



## **EDAD 554 Leading the Learning Community COURSE SYLLABUS: Fall 2014**

**Instructor:** Dr. Shari Farris –Assistant Professor

**Office Hours:** Remote

**University Email Address:** [Shari.Farris@tamuc.edu](mailto:Shari.Farris@tamuc.edu)

### **COURSE INFORMATION**

#### **REQUIRED TEXTS:**

- Vornberg (2010). *Texas Public School Organization and Administration*.
- Walsh, J. & Kemerer, F. (1999). *The Educator's Guide to Texas School Law* (7<sup>th</sup> ed.)
- Kemp-Graham, K. (2014) Preparing for School Leadership in Texas: Mastering Principal Competencies and Challenges of 21st Century School Leadership.
- Wilmore, E. (2003). Passing the Principal TExES Exam.
- American Psychological Association. (2009). *Publication manual of the american psychological association* (6<sup>th</sup> ed.). Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association.

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**Please Note:** The proposed class schedule is tentative. All assignments and due dates are subject to change at the discretion of the instructor.

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## **REQUIRED VIDEO (DVD)**

Please select one of the below listed documentaries. You will need to view one of the below documentaries for your documentary critique. More information about this assignment will be explained in greater detail further in the syllabus.

- American Teacher (2011) [Matt Damon](#) (Actor), [Jamie Fidler](#) (Actor), [Vanessa Roth](#) (Director) | Rated: NR | Format: DVD
- Waiting for "Superman" (2010), [Geoffrey Canada](#) (Actor), [Michelle Rhee](#) (Actor), [Davis Guggenheim](#) (Director) | Rated: PG | Format: DVD
- [The First Year](#) Starring Georgene Acosta, Geneviève DeBose, Joy Kraft-Watts, et al.(2004)

**Other texts, readings and audio visual materials as assigned.**

**Excellent additions to your professional library**

1. Gorton, R. & Alston, J. (2009). *School leadership and administration* (8<sup>th</sup> ed.). Boston, MA:McGraw-Hill Companies.
2. Senge, Peter. (1999). *The fifth discipline*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
3. Collins, Jim, & Porras, Jerry. (1997). *Built to last: Successful habits of visionary companies*. New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishers.
4. Collins, Jim. (2001). *Good to great*. New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishers.
5. Collins, Jim. (2005). *Good to great and the social sectors* (A monograph to accompany *Good to Great*). Boulder, CO: Jim Collins.
6. Collins, Jim. (2009). *How the mighty fall: And why some companies never give in*. New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishers.

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## **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

**This course is the capstone course** that develops candidates for EXEMPLARY school leadership as evidenced by student knowledge, dispositions, and performance ability to promote success of all students by exercising visionary, collaborative, instructional, organizational, and political leadership. The focus of this course is on facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a school vision of learning that is shared by the school community by exercising highly integrated, transformational, and transactional leadership roles for transforming schools into learning communities.

## **COURSE OBJECTIVES**

Through the activities of TAMU-Commerce **Principal Preparation Program** and this course, students are prepared to be competent administrators in the following areas:

- Leadership and campus culture,
- Values and ethics of leadership,
- Instructional leadership and management,
- Human resources leadership and management,
- Communication and community relations,
- Organizational leadership and management, and
- Curriculum planning and management.

This course, in particular, is intended to assist students in gaining the professional knowledge and skills needed to:

- Model and promote the highest standards of conduct, ethical principles, and integrity in decision-making.
- Analyze a variety of educational administration positions and functions and the influence each has had on the organization and operation of the school and the district.
- Serve as skilled group leaders, facilitators, and members; as public speakers; and as writers.
- Understand the components of organizational culture, models for culture building and change, and the role of the leader in creating, transforming, and sustaining culture in an organization.

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- Define the components of effective school-based decision-making and describe the policies of SBDM in Texas.
- Define the multiple dimensions and necessary skills of campus improvement that lead to increased student achievement.

Students will be challenged and expected:

- To think critically about roles and responsibilities of effective principals;
- To engage in reflective thinking about roles and responsibilities of effective principals;
- To integrate a variety of ideas regarding roles and responsibilities of effective principals, including the active exploration and assimilation of new ideas;
- To be able to synthesize the coursework into a meaningful framework of understanding about roles and responsibilities of effective principals, including exploration, assimilation, and demonstration of new perspectives, and
- To encounter and develop solutions to real-world, realistic school based problems.

