

Urban Education Leaders Program Course Description Updates

Leadership in Schools and Communities

This course is designed to introduce students to the theory and practice of exercising leadership in the public sector. Research literature and essential writings of great thinkers complement a practice-based, real-life orientation to the challenges and opportunities associated with leading communities through complex and persistent problems. Course readings will be examined in light of practical challenges education leaders face every day; conversely, we will discuss the ways in which research sheds light and offers perspective to those who lead complex organizations, such as schools and districts, in public settings. The course will consider leadership from a multi-disciplinary perspective, including readings and videos from the social sciences, literature, business, history, politics, and contemporary commentary. Class discussions, case studies, guest speakers and small group work combine to invite students to recognize and develop the personal, professional, intellectual and political attributes that women and men need to address the most pressing issues in education, government, community life and society at large.

Research, Theory and Practice in Education Leadership

This course focuses on major theoretical perspectives on administrative leadership in education, how these perspectives are studied and advanced through empirical research, and how the theory and research are connected to leadership practice. Students will examine theory and empirical research on topics such as leadership effects on student learning; challenges in leading learning organizations; and the relationships among leaders' knowledge, skills, and dispositions and their leadership preparation and effectiveness.

Ecology of Data-Driven Leadership

This course relies upon systems theory and its application to school systems. The course teaches prospective leaders the use of databases of various kinds to pursue a systematic inquiry in the health and productivity of the ecology of the school. It explores various approaches to data mining, model building, and ultimately the "art of improvisational leadership." The course teaches students how to distinguish the different purposes for which data can be used and misused and relies heavily on the use of cases, simulations and exercises, including those with complex feedback systems. Familiarity with spreadsheets and simple statistics is helpful.

Leadership for Social Justice

Through this course, students will learn to personally reflect upon and critically examine the larger social, economic, and political contexts in which schools, districts, and colleges and universities operate. This course will also investigate the ways in which issues of race, immigrant status, social class and gender shape the experiences of practicing leaders and researchers. Over the course of the semester, students will study how larger public policies (areas often considered “outside education”) –including housing policies, social welfare policies, transportation policies, and tax laws--have shaped cities, educational institutions and the lives and opportunities of students and families. This course will also examine the ways in which issues of race, immigrant status, social class and gender shape students’ experiences and outcomes within schools. Additionally, readings in this course will draw from a range of areas, including political science, public policy, housing policy, law, and sociology.

Action Research and Organizational Behavior

This course reviews the history, traditions, methods, and rationale associated with action research in schools systems and educational organizations. It focuses largely on the application and utility of action research in dissertation projects with an emphasis on the planning, carrying out, and execution of action research dissertations. The course will also emphasize the importance of engaged inquiry in designing an action research project that seeks to integrate theory, research, and action in the study of urban school systems and organizations.

School District Organization and Governance

This course is designed to provide a sound background in organizational theory and design and to equip students with fundamental knowledge and skills to enhance leadership practice and governance in PK-12 school districts. Individuals who choose to exercise leadership in education live and work within organizations including schools, districts, communities, states and nations. In this course, we will explore the dynamic relationship between the individual and the group, as well as the relationship between the district and the schools, examining the structural, social, political, and cultural dimensions of organizations. The course builds on the premise that in order to govern effectively in the context of urban education, leaders must work not only with school boards but also with stakeholders inside and outside the formal organization of the school district.

Action Research Practicum

In this course, students will document their academic and professional growth and development as part of an electronic Action Research Portfolio over the course of their program of study. The Action Research Portfolio will reflect the culmination of three separate Portfolios (Portfolio I, II, and III) that will be assessed by the student's course instructor and program advisory team to facilitate feedback, guidance, and support to each student as they progress their dissertation research. Each 1-point module and resultant Portfolio will represent the aims, scope, and depth of a student's academic and professional goals, plans, coursework, internships, research activities, and related learning experiences, providing an opportunity for self-reflection and a comprehensive account of each student's progress toward those goals. Once students complete all their program coursework and their Action Research Portfolio, they will be required to present their final portfolio to their program advisory team to determine the student's preparedness to proceed with their dissertation research.

Educational Equality and the Law

During the last century, many of the greatest barriers to equality—and many of the most important efforts to overcome such barriers—have involved the law. Students in this course will explore issues of discrimination and educational opportunity in the U.S., past and present; apply interdisciplinary perspectives grounded in law and policy, social-science research, and education practice; consider both the law and the important *non-legal* questions -- educational, ethical, political, financial, and administrative -- that legal disputes often raise but rarely resolve; reflect on how experience to date can inform future policy and practice; and consider how to use law not only to prevent unnecessary litigation but also to *advance our most important educational objectives*. Topics include: (1) Growing inequality and segregation based on race, national origin, and socioeconomic status; (2) Promoting racial and ethnic diversity and redressing discrimination; (3) Current battles over immigration, DACA, refugees, and education programs for English learners; (4) Testing and accountability; (5) Discrimination and harassment based on gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, race, national origin, religion, and disability; (6) Special education and other support for students with disabilities; and (7) Student free speech.

