



EDCI 620, Policy & Practice in Education

COURSE SYLLABUS: Fall 2026

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Instructor: Dr. Karyn Miller, Ph.D

Office Hours: I will be available by appointment.

University Email Address: Karyn.Miller@etamu.edu

Preferred Form of Communication: Email

Communication Response Time: 48 hours maximum (Monday-Friday)

COURSE INFORMATION

Materials – Textbooks, Readings, Supplementary Readings

Textbook(s) Required

There are no required textbooks. All readings for each class session will be assigned in the course LMS. All readings are available through the EETAMU library or OER.

Software Required

n/a

Optional Texts and/or Materials

n/a

Catalog Course Description

This course includes multiple conceptions of the relationship between policy and practice in K-12 education. Includes a study of major developments and shifts in educational policy in the United States over time. Focuses on the relationship between policy and practice in K-12 education and the extent to which policy can both create and resolve curricular and instructional problems in schools. Prerequisites: Doctoral level standing or consent of the instructor.

The syllabus/schedule are subject to change.

Specific Focus of this Course

Within the general course description, this course is designed to help educators understand how education policy moves from ideas and decisions into curriculum, instruction, and professional practice. The course develops a practical framework for policy analysis organized around six questions: *How did we get here? What is the problem? What is the policy trying to accomplish? Who has power to shape it? How is it supposed to work? What actually happens in practice?* Students use contemporary education policy cases to practice each form of analysis and apply the same framework to one policy they investigate throughout the semester. The course culminates in a Policy Analysis Forum in which students present and defend their conclusions about the relationship between policy and educational practice.

Student Learning Outcomes:

Students will be able to:

1. **Analyze** how education policies emerge, develop, and change.
2. **Evaluate** the goals, values, and power relationships that shape education policy.
3. **Analyze** how policy is designed to influence curriculum, instruction, and teaching.
4. **Examine** how educators interpret and enact policy in practice.
5. **Communicate** evidence-based policy analysis for professional audiences.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Minimal Technical Skills Needed

Access to a Computer with:

- Internet Access
- Microsoft Word Processing Software
- Microsoft Power Point Software
- Adobe or Foxit Reader to open PDF File

Instructional Methods

Instructional methods include lectures, small group discussions, student presentations, and writing assignments.

Student Responsibilities or Tips for Success in the Course

Students are responsible for engaging in their own learning. This includes being aware of and meeting deadlines, checking class emails, asking questions to clarify understanding, and actively participating in course activities.

GRADING

Final grades in this course will be based on the following scale:

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A = 90%-100%
B = 80%-89%
C = 70%-79%
D = 60%-69%
F = 59% or Below

Weights of the assessments/activities in the calculation of the final letter grade.

Individual policy applications	25%
Group policy analysis products	25%
Final group policy analysis	20%
Policy analysis forum	10%
Seminar participation & case analysis	20%
Total	100%

Assessments

This class has one major project that spans the semester: the Policy Analysis Portfolio. This project will require individual and pair work and culminates in a final policy analysis and forum. In addition, students are expected to come to class prepared to engage in peer and group work.

Policy Analysis Portfolio

Working with a partner, students will analyze one education policy throughout the semester using the course framework. The project develops in stages focused on **Context, Problem, Purpose, Power, Design, and Practice**. For each stage, students will first complete an individual analysis and then work with their partner during class to develop a synthesized group product. These products build progressively toward the Final Group Policy Analysis.

Individual Policy Applications

Students will complete short individual applications of the course framework to their selected policy. These assignments provide preparation for the collaborative work completed with their policy analysis partner during the following class meeting.

Group Policy Analysis Products

Following each individual application, partners will compare their findings and develop a shared analysis of their policy. Group products will be developed primarily during class and submitted shortly afterward. Together, these products form the foundation of the Final Group Policy Analysis.

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Final Group Policy Analysis

Partners will revise and synthesize their semester-long work into a coherent, evidence-based policy analysis. **The final analysis builds directly from work completed throughout the semester and is not a separate major research project.** It is due before the final class meeting.

Policy Analysis Forum

During the final class meeting, each pair will present and defend the major findings and conclusions from its completed policy analysis. The forum will also provide an opportunity to compare what the four policy cases reveal about the relationship between education policy and practice.

