

## EDUCATION 486-4

### SPECIAL TOPIC:

### Critical Incidents in Teaching: The Teacher as Decision Maker (E1.00)

Spring Semester, 1992  
(January 6–April 3)  
Wednesday, 4:30–8:20 p.m.  
Location: MPX 7600F

Instructor: Dr. S. Wassermann  
Office: MPX 8629  
Phone: 291-3798

---

**PREREQUISITE:** EDUC 401/402

#### OVERVIEW OF COURSE AND ELIGIBILITY:

This course is offered for preservice and inservice teachers who wish to participate in the examination of the decision making processes of teachers, and understand the kinds of influences that bear upon these processes.

One of the important aspects of professional functioning is the autonomy of professionals to arrive at decisions based upon their sound professional judgment. The ability to examine and interpret data, to analyze assumptions, and to project potential consequences is considered a true mark of professional functioning.

In some professions, a variety of pressures—political, social, emotional, personal, temporal—serve to influence professional judgment and consequently, decision making. Such influence may have a deep and pervasive effect upon the degrees of freedom and emotional health of professionals, upon their beliefs and values about the profession itself, and upon their subsequent practice. This course uses contemporary film and readings to raise levels of awareness about factors influencing teachers' decision making, through examination of certain critical incidents in teaching. Films, books, journal articles and written case studies are supplemented by focused group discussions through which the many facets of educational decision making may be more critically examined. It is through this process that students become more critically aware of personal decision making in their own professional/educational contexts.

#### COURSE OBJECTIVES:

1. To promote greater understanding of and appreciation for the various and complex factors, and situational demands that influence personal decision making in professional contexts.
2. To promote awareness of the relationship between decision making and personal empowerment.
3. To promote more critical awareness of personal decision making in professional contexts.
4. To develop more effective strategies to aid in personal decision making.

#### REQUIREMENTS:

In addition to regular attendance and active participation in seminars and study groups, students are required to complete assigned readings, write two case analyses, and write an original case, demonstrating awareness of decision making conflicts in a professional context. The keeping of a journal of personal reflections on decision making in professional contexts is an optional requirement.