

**Loyola University Chicago**  
CIEP 523 - School Improvement and Curriculum Reform  
Thursdays 7:00-9:30, Corboy Law Center, Room 304  
Spring 2017

Instructor:	Dra. Aurora Chang, Ph.D.
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Office/Office Hours:	By appointment (phone, Skype, FaceTime, in-person)
Course Information:	Course materials are available on Sakai

### **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/> 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](#).

## **Syllabus Addendum Link**

- [www.luc.edu/education/syllabus-addendum/](http://www.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**

Darling Hammond, L. (2010), *The Flat World and Education – How America’s Commitment to Equity Will Determine Our Future*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

## **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 (6<sup>th</sup> 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 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 3<sup>rd</sup>. 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 4<sup>th</sup> 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

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

	ESEA, ESSA and the Common Core	<a href="#">The ESSA (Every Student Succeeds Act) Explained</a>  <a href="#">ESEA (The Elementary and Secondary Education Act)</a>	<a href="#">The Common Core Controversy: Documentary on the Nation's Biggest Education Reform Ever</a>
February 9	Speaking of Capital ... The Trump Effect on Education	<a href="#">Three Challenges for teachers in the era of Trump</a>  <a href="#">The Trump Effect: The Impact of the Presidential Campaign on Our Nation's Schools</a>  <a href="#">Betsy DeVos and God's Plan for Schools</a>	
<b>Situating School Improvement and Curricular Reform Globally, Nationally &amp; Locally</b>			
February 16	School Improvement and Curricular Reform	None – Prepare for Group Presentations	Group Presentations on School Improvement and Curricular Reform
February 23	Topic: The Flat World, Educational Inequality and America's Future <b>Facilitator: Cynthia</b>	Darling Hammond, The Flat World and Education, Ch. 1	
March 2	Topic: The Anatomy of Equality: How the Opportunity Gap is Constructed	Darling Hammond, The Flat World and Education, Ch. 2	
March 9	<b>SPRING BREAK</b>		
March 16	Topic: New Standards and Old Inequalities: How Testing Narrows and Expands the Opportunity Gap <b>Facilitator: Ahlam</b>	Darling Hammond, The Flat World and Education, Ch. 3	<b>One page proposal of final paper due</b>
March 23	Topic: Inequality on Trial: Does	Darling Hammond, The Flat World and Education, Ch. 4	

	Money Make a Difference? <b>Facilitator:</b> <b>Sammie</b>		
March 30	A Tale of Three States: What Happens When States Invest Strategically (or Don't) <b>Facilitator: Jon</b>	Darling Hammond, The Flat World and Education, Ch. 5	
April 6	Topic: Steady Work: How Countries Build Successful Systems <b>Facilitator:</b> <b>Jenna</b>	Darling Hammond, The Flat World and Education, Ch. 6	
April 13	Topic: Doing What Matters Most: Developing Competent Teaching <b>Facilitator:</b> <b>Mandy</b>	Darling Hammond, The Flat World and Education, Ch. 7	
April 20	Topic: Organizing for Success: From Inequality to Quality <b>Facilitator:</b> <b>Eleni</b>	Darling Hammond, The Flat World and Education, Ch. 8	
April 27	Topic: Policy for Quality and Equality: Toward Genuine School Reform	Darling Hammond, The Flat World and Education, Ch. 9	
May 4	<b>No Class</b>		<b>Final Paper due by noon</b>