Seminar Participation & Case Analysis

Active participation is expected in reading discussions, collaborative policy work, and in-class analysis of contemporary education policy cases. Students should come to class having completed the assigned readings and case materials and prepared to contribute to discussion and analysis.

Approach to Grading

This semester, I will use “minimal grading” to assess your work. This will take the form of a 3-point grading scale that uses strong/satisfactory/weak. All students begin the course with an “A”. Strong work maintains that final grade. Satisfactory work is more indicative of a “B”. Weak work is more reflective of a “C”. Students may revise any Satisfactory/Weak submission once during the semester (within 7 days, assuming the submission was submitted by the due date) to raise it by one level. Late work without prior approval will receive a “weak” score. At the end of the semester, students will submit a self-reflection with their final grade self-assessment.

COURSE OUTLINE/CALENDAR

Session	Focus	Assigned Readings & Case Materials
1	Policy & Practice	No advance reading.

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2	History & Institutions	Hoefer (2022), “The Multiple Streams Framework” Tyack & Cuban (1995), Tinkering Toward Utopia, selected chapter Gamson, McDermott, & Reed (2015), “The Elementary and Secondary Education Act at Fifty” Cohen & Mehta (2017), “Why Reform Sometimes Succeeds,” selected portions. Case: ESEA → NCLB → ESSA is embedded in the readings; no separate packet.
3	Problem Definition	Stone, Policy Paradox, “Numbers” and “Causes” Guthery & Dixon, “Local Licensure and Teacher Shortage: Policy Analysis and Implications” Aydarova (2023), “‘Whatever You Want to Call It’: Science of Reading Mythologies in the Education Reform Movement” CASE PACKET: Chronic Absenteeism
4	Equity & Policy Goals	Stone, Policy Paradox, “Equity” Labaree (1997), “Public Goods, Private Goods” Sinclair & Brooks, “School Funding and Equity in Australia: Critical Moments...”; CASE PACKET: Texas Education Freedom Accounts (TEFA)
5	Power, Authority & Voice	Collins & Reckhow (2024), “The New Education Politics in the United States”; Bridges et al., “Not ‘Citizens in Waiting’: Student CounterNarratives of Anti-Equity Campaigns”; CASE PACKET: Bluebonnet Learning/HB 1605
6	Policy & Instructional Change	Cobb, Donaldson & Mayer (2013), “Creating High Leverage Policies: A New Framework to Support Policy Development” Whyte (2025), “Understanding a District’s Vision for Play” CASE PACKET: Texas Science of Reading Policy

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7	Policy in Practice	Ball, Maguire & Braun (2012), How Schools Do Policy, selected chapters Brooks & Brooks, “Hot Leadership, Cool Leadership: How Education Policies are Implemented (and Ignored) in Schools” Welsh, Graham & Williams (2019), “Acing the Test” CASE PACKET: TBD
8	Policy Analysis Forum	No new readings.

AI Policy

ETAMU AI use policy as of May 25, 2023:

East Texas A&M University acknowledges that there are legitimate uses of Artificial Intelligence, ChatBots, or other software that has the capacity to generate text, or suggest replacements for text beyond individual words, as determined by the instructor of the course. Any use of such software must be documented. Any undocumented use of such software constitutes an instance of academic dishonesty (plagiarism). Individual instructors may disallow entirely the use of such software for individual assignments or for the entire course. Students should be aware of such requirements and follow their instructors’ guidelines. If no instructions are provided the student should assume that the use of such software is disallowed. In any case, students are fully responsible for the content of any assignment they submit, regardless of whether they used an AI, in any way. This specifically includes cases in which the AI plagiarized another text or misrepresented sources.

13.99.99.R0.03 Undergraduate Academic Dishonesty

13.99.99.R0.10 Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty

AI Use in this Course

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has become increasingly pervasive in education in the last couple of years. It provides numerous benefits and can serve almost as a critical friend who can challenge your thinking and help foster creativity and new ideas. However, it is all too easy to rely on AI to generate content and “complete” assignments quickly and easily. Consistent with East Texas A&M University’s policy on AI use, using AI to generate content for course assignments without instructor permission is considered academic dishonesty. The following graphic provides potential levels of AI use in education with requirements for AI disclosure. In this course, it is

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expected that all online discussions are completed with no AI use. In the D2L course shell, it will be explicitly noted what assignments, if any, allow for AI use and at what level. If a student in this course is suspected of using generative AI in a manner that violates the course policy for AI use, this will be considered cheating and a [Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty Form](#) will be submitted to the Graduate School for review. Students using AI to generate assignments may receive a failing grade on an assignment and/or in the course.

