

*University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign - College of Education*  
*Department of Educational Organization and Leadership*

**EOL 542: The Principalship in Elementary and Secondary Education**  
**Course Syllabus, Spring 2009**

**Instructor:**

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**“The quality of a school hinges on the principal—and the degree to which he or she engages parents and community in a shared vision of success for all, creates a culture of respect and high expectation, and promotes delivery of high quality curriculum, instruction, and assessment.”**

**NSBA 2000**

**“A leader is a person who has a following. The key to being a good leader lies in one’s ability to cause others to want his leadership.**

**Robert Debrun,**  
*Causing others to want your leadership*

**Course Description:**

The job of the principal is made up of a collective series of roles and functions that must be carried out for a school to operate successfully. It is an increasingly complex job, filled with competing interests and issues that occupy the energy the principal brings to the job each day. In the midst of this increased complexity are the constant demands for higher and higher performance accountability, while dealing with an inadequacy of resources. The principal must provide the faith and inspiration to build a professional learning community through his ability to share values, create meaning, develop visions, and shape a school culture dedicated to excellence and equity for all.

The purpose of this course is to provide an understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the school principal as well as explore frameworks for thinking about problems and opportunities in schools, the standards and competencies expected of principals, and the position-related questions and issues encountered by principals. Attention is also given to issues of equity, an inclusive school culture, and collaboration with the larger community. This course will introduce graduate students considering a career in school administration to the promises and the realities of school-based leadership. While it stresses both the leadership and management aspects of the principalship; hopefully it will also provide students with an intellectual challenge and cause them to reflect on what, with effort and analysis, “might be”.

**Course Outcomes:**

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

1. Describe the complexities of school climate and school culture and the principal’s role in enhancing climate and developing culture

2. Analyze the roles and responsibilities of a visionary leader and the staff in the school environment as they relate to curriculum design and delivery, scheduling, staff utilization, decision-making, public relations, communication and conflict resolution, school finance, and facilities management.
3. Analyze internal and external communication systems and how effective communication skills impact the district-community programs.
4. Know and understand the ethical and moral implications of decision-making.
5. Develop an understanding of the organizational structure and operation of schools; human dimensions of schools, including organizational culture and climate; and the social, political and economic environment in which schools exist.
6. Reflect on how leadership identity influences leadership beliefs and practice.
7. Assess their potential as an effective school administrator and leader.

### **Required Textbooks:**

Ubben, G., Hughes, L., and Norris, C. (2007). *The principal*. Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.  
Whitaker, T. (2003). *What great principals do differently*. Larchmont, NY: Eye on Education.

### **Course Organization**

This class will be conducted as a graduate seminar blending individual, small group and large group activities using multiple avenues of information gathering and communication. The development of the course is based on the notion that learning is something people do and knowledge is gained by doing; not something passively received. As such, students are expected to be able and willing to devote considerable attention to assignments and activities and share information and ideas. Throughout the course students will have opportunities to make sense for themselves of the competing, often times paradoxical, roles of the principal. Through discussion and case study analysis, students will gain experience in discussing their vision for schools, becoming more conscious of their own values, assumptions, and purposes in the process. This will include learning to think critically and systematically when analyzing key school related issues.

Punctual class attendance is a must. It is very difficult to make up for missed class time. If you miss more than one class period your grade may be lowered one letter grade as well as have a negative impact upon your participation grade. If an emergency arises, please let me know as soon as possible by email or phone as soon as possible.

### **General Expectations**

In order to ensure that this course will be enjoyable and productive, students are expected to:

1. Study assigned readings and be prepared to actively contribute to conversations and activities related to them.
2. Complete assignments and hand them in on time.
3. Attend and participate actively in all classes.
4. Notify the professor if you are unable to attend class prior to the class meeting.

## **Expectations for all Written Work:**

Graduate-level writing is expected to:

1. Be free from grammatical and spelling errors.
2. Be thoughtful and analytical.
3. Be well structured and bias-free.
4. Clearly draw from and refer to the reading assignments.
5. Be in APA form with correct citations. (Include a cover sheet with each assignment, use 1.25-inch margins, Times New Roman font, and use double spacing)
6. Be student's original work.

