



**Master of Science in Education Program  
MS\_ED\_451\_SEC22\_Topics in Teaching & Learning-  
Teacher Advocacy: Local, State, & National Impact**

Fall 2021, Thursdays/6:00-9:00 p.m.  
<https://northwestern.zoom.us/j/94748779383>

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Office Hours: Virtual, Thursdays 5:30 p.m. & 8:00 p.m.

### Course Description

Educational policy is one of the most influential forces impacting education today. Teacher leadership and advocacy are *calls to action* for educators to use their individual and collective voices to shape education through policy and practice. Students will be able to immediately apply what they learn as they identify an opportunity/challenge from their lived experiences and propose a policy-based solution and advocacy plan to address it.

**Required Texts:**

- Garza, A. (2020). *The purpose of power: How we come together when we fall apart*. One World-Penguin Random House. ISBN 978-0-525-50968-4
- Good, A. G. (2019). *Teachers at the table: Voice, agency, and advocacy in educational policymaking*. Lexington Books. ISBN 978-1-4985-7247-7

## Course Objectives

Through the *Teacher Advocacy: Local, State, & National Impact* course, students will be able to...

- Define educational policy (vs. practice) and advocacy, including the process, actors/implementers, milieu, and evaluation;
- Identify opportunities for teacher agency, collective teacher leadership & advocacy, and impacts (i.e., classroom, school, district, community/local, state, & national);
- Understand and examine how educational policies affect learning environments, teacher quality and pedagogy, and student learning;
- Identify strategies & structures through which teachers can effectively advocate for equity in education; and,
- Define an educational opportunity/challenge and develop a proposed policy-based solution.

## Course Expectations/Content, Policies, and Grading

### **CANVAS DISCUSSION FORUM:**

When assigned (see [quick guide](#)), each student is required to post one (1) initial post response and one (1) reply to a classmate on the Canvas Discussion Forum.

### **PARTICIPATION:**

Your enthusiastic, mindful participation is crucial to the class, as is your commitment to listen carefully to other students' points of view.

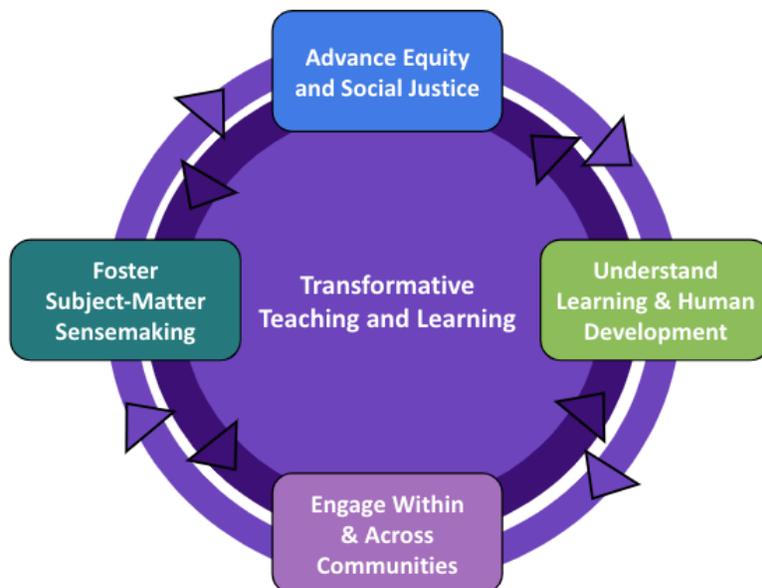
### **ASSIGNMENTS & FINAL GRADE:**

**All assignments are due at the assigned class session.** Your final grade will be based on your education passion paper and [final advocacy project](#).

### **KEY COURSE READINGS & ASSIGNMENTS:** [MS ED 451 Course Quick Guide](#)

This syllabus is intended to give students guidance in what may be covered during the quarter and will be followed as closely as possible. However, the instructor reserves the right to modify, supplement, and make changes as course and student needs arise.

## Northwestern Teacher Education Guiding Commitments



The Northwestern Teacher Education Program's Guiding Commitments are:

- A statement of values about education for dignity, theories of learning as a social, cognitive, ethical and cultural process, and belief in the power of practices that create culturally sustaining & anti-racist learning environments
- Tools for strengthening our cultural life living through Course, "Discipline", Program, and Community
- Opportunities to build knowledge, enact practices/ performances, cultivate dispositions

## Student Attendance Policy

Student attendance at every class meeting is expected. Your presence as part of a collaborative learning community is key to your development and the development of your colleagues. If for some reason you must be absent from a class session, you must inform the instructor before your absence. Because of the short number of overall class sessions in the quarter system, missing two class sessions puts your ability to pass the class in jeopardy. Missing three class sessions will result in an automatic grade of "Incomplete" and you will have to retake the class at another time.

## Academic Integrity Policy

Students in this course are required to comply with the policies found in the booklet, "Academic Integrity at Northwestern University: A Basic Guide". All papers submitted for credit in this course must be submitted electronically unless otherwise instructed by the professor. Your written work may be tested for plagiarized content. For details regarding academic integrity at Northwestern or to download the guide, visit:

<https://www.northwestern.edu/provost/policies/academic-integrity/index.html>

## Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Northwestern University is committed to providing the most accessible learning environment as possible for students with disabilities. Should you anticipate or experience disability-related barriers in the academic setting, please contact AccessibleNU to move forward with the university's established accommodation process (e: [accessiblenu@northwestern.edu](mailto:accessiblenu@northwestern.edu); p: 847-467-5530). If you already have established accommodations with AccessibleNU, please let me know as soon as possible, preferably within the first two weeks of the term, so we can work together to implement your disability accommodations. Disability information, including academic accommodations, is confidential under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act.