Can I Use AI on this Assignment?

Generative AI Acceptable Use Scale

Generative AI refers to any of the thousands of Artificial Intelligence tools in which the model generates new content (text, images, audio, video, code, etc)
This includes, but is not limited to, Large Language Models/ LLMs such as ChatGPT, Google Bard, etc, Image creators such as Dall-E3, Adobe Firefly, and any tools with built in generative AI capabilities such as Microsoft CoPilot, Google Duet, Canva, etc etc)

	Level of AI Use	Full Description	Disclosure Requirements
0	NO AI Use	This assessment is completed entirely without AI assistance. AI Must not be used at any point during the assessment. This level ensured that student rely solely on their own knowledge, understanding, and skills.	No AI disclosure required May require an academic honesty pledge that AI was not used.
1	AI-Assisted Idea Generation and Structuring	No AI content is allowed in the final submission. AI can be used in the assessment for brainstorming, creating structures, and generating ideas for improving work.	AI disclosure statement must be included disclosing how AI was used. Link(s) to AI chat(s) must be submitted with final submission.
2	AI-Assisted Editing	No new content can be created using AI. AI can be used to make improvements to the clarity or quality of student created work to improve the final output.	AI disclosure statement must be included disclosing how AI was used. Link(s) to AI chat(s) must be submitted with final submission.
3	AI for Specified Task Completion	AI is used to complete certain elements of the task, as specified by the teacher. This level requires critical engagement with AI generated content and evaluating its output. You are responsible for providing human oversight and evaluation of all AI generated content.	All AI created content must be cited using proper MLA citation. Link(s) to AI chat(s) must be submitted with final submission.
4	Full AI Use with Human Oversight	You may use AI throughout your assessment to support your own work in any way you deem necessary. AI should be a 'co-pilot' to enhance human creativity. You are responsible for providing human oversight and evaluation of all AI generated content.	You must cite the use of AI using proper MLA or APA citation. Link(s) to AI chat(s) must be submitted with final submission.

Adapted by Vera Cubero for the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NC DPI)
from the work of Dr. Leon Furze, Dr. Mike Perkins, Dr. Jasper Roe FHEA, & Dr. Jason Mcvaugh
Link to Original Work



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TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

LMS

All course sections offered by East Texas A&M University have a corresponding course shell in the myLeo Online Learning Management System (LMS). Below are technical requirements

LMS Requirements:

<https://community.brightspace.com/s/article/Brightspace-Platform-Requirements>

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LMS Browser Support:

https://documentation.brightspace.com/EN/brightspace/requirements/all/browser_support.htm

Zoom Video Conferencing Tool

https://inside.etamu.edu/campuslife/CampusServices/CITESupportCenter/Zoom_Account.aspx?source=universalmenu

ACCESS AND NAVIGATION

You will need your campus-wide ID (CWID) and password to log into the course. If you do not know your CWID or have forgotten your password, contact the Center for IT Excellence (CITE) at 903.468.6000 or helpdesk@etamu.edu.

Note: Personal computer and internet connection problems do not excuse the requirement to complete all course work in a timely and satisfactory manner. Each student needs to have a backup method to deal with these inevitable problems. These methods might include the availability of a backup PC at home or work, the temporary use of a computer at a friend's home, the local library, office service companies, Starbucks, a ETAMU campus open computer lab, etc.

COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

If you have any questions or are having difficulties with the course material, please contact your Instructor.

Technical Support

If you are having technical difficulty with any part of Brightspace, please contact Brightspace Technical Support at 1-877-325-7778. Other support options can be found here:

<https://community.brightspace.com/support/s/contactsupport>

Interaction with Instructor Statement

COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES

Course Specific Procedures/Policies

Syllabus Change Policy

The syllabus is a guide. Circumstances and events, such as student progress, may make it necessary for the instructor to modify the syllabus during the semester. Any changes made to the syllabus will be announced in advance.

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University Specific Procedures

Student Conduct

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. The Code of Student Conduct is described in detail in the [Student Guidebook](#).