## **Course Requirements:**

Each student's performance in this course will be evaluated by:

### **1. Class Participation: 20% (30 points—12 possible for punctuality)**

Class attendance is required and students are encouraged to contribute to class discussion. You will earn 1 point for being in class on time (5:30) for each of the 12 class sessions. This will constitute 40% of the participation grade or 12 points out of 30).

Participation is key to a stimulating class. Three general points are worth noting:

- a. It is the quality, not the quantity, of one's contributions to class discussion that matters. Active listening is a must.
- b. Diverse views are desired; they add depth to our understanding. Students in the class possess a rich variety of experiences and we have much to learn from each other. Try to relate the readings or discussion to your own experience whenever possible. No one has your background and everyone can learn from hearing your reflections.
- c. Respect for one another's opinions and perspectives is a nonnegotiable.

\*The following guidelines will be used for evaluating class participation:

***Outstanding contributor:*** Contributions in class reflect exceptional preparation. Ideas offered are always substantive, provide one or more major insights as well as direction for the class. Challenges are well substantiated and persuasively presented. If this person were not a member of the class, the quality of discussion would be diminished markedly.

***Good contributor:*** Contributions in class reflect thorough preparation. Ideas offered are usually substantive, provide good insights and sometimes direction for the class. Challenges are well substantiated and often persuasive. If this person were not a member of the class, the quality of discussion would be diminished.

***Adequate contributor:*** Contributions in class reflect satisfactory preparation. Ideas offered are sometimes substantive, provide generally useful insights but seldom offer a new direction for the discussion. Challenges are sometimes presented, fairly well substantiated, and are sometimes persuasive. If this person were not a member of the class, the quality of discussion would be diminished somewhat.

***Non-participant:*** This person says little or nothing in class. Hence, there is not an adequate basis for evaluation. If this person were not a member of the class, the quality of discussion would not be changed.

**Unsatisfactory contributor:** Contributions in class reflect inadequate preparation. Ideas offered are seldom substantive, provide few if any insights and never a constructive direction for the class. Integrative comments and effective challenges are absent. If this person were not a member of the class, valuable air time would be saved.

**2. Book Presentation: 25%--37.5 points-- (13% --19.5 points-- Powerpoint) (12% --18 points-- paper)**

Read all or a portion of one of the books on the approved list. No one will read the same book. Write a 3-5 page summary/critique. Be sure to relate what we have been exploring in class; for example, decision making, roles of a principal, and/or Todd Whitaker's philosophy of the principalship. Prepare a 7-10 minute PowerPoint to share with the class. You may just pick one aspect of your book to share in the PowerPoint. The summary/critique and the PowerPoint do not have to be identical. You will be allowed no more than 20 minutes to present your PowerPoint and answer questions, and/or engage the class in discussion.

**3. Case Study Analysis: 15%--22.5 points**

Choose one of the three case studies on which to become an "expert".

As a small group, explore the issues in the case, using Chapter 3 Decision Making from Ubben, the presentation on change, and Bolman and Deal's four frames. As an individual, write a 2-4 page analysis of the case and your plan for resolution. During one class period you will each act as an expert and facilitate a small group exploration of the case.

**4. Journal Analysis: 10 %--15 points**

Read one issue of the NASSP Bulletin or the NAESP Principal from cover to cover **AND** one issue of either Education Leadership or Journal of the National Staff Development Council from cover to cover. Prepare no more than a five page summary, review, analysis, and reaction to the issues that you read.

**5. Reflection on the *Change Game*: 15% --22.5 points**

A 2-4 page reflection/reaction paper to the *Change Game*. This paper should be a synthesis of our class discussions on change, carrying out a SIP action plan, and what happened during the game. Was it realistic or not—why or why not? You might also reference a change initiative in your district/building and how its successful or unsuccessful implementation was similar or different than discussions in class.

**7. In basket Assignments: 3 for 5% each for a total of 15%--22.5 points**

You will be given three different "in basket" activities to complete outside of class. These activities will be further explained in class.

**6. Reflection on Professional School Leadership Standards #3 Management and #4 Collaborations with Families and Communities: meets/exceeds/does not meet**

Prepare a self-assessment, using the Illinois Professional School Leadership Self Inventory. This will require a reflective response to the Illinois Professional School Leader Standards, completion of the School Leadership Self Inventory, and an analysis and reflection on the results of the Self Inventory that includes a statement describing personal leadership style and values and a statement describing preferences in school organization and environment. You must receive a "meets" on this activity to be recommended for certification.