## **STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES**

*Student learning outcomes are what you are able to do as a result of the interactive activities, readings and instruction that will occur in this course—these are my expectations of you in terms of academic performance.*

**Learning Outcome #1:** The learner will be an active and engaged participant in the class proceedings. Students will demonstrate their participation by engaging in discussions, asking and answering questions, engaging in class activities and group projects, and staying on task.

**Learning Outcome #2:** The learner will think critically; engage in reflective thinking; actively integrate a variety of ideas, including the active exploration and assimilation of new ideas; and synthesize the coursework into a meaningful framework of understanding, including exploration, assimilation, and demonstration of new perspectives. Students will demonstrate these behaviors by analyzing case studies, administrator simulations, writing documentary critique and engaging the class in a meaningful discussion of the issues and potential solutions.

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**Learning Outcome #3:** The learner will think critically; engage in reflective thinking; actively integrate a variety of ideas, including the active exploration and assimilation of new ideas; synthesize the coursework into a meaningful framework of understanding, including exploration, assimilation, and demonstration of new perspectives; and develop solutions to a real-world, realistic problem. Students will demonstrate these behaviors by working in a **collaborative group** to create, organize, and **produce a campus case study portfolio** that illustrates the learning in the course as well as learning from the Principal Preparation Program.

**Learning Outcome #4:** The learner participates in academic-based, qualitative research. Students will demonstrate this behavior by engaging a lead principal in an interview, transcribing the interview, and submitting the interview transcription and findings to the instructor.

## COURSE OUTLINE AND EXPECTATIONS

### DESIGN OF THE CLASS

This class is designed on constructivist principles. This means that the instructor creates an environment for learning by providing focus and guidance to the content. Assignments are designed to be learning experiences for students, and it is presumed and expected that students actively participate in the class through the construction of their own learning. As a graduate level course, the instructor expects quality work from each student supported by adequate preparation and involvement.

### CLASS PARTICIPATION

Given the constructivist design of the class, this course will be interactive. It is my expectation that all students participate fully for all activities and assignments in order to maximize their learning experience. This web based course will be made up of several learning activities including (but not limited to) small & large group discussion, student-led learning activities, lecture notes and clarification, reflection activities, individual learning activities, written papers, and reflective, integrative examinations. In order for this class to be interesting and beneficial, each student is expected to have recorded weekly minutes in the eCollege portal. The eCollege reports these minutes to me. In certain circumstances if a student is (inactive) for "0" recorded minutes, they are dropped from the course.

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Students must be prepared to lead and/or enter into discussions, to ask relevant questions, and to share the results of their study and reflection. This means that each student should be (1) conscious of the class schedule and the requirements for each class (knowing what to be prepared for), (2) self-disciplined (spending time to be fully prepared), and (3) eager to share with your classmates (participating actively by sharing what you have prepared).

## **ONLINE CLASS ENVIRONMENT**

Please practice courtesy, respect the opinions of others, be positive in speech and effort, encourage your classmates, respect confidentiality, and support each other's learning.

### **GRADING—Scoring Rubrics located in the DocSharing Tab**

Discussion (6)	15
Response to Text/Reflections (6)	15
Quizzes (6)	20
Principal Interview (1)	20
Portfolio (1)	20
Documentary Critique (1)	10
Total	100

Final grades will be calculated on the following scale

<b>90-100</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>Excellent</b>
80-89	B	Good
70-79	C	Poor
Below 70	F	Unacceptable

***Please Note:*** While students may receive numerical grades for various assignments listed in the syllabus based on the criteria provided by the instructor and which contribute to an overall grade average represented in the breakdown listed above, these grades are to provide feedback to students and to guide the instructor in making an assessment of student work. The final grade awarded for the course, however, will be at the sole discretion of the instructor and will be based on several factors, including but not limited to the rubric provided (see Course Grade Rubric attached). Points will be deducted for the submission of late work.

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## **ASSIGNMENTS**

### ***Participation:***

Each student will work individually and/or with a group at the direction of the instructor to complete the assignments of the course. Please find group assignment in the course shell under the Home Tab.

- The participation grade will reflect the successful interaction of students as well as the successful completion of all discussion questions whether graded or not.

