

Course: **EDUC 570: Professional Development Seminar – Program Evaluation and Improvement Research**
EDUC 737: Contemporary Issues in Educational Evaluation and Improvement

Semester: Winter, 2020
Credits: 1.5
Days/Times: 01/08/2020, 9:00 a.m.; Arranged thereafter
Location: 2334 School of Education Building
Professor: Donald J. Peurach, Associate Professor
E-mail: dpeurach@umich.edu
Phone: 734-353-9840
Materials: Available on M+Box (“EDUC_570_2020_Winter_Materials”)
Office Hours: By appointment.

Course Context

Graduate students in the School of Education (as well as those in other schools and colleges at the University of Michigan) often feel a strong calling to make a big difference in US public education. Their aims are to improve educational opportunities and outcomes not just for students in a single classroom, school, or district but, instead, for *lots* of students across many classrooms, schools, and districts, especially those serving students of poverty and color.

Those who choose to pursue this calling find themselves needing to understand large-scale education reform as playing out in complex interactions among educational policy, research, and practice. These interactions can work in ways that support the improvement of educational opportunities and outcomes at scale. These interactions can also work in ways that complicate and undermine large-scale educational improvement.

Goals

With the preceding as context, the goals of this class are to support a diverse group of graduate students in collaborating to:

- Understand the landscape of educational policy, research, and practice.
- Consider ways in which they might position themselves professionally within this landscape.

Approach

Our approach to pursuing these goals will be to extend our work from Fall 2019 by a) continuing to interview leading professional in the program evaluation and improvement research space, b) framing students’ professional interests and aspirations in relation to what they are learning, c) prepare and workshop job application materials, and b) prepare to apply and interview for jobs.

Design and Schedule

The design is to meet roughly every other week for a fun, engaging, collegial conversation about our big ambitions for making a big difference in public education. Because we have so few students (5 total), because everybody is deeply engaged in internships, and because everybody will also be interviewing for jobs, we defer establishing firm meetings dates until the second

week of the semester. We will co-construct our agenda from session to session based on debriefs of ongoing internship activities, successes and challenges arranging interviews with practicing professionals, and available job opportunities.

Writing Project

Students are required to maintain a session-by-session journal in which they reflect on a) their ambitions for (and understandings of) large-scale education reform as sitting at the intersection of education policy, research, and practice and b) ways in which their ambitions and understandings shift, evolve, and expand throughout the course. The expectation is that entries will be on the order of a single page per session.

Expectations and Grading

Please note the follow expectations:

- The expectation is that students will engage reading, class discussion, and supplemental exercises at a level befitting of a graduate student at a leading research university. *Unless arrangements are made in advance, late work risks receiving reduced credit.*
- Excellent attendance is assumed. *More than one absence (planned or unplanned) risks receiving reductions in course grades.* The same holds for chronic lateness. For planned absences, contact me as soon as possible in advance of the class session (via e-mail or cell). For unplanned absences, if at all possible, contact me that day to let me know that you will not be in class (via e-mail or cell).

Grading for this course will be on a “Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory” basis.

- Satisfactory: Earnest preparation and engagement, excellent attendance, and a complete and thoughtful journal.
- Unsatisfactory: Weak preparation and/or engagement, poor attendance, and an incomplete and/or perfunctory journal.

University Policies

All university policies hold, *including (and especially) those pertaining to academic integrity.* See the following for the UM student handbook, which details students rights and responsibilities: http://www.rackham.umich.edu/policies/academic_policies/. Please contact me immediately regarding any necessary accommodations due to religious holidays, disabilities, or any other special needs. It is UM policy to provide, on a flexible and individualized basis, reasonable accommodations to students who have disabilities that may affect their ability to participate in course activities or to meet certain requirements. Students with special needs are welcome to speak with me but are also encouraged to contact the Office for Students with Disabilities: web -- <http://ssd.umich.edu/>; phone -- (734) 763-3000; email -- sswdooffice@umich.edu.