## COVID-19 Testing Compliance

To protect the health of our community, Northwestern University requires unvaccinated students who are in on-campus programs to be tested for COVID-19 twice per week.

Students who fail to comply with current or future COVID-19 testing protocols will be referred to the Office of Community standards to face disciplinary action, including escalation up to restriction from campus and suspension.

## Prohibition of Recording of Class Sections by Students

Unauthorized student recording of classroom or other academic activities (including advising sessions or office hours) is prohibited. Unauthorized recording is unethical and may also be a violation of University policy and state law. Students requesting the use of assistive technology as an accommodation should contact [AccessibleNU](#). Unauthorized use of classroom recordings – including distributing or posting them – is also prohibited. Under the [University's Copyright Policy](#), faculty own the copyright to instructional materials – including those resources created specifically for the purposes of instruction, such as syllabi, lectures and lecture notes, and presentations. Students cannot copy, reproduce, display, or distribute these materials. Students who engage in unauthorized recording, unauthorized use of a recording, or unauthorized distribution of instructional materials will be referred to the appropriate University office for follow-up.

## Support for Wellness and Mental Health

Northwestern University is committed to supporting the wellness of our students. Student Affairs has multiple resources to support student wellness and mental health. If you are feeling distressed or overwhelmed, please reach out for help. Students can access confidential resources through the Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS), Religious and Spiritual Life (RSL) and the Center for Awareness, Response and Education (CARE). Additional information on all of the resources mentioned above can be found here:

<https://www.northwestern.edu/counseling/>

<https://www.northwestern.edu/religious-life/>

<https://www.northwestern.edu/care/>

## Guidance on Class Recordings

This class or portions of this class will be recorded by the instructor for educational purposes and available to the class during the quarter. Your instructor will communicate how you can access the recordings. Portions of the course that contain images, questions or commentary/discussion by students will be edited out of any recordings that are saved beyond the current term.

## Northwestern Teacher Education Working Professional Dispositions

At Northwestern University, we affirm that teaching is a scholarly, complex endeavor that requires an understanding of the intertwined nature of theory and practice. Teachers need to develop knowledge, skills, practices, and critical reflection, while they also actively and consistently demonstrate professional dispositions. We define dispositions as professional attitudes, stances, values and beliefs; we have collaboratively developed our program dispositions for transformative teaching and learning. Through integrated coursework, developmental advising, and field experiences, we commit to supporting educators as they develop both their pedagogy and professional dispositions.

Below each **bolded disposition** we have included descriptors that elaborate how each disposition might be enacted. This is not an exhaustive list and there are other ways that educators may demonstrate these dispositions. By design, some indicators do appear under multiple dispositions given the intersecting nature of these categories.

### **Commitment to Advancing Equity and Justice**

- Engage in self-reflection to understand your own identity, internalized biases, positional privileges, and your impact in any space.
- Demonstrate a recognition that teaching grounded in equity and social justice is essential in any setting and in the teaching of all subject matter.
- Work to understand how inequity shows up in different settings and take steps to disrupt those patterns.
- Identify and strive to address inequities and power relations of systemic racism, sexism, socioeconomic classism, heteronormativity, ableism, and other forms of human oppression.
- Cultivate interactions that demonstrably value all students and stakeholders and their ideas.

### **Sense of Professional Responsibility and Commitment to Ongoing Growth**

- Demonstrate self-awareness and self-management.
- Engage in self-reflection to understand your own identity, internalized biases, positional privileges, and your impact in any space.
- Demonstrate an openness to feedback and integrate feedback into action.
- Seek out resources, feedback, and support based on interests and/or needs.
- Engage in critical self-reflection and reflection on practice; explain rationale for decisions grounded in research, theory, and lived experience.
- Apply feedback and demonstrate a willingness to make changes.
- Take action to learn and meet the professional expectations for each context (this includes everything from professional records to attendance to attire).
- Meet all legal and ethical requirements (including related to how to appropriately engage with students, colleagues, and stakeholders).
- Engage in a way that is reliable and trustworthy (this includes being punctual, prepared, present, etc.).

### **Reverence for Learners and Learning**

- Demonstrate a commitment to all students as individuals with unique strengths and experiences; seek to understand and build relationships with all students.

- Maintain high expectations for all students; value and prioritize opportunities to advance learning.
- Recognize the complexity of teaching and learning.
- Demonstrate a strengths-based perspective and actively question and push back on deficit thinking.
- Value students' contributions and their diverse ways of knowing and being; commit to understanding students' thinking.

**Focus on Collaboration**

- Seek to build meaningful relationships by understanding, working with, and learning from others.
- Value the contributions of families and community members and actively work to meaningfully connect with them.
- Seek to understand and build relationships with schools, families, and communities as particular types of intersecting systems within a larger ecosystem that shape our students' lives.
- Maintain a focus on recognizing students' strengths, advancing learning (own and others), and finding positive solutions during all interactions.