<http://www.etamu.edu/Admissions/oneStopShop/undergraduateAdmissions/studentGuidebook.aspx>

Students should also consult the Rules of Netiquette for more information regarding how to interact with students in an online forum: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/netiquette>

ETAMU Attendance

For more information about the attendance policy please visit the [Attendance Procedure 13.99.99.R0.01](#).

<http://www.etamu.edu/admissions/registrar/generalInformation/attendance.aspx>

<http://www.etamu.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/academic/13.99.99.R0.01.pdf>

Academic Integrity

Students at East Texas A&M University are expected to maintain high standards of integrity and honesty in all of their scholastic work. For more details and the definition of academic dishonesty see the following procedures:

[Undergraduate Academic Dishonesty 13.99.99.R0.03](#)

[Undergraduate Student Academic Dishonesty Form](#)

<http://www.etamu.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/documents/13.99.99.R0.03UndergraduateStudentAcademicDishonestyForm.pdf>

[Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty Form](#)

<http://www.etamu.edu/academics/graduateschool/faculty/GraduateStudentAcademicDishonestyFormold.pdf>

<http://www.etamu.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/undergraduates/13.99.99.R0.03UndergraduateAcademicDishonesty.pdf>

Students with Disabilities-- ADA Statement

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a

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learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

Office of Student Disability Resources and Services

East Texas A&M University

Velma K. Waters Library Rm 162

Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835

Fax (903) 468-8148

Email: studentdisabilityservices@etamu.edu

Website: [Office of Student Disability Resources and Services](http://www.etamu.edu/campusLife/campusServices/studentDisabilityResourcesAndServices/)

<http://www.etamu.edu/campusLife/campusServices/studentDisabilityResourcesAndServices/>

Nondiscrimination Notice

East Texas A&M University will comply in the classroom, and in online courses, with all federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination and related retaliation on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age, genetic information or veteran status. Further, an environment free from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression will be maintained.

Campus Concealed Carry Statement

Texas Senate Bill - 11 (Government Code 411.2031, et al.) authorizes the carrying of a concealed handgun in East Texas A&M University buildings only by persons who have been issued and are in possession of a Texas License to Carry a Handgun. Qualified law enforcement officers or those who are otherwise authorized to carry a concealed handgun in the State of Texas are also permitted to do so. Pursuant to Penal Code (PC) 46.035 and A&M Rule 34.06.02.R1, license holders may not carry a concealed handgun in restricted locations.

For a list of locations, please refer to the [Carrying Concealed Handguns On Campus](#) document and/or consult your event organizer.

Web url:

<http://www.etamu.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/34SafetyOfEmployeesAndStudents/34.06.02.R1.pdf>

Pursuant to PC 46.035, the open carrying of handguns is prohibited on all A&M-Commerce campuses. Report violations to the University Police Department at 903-886-5868 or 9-1-1.

East Texas A&M Supports Students' Mental Health

The Counseling Center at East Texas A&M, located in the Halladay Building, Room 203, offers counseling services, educational programming, and connection to community resources for students. Students have 24/7 access to the Counseling Center's crisis assessment services by

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calling 903-886-5145. For more information regarding Counseling Center events and confidential services, please visit www.etamu.edu/counseling-center



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COURSE CALENDAR

Session	Assignments/Activities
1	● Online discussion/activities ● Analytic framework-entry 1 (F)
2	● Online discussion/activities (G) ● Analytic framework-entry 2 (F)
3	● Online discussion/activities (G) ● Analytic framework-entry 3 (F) ● Group project: Form group and choose policy issue (G)
4	● Online discussion/activities (G) ● Analytic framework-midpoint check-in (entries 1-4) (G) ● Group project: Research policy issue, identify 6-7 key policies/reforms/court cases/turning points related to issue (G)
5	● Online discussion/activities (G) ● Analytic framework-entry 5 (F) ● Group project: complete the policy issue chart (F)
6	● Online discussion/activities (G) ● Analytic framework-entry 6 (F) ● Group project: complete policy issue timeline and begin brief (G)
7	● Online discussion/activities (G) ● Analytic framework-entry 7 (F) ● Group project: policy brief rough draft (F)
8	● Online discussion/activities (G) ● Analytic framework-complete framework (entries 1-8) (G) ● Group project: policy brief final draft, presentation (G)

*G denotes where the minimal grading scale will be used. F denotes where feedback will be provided to guide revisions for a graded assignment.

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