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### ***Response to Text/Reflections (Scoring Rubric in DocSharing Tab)***

Chapter reflections demonstrate your knowledge about what you have read and your ability to analyze and synthesize information as well as an opportunity to reflect on the information presented and its application to current practice. **I have already read the chapter and do not need a summary.** Your reflection should make specific references to the content in the chapters, including your thoughts (reflections) on the information and its possible implications for current and future practice.

#### **Format for Papers to be submitted:**

1. All papers are to be type written.
2. Papers should be clearly and cogently written using proper grammar and punctuation.
3. A title page is not necessary (unless otherwise specified). Each paper should have a single spaced heading in the **top left corner of the EVERY page which must include the following**

#### *Example*

Johnny Student  
EDAD 544  
July 25, 2012  
Reflection#1

4. Papers should be formatted in 12 point, “Arial” or “New Times Roman” font only.
5. Papers should have 1 inch margins on all four sides, a double-spaced body, and be numbered beginning on the 2<sup>nd</sup> page (the page number should be in the top right corner).
6. **Papers must be submitted in the 6<sup>th</sup> APA format.**
7. Papers should be written in MS Word and uploaded to the appropriate dropbox.

Assistance in completing reflection papers can be found in Week One.

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## ***Documentary Critique***

***(Rubric Available under DocSharing Tab)***

*Each student will select and review one of the three documentaries listed below. The DVDs can be purchased from Amazon. In some instances, you may be able to rent the movie. All three documentaries focus on issues in American Education. As you watch your selected documentary, listen to the speakers very carefully and envision yourself being assigned as an administrator of a school profiled in the documentary. What would you do to help? Is there anything that could be done to provide assistance?*

- American Teacher (2011) [Matt Damon](#) (Actor), [Jamie Fidler](#) (Actor), [Vanessa Roth](#) (Director) | Rated: NR | Format: DVD
- Waiting for "Superman" (2010), [Geoffrey Canada](#) (Actor), [Michelle Rhee](#) (Actor), [Davis Guggenheim](#) (Director) | Rated: PG | Format: DVD
- [The First Year](#) Starring Georgene Acosta, Geneviève DeBose, Joy Kraft-Watts, et al.(2004)

*Should anyone have difficulty accessing this movie, please make me aware ASAP. A detailed description of the purpose of a documentary critique, guidelines and suggestions is available under the DocSharing tab. Questions below are provided as a guide for organizing your thoughts. There is no page limit for this assignment, however, the critique must be thorough.*

### **QUESTIONS TO GET YOU STARTED**

These questions are valuable to answer before you get started because they will provide you with the adequate background information and research that you will need to include into your review. Acquiring this information beforehand and keeping it constantly in mind will smooth out your writing process.

1. ***What is the main issue/topic of the documentary? Is it a political, social, or just informative piece?*** This is the first step to writing your review. Knowing whether the documentary is political, social, or informative will affect the specific details that you choose to discuss within your review as well as slightly alter your audience.
2. ***What is the context of this issue? Is this issue controversial?*** (Do research if necessary!) Context will help both you and your readers determine the significance and accuracy of the film based on the events at the time. Including context into your review will also allow readers to see that you are knowledgeable in your topic.
4. ***How accurate is the documentary?*** Find out what is accurate, inaccurate, or slightly skewed about the documentary. It is very important to inform your reader about this.
  - a. ***What do participants have to know or believe to understand or appreciate this documentary?*** Your answer to this question is exactly the background information that what you will have to inform your reader about, whether it is in

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the introduction or insinuated throughout the review. For example, if your documentary is about some unheard-of sport, you may first have to explain the sport's rules in your review. Of course, you may need to do some assumptions as to what you think your audience knows and does not know.

b. ***Who would you like to invite into your audience and who is excluded?*** This information is very important to reveal at the beginning of your review because after the first few sentences, readers will know whether or not they are interested, and you should waste as little of their time as possible. Sometimes, making this apparent will require you to change your tone a bit to match the topic of which you are writing.

6. ***Which specific points in the film do you wish to analyze in detail?*** (These can include scenes, quotes, fluency of film, bias, use of imagery, use of music/sound, degree of interest, juxtaposition of shots, etc.)