School District Leadership: Personnel, Conflict and Labor Relations

This course is designed to provide students with a sound background in the management knowledge and skills that are necessary in order to exercise effective leadership in public school districts. The course focuses on human resource management, a critical dimension of systemwide leadership. We will examine basic relationships among adults as they exist in school settings, including a look at the

legal and contractual rights and responsibilities of school staff and consider options for action when such obligations are not carried out appropriately. Students will explore topics including labor relations, negotiations, collective bargaining, grievance/arbitration, due process, conflict resolution and mediation, professional coaching and complex personnel issues.

Education Policy, Politics and Leadership in Urban School Systems

The shifting landscape of American education and increased politicization of urban school systems hold critical implications for district-level education leaders. Expected to both understand and respond to the larger social, political, and economic forces that influence life in urban schools, education leaders confront numerous challenges as they navigate complex institutions, policy regimes, competing agendas, and special interests while advocating for the educational success of every student. In this course, we will explore the changing demands and expectations of urban school leadership in an era of inequality shaped largely by widening racial and socioeconomic segregation, privatization, gentrification, and corporate reform. By evaluating the influence of local, district, state, and federal policy decisions on student learning, academic achievement, and school performance, this course will consider whose values, interests, and agendas are being advanced in the education policy arena and to what end. It will also focus on how education leaders might adapt district-level strategies and democratic approaches to leadership through community-based advocacy, coalition building, and activism.

Leadership for Adult Development

Leading districts and caring for others' growth as well as our own will make a difference as we work to build capacity at the individual, systemic, and global levels. Promoting adult development at the district level enhances student achievement, since it enables district leaders to support and empower principals and educators within their schools. Simply put, leading on behalf of adult development at the district level develops adults' internal capacities, which in turn enables them to better manage the complexities of leading, teaching, learning and living. This course seeks to help you, as a district leader, to support adult growth within systems. To support adult growth, district leaders need to implement practices that serve adults' professional and personal development, which is especially important given the complexities of leading, learning and working in today's environment with its emphasis on standards and accountability. Moreover, practitioners who are knowledgeable about adult development are positioned to advance critically important goals around equity and social justice. ORLD 5070 explicitly connects research on adult developmental theories to district practices that support the professional growth of educators as well as the academic and social outcomes for all students.

Internship in Public School District Leadership

This course supports the 9-month, 450-hours field-based internship required as the culminating leadership experience of the Urban Education Leaders Program. The internship is required by both the Teachers College Education Leadership Program faculty who have determined that practical site-based application of classroom learning is a key component of the student's Doctoral experience at the College and by CAEP (Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation), a national organization that certifies higher education programs. Students who have already attained SDL (School District Leader) licensure in New York State are still required to fulfill the internship requirement in order to satisfy the Teachers College and CAEP expectations. Students who do not currently possess, but wish to earn, NYS SDL licensure can use this internship experience to meet the State requirement.

Improving Teaching and Learning in School Districts

This course is designed to provide students with the knowledge and skills they need to improve teaching and learning in PK-12 public school districts. Students will learn how decisions are made from the boardroom to the classroom in support of improving teaching and learning for all students. The foundational conceptual framework of this course is that improving instruction is the responsibility of everyone in the school district, and that leaders need to create reciprocal accountability for system employees to exercise that responsibility. In order to ensure that every child is receiving the kind of instruction they need to graduate college and career ready, all aspects of the organization must be aligned around a clear vision of social justice and excellence. The course will place a particular emphasis on designing professional learning systems that build the capacity of leaders throughout the system. Students will also learn how to analyze comprehensive sets of qualitative and quantitative data, in order to ensure that goals for adult and student learning are measured, adjusted and accomplished.

School District Finance and Leadership

This course introduces the concepts, structures and practices of school finance from practical, political, legal and economic perspectives. Educators are under increasing pressure from the public and policymakers to demonstrate that resources are being used in optimal ways to increase the achievement of all students by providing equitable and adequate educational opportunities. Equity and adequacy frameworks will be introduced with a focus on the evolution of school finance litigation and court-ordered reforms that have shaped educational policies at the state and federal levels. The principles of budget planning, development, presentation and adoption will be thoroughly explored, including site-based, performance, zero-based, outcome-focused and traditional budget models. Budget discussions will analyze local, state and federal revenue sources and expenditure estimation. The areas of enrollment management, human resources management

and capital management, strategies for reducing costs and overall financial management of school systems are explored.

Dissertation Proposal Advisement

This course provides students the opportunity to discuss topics related to the preparation of their dissertation proposal in a seminar format. Students present their ideas and writing for feedback from the instructor and other students. Students may enroll in this seminar once. Permission of the instructor is required.

Proseminar in Education Leadership

This seminar is topical and brings in guest speakers, exemplary practitioners, researchers and policymakers from academia, public schools and school districts, charter schools, education management organizations, private and independent schools, business, and other organizations to share their experience, research and insights about effective leadership practices. The Proseminar also addresses the development of personal self-awareness as well as interpersonal and public communications. Students will be introduced to resources that are useful for personal reflection and professional growth.

Dissertation Advisement

Individual advisement on the doctoral dissertation. Students register for this in the first semester after their dissertation proposal has been approved and continue registering in this (or in another course, with sponsor approval) until the dissertation is completed. Requires ongoing consultation between the student and dissertation sponsor. The fee equals three points at the current tuition rate for each term. Permission required from individual faculty.