

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY
EDUCATION 486-4
SPECIAL TOPIC: POLITICAL ISSUES IN EDUCATION
(E1.00)

Fall Semester, 1991
(September 3 – November 29)
Thursdays, 4:30–8:20 p.m.
Location: MPX 9511

Instructor: Norman Robinson
Office: MPX 8666
Phone: 291-4165

PREREQUISITE: EDUC 401/402, or equivalent.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Education 486 (Political Issues in Education) is designed as an introduction to the world of educational politics. The course attempts to provide a broad, general understanding of current knowledge and research in the area of the politics of education and educational governance. Special attention is given to understanding the political environment of public environment in Canada, with particular emphasis placed on British Columbia.

A variety of course experiences will be offered to promote understanding. These will include individual study and research, lectures, small group discussions, and class projects. Extensive use will be made of case studies, role plays, simulations and filmed materials. Field trips will be undertaken to observe school boards in action and a number of politicians in the area of educational politics will give guest lectures.

Education 486 (Political Issues in Education) is designed for all teachers and administrators who want to gain a better understanding of the political environment in which public education operates. The course is particularly useful for those students who are planning careers as school administrators. It is probably most essential for those persons who aspire to high level administrative positions in school districts or senior government.

COURSE READINGS

These will be distributed by the instructor at the beginning of the course.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

Assignments and responsibilities for the course are of three kinds:

1. Attendance. Each student is expected to be present for all classes and field sessions of the class. In the event of extenuating circumstances, it is the responsibility of the student to inform the instructor of any proposed absence.
2. Regular class presentation. Each student will have required reading assignments for each class session along with additional preparatory work assigned, e.g. case study analysis, role plays.
3. Assignments from the list of suggested assignments. The list of suggested assignments (which will be distributed at the beginning of the course) includes assignments such as book reviews, interviews with political actors in education, field observations, in-class presentations, article reviews, small-scale research studies, term papers, writing of case studies, etc.

GRADE CONTRACTING

Each student may contract for the grade desired.

Students who wish to contract for a grade at the C level will be required to complete assignments and responsibilities 1 and 2 and one assignment from 3. The grade

awarded at the C level (C-, C or C+) will depend upon the quality of work done at this level.

Students who wish to contract for a grade at the B level will complete assignments and responsibilities 1 and 2 and two assignments from 3. The grade awarded at the B level (B-, B or B+) will depend upon the quality of the work done at this level.

Students who wish to contract for a grade at the A level will complete assignments and responsibilities 1 and 2 and three assignments from 3. The grade awarded at the A level (A-, A or A+) will depend upon the quality of work done at this level.

COURSE TOPICS

The Public Education

1. Public attitudes toward education
2. Citizen participation in education
3. School-community relations
4. School-community communications

The Media and Education

1. The political function of the mass media
2. Images of education in media

The Federal Government and Education

1. The federal role in education

The Provincial Government and Education

1. The role of the provincial government in education
2. The office of the Minister of Education
3. The Ministry of Education

School Districts and School Boards

1. The history of school boards in Canada with special reference to British Columbia
2. The school board and its responsibilities
3. School board members and their characteristics
4. The politics of school board elections

The Politics of the Neighbourhood School

1. Public involvement in the local school
2. Power structures in the neighbourhood
3. Home-school communications
4. Home-school partnerships

Pressure Groups in Education

1. The teacher organizations
2. The school trustee organizations
3. Parents' groups
4. Citizen groups
5. Protest and anomie political behavior in education

The Micropolitics of the School and School District

1. School district organizational politics
2. School-school district politics
3. Inside-school politics
4. Getting ahead: career politics in schools
5. Getting what you need: budget politics in schools