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***Principal Interview***  
***(Rubric Available under DocSharing Tab)***

- Each student will **individually** interview a lead principal and share the results of the interview with the class.
- The purpose of this assignment is:
  - *to gain insight from practicing principals on the job of the principal,*
  - *to learn the benefit of developing relationships with other principals in order to draw on their experiences and advice.*
- To complete the interview, students should do the following:
  - o Identify the principal to be interviewed. You should select a lead principal of your campus (or another campus) and get permission to conduct the interview. **If your principal will not agree to be interviewed, you will need to seek out a principal from another campus.** Be sure to not ask someone who is to be interviewed by another member of the class.
  - o Select a time to conduct the interview. The interview should not take very long, but you don't want to be interrupted if at all possible. Distractions can impact the quality of responses.
  - o Conduct the interview. The interview should be conducted live and taped for ease of transcribing. (Be sure to explain why you are taping and that once you have transcribed the interview the tape will be erased.)
  - o Transcribe the interview. Interviews should be transcribed verbatim into a **MS Word** document. Begin with your heading (like your reflection papers) and then include the information about the principal you interviewed: (1) the name of the principal you interviewed, (2) the campus name; (3) the district name, (4) the length of time the principal has been at this campus as a lead principal, and (5) the length of time he/she has been a principal in their career. Following that, record the interview verbatim for each question.
  - o Submit the interview. Upon completion of transcribing the interview and formatting it in the required format, upload to the appropriate drop box.

**Directions for interview question selection. Please locate the Principal Interview Questions in the DocSharing tab...Select five areas from this extensive list and select two questions from each area. When you are submitting your interview—please**

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**indicate by re-writing the area of focus and question. There should be a total of 10 questions submitted. I will provide you with a rubric ASAP>**

***Campus Case Study Portfolio  
(Scoring Rubric Available in DocSharing Tab)***

Each student, working in assigned groups (located under Home Tab) will analyze a campus case study of a selected campus in need of improvement. This assignment will reflect the successful understanding, integration, synthesis, and application of the content/activities of this course as well as the knowledge and content gained in the principal preparation program as a whole.

- The purpose of this assignment is
  - ✓ *to analyze data in the form most available to schools and districts*
  - ✓ *to apply theoretical perspectives to a real life situation*
  - ✓ *to formulate ideas that address the needs of students, faculty, and staff with the goal of improving a campus*
  - ✓ *to organize and communicate effectively through a written report*
  - ✓ *to tackle a “messy” problem with limited parameters and guidance (that is, “a real life problem”); in other words, to engage in higher order and critical thinking*
- To complete the assignment, students should:
  - ✓ **Select a campus in Texas with an Unsatisfactory Rating. You can choose any level and any school from the TEA published list.  
<http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/perfreport/account/>**
  - ✓ Analyze the AEIS report for the selected campus. Students will obtain the latest AEIS report for the campus they have selected and analyze the data from the report to determine the needs of that particular campus. Needs should not be limited to only academic or instructional issues. Students will so want to gather other information on the campus and district to help them understand the campus as much as possible in this limited timeframe and proximity to the campus.
  - ✓ Create a plan to deal with the identified needs of the campus based on the TExES Domains & Competencies and the skills and behaviors of effective principals. Students should also consider the concepts and ideas presented in other courses in the Principal Preparation Program.

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- ✓ Submit a portfolio (your collection of electronic artifacts) that demonstrates student learning with regard to campus improvement and the content of this and other courses in the Principal Preparation Program. The portfolio should be professional in appearance and design.

## **ALL PORTFOLIOS**

Portfolios should have **at least these sections:**

- 1. Title page:** with information as specified by APA style manuals (exception: no running heading is needed) and includes “Date Submitted: with date” at bottom of the page.
- 2. Introduction:** a brief formulation of your thoughts regarding the assignment highlighting what is coming in the portfolio, and other important information you deem necessary to introduce the project..
- 3. District Background and other relevant information:** relevant information about the district/campus that will help provide an understanding of the context for school improvement
- 4. AEIS Reports:** a copy of the current AEIS report for the campus being considered
- 5. Needs Analysis:** identification of major school wide issues determined from analysis of the AEIS report to be addressed
- 6. Vision Statement and Model:** An overall vision statement that describes a future state of success of the campus and a model that illustrates the process to be used to move the campus forward.
- 7. Plan of Action:** a plan of action (use a District or Campus Improvement Plan format) which addresses the needs of the campus, represents the skills and behaviors of effective principals as demonstrated in the TExES Domains & Competencies, and represents the characteristics of effective schools as demonstrated in research by Lezotte and Edmonds. You should consider short, medium, and long term goals— think beyond a single year, in other words. You should also consider how you would implement your ideas—that is, what needs to be done for the idea to become a part of the school climate and culture? Finally, how will you know when you have succeeded in moving the campus toward improvement?
- 8. Conclusion:** a brief statement bringing your thoughts (and portfolio) to a meaningful conclusion
- 9. References:** a list of references of sources used to construct your portfolio

