

Note:

Course content may be changed, term to term, without notice. The information below is provided as a guide for course selection and is not binding in any form, and should not be used to purchase course materials.

COURSE SYLLABUS

EDUC 643

CONTEMPORARY ISSUES IN EDUCATIONAL POLICY

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course examines current issues and trends in education. Emphasis will be placed on how policy at the federal, state, and district levels affect the school-level decision-making process.

RATIONALE

This course will be directed toward non-licensure graduate students seeking a Masters or Specialist degree in Education. This course will help the candidate analyze and understand policy that affects the K–12 school setting. Understanding the process, implementation, and evaluation of district, state, and federal policy will help current and future educators and educational leaders influence school-level decision making.

I. PREREQUISITE

For information regarding prerequisites for this course, please refer to the [Academic Course Catalog](#).

II. REQUIRED RESOURCE PURCHASE

Click on the following link to view the required resource(s) for the term in which you are registered: <http://bookstore.mbsdirect.net/liberty.htm>

III. ADDITIONAL MATERIALS FOR LEARNING

- A. Computer with basic audio/video output equipment
- B. Internet access (broadband recommended)
- C. Blackboard [recommended browsers](#)
- D. Microsoft Office

IV. MEASURABLE LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon successful completion of this course, the candidate will be able to:

- A. Review and summarize the effects of federal mandates on local school decisions regarding curriculum, school funding, student services, testing, and school programs.
- B. Evaluate specific state and district guidelines, policy, and procedures for purpose and effectiveness.
- C. Recognize and gain an understanding of the presence of societal and cultural influence on school policy.

- D. Critique and discuss school funding issues related to equity, corporate influence, and school choice.
- E. Analyze and develop ideas to lead technology initiatives in an environment of limited resources.
- F. Develop personal perspectives on the leadership responsibilities of various groups including government leaders, district and building level leaders, and community and family members.

V. COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND ASSIGNMENTS

- A. Textbook readings and lecture presentations

- B. Course Requirements Checklist

After reading the Course Syllabus and [Student Expectations](#) the candidate will complete the related checklist found in Module/Week 1.

- C. Discussion Board Forums (5)

Discussion boards are collaborative learning experiences. Therefore, the candidate is required to create a 300–400-word thread in response to the provided prompt for each forum. Additionally, the candidate will post a 100–150-word reply to at least 2 other classmates' threads. Each thread must have at least 1 citation in current APA format. Acceptable sources include the textbook, the Bible, and scholarly journals/articles. (MLO: A, B, C, D)

- D. News Article Reviews (2)

The candidate will submit 2 essays discussing current news articles related to policy issues in education. News articles used for this assignment must come from a newspaper, a news program, or another reputable news source, and the article must be written within the past 5 years. Reputable sources include such resources as an education journal or major news networks, but do not include sites such as Wikipedia. Each essay must be formatted in current APA style and must be at least 300–400 words. A title page and reference page for each article must be provided. (MLO: A, B)

- E. Policy vs. Worldview Paper

The candidate will submit a 3–5-page paper that critically discusses a contemporary educational policy issue in which the case for or against the policy is, or potentially could be, in conflict with biblical principles. The paper must incorporate at least 3 sources and must be formatted in current APA style with a title page included. The candidate must also provide a personal response to the issue and a discussion of the implications for K–12 educators and students. Each source must be written within the past 5 years. (MLO: C, F)

F. Federal Policy Review

The candidate will visit the [United States Department of Education website](#) and view the most recent speech or video presentation from the current U.S. President or U.S. Secretary of Education. After reviewing the video, the candidate will write a 600–800-word critique of the message, including a summary of the speech and the potential implications for schools. The review must be formatted in current APA style and include a title and reference page. (MLO: A, C, F)

G. Book Critique

The candidate will read and analyze the book *The Case Against Standardized Testing: Raising Scores, Ruining the Schools* by Alfie Kohn. The candidate must summarize the premise of the book, take a stance for or against the key points made, and discuss implications for K–12 educators. The candidate must use at least 1 outside source to support his/her view. The critique must be formatted in current APA style, have a title and reference page, and be 4–6 pages. (MLO: A, D, F)

