The College of Charleston

Poli 308.01- Education Policy

(Prerequisites – No)

Fall 2021

Tuesday- Thursday – 8 A.M. – 9:15 A.M.

(On-Line via Zoom)

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Instructional Objectives and Student Learning Outcomes

Education Policy is a reflection of the goals, infrastructure and underlying principles that direct the content and quality of public education in specific historic and policy periods. Under the 10th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, states have principal responsibility for determining the importance of education among their many competing priorities. As a result, the mission of education has evolved and changed as historic events, societal expectations and cultural norms have shifted.

The result is a continuous debate over what should be the dominant values and goals that shape the policy agenda for public education. For example, over the past century all of the following have been goals of public education:

- To prepare children for citizenship
- To cultivate a skilled workforce
- To teach cultural literacy
- To prepare students for college
- To help students become critical thinkers
- To help students compete in the global, competitive marketplace.

Major educational policy issues continue to involve the following questions regarding public education:

- Who should be educated- and by whom should they be taught?
- What should be taught – and who decides the curriculum?
- Where and when should students be educated?
- Who is responsible for the delivery of education?
- How much should a public education cost- who benefits- and who pays?
- What are the standards for measuring success?
- How should we define the term “educational failure”? What corrective measures should be available?
The major stakeholders (interested parties) involved in these issues and decisions (in varying degrees) include the following:

- Students
- Parents
- Teachers
- School Districts/School Board members (Elected and/or appointed)
- School Administrators – Superintendents, Principals, etc.
- Governors
- State Legislatures
- Elected and appointed state education officials: State Boards of Education, State Superintendents, State Textbook Commissions, etc.
- City government: Mayors and local Boards of Education
- Businesses that rely on an educated work force
- Teachers’ Unions
- The general public

Given all of these voices—Is there a consensus about any of the above questions?

This course is designed to introduce students to the major issues and challenges, as well as the significant actors, that shape and influence the development of public education policy in the United States. The course will examine the major judicial rulings, legislative enactments and executive actions—from 1954 to the present— that serve as principal for the organization and administration of American public schools. Attention will be paid to the impact of federal, state and local policies on the governance, implementation and outcomes of public education.

At the end of the semester students should be able to (a) analyze, interpret and explain the political and policy influences that shape the current American public education system; (b) identify the implications for future outcomes regarding public support, student achievement and the role of public education as an instrument of democracy; and (c) understand the critical role of citizen engagement in determining the future of American public education.

**Attendance Policy**—This is an on-line class presented via zoom. Attendance will be tracked and recorded through the appropriate web-based technology. Students who miss class due to personal illness, COVID-19 related illness, a requirement that they isolate or quarantine, the need to care for a family member who is ill due to COVID-19, other significant medical or family emergencies, are responsible for contacting the instructor directly. Students who fail to meet the stated deadlines for any written mandatory assignments without a confirmed, acceptable reason may incur a severe grade deduction. Students who fail to turn in any mandatory assignment by the Midterm without an acceptable excuse will receive an “F” for the midterm and not be allowed to continue in the class. The due dates for recipient of assignments are listed in this syllabus in the appropriate sections.
Grading Policy –

Grades will be based on a four-part research paper that examines a current educational issue and a Final Examination as follows:

1. Research Paper, Part One 20%
2. Research Paper, Part Two 20%
3. Research Paper, Part Three 20%
4. Research Paper, Part Four 20%
5. Final Examination 20%

Grade values will be assigned as follows:

A=93-100  A-=90-92
B+=88-89  B=83-87  B-=80-82
C+=78-79  C= 73-77  C=70-72
D-=68-69  D=63-67  D-=60-62
F=59 and below

Required and Optional Readings

There is not a required textbook for this class. You are required to read the following documents and reports during the semester:

2. The Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), as amended by subsequent reauthorizations.
4. The Charleston County 1968 Act of Consolidation, South Carolina State Legislature
7. Charleston County Shared Future Project- Final Report- 1/28/2019
8. The American Society of Civil Engineers – Infrastructure Report on America’s Schools. Infrastructurereportcard.org./cat-item-schools/
9. Other readings may be assigned during the semester.

Accommodations for students with disabilities
The College abides by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1974 and the Americans with Disabilities Act. If you have a documented disability that may have some impact on your work in this class and for which you may require special accommodations, please see an administrator at the Center for Disability Services (SNAP), (843)953-1431 or contact me so that such accommodations may be made.

**Honor Code and Academic Integrity**

Lying, cheating, attempting cheating and plagiarism are violations of the Honor Code that, when suspected, are investigated. Each incident will be examined to determine the degree of deception involved.

Incidents where the instructor determines that the student’s actions are related more to misunderstanding and confusion will be handled by the instructor who may design and intervention or assign a grade reduction to prevent the student from repeating the error. The response is recorded on a form and signed by both the instructor and the student. It is forwarded to the Office of the Dean of Students and placed in the student’s file.

Cases of academic dishonesty will be reported directly by the instructor and/or others having knowledge of the incident to the Dean of Students. A student found responsible by the Honor Board for academic dishonesty will receive an XXF in the course, indicating failure of the course due to academic dishonesty. This status will appear on the student’s transcript for two years after which the student may petition for the XX to be expunged. The F is permanent.

Students can find the complete Honor Code and all related processes in the Student Handbook at: http://student affairs.cofc.edu/honor-system/student handbook/in depth.

**Program Specific Elements** – This course consists of On-line lectures and discussion, a four part required Policy Research paper and a final Take-Home Examination.

