Course Description
This course develops students’ understandings of school improvement and curricular reform. It examines the meanings and impact of these popular notions and critically analyzes the implications of a Trump administration on such efforts. The course considers the timeless tension between diverse approaches to educational reform through school improvement and curricular reform, but primarily focuses on contemporary and potential future improvement and reform efforts.

Course Objectives
Candidates will be able to demonstrate:
• an understanding of school improvement and curricular reform discourses
• how school improvement and curricular reform can both help and hinder student equity
• effective communication skills by presenting clear and concise text and research syntheses in spoken and written formats that explore specific issues in school improvement and curricular reform
• how sociohistorical contexts inform school improvement and curriculum reform efforts
• how “accountability” and “choice” are framed in school improvement and curricular reform discourses
• an understanding of school improvement and curricular reform models and strategies and their impact on teaching and learning

Conceptual Framework and Conceptual Framework Standards
The SOE’s Conceptual Framework (CF)—Social Action through Education—is exemplified within this course through our presentation, study, discussion, analysis, and writing about educational reform issues that disproportionately impact students from marginalized populations.

Diversity
Diversity is integral to the study of education and to the social justice mission of the School of Education. This course centers on the racial, ethnic, economic and wide-ranging components of diversity in U.S. schools and the ways in which school reform efforts impact students and families from systemically oppressed groups.

This course address the following SOE Conceptual Framework Standard (CFS)
• CFS1: Candidates critically evaluate current bodies of knowledge in their field.

IDEA Objectives for the Objectives Selection Form
1. Gaining a basic understanding of the subject (e.g., factual knowledge, methods, principles, generalizations, theories)
2. Learning to apply course material (to improve thinking, problem solving, and decisions)
3. Learning how to find, evaluate and use resources to explore a topic in depth
**IDEA Course Evaluation Link for Students**
Each course you take in the School of Education is evaluated through the IDEA Campus Labs system. We ask that when you receive an email alerting you that the evaluation is available that you promptly complete it. To learn more about IDEA or to access the website directly to complete your course evaluation go to: [http://luc.edu/idea/](http://luc.edu/idea/) and click on **STUDENT IDEA LOGIN** on the left hand side of the page.

**Dispositions**
All courses in the SOE assess student dispositions. The following SOE dispositions will be assessed in the course: **Professionalism, Inquiry, and Social Justice.** Professionalism will be measured by the manner with which you interact with your fellow colleagues. Inquiry will be measured by the quality of the content of your verbal and written contributions to the course. Social Justice will be measured by the degree to which you apply social justice principles to all class activities. A description of how we use disposition data in the SOE is included in the SOE syllabus addendum.

**LiveText**
All students, except those who are non-degree, must have access to LiveText to complete the benchmark assessments aligned to the Conceptual Framework Standards and all other accreditation, school-wide and/or program-wide related assessments. You can access more information on LiveText here: [LiveText](http://luc.edu/education/liveText/).

**Syllabus Addendum Link**
- [www.luc.edu/education/syllabus-addendum/](http://luc.edu/education/syllabus-addendum/)

This link directs students to statements on essential policies regarding **academic honesty, accessibility, ethics line reporting and electronic communication policies and guidelines.** We ask that you read each policy carefully.

This link will also bring you to the full text of our conceptual framework that guides the work of the School of Education – **Social Action through Education.**

**Texts and Resources**

**Assignments and Evaluation**

**General Evaluation Criteria**
- Complete and submit work in a timely fashion. *Assignments submitted after due date/time will be subject to a lower grade, generally a 10% reduction for every day late.*
- All assignments need to be typed and double-spaced with 1” margins in 12-point font. Please be sure to include your identifying information. Some assignments will need to be submitted electronically via LiveText. Those are indicated below.
- Students are expected to follow APA guidelines (6th edition) for citations and references.

**Assignments**

**Participation** (10 points) – You are expected to attend all class sessions. In the event that you cannot attend a session, please notify me in advance if possible. You are expected to read and discuss assigned readings, as well as participate in all class activities.
**Cajita of Capital** (15 points) - Cajita Project:
You will construct a cajita (literal translation – little box) that represents your capital/community cultural wealth. A cajita of capital is a personal reflective “box” that represents who each student is as a person (through social identities), and the specific forms of capital that he/she brings to the classroom, professional life and the world. You may select artifacts that represent but are not limited to individuals who have influenced and validated you, the kind of scholar you hope to be, and how you hope to make a difference in education.

You will bring your cajitas to class on February 3rd to be displayed in our classroom gallery. The cajitas gallery walk involves about a twenty-minute silent walk as students take the time to observe and “take in” their peers’ cajitas. Following the gallery walk, we will open the classroom for volunteers who would like to present their cajitas.

Photos of the cajitas will be uploaded to LiveText as jpeg documents. Creativity is central to this project. So think outside the cajita!

**Discussion Facilitation** (20 points) – Individually, you will facilitate a class session from 7:30-9:15. I will reserve the first half hour and last fifteen minutes of class to to highs and lows, class housekeeping and announcements. You will research, identify and develop expertise on three additional peer-reviewed articles or a book that you will assign to your colleagues in addition to the already assigned reading. **You must identify the reading(s) you will assign by Friday, February 3rd**. Email me the reading(s) you have chosen as well as the PDF’s of the readings or the name of the book you decide upon (aim for 75-100 pages total). You will have one hour and forty-five minutes to facilitate an engaging discussion on the class readings for the evening.