H. School Board PowerPoint Presentation

The candidate will select and analyze 1 district or school-level policy issue. The candidate must use resources such as student handbooks, school and district websites, school board policy, or interviews with school/district personnel to describe the policy issue and its implications on the school setting. The candidate must then develop a PowerPoint presentation to present at a school board meeting. The candidate must address why the new policy or policy change is needed, what effect the policy has had or could have on the school(s), how other schools or districts are addressing this issue, and future potential effects of the policy being/not being implemented or changed. This presentation must contain 10–15 slides and 5 references in current APA format, with all references listed on the last slide. (MLO: A, B, C, E, F)

I. Policy Evaluation Benchmark

As the benchmark assignment for this course, the candidate is required to write an 8–10-page paper applying the course principles to evaluate educational policy at the federal, state, and local level. The purpose of the paper is to synthesize the various elements covered in the course and textbook readings in order to promote an understanding of the effects of educational policy on the K–12 classroom. The paper must demonstrate proper use of current APA format by including a title page, an abstract, and a reference page with at least 5 references no older than 5 years, and proper internal citations. The paper must be written from a biblical worldview with Scripture references included. The candidate will submit the assignment through SafeAssign and LiveText. (MLO: A, B, C, D, E)

J. Quizzes (2)

Each quiz will cover the Reading & Study material for the assigned modules/weeks. Each quiz will be open-book/open-notes, include 20–25 multiple-choice questions, and have a 2-hour time limit. (MLO: A, C)

VI. COURSE GRADING AND POLICIES

A. Points

Course Requirements Checklist	10
Discussion Board Forums (5 at 50 pts ea)	250
News Article Reviews (2 at 40 pts ea)	80
Policy vs. Worldview Paper	80
Federal Policy Review	80
Book Critique	120
School Board PowerPoint Presentation	100
Policy Evaluation Benchmark	200
Quizzes (1 at 40 pts, 1 at 50 pts)	90
Total	1010

B. Scale

A = 940–1010 A- = 920–939 B+ = 900–919 B = 860–899 B- = 840–859
 C+ = 820–839 C = 780–819 C- = 760–779 D+ = 740–759 D = 700–739
 D- = 680–699 F = 0–679

C. LiveText Submission Policy

All LiveText assignments must be submitted to Blackboard and LiveText in order for the candidate to receive credit. LiveText Submission Exception: Candidates pursuing the following programs: M.Ed. in Higher Education, Ed.S. in Higher Education Administration, the Ph.D. in Education, and the Ph.D. in Higher Education Administration, are not required to submit this assignment in LiveText, but must submit this assignment in Blackboard.

D. Disability Assistance

Candidates with a documented disability may contact Liberty University Online’s Office of Disability Accommodation Support (ODAS) at LUODAS@liberty.edu to make arrangements for academic accommodations. Further information can be found at www.liberty.edu/disabilitysupport.

If you have a complaint related to disability discrimination or an accommodation that was not provided, you may contact ODAS or the Office of Equity and Compliance by phone at (434) 592-4999 or by email at equityandcompliance@liberty.edu. Click to see a full copy of Liberty’s [Discrimination, Harassment, and Sexual Misconduct Policy](#) or the [Student Disability Grievance Policy and Procedures](#).

COURSE SCHEDULE

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Textbooks: Fowler, *Policy Studies for Educational Leaders: An Introduction* (2013).
Kohn, *The Case Against Standardized Testing* (2000).

MODULE/ WEEK	READING & STUDY	ASSIGNMENTS	POINTS
1	Fowler: chs. 1–2 1 presentation	Course Requirements Checklist	10
		Class Introductions	0
		Advising Guide Acknowledgement	0
		DB Forum 1	50
		News Article Review 1	40
2	Fowler: chs. 3–4 1 presentation	DB Forum 2	50
		Policy vs. Worldview Paper	80
3	Fowler: chs. 5–6 1 presentation 1 website	DB Forum 3	50
		Federal Policy Review	80
4	Fowler: ch. 7 Kohn: entire 1 presentation	Book Critique	120
5	Fowler: chs. 8–9 1 presentation	DB Forum 4	50
		Quiz 1	40
6	Fowler: chs. 10–11 1 presentation	News Article Review 2	40
		School Board PowerPoint Presentation	100
7	Fowler: ch. 12 1 presentation 1 website	DB Forum 5	50
		Quiz 2	50
8	Fowler: review all 1 presentation	Policy Evaluation Benchmark	200
TOTAL			1010

DB = Discussion Board

NOTE: Each course module/week begins on Monday morning at 12:00 a.m. (ET) and ends on Sunday night at 11:59 p.m. (ET). The final week ends at 11:59 p.m. (ET) on **Friday**.