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- Your Campus Case Study Portfolio will include **narrative commentary** for each section, but you might want to supplement your commentary with **evidentiary artifacts** to support your thinking and your analysis.
- Your Campus Case Study Portfolio will be graded on several criteria; however, overall your portfolio should reflect **quality in depth and breadth**. That is, your portfolio should encompass the content of the class (and the Principal Preparation Program) by demonstrating your ability to synthesize and integrate the concepts discussed and indicate a depth of understanding of the related topics and literature while demonstrating the ability to package information in a cogent and scholarly manner. That is to say, the content is just as important as its presentation.
- In addition, the process of creating the portfolio is another key component of the assignment. Your ability to work together equitably to produce a quality product is of utmost importance to the success of the assignment and your grade. It is expected that all group members will participate fully, actively, and equitably in every aspect of the portfolio assignment. *NOTE: One grade will be awarded for the project and all members will receive the same grade.*

## TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

This course is an on-line class. You will need a minimum of technology to successfully complete the course. You will need access to an email account on a daily basis. I will be emailing during the course to communicate information, assignments, and other addenda. You need to check your MyLeo email each day for these communications. You will also need to communicate often with your classmates. Please use MyLeo email accounts in this course. In addition, begin the course by introducing yourself and locating a classmate “buddy.” Exchange phone numbers and contact information. Please respect the privacy rights of your classmates and use this information for class purposes only unless you have specific permission from each class member to do otherwise. In order to complete your assignments, you will need to be proficient at MS Office programs, such as Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and Publisher. All assignments submitted electronically must be in MS Office formats.

## ACCESS AND NAVIGATION

**Course Concerns:** If you have questions pertaining to the content of this course, please contact me via email, or by phone (urgent issues only please), or visit with me before or after class. If you need an appointment outside of class, please visit with me to set up a time.

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**Other Questions or Concerns:** Contact the appropriate TAMU-Commerce department relating to your questions or concerns. Contact information for individual departments is available by navigating the information on the university web page ([www.tamuc.edu](http://www.tamuc.edu)). Phone numbers are available by clicking on “Contact Us” link at the bottom left corner of the university web main page. If you are unable to reach the appropriate department with questions regarding your course enrollment, billing, advising, or financial aid, please call 903.886.5520 (Educational Leadership Department secretary) between the hours of 8:00 am and 5:00 pm, Monday through Friday.

## **COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT**

### **Interaction with Instructor Statement:**

The best way to contact me is via email at [shari.farris@tamuc.edu](mailto:shari.farris@tamuc.edu) I check my email regularly. Please let me know if you would like to set up an appointment to speak by phone.

## **COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES**

### **Course Specific Procedures:**

**Citizenship:** All students enrolled in the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. (see Students Guide Handbook, Policies and Procedures, Conduct).

**Courtesy:** Please practice courtesy, respect the opinions of others, be positive in speech and effort, encourage your classmates, respect confidentiality, and support each other’s learning.

**Late Work:** All assignments are due on the date assigned.

**Plagiarism:** Plagiarism WILL NOT BE TOLERATED and will result in an automatic “F” for the course. Various versions of your work and papers may be run through Turn It In software to verify authorship authenticity, as well as to assist you in seeing possible areas that might be unintentionally plagiarized and allow for editing your work.

**Scholarly Expectations:** All work submitted for credit must be original works created by you—the scholar—for this class setting. All work that is created by another that you use in your work must be cited appropriately using APA Publication Manual (6<sup>th</sup> edition) formatting. It is my expectation that any work you produce for this class be of high quality and represent the skills

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and behaviors of an excellent academic scholar demonstrating passion for the field (see the *Rubric for Course Grade* for a listing of those behaviors)

**University Specific Procedures:**

**ADA Statement:** The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

**Office of Student Disability Resources and Services**

**Texas A&M University-Commerce**

**Gee Library 132**

**Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835**

**Fax (903) 468-8148**

[StudentDisabilityServices@tamu-commerce.edu](mailto:StudentDisabilityServices@tamu-commerce.edu)

**Student Disability Resources & Services**

**Student Conduct:** All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. (See: *Code of Student Conduct from Student Guide Handbook*).

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