EDAD 6330

K-16 LEGAL POLICY RESEARCH

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND POLICY STUDIES

UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT ARLINGTON

Fort Worth Cohort

Spring Semester, 2013

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Purpose of Course
The purpose of this course is to enable students to conduct original research in K-16 law and policy.

**Through assigned readings students will be exposed to the research methods used in investigations of: (1) Legal Education (2) Legal History (3) Judicial Politics (4) Law Review and Analysis and (5) Policy and Law Reform.**

Students will deepen their knowledge of the legal foundations of public education, political theory, and the role of the law, court rulings, and the politics of educational governance at the federal, state, and local levels. In achieving these objectives students will enhance their understanding of:

1. the federal and state legal systems and their relationship to the legislative and executive branches.

2. strengthen basic legal vocabulary and concepts and learn how to apply them.

3. understand how public school law intersects with other legal fields and how state and local laws relate to each other and to federal law.

4. learn to distinguish legal from policy, political, or human relations issues which they will confront in conducting legal and policy research in educational leadership.

**On-Line Resources**

On-line resources for United States Supreme Court Opinions include: UTA Library Westlaw and Lexis- Nexis. Other web-sites include: OYEZ @ IIT Chicago-Kent College of Law [www.oyez.org]; Supreme Court of the United States [www.supremecourtus.gov/]; and SCOTUSBlog [www.scotusblog.com/wp/].

United States Courts of Appeal and Federal District court decisions, as well as access to federal statutes and the federal code of rules and regulations are accessible at the UTA Library via Westlaw and Lexis- Nexis.

State statutes, administrative regulations and case law are available via UTA Library at Westlaw and Lexis- Nexis.
Law review, political science and education articles which pertain to education law and policy are accessible through the UTA Library through Westlaw, Nexis-Lexis or other social science search engines.

**Recommended Law Related Works**


**COURSE DESIGN**

**I. Research Proposal**

Each student will present in class, an *original research proposal*. His/her choice must involve a problem in education law and policy and be pre-approved by the instructor.

One week before students present their proposals to the class they will transmit a copy of the proposal to each of the students in the cohort for review and commentary. Each student is required to review his/her colleagues’ proposals and transmit a copy of their commentary to the author *and the instructor* by 5:00 p.m. on the Friday immediately preceding Tuesday’s class. This will enable the students and instructor to review the students’ comments before class.

A. The format for the research proposal will be as follows:

  **Title**

  Statement of the Problem [with at least 10 pertinent citations]

  Purpose of the Study

  Research Objectives/ Questions

  Theoretical/Conceptual Framework
Procedures

Statement of Research Sources

Population and Sampling

Data Collection

Data Analyses

Significance of the Study

Research

Practice

Theory

The research proposal must be at least five pages, but not more than ten pages in length, typed and double-spaced.

Each student will make an oral presentation of his/her research proposal and be prepared to defend the merits of the proposal.

B. The format for student commentary will be as follows:

For each section in a student’s research proposal the student commentator will reflect on a positive aspect(s) of its content and then offer suggestions on how to improve its content. The commentary should not exceed two pages double spaced in length.

II. Class Presentations Based on Assigned Readings

Students will be assigned to two articles from the list of required reading which appears below and required to teach a 30-40 minute lesson based on the assigned readings. To facilitate the lesson students will use a power point outlining the principal sections of the article, facts asserted and arguments made by its author. The presenters should be prepared to answer questions from their classmates and the instructor about the article, including its implications for
further research. Each presenter should assume he/she is presenting to an audience which is wholly unfamiliar with the subject and should therefore start with basics and build from there.

Students are required to be prepared for class and thoroughly read the articles assigned to their colleagues so that they can participate in the discussion.

III. Vocabulary and Legal Concepts Assessment

Students will take a vocabulary and legal concept assessment around the middle of the semester. This will test their knowledge and basic legal vocabulary and concepts.

**GRADING**

The course grade will be determined as follows:

Article Presentations: 20%

Research Proposal: 40%

Student Commentary on Research Proposals: 20%

Vocabulary and Concepts Test: 20%

Please bring your laptops to class for the first meeting. This will enable you to practice using the legal web-sites referred to above.

**NOTE:** Early in the semester I will arrange for a visit to the UTA Library in order to strengthen your legal research skills through exercises with Librarian Andy Herzog.

**Rules of the Course**

You may not under any circumstances confer or seek or render assistance unauthorized by the instructor to any person in connection with your research proposal, article presentation or commentary on cohort members’ research proposals. You may however, seek assistance from UTA librarians or consult with your instructor about the assignments. You may use any other research tools to assist you in completing the assignments. Unauthorized student conferral or seeking or rendering assistance will be treated as a form of academic dishonesty. Such cases will be dealt with according to UTA’s rules and regulations concerning academic dishonesty.
If you would like to meet with me in person to discuss any issues related to the course I would be glad to meet with you before class or by appointment at a mutually agreeable time and place.

**Note:** The UTA Graduate Honor Code establishes a standard of academic integrity. The code demands firm adherence to a set of values and is founded on the concept of honesty with respect to the intellectual efforts of oneself and others. You must read and study the requirements of the Graduate Honor Code as a requirement of this course. Please visit the UTA website for details concerning your obligations in this regard.

**Note:** If you at any time believe you are a student with a disability who requires a reasonable accommodation, related in any way to this course, please visit the UTA web-site regarding accommodations based on disability so that, where appropriate, such accommodations may be offered to you. Such accommodations may include rights under the Americans with Disabilities Act (“ADA”) and the Rehabilitation Act (“Section 504”).

**Note:** The instructor reserves the right to change the assignments listed below based upon (1) legal and statutory developments which follow the distribution of this syllabus (2) needs of the class as determined by the instructor.

**Schedule**

**Class One:** Tuesday, January 15, 2013.

Review of Course requirements.

Overview of State and Federal Legal Systems and Essential Legal Terminology.

**Reading:** Handout.

**Class Two:** Tuesday, January 22, 2013.

**Legal Literacy**

Class Three: Tuesday, January 29, 2013.

Retaliation for the Exercise of Free Speech


Class Four: Tuesday, February 5, 2013.

Perspectives on School Finance Litigation


Class Five: Tuesday, February 12, 2013.

Empirical Investigation of Judicial Behavior


Class Six: Tuesday, February 19, 2013.

Judicial Power through the Exercise of Discretion


Class Seven: Tuesday, February 26, 2013.

Plagiarism


Class Eight: Tuesday, March 5, 2013

Historical Research


Spring Recess Monday, March 11-Sunday, March 17.

Class Nine: Tuesday, March 19, 2013

Affirmative Action


Class Ten: Tuesday, March 26, 2013.

Research Presentation #1

Class Eleven: Tuesday, April 2, 2013.

Research Presentation # 2
**Class Twelve:** Tuesday, April 9, 2013

Research Presentations: 3-4

**Class Thirteen:** Tuesday, April 16, 2013

Research Presentations: 5-6

**Class Fourteen:** Tuesday, April 23, 2013

Research Presentations: 7-8.

**Class Fifteen:** Tuesday, April 30, 2013

Research Presentations: 9 and Review.