In preparing this assignment for inclusion in the Common Assessment Portfolio, students also must add a reflective statement on how this assignment improved their understanding of an administrator's role in school management and in collaboration with families and communities.

## **Grading System**

Assignments turned in late may be lowered one letter grade up or 10 percentage points.  
There are a total of 150 points possible

Course grades are based on the following scores:

150-141	A	134-130	B+	119-115	C+	104-100	D+	< 90	F
141-135	A-	129-124	B	114-109	C	99- 94	D		
		123-120	B-	108-105	C-	93- 90	D-		

Grades in the A category are reserved for outstanding performance. Grades in the B category are awarded for solid high quality work, and C grades are assigned to work that is not distinguished as professional quality at the graduate level. A grade of F is assigned for failure to meet expectations for graduate quality work.

## **Students with Disabilities:**

I wish to fully include students with disabilities in this course. Please let me know if you need any special accommodations in the curriculum, instruction, or assessments to enable you to participate fully. I will try to maintain the confidentiality of the information you share. Please contact me as early in the course as possible; definitely by the second class meeting.

## **Academic Honesty and Integrity Statement:**

Students are expected to maintain academic honesty and integrity as students at the University of Illinois by doing their own work to the best of their ability. All written work by students should be the result of the individual student's research, thought, preparation, and writing efforts. Plagiarism and work that is prepared by others outside of the enrolled class and submitted as original work by the student is reason for punitive actions which may include dismissal and other serious actions by the university. See [http://www.uiuc.edu/admin\\_manual/code/code\\_contents.html](http://www.uiuc.edu/admin_manual/code/code_contents.html) for the University's Code of Policies and Regulations that apply to all students.

## **Confidentiality:**

In this course, we must respect several levels of confidentiality regarding information and experiences to which we will be privy. This includes information and anecdotes that may be shared in papers as well as class discussions and presentations. Appropriate treatment of the confidentiality of material and issues raised in class ultimately rests with our good judgment. We must be especially sensitive to the personal nature of the information and use discretion when talking and writing about the work.

## **Course Association to UIUC Conceptual Framework For Professional Education Programs**

The objectives of this course are directly associated with University and College of Education Professional Education Program goals in the following areas:

- Establishing community in teaching and learning environments
- Examining the sociological, philosophical and psychological context of public schools and the development of positive learning environments through collaborative administrative practices
- Guiding the development of inquiring and reflective minds

Emphasizing a reflective approach to understanding administrative leadership roles and practices, focusing particularly on critical thinking and analysis of research and leadership theory applications to public school administration  
Fostering a commitment to service  
Exploring the essential role and commitment of educators to serving the professional and school communities

### **Course Association with Content Area Standards in Educational Administration**

This course directly utilizes the following professional content area standards for the preparation of principals:

#### ***Standard 1: Facilitating a vision of educational excellence***

Students will develop an understanding of the role of the principal in advancing a vision emphasizing the success of all students by facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a school vision of learning that is supported by the school community.

#### ***Standard 2: School culture, learning environment, and instructional program***

Students will understand the theory and research that influences the principal's leadership in building a culture for effective teaching and learning, professional development, community relations and school improvement.

#### ***Standard 3: Management of the organization, operations, and resources***

Students will explore theories and methods of administrative support for an inclusive teaching and learning environment which promotes success for all students. This includes managing the organization, operations, and resources in a way that provides a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment.

#### ***Standard 4: Collaboration with families and communities***

Students will practice collaborative administrative roles in communicating with and in working with professional staff, students and families, other members of the school community. This will be done through case study analysis and simulations.

#### ***Standard 5: Acting with integrity, fairness, and in compliance with legal and ethical standards***

Students will understand the importance of professional ethics by demonstrating honesty, integrity, and fairness to guide and lead the school organization.

#### ***Standard 6: The political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context***

Students will seek comprehension of the social, economic, and political contexts in which public schools function and through course readings and small group work to anticipate and understand the influence of these contexts on public school operations.

**Emphasis will be placed on Standards 2 and 4.**