**School Improvement and Curriculum Reform Group Presentation** (15 points) – In pairs, develop a 30-minute presentation where you comprehensively define school improvement and curriculum reform in a particular context (as explained next). Each group will identify major school improvement and curriculum reform efforts that have taken place in one of the following places: (1) a country other than the U.S., (2) the United States, (3) the state of Illinois, and (4) the city of Chicago.

**Final Paper** (40 points) - You are to write an argumentative paper on an issue related to this course. The argumentative essay is a genre of writing that requires you to investigate a topic; collect, generate, and evaluate evidence; and **establish a position** on the topic in a concise manner. This paper should be a minimum of 18 pages and no longer than 20 pages double-spaced and using APA format throughout. I expect for you to reference 10 texts with a minimum of 8 outside peer reviewed articles or monographs to support your ideas (for a total of 10 references). You can always reference more. **A one-page proposal for this paper is due on March 16th.** The proposal must include the following elements: a clear, concise and defined argument (thesis statement), a summary of each of the multiple points of view on the issue at hand, and a list of 3-5 citations you plan to use in making your argument. **The final version of the paper is due no later than May 4th at noon.**

Some suggested topics to base your argument upon include (but are not limited to):
- Ability grouping
- Academic achievement
- Accountability
- Achievement gap
- Black and Brown underachievement
- Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation
Charter Schools
Corporate Reform Movement Curriculum (Core Knowledge, history, literature, science, narrowing of, standards movement)
Education in a Trump Era
English Language Learners
For profit management of schools
Foundations
Gender Achievement Gap
Globalization and school reform
Graduation Rates
Immigration policy Incentives
KIPP program
LGBTQ+ policies
Merit pay
NAEP National Blue Ribbon Award
NCLB PISA Privatization Proficiency
Race to the Top
School choice programs
School finance
School principalship/leadership
School size
Standardized Tests and Testing Student performance
Teacher’s Unions
Technology
Tenure in PK-12
Vouchers

**Course Grades**
There are a total of 100 points possible in this course. The grading scale is as follows: A (93 – 100%), A- (90 - 92%), B+ (87 – 89%), B (83 – 86%), B- (80 – 82%), C+ (77 – 79%), C (73 – 76%), C- (70 – 72%), D+ (67 – 69%), D (63 – 66%), D- (60 – 62%), F (59% and below).

**Course Schedule**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings</th>
<th>Assignment due in class</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 19</td>
<td>Introduction What is school improvement and curricular reform?</td>
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<td>Artifact and Article Presentations [You will have time to form groups and plan for the School Improvement and Curricular Reform presentations.]</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 26</td>
<td>What is capital and how does it relate to school improvement and curricular reform?</td>
<td>Bourdieu, Forms of Capital Yosso, Community Cultural Wealth</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 2</td>
<td>Cajitas of Capital</td>
<td>The Common Core</td>
<td>10 minute presentations Cajita Gallery Walk</td>
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## ESEA, ESSA and the Common Core

The ESSA (Every Student Succeeds Act) Explained

ESEA (The Elementary and Secondary Education Act)

The Common Core Controversy: Documentary on the Nation’s Biggest Education Reform Ever

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading Material</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>February 9</td>
<td>Speaking of Capital … The Trump Effect on Education</td>
<td>Three Challenges for teachers in the era of Trump</td>
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<td>The Trump Effect: The Impact of the Presidential Campaign on Our Nation’s Schools</td>
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<td>Betsy DeVos and God’s Plan for Schools</td>
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### Situating School Improvement and Curricular Reform Globally, Nationally & Locally

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>February 16</td>
<td>School Improvement and Curricular Reform</td>
<td>None – Prepare for Group Presentations</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Group Presentations on School Improvement and Curricular Reform</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 23</td>
<td>Topic: The Flat World, Educational Inequality and America’s Future</td>
<td>Darling Hammond, The Flat World and Education, Ch. 1</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Facilitator: Cynthia</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 2</td>
<td>Topic: The Anatomy of Equality: How the Opportunity Gap is Constructed</td>
<td>Darling Hammond, The Flat World and Education, Ch. 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 9</td>
<td>SPRING BREAK</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>March 16</td>
<td>Topic: New Standards and Old Inequalities: How Testing Narrows and</td>
<td>Darling Hammond, The Flat World and Education, Ch. 3</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Expands the Opportunity Gap Facilitator: Ahlam</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 23</td>
<td>Topic: Inequality on Trial: Does</td>
<td>Darling Hammond, The Flat World and Education, Ch. 4</td>
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One page proposal of final paper due
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Facilitator</th>
<th>Reading Material</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>March 30</td>
<td>Money Make a Difference?</td>
<td>Sammie</td>
<td>Darling Hammond, The Flat World and Education, Ch. 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 6</td>
<td>A Tale of Three States: What Happens When States Invest Strategically (or Don’t)</td>
<td>Jon</td>
<td>Darling Hammond, The Flat World and Education, Ch. 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 13</td>
<td>Topic: Steady Work: How Countries Build Successful Systems</td>
<td>Jenna</td>
<td>Darling Hammond, The Flat World and Education, Ch. 6</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 20</td>
<td>Topic: Doing What Matters Most: Developing Competent Teaching</td>
<td>Mandy</td>
<td>Darling Hammond, The Flat World and Education, Ch. 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 27</td>
<td>Topic: Organizing for Success: From Inequality to Quality</td>
<td>Eleni</td>
<td>Darling Hammond, The Flat World and Education, Ch. 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 4</td>
<td>Topic: Policy for Quality and Equality: Toward Genuine School Reform</td>
<td></td>
<td>Darling Hammond, The Flat World and Education, Ch. 9</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No Class</td>
<td></td>
<td>Final Paper due by noon</td>
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