



UCDS Graduate School of Education

The UCDS Graduate School of Education courses connect experiences in classrooms and schools with the existing body of educational research and theory. Each course is anchored by a practicum experience. Instructors offer weekly practicum prompts to link learning in the graduate program with learning inside school settings. There are three aspects present in the overall courses: seminar experience, foundational knowledge and workshop experience.

Seminar Experience - Courses are designed to be philosophical and intellectual explorations into theory. They give students a foundational understanding of existing research that guides areas of practice. Seminar experiences promote dialogue, thinking and writing around central ideas and readings. This format will add depth and perspective to the other components of the program.

Foundational Knowledge - Coursework will blend real-time experience in schools with pedagogical and leadership investigations in class. Faculty design experiences focused on methodology, strategies and practice and to facilitate conversations to deepen student understanding of the relationship between theory and practice. Practicum experiences provide the expectation and opportunity for students to immediately apply information about theory.

Workshop Experiences - Courses provide students the opportunity to practice seeking resources, sharing and facilitating learning with others, and promoting reflection and question asking inside the communities they serve. Classes will take form in ways that best facilitate student participation. Workshop experiences require students to take academic risks by applying new knowledge and sharing that experience with their peers.

Practicum Experience - Graduate students will pair the body of coursework with practicum experience. Practicum settings provide students with the opportunity to test the theoretical knowledge gained in class with the practical application of that knowledge when teaching. Coursework will require graduate students to use their practicum as a place to practice, question, refine, and ground their understanding as well as their practices. Students who are working in schools may conduct their practicum in their own schools.

Course Rotation - The academic program is organized as a two year rotation to add to the quality of student discourse and account for the unique goals associated with students in the first and second years of the graduate program. Courses are offered every other year during Fall, Winter, and Spring quarters with the exception of the Cornerstone and Capstone courses offered every year.



Course of Study

Year A

Fall

All Students

EDU 592 Elements of Assessment 3 credits

EDU 533 Effective Communication 2 credits

EDU 561 Understanding Educational Research 2 credits

Cornerstone Students

EDU 542 Cornerstone - School Culture & Reflective Practice 1 credit

Capstone Students

EDU 701 Capstone - Proposal & Design 2 credits

Winter

All Students

EDU 593 Designing Assessment 3 credits

EDU 583 Student-Centered Curriculum Design 2 credits

EDU 584 Designing Curriculum for Critical Thinking and 21C Skills 2 credits

Cornerstone Students

EDU 543 Cornerstone - Introduction to Action Research 1 credit

Capstone Students

EDU 702 Capstone - Practicum & Synthesis 2 credits

Spring

All Students

EDU 595 Designing a Culture of Inquiry 3 credits

EDU 524 Comparative School Cultures 2 credits

EDU 586 The Democratic Classroom: Student Agency and Advocacy 2 credits

Cornerstone Students

EDU 544 Cornerstone - Implementing Action Research 1 credit

Capstone Students

EDU 703 Capstone - Reflection, Composition & Presentation 2 credits



Year B

Fall

All Students

EDU 532 Collaborative Elements 2 credits

EDU 531 Designing Connected Curriculum 2 credits

EDU 523 Learning About Learning 2 credits

Cornerstone Students

EDU 542 Cornerstone - School Culture & Reflective Practice 1 credit

Capstone Students

EDU 701 Capstone - Proposal & Design 2 credits

Winter

All Students

EDU 522 Cultural Competence 2 credits

EDU 581 Individualizing Instruction 2 credits

EDU 591 Learning Communities 2 credits

Cornerstone Students

EDU 543 Cornerstone - Introduction to Action Research 1 credit

Capstone Students

EDU 702 Capstone - Practicum & Synthesis 2 credits

Spring

All Students

EDU 564 Leading for Change 2 credits

EDU 582 Semiotics of Schools 2 credits

EDU 563 Ethics in Education 2 credits

Cornerstone Students

EDU 544 Cornerstone - Implementing to Action Research 1 credit

Capstone Students

EDU 703 Capstone - Reflection, Composition & Presentation 2 credits

Total credits for a degree 48 credits

Course Descriptions

EDU 522 Cultural Competence 2 credits

Throughout this course, we will utilize Goodman's definitions of cultural competence and social justice to examine the importance of educators and educational leaders having a profound understanding of how identity, power, and privilege impact the communities they serve. [Goodman \(2011\)](#) defines cultural competence as, "the ability to live and work effectively in culturally diverse environments and enact a commitment to social justice." She further defines social justice which, "refers to creating a society (or community, organization, or campus) with an equitable distribution of resources and opportunities. In socially just environments, all people are safe (physically and psychologically), can meet their needs, and can fulfill their potential. Social justice thus entails equity (fairness) and a sense of real inclusion." Participants will have the opportunity to implement various techniques to continually expand their awareness, knowledge, and abilities as they strive to create culturally competent communities.

