TO ACCOMPANY PROPOSAL FOR ADDITION OF COURSE TO AN EXISTING CLUSTER

Name of proposing faculty member: Robin Voskerchian
Title of proposed course: Cultural Pluralism and Urban Education
From which department(s): Educational Policy, Foundations and Administrative Studies
For which cluster: Leadership for Change
Name of cluster coordinator: Dilasruz Williams

COURSE APPROVED FOR CLUSTER INCLUSION BY

DEPARTMENT CHAIR(S): [Signature] (Acting) Date: 11/27/00

CLUSTER COORDINATOR: [Signature] Date: Dec 7, 2000

CHAIR, CLUSTER COORDINATORS: [Signature] Date: 12/6/00

CHAIR, UNST COMMITTEE: [Signature] Date: 12/18/00

University Studies: November 2000
PROPOSAL FOR ADDITION OF COURSE TO AN EXISTING CLUSTER

A. COURSE DESCRIPTION:
This course is designed to explore the process of education policy development and implementation in culturally diverse urban environments. The course is organized around several cultural pluralism perspectives; among the topics to be explored are the issues of socialization of the child, governmental operations, educational administration, issues of teaching and learning, and curriculum design.

B. COURSE DEVELOPMENT:
EPFA 457/557 Cultural Pluralism and Urban Education is an existing course offered in Graduate School of Education’s Educational Policy, Foundations and Administrative Studies Department. I am proposing to redesign EPFA 457/557 to address issues of diversity within the context of educational leadership and urban education. This course will be taught by Robin Voetterl, faculty member – Educational Policy, Foundations and Administrative Studies, Graduate School of Education.

C. GENERAL EDUCATION GOALS:
Generally, a multicultural environment is one where multiple cultures exist; whereas a culturally plural environment is one where knowledge about culture, respect for the culture(s) of others and an understanding of the interplay of difference is used as the basis for interacting with diverse persons and groups. Further, a culturally plural environment is one whose participants make a conscious effort to develop a common, just agenda (Henry, 1991). This course explores the impact of culture and communities on those who lead in a variety of educational contexts; and assumes certain knowledge, skills and sensitivities in the epistemological understandings and practice of cultural pluralism must be mastered in order to become an effective leader in culturally diverse urban environments.

This course expects students to be active explorers of their own and others’ cultures, cultural assumptions, culture contact and cultural behavior in educational organizations and urban environments. The overall goal of the course is to develop critical ways of thinking about leadership, education, culture, and the forming of communities of learners in the hope that all will be enhanced rather than diminished by the experiences they share. Hence, through our engagement with provocative theoretical and philosophical perspectives, in-class dialogues, and community based field experiences we will meet the following objectives:

- re-examine one’s personal and cultural values and their relevance to questions of developing leadership capacity in urban environments and test one’s capacity to engage the ethical, interactive, and organizational challenges of culturally plural urban environments;
- critically analyze the ways in which culture, race, class, and gender become important determinants of conceptions and expectations of leadership (in theory and in and practice);
- generate conceptual tools for analyzing educational goals, theories, practices, structures, and outcomes within their cultural contexts;
- demonstrate knowledge, skills, and sensitivities necessary for leadership in a variety of educational organizations within culturally plural urban environments;
- demonstrate an understanding of conceptions of effective leadership philosophies and practices in culturally plural urban environments;
- document and analyze trends and issues in urban education systems;
- examine the relationship between cultural diversity, educational leadership, and educational outcome effectiveness;
- identify and critically evaluate educational policy and leadership alternatives for meeting the educational needs of culturally diverse learners located within urban social environments.

D. COURSE OUTLINE

This course requires students to explore the human experience inherent in all institutions of education as well as ethical issues related to social responsibility and agency in a democracy; while simultaneously increasing the learners capacity for critical inquiry and communication by exploring the following themes:

What is cultural pluralism and how can it affect life in communities and leadership paradigms?

