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TE 975

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Location 306 Bessey Hall
Times 4:10-7:00 Tuesdays
Start Date Aug 29

Required Text

Most readings are posted on line. One book you will need to buy on line is:
Hess, F. M., & Petrilli, M. J. (2006). No Child Left Behind. New York: Peter Lang Primer.

Course Objectives

This course examines a variety of interrelated questions about the nature of teacher quality and how policy makers can try to improve teacher quality. These questions are rendered difficult by (a) large variation in values; that is different people value different qualities in teachers; and (b) the difficulty of measuring or documenting evidence of quality. We will discover many definitions of quality: general intellectual ability, credentials, quality of practice itself, effectiveness, and race, gender, or ethnicity profiles. Each of these definitions of quality has advocates. And each is affected by policies. Some policies may improve quality by one definition but reduce it according to another definition. Our task is to try to sort all of this out. The course is organized around the employment pipeline. We will ask how policies affect teachers and teaching at each stage in a teacher's career: as a college student who could potentially move into teaching, as a student enrolled in teacher education, as a graduate seeking certification, as a certified teacher seeking a job, as a novice teacher, a tenured teacher, or a teacher who needs to be dismissed. Our task during the course will be to examine each of these stages to see how policies influence teacher quality, recognizing different definitions of quality, and to see whether or how policies might be used to improve quality by influencing that particular step in the pipeline.

Course Requirements

Students will be responsible for two primary products during the course.

1. Due on October 17 will be a book review. At the end of this syllabus I list several recent policy books that address issues of teacher quality. Each student will write a review of one of these books, with no overlaps in books. I encourage you to try to get your review actually published.
2. Due on final exam day will be a policy analysis in which you establish a definition of teacher quality and examine strategies for improving that particular aspect of teacher quality. This paper will review literature to make an evidence-based argument about how to improve teacher quality.

Grading Policy

In addition to the two main assignments there will be smaller tasks along the way, including internet searches and critiques of articles. Grade will be determined as follows:

- 40% on the first paper
- 50% on the second paper
- 10% on class participation

Attendance Policy

Bring either your laptop or a paper copy of the readings with you so that we can refer to them during discussions.

Academic Integrity

Students are expected to do their own work and to submit papers that are their own work. If you quote another author, you must cite that author rather than imply that this is your own work. The university does not tolerate academic dishonesty of any kind.

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