George Mason University
Graduate Course Approval/Inventory Form

Please complete this form and attach a copy of the syllabus for new courses. Complete the Coordination Form on page 2 if changes in this course will affect other units. If no other units are affected, simply indicate “None” on the form. After approval by the appropriate GSE program faculty and GSE Program Development and Evaluation Team (PDET), the Associate Dean for Outreach and Program Development will forward it as an email attachment to the Secretary of the Graduate Council. A printed copy of the form with signatures will be brought to the Graduate Council Meeting.

Please indicate:  ____X__ NEW  ____ MODIFY  ____ DELETE

Local Unit: College of Education and Human Development  Graduate Council Approval Date:

Course Abbreviation: EDUC  Course Number: 874

Full Course Title: The Achievement Gap

Abbreviated Course Title (24 characters max including spaces): The Achievement Gap

Credit hours: 3  Program of Record:

Repeatable for Credit?  ____ D=Yes, not within same term  Up to ___ hours
 ____ T=Yes, within the same term  Up to ___ hours
 ____ X=N=Cannot be repeated for credit

Grade Type:  ____ X=GR: graduate grading, normal (A, A-, B+, B, C, F, IN, AB)

Activity Code (please indicate):  ____ X=Lecture (LEC)  ____ Lab (LAB)  ____ Recitation (RCT)
 ____ Studio (STU)  ____ Internship (INT)  ____ Independent Study (IND)

Catalog Credit Format  ____ 3 : 3 : 0  Course Level: GF(500-600)  ____ GA(700+)  ____X____

Maximum Enrollment: 15

For NEW courses, first term to be offered: Fall, 2005

Prerequisites or corequisites: Admission to the Ph.D. program or permission of instructor.

Catalog Description (35 words or less) Use catalog format and attach a copy of the syllabus for new courses:

Focuses on the achievement gap in schools. Students will research and analyze the gaps in student achievement, related to race/ethnicity, limited English proficiency, family background, gender, poverty, and ableism, and the practices designed to close the gap.

For MODIFIED or DELETED courses as appropriate:

Last term offered:  Previous Course Abbreviation:  Previous number:

Description of modification:

APPROVAL SIGNATURES:

Submitted by:  _________________________________ email: ________________

Department/Program: _________________________________ Date: __________________

College Committee: _________________________________ Date: __________________

Graduate Council Representative: _________________________________ Date: __________________
GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY
Course Coordination Form
Graduate School of Education

Approval from other units:

Please list those units outside of your own who may be affected by this new, modified, or deleted course. Each of these units must approve this change prior to its being submitted to the Graduate Council for approval. Submit a signed form or attach a copy of the email approval.

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Graduate Council approval: ____________________________________________ Date: __________

Graduate Council representative: ________________________________ Date: __________

Provost Office representative: ________________________________ Date: __________
Prerequisite: None

Course Description and Relationship to Program Goals: A doctoral seminar in which students will research and analyze the gaps in student achievement related to race/ethnicity, limited English proficiency, gender, family background, poverty, and ableism, and the practices designed to close the gap.

Course Objectives
The learner will:

- Develop an understanding of the achievement gap in schools today including, its causes, its effects, its solutions, and the implications for policy formation;
- Deconstruct and explore in detail one aspect of the achievement gap, e.g. poverty, race, gender, teacher quality, student assessment practices, ableism, etc.;
- Explore “gap-generated” school reform models for their promise and for the barriers that need to be addressed;
- Prepare an in-depth analysis of one aspect of the gap in her/his local school using school-based data.

Required Readings


Additional Online Resources

The Center for Education Policy. http://www.ctredpol.org/nclb/; The Center on Education Policy is a national, independent advocate for public education and for more effective public schools. The Center helps Americans better understand the role of public education in a democracy and the need to improve the academic quality of public schools. It does not represent any special interest groups.


National Center for Education Statistics. http://nces.ed.gov/edfin/search/search_intro.asp. This website is the home of the nation’s report card. Most statistics on the condition of education can be found at NCES.


Many others will be posted on blackboard as we proceed.

Supplies

Computer with Internet access and current GMU email account.

CEHD Course Expectations

The College of Education and Human Development (CEHD) expects that all students abide by the following:

Students are expected to exhibit professional behavior and dispositions. See http://gse.gmu.edu for a listing of these dispositions.

Students must follow the guidelines of the University Honor Code. See http://www.gmu.edu/catalog/apolicies/#TOC_H12 for the full honor code.

Students must agree to abide by the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing. See http://mail.gmu.edu and click on Responsible Use of Computing at the bottom of the screen.

Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with the GMU Disability Resource Center (DRC) and inform the instructor, in writing, at the beginning of the semester. See www.gmu.edu/student/drc or call 703-993-2474 to access the DRC.
Course Delivery

In addition to classroom attendance and participation, students are expected to complete readings, whole class and small group discussions, group, pair, and individual projects, internet research, analyses of case studies, and reflections on practice. I will use GMU’s web-accessible Blackboard course framework regularly throughout the course.

Assignment

There is only one assignment and that is to prepare a 15-20 page paper on one dimension of the achievement gap that is found in your own school and to explore:
1) the nature of that dimension e.g. LEP
2) its effects with data to support your case, e.g. performance of LEP students
3) the policy debate surrounding it (what policies have tried to help close this gap?), and
4) to include a presentation of promising practices that might close this dimension of the gap with supporting evidence from research and evaluation.

Evaluation and Grading

3 = highly accomplished (letter grade = A). The paper clearly delineates the nature of the area that the literature suggests “causes” the achievement gap. The discussion includes research studies in which the data clearly indicate the gap. The student also presents a deep discussion of the policies enacted that are intended to alter practice to close the gap, and lastly, there is a solid presentation and critique of the promising practices designed to close the gap and a judgment of their strengths and weaknesses.

2 = adequate (letter grade = B). The paper describes the nature of the area as a “cause.” The student includes a general and abstract discussion of the research literature to date and identifies some policies enacted to close the gap, and lastly there is some discussion of the promising practices that is more perspective than critique.

1= needs rewriting (letter grade = C). The literature and reads more like a “thought” paper than an analysis of the research literature, the policies enacted, and the effects of those promising practices to date.