EDU 523 Learning About Learning 2 credits

Our understanding of the human brain and its ability to learn is ever-expanding. This course opens up the beautiful and often mysterious 'black box' of how humans learn. Explore the latest and most significant theories of learning from the fields of cognitive science, neuroscience, and experimental psychology. Topics will include understanding and putting into practice: brain plasticity, memory, mindset, reasoning, attention, and executive function.

Students will discover how cognitive science informs teaching strategies, curriculum design, student assessment, and professional development through the continual practice of asking "What?" "Why?" "Why is this important?" and "How? How do I implement this? How does it affect my teaching?"

In addition, the following questions, and students' own inquiry, will lead our work together:

- *How does learning occur (cognitive science 101)?*
- *What is the role of memory and executive function?*
- *What factors influence learning?*
- *How can we design and deliver lessons that maximize learning (retention and utilization)?*
- *How do we design lessons that can be individualized to students based on their unique profile, taking into account cultural differences, neurodiversity, learning styles, and cognitive abilities.*

EDU 524 Comparative School Cultures 2 credits

Ron Ritchhart states that "culture is foundational (to schools) and determines how any curriculum comes to life." Classroom culture, school culture and a community's culture create the context for learning in our schools. This course examines education from both historical and organizational lenses. We will investigate the factors that define and influence school culture. We will use practicum experiences to analyze the roles played by artifacts, espoused beliefs and values, and underlying assumptions in each community. This study will increase a student's awareness and understanding of cultural forces and their role in shaping them.

Integral in the design and coursework Comparative School Culture is the belief that a school culture must support diversity, equity and inclusion. We read and examine the voices of powerful adherents for inclusive classroom and institutional democracy. These voices questioned and continue to question the traditional values of public and private education in a way that fosters deep reform, progressive thinking and a healthy skepticism when assessing and evaluating norms and standards of their eras. Sara Lawrence-Lightfoot, John Dewey, Paulo Freire, Eliot Eisner, Vivian Gussin-Paley, Bell Hooks and Jerome Bruner are some of the scholar-educators whose approaches to learning and vigorous examination of the culture of education identified that the power rests in the student/learner not the dominant, current or traditional political, racial, economic or institutional thinking. This course, as well, encourages students to be open, healthy skeptics in their work but also good listeners to the majority and the dissonant voices as they explore institutional culture. And we know that all our educational institutions must be diverse, equitable, inclusive and open-hearted so all believe they belong.

EDU 531 Designing Connected Curriculum

2 credits

Building curricular frameworks that facilitate learning by connecting different subject areas (math, science, literature, art, social studies, social-emotional learning, physical education, and more) offers a dynamic, engaging classroom approach. When compared to a curriculum that focuses solely on one subject, a combined approach using inquiry-based methods allows the student to have more voice and ownership as they investigate a topic from various perspectives. A connected curriculum also allows students to delve into their identity and explore topics related to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. This approach helps children to gain a better grasp of concepts while developing their communication, critical thinking, and creative skills.

This course aims to provide answers to the following questions:

- How can I create a curriculum that is interconnected?
- How does a connected curriculum improve student learning?
- What are the components of a connected curriculum?
- In what ways does a connected curriculum support diverse student groups?
- How do Design Thinking and Storytelling elements facilitate DEI topics in various fields?

Current educational frameworks that offer an integrated approach include Design Thinking, Project Based Learning, Thematic Curriculum, IB Curriculum, and Backward Design Approaches. These frameworks anchor student work in motivating, authentic, and relevant experiences. Additionally, this course emphasizes the significance of storytelling as a means of expressing personal identity, as well as being receptive to hearing and embracing the stories of others to establish connections and foster relationships.

EDU 532 Collaborative Elements

2 credits

Through a combination of in-class work and in-school observations, this course will explore and define collaboration. Each class session will be guided by an inquiry-based question regarding collaboration. Each participant's experiences and professional interests will be taken into account as the course evolves from a framework of relevant readings and experiences. Each participant's voice will be highly valued and become an integral part of the cohort of students' experiences. Students will have the opportunity to develop and deepen their network of colleagues to partner with and inform their future professional endeavors.



EDU 533 Effective Communication

2 credits

Communication is an essential tool for building an intentional school culture. Needs, values, traditions and a school's ethos rely on the medium of communication. Educators are called upon to be change agents: to explain concepts, motivate people and advocate for a better way of doing something. A successful, dynamic communicator makes their ideas come to life and brings clarity and shared understanding to the audience using effective and reflective listening, speaking, and writing skills that are grounded in the characteristics and knowledge of the school culture. Intentional communication clarifies understanding and invites the participation of educators, students and the greater community to share in and strengthen the school culture.

Students will build the knowledge, skills, strategies, and understanding that supports effective communications. Students will leave this class with the ability to identify elements of communication, navigate communication conflicts, adapt their communication approach to increase their effectiveness, and to create change in a wide range of communication contexts and relationships. This course focuses on the influences of interpersonal communication and how these interactions shape an environment. Weekly in-class activities center on identifying personal values that characterize interpersonal communications with the expectation of engaging with a school culture.