Themes:
- understand the evolution of cultural pluralism and the boundaries of culture;
- explore how leadership patterns are transmitted and transformed by educational institutions;
- explore how cultural pluralism relates to issues of educational leadership and community participation and empowerment in relation to the relationships that exist between the behavior of leaders and participants in normalizing institutions and the cultural values of their time, place, and dominant interests;
- understand issues of equity and educational leadership philosophies and practices including understanding diversity, continuing efforts to seek to eliminate discrimination, adapting equity models for specific educational organizations, exploring aspects of group solutions to the collective problems of discrimination, and enhancing the ability for leaders to communicate group goals clearly and coherently;
- explore the significant roles for educational leaders in culturally plural environments;
- explore and understand how leadership is defined in various cultural settings, as well as in the current leadership paradigm, and examine conceptions of leadership from the margins – conceptions that reflect other cultures and societies than the dominant U.S. culture;
What are the historical and philosophical perspectives on leadership and cultural pluralism in U.S. society?
Themes:
- understand the history of education and educational leadership in a democratic society;
- explore the relationships between the ability of educational institutions to achieve social justice and the ability their leaders to demonstrate excellence;
- investigate how educational leaders have historically responded to issues of cultural pluralism and urban environments;
- explore the significant issues of K-12 and higher education that reflect societies efforts to grapple with issues of cultural pluralism and social justice in the urban environment;
- analyze the successes and identify the continuing barriers to success for cultivating educational leadership among communities of differing cultural groups;
- explore whether schools as presently constituted are structurally compatible with the democratic ideals and for educating leaders in a culturally plural society;

What are the critical relationships between urban life, cultural pluralism and leadership?
Themes:
- examine how urban education leaders and educational institutions can effectively respond to issues regarding cultural pluralism in the next 20 years?
- explore strategies for effective cross cultural communication and intercultural interactions among all participants in urban education;
- understand how educational leaders can increase the probability of successfully educating for social justice in urban institutions of education?

CONNECTION TO THE GOALS OF UNIVERSITY STUDIES:
This course reinforces the notion that each individual is a unique part of an interconnected web of relationships and encourages students to make connections between theory, practice, and their own experience leading to a more complete understanding and further development of their own leadership abilities and capacity to engage in civil discourse. Students will demonstrate their understandings of the relationships between urban life and educational institutions, cultural pluralism and leadership paradigms through an integrated approach designed to explore the experiential and ethical issues related to personal, societal and global well-being. Utilizing community-based partners known for their excellence in educational endeavors and commitment to social justice, students will explore issues of cultural pluralism and leadership using the following strategies. This course will: Develop critical reasoning and the ability to engage in inquiry by evaluating theories, systems of knowledge and knowledge claims from a variety of perspectives using a range of modes and styles of inquiry. Through out this course students will reflect on the importance of language as well as explore and develop a self concept of their own leadership.
Explore the personal implications and responsibilities in creating ethical and safe urban communities with an appreciation of diversity through enhancing each individual's understanding of leadership and the role individual participation plays in a healthy democratic society.

Explore the relationship between physical, intellectual, emotional and social well-being and develop the capacity to adapt to a variety of challenges by enhancing awareness and appreciation for diverse leadership styles in local, national and global communities through course readings and interactions among classmates and with our community partners.

Enhance familiarity with and proficiency with current technologies through the use of electronic portfolios.

Enhance written and oral expression through the use of weekly critical reflection papers, course journals, small and large group dialogue, and in class presentations of course readings and final projects.

Encourage students to use project planning as a way to explore their own conceptions of leadership, as well as to develop an understanding of shared leadership and communal responsibilities.

CONNECTION TO THE LEADERSHIP FOR CHANGE CLUSTER:
This course builds on important themes inherent in the leadership for change cluster. By exploring varying theoretical frameworks of leadership, exposing students to a variety of leadership paradigms and styles, and helping students to understand different forms of leadership in various cultural contexts and the impact these forms have on urban communities, students will grapple with the fundamental question of what it means to be a leader and participant in democratic community based institutions.

PRELIMINARY READING LIST & PARTIAL BIBLIOGRAPHY OF KNOWLEDGE


