> Read: <a href="#">The Battle Over Charter Schools</a></p> <p>Read: <a href="#">Charter School Accountability Under ESSA</a></p> <p><b>Design</b> Read: <a href="#">Best of Both Worlds: Denver's Portfolio Strategy</a></p> <p>Read: <a href="#">San Antonio's Plan to Disrupt Segregated Schools</a></p> <p>Read: <a href="#">Changing the Game with School Design</a></p> <p>Read: <a href="#">Reinventing High School</a></p> <p>Read: <a href="#">Extending the Reach of Excellent Teaching</a></p>
October 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Superintendent memo workshop</li> </ul>	<b><i>Bring draft of Superintendent memo to class</i></b>
October 14 (Thursday)	<b><i>Superintendent memo due Thursday, October 14 at 11:59pm</i></b>	



## Appendix 1: Specifications for blog posts

In preparation for the next class session, students must post thoughts on the class session's reading assignment to Canvas by 6pm on the evening before the class meets. These posts offer each student an opportunity to develop their own individual ideas and provide a forum for students to see how others interpret and react to the readings.

In no more than 250 words, make sure that each post:

- Responds directly to specific content from the week's readings;
- Articulates a single main idea and gets to it quickly; and
- Supports the main idea with several supporting points and details.

Do not simply pick a point from one of the readings and restate it in your own words. Instead, try to draw connections from multiple readings or for different places in the text to offer insight, interpretation, or application of the idea to new contexts. Another approach would be to focus your blog post on a perspective that was not represented in the assigned readings and illustrate how it differs from the reading content.

The readings for some weeks may cover multiple topics. If that is the case, you are not expected to write a blog post that touches on each of them. Rather identify which resonates with you and build your response around it.

While 250 words is brief, keep in mind that we will use class time to explore the thoughts you introduce in your posts. Therefore, it is not expected that you fully flesh out your arguments, but rather succinctly introduce your idea as a launching point for further discussion in class.

Each blog post will be worth 5 points, and will be scored according to the following rubric:

Expectation	1 point	0 points
Completion	Blog post submitted on time	No blog post submitted, or submitted past deadline
Comprehension	Blog post suggests accurate understanding of assigned readings	Blog post suggests limited or no understanding of assigned readings
Clarity	Blog post is clearly written and presents an easily identifiable, succinct main idea	Blog content is difficult to understand and/or the main point is ambiguous
Connections	Comprehension is further evidenced by making connections to other readings or personal experience	Blog post does not connect to other readings or experiences
Composition	Care has been taken to proofread blog post and it does not contain any grammatical errors or typos.	Blog post includes grammatical errors such as run-on sentences, missing or misspelled words, etc.

To post in Canvas:

- Navigate to the Discussion section of the course's Canvas site
- Each class session for which there is a blog post assigned will have its own corresponding Discussion board in Canvas. Select the appropriate Discussion board.
- Click on "Reply" and type your blog post in the reply field.
- Once finished, click the "Post Reply" button.
- You will not be able to see other students' posts until you submit your own.
- For more instruction on using the Discussion section of Canvas, click [here](#).

## Appendix 2: Rubric for writing assignments

Up to 50 points are earned for each of three written assignments based on quality of presentation, meeting the basic requirements of the assignment, and demonstrating mastery of content.

	Criteria	10 points	5 points	0 points
Quality presentation	<b>Effective Writing</b>	All sentences are complete and grammatically correct, with no run-on sentences. All words are chosen for their precise meanings. All new or unusual terms are well-defined. Document has been proofread and has no errors.	Some sentences are incomplete or grammatically incorrect, with some run-on sentences. Most words are chosen for their precise meaning. Some new or unusual terms are not well-defined. Document contains some spelling mistakes or other basic proofreading errors.	Many sentences are incomplete or grammatically incorrect, with many run-on sentences. Words are not chosen for their precise meaning. New and usual terms are not well-defined. Document contains frequent spelling mistakes and other proofreading errors.
	<b>Effective Visual</b>	Formatting is clean, professional, and consistent throughout, and effectively contributes to conveying the message of the piece. The visuals (e.g. charts, graphics, pictures) are of high quality, are used well and often, and fit appropriate with the text of the document. Basic formatting conventions such as page numbers, headings, and subheadings facilitate use of the document.	Formatting is mostly clean, professional, and consistent but could do more to convey the message. Visuals are sporadically used or do not fit appropriately with the text of the document or are of inconsistent quality. Basic formatting conventions such as page numbers, headings, and subheadings are not used in a consistently effective way.	Formatting is not clean, professional, or consistent. Visuals are rarely used, or do not fit appropriately with the text, or are of poor quality. Basic formatting conventions such as page numbers, heading, and subheadings are not used or are not effective.

	Criteria	10 points	5 points	0 points
Basic requirements	<b>Complete and Comprehensive</b>	All required content described in the prompt is included in the document. Demonstrates deep thought and exploration of subject area, and integration of content from a variety of sources to form a new perspective. Articulates a perspective supported by strong information and knowledge of the field.	Most of the required content is included in the document. Demonstrates inconsistently deep thought and exploration of subject area and integration of content from a variety of sources. Does not clearly articulate a perspective supported by strong information and knowledge of the field.	Many of the required content components are missing. Demonstrates limited thought and exploration of subject area, and integration of content from a variety of sources. Does not articulate a perspective supported by strong information and rationale.
	<b>Coherent and Accurate</b>	The content is easy to understand and clearly articulated. The pieces of the document fit together and do not contradict each other. Key concepts and theories are accurately and completely explained. The information, including numbers, citations, contextual facts, and references are accurate and precise. The conclusions drawn from research are appropriately cited or referenced. Tradeoffs, limitations, and counterarguments are appropriately acknowledged.	Most of the content is easy to understand and clearly articulated. The pieces mostly fit together but in some cases are disjointed or sections appear to contradict each other. Key concepts and theories are not always accurately and completely explained. The information, including numbers, citations, contextual facts, and references are sometimes inaccurate or imprecise. Conclusions drawn from research are sometimes inappropriate or irrational. Tradeoffs, limitations, and counter arguments are not appropriately acknowledged.	Much of the content is difficult to understand and not clearly articulated. The pieces of the document do not fit well together. Content is contradictory or inconsistent. Key concepts and theories are often inaccurately or incompletely explained. The information, including numbers, citations, contextual facts, and references are often inaccurate or imprecise. Conclusions drawn from research are often inappropriate or irrational. Tradeoffs, limitations, and counter arguments are not acknowledged.

	Criteria	10 points	5 points	0 points
	<b>Instills Confidence and Engagement</b>	Overall, the content makes a strong case and is appropriate for a professional setting. Upon reading, audience is convinced that the author is knowledgeable, and that explanation/argument/plan can be trusted and is worth investing in. Connects with reader in a way that inspires and/or engages them.	Overall, makes a moderately strong case and largely, but not completely, appropriate for a professional setting. At times connects with reader in a way that inspires and/or engages them. Upon reading, audience is not fully convinced that the author is knowledgeable, and is unsure that explanation/argument/plan can be trusted and is worth investing in.	Makes a weak case and is not appropriate for a professional setting. Does not connect with reader in a way that inspires and/or engages them. Upon reading, audience is convinced that the author is the author is not knowledgeable, and that explanation/argument/plan cannot be trusted and is not worth investing in.