

Course: EDUC 570: Professional Development Seminar – Program Evaluation and Improvement Research
Semester: Winter, 2022
Credits: 1.0
Days/Times: 01/07/2022, 1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.; bi-weekly after that.
Location: 2328 SEB
Professor: Donald J. Peurach, Professor
E-mail: dpeurach@umich.edu
Phone: 734-353-9840
Materials: Available on Dropbox (“EDUC_570_2022_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 2021 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) preparing and workshopping job application materials, and b) preparing 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 everybody is deeply engaged in internships, and because everybody will also be interviewing for jobs, we will maintain flexibility in our class sessions to debrief and to discuss those experiences.

Writing Project

Students are encouraged (but not 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.

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.
- Unsatisfactory: Weak preparation and/or engagement; poor attendance.

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.

Schedule

Session 01 -- 01/07/2022: Getting Organized

With our quick return to classes following the holiday, we’ll begin with a “soft launch” to kick things off. Let’s plan on checking in about everybody's holiday experiences, making sure that your course schedules are in good shape, and getting organized for our work together in the winter semester.

Session 02 -- 01/21/2022: Searching

This class session will focus on searching for open positions by collaborating to identify high leverage job posting sites.

We will also review and debrief our final conversation from last fall with Bill Black and Yanaiza Gallant in the East Providence (Rhode Island) School District.

Session 03 -- 02/04/2022: Networking

This class session will focus on professional networking. Extending our approach from Fall 2021, students will identify three organizations in which they have professional interests and conduct an informational interview with a project leaders about their work.

Session 04 -- 02/18/2022: Applying – Cover Letter Workshop #1

This class session will focus on writing strong cover letters. Two students will volunteer to draft cover letters to an open position. We will then workshop those letters together in class to discern the structure and content of a strong cover letter.

Spring Break -- 03/04/2022

Session 05 -- 03/11/2022: Applying – Cover Letter Workshop #2

Continuing our focus on writing strong cover letters, all students will write a cover letter to an open position of interest to them. We will then workshop the cover letters in class to provide feedback.

Session 06 -- 03/25/2022: Interviewing

This class session will focus on approaches and tips for initial and follow-up interviews.

Session 07 -- 04/08/2022: Open

We will design this class session in response to students' interests and needs as we near the end of the semester.

Session 08 -- 04/22/2022: Reflecting

Students will submit a brief reflection on their experiences in EDUC 570 over the winter semester.