**Required assignments to assess student learning outcomes**

**Mandatory Policy Research Assignment: Is There a Relationship Between Critical Race Theory (CRT) and Public Education Policymaking?**

This semester you are required to research and write a four-part policy paper that will explore the implications of the current debates around critical race theory as a factor in education policy planning. This issue gained major public attention and debate in September 2020 with the issuance of an Executive Order signed by then President Donald Trump. The topic has received widespread discussion and debate in the last year in both the legal and education arenas. At least 30 State Legislatures have introduced legislation to ban its teaching in the classroom and many school boards and textbook commissions have placed it on the agenda. Legal scholars and some education policymakers assert that critical race theory is a defining influence in the development and execution of policies that contribute to persistent racial inequalities in public education.
Your four-part policy paper will explore and draw conclusions on two basic questions- (1) What is the definition of “Critical Race Theory”? (2) Is critical race theory a major factor that policymakers should consider in understanding the historical and persistent patterns of inequality in American public schools?

Your paper will be divided into the following four parts:

**Part One – Problem Definition.** (1) Define the term Critical Race Theory as used by (a) proponents of the theory and (b) opponents of the theory. (2) Provide the historical evolution of the term; (3) identify the principal legal scholars who coined the term and provided the definition (4) Provide the principal reasons they provide for why this theory is critical to educational policymaking.

**Part Two – Issue and Data Analysis.** (1) Identify and explain the principal elements and assumptions of critical race theory set forth by its proponents. (2) Provide at least three examples of the persistent inequalities in education that these scholars attribute to critical race theory and (3) the data they offer to support this conclusion. (4) Provide three arguments made by the opponents to support their assumptions that critical race theory is not a critical factor in explaining the persistent inequalities in education and (5) provide the data they offer to support their conclusion.

**Part Three – Current Policy Impact.** Utilizing the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) website and its recommended resources answer the following (1) Name the states that have passed anti-CRT legislation and summarize the content of each bill; (2) Identify actions taken by State Boards of Education to address CRT; (3) Identify and explain actions taken by Local School Boards with regard to CRT; (4) Identify actions, if any, taken by the Charleston County School District regarding CRT.

**Part Four- Summary and Recommendations.** Summarize your principal conclusions regarding the validity of this issue as a legitimate education policy concern. State the most persuasive findings and/or arguments made by (a) proponents and (b) opponent of the theory. State your recommendations for whether policymakers should support or oppose CRT in K-12 schools. Give specific reasons for your conclusions and recommend next steps in the process.

The maximum length for each paper is ten (10) double-spaced pages, excluding charts, graphs and appendices.

The MLA citation format should be used for works cited.

**OAKS**

OAKS will be used for this course throughout the semester to provide the syllabus, class materials and grades for each assignment which will be regularly posted,

**Recording of Classes via Zoom**

Class sessions will be recorded via both voice and video recording. By attending and remaining in this class, the student consents to being recorded. Recorded class sessions are for instructional use only and may not be shared with anyone who is not enrolled in the class.

**Inclement Weather, Pandemic or Substantial Interruption of Instruction**
If in-person classes are suspended, faculty will announce to their students a detailed plan for change in modality to ensure the continuity of learning. All students must have access to a computer equipped with a web camera, microphone and internet access, Resources are available to provide students with these essential tools.

**Center for Student Learning**

The Center for Student Learning (CSL) academic support services provide assistance in study strategies, speaking and writing skills and course content.

Services include tutoring, supplemental instruction, study skills appointments and workshops. Students of all abilities have become successful using these programs throughout their academic careers and the services are available at no additional cost. For more information, please visit the CSL website: http://csl.cofc.edu. Or call (843) 953-5635.

**Semester Class Schedule**

**August 2021**
- Tu 24   Semester Overview – Class Introductions
- Th 26   Overview of Semester Assignments
- Tu 31   Public Policy defined

**September 2021**
- Th 2    Public Policy Defined
- Tu 7    Federalism and American Education Policy
- Th 9    Snapshot of the American Education system- Demographics
- Tu 14   Snapshot of the American Education system- staffing and teachers
- Th 16   American schools – Infrastructure report

**Paper One Due**
- Tu 21   Federal Education policy –Briggs v Elliott/ Brown v Board of Education
- Th 23   Federal Education Policy- Brown v Board of Education
- Tu 28   The Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA)
- Tu 30   ESEA – Major Amendments

**October 2021**
- Tu 5    ESEA – Major Amendments
- Th 7    A Nation at Risk- The Imperative for Education Reform
Tu 12   The Koret Task Force Report on A Nation at Risk

   Paper Two Due

Th 14   The Charlottesville Summit on American Education

Tu 19   Fall Break – No Classes

Wed 20  Midterm Grades Posted

Th 21   Public Education: State Legislative Powers and Authority

Tu 26   State Legislative Powers and Authority

Th 28   Public Education: State Administrative Powers and Authority

November 2021

Tu 2    State Administrative Powers and Authority

Th 4    Public Education: Local Governments Powers and Authority

Tu 9    Local Governments – Powers and Authority

   Paper Three Due

Th 11   Special Issues in Public Education: Immigrant Children

Th 16   Special Issues in Public Education: Homeless Youth

Th 18   Transgender Youths

Tu 23   Emerging Issues in Public Education

Th 25   Thanksgiving Holiday – No Class

Th 30   Semester Recap

   Paper Four Due

December 2021

Th 2    Final Examination Issued via Drop Box (Take-Home Exam)

Mon 6   Last Day of Spring Semester Class

Th 7    Reading Day

Tu 9    Final Examination due in Drop-Box by 5 P.M.

Wed 15  Final Grades posted at Noon