EDU 542 Cornerstone - School Culture & Reflective Practice

1 credits

This course is designed to support students academically and professionally throughout their career at the UCDS Graduate School of Education and support students at a similar point in their enrollment in forming an effective cohort. Cornerstone topics and activities serve as both preparatory and responsive to the overall student experience and will pay special attention to issues related to practicum experiences. This quarter the cohort will focus on joining school teams as the academic year begins and navigating the expectations and relationships in practicum settings.

Throughout the first year, Cornerstone will focus on navigating and making meaning of students' practicum work in classrooms. Students will identify, synthesize and articulate connections across classes and contexts. Through conversations, written reflections, and goal setting, students will build and strengthen their habits as reflective practitioners. Finally, this series of courses will serve as a place for students to curate their professional artifacts and document their evolving understanding of school culture.

This quarter will focus on understanding elements of institutional culture and applying this knowledge through a lens of reflective practice. Students will begin to build a cultural profile of their practicum sites as they apply different reflective lenses and tools to their evolving understandings. They will engage in a mix of responses to materials centered around the culture of education and reflections about their teaching experiences.

EDU 543 Cornerstone - Introduction to Action Research

1 credits

This course is designed to support students academically and professionally throughout their career at the UCDS Graduate School of Education and support students at a similar point in their enrollment in forming an effective cohort. Cornerstone topics and activities serve as both preparatory and



responsive to the overall student experience and will pay special attention to issues related to practicum experiences.

This quarter students will deepen their understanding and appreciation for the various ways research can influence teaching practices, specifically through the lens of action (or practitioner) research. The emphasis in this course is placed on building understanding of the foundational areas of research methods and the application of those methods to real school settings. Work from this quarter will carry forward into EDU 544.

This course will build on concepts and relate to assignments from EDU 542. Learnings and materials from these courses will be used to inform and add to the overall portfolio that will be due at the end of EDU 544.

EDU 544 Cornerstone - Implementing Action Research 1 credits

This course is designed to support students academically and professionally throughout their career at the UCDS Graduate School of Education and support students at a similar point in their enrollment in forming an effective cohort. Topics and activities serve as both preparatory and responsive to the overall student experience and will pay special attention to issues related to practicum experiences.

This quarter students will deepen their understanding and appreciation for the various ways research can influence teaching practices, specifically through the lens of action (or practitioner) research. The emphasis in this course is placed on building understanding of the foundational areas of research methods and the application of those methods to real school settings. Work from this quarter will continue to build from EDU 543. Students will focus on data collection, analysis and draw conclusions about the outcomes of their mini-research projects.

EDU 561 Understanding Educational Research 2 credits

The purpose of this course is to introduce students to the methods, analyses and evaluation techniques employed in educational action research. Educators and educational leaders face an increasing demand to demonstrate evidence-based, culturally responsive solutions for a variety of complex problems. It is crucial they are equipped with the knowledge and skills to effectively gather, evaluate and interpret research on educational topics and understand how issues related to diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging are part of the work being conducted. Students will use a variety of inquiry-focused approaches to read from and interrogate a range of research studies and summaries.

EDU 563 Ethics in Education 2 credits

The decision to educate is ethical in nature: the older generation assumes responsibility for introducing the newer generation to valued cultural beliefs, practices, and traditions. The act of educating raises profound questions regarding purpose, values, and responsibilities. Educators are decision-makers. They are entrusted to make decisions that are culturally competent, pedagogical, administrative, political, evaluative, and personal. The practice of education has the potential to enrich the lives of all those involved, including teachers, students, parents, and institutions.

This course will be practicum based. Participants will examine case studies pertaining to ethical dilemmas in education and identify, evaluate, discuss, and plan short and long term solutions. Along



with contemporary case studies, this course will draw on the views of influential scholar-educators who espouse progressive approaches to learning, inclusive classrooms, institutional democracy, allowing participants to question the traditional values of public and private education in a way that fosters deep reform, progressive thinking, and healthy skepticism when assessing and evaluating norms and standards of this and other eras.

EDU 564 Leading for Change

2 credits

As learning institutions, schools must evolve in response to new knowledge and analyses of community needs. This course will highlight practices of a leadership culture that cultivate initiative, collaboration, and reflective practice. Participants will investigate the effectiveness of various leadership models through lively discussions, salient readings, and practicum experiences. We will hear from prominent figures in the local school community and from national school leadership experts about the essential tools and strategies needed to build a generative leadership culture in your school.

Schools are diverse and dynamic in ways that require a shared leadership culture. By identifying their own leadership experience within the classroom and school, participants will deepen their understanding of coaching methods and organizational structures that inspire innovation, collaboration and growth. The insight gained will provide tools and strategies that will equip each participant to solve real-world problems in ways that build a learning culture in our schools.

EDU 581 Individualizing Instruction

2 credits

This course will explore the groundwork necessary for individualization by reviewing a framework of elements that support a successful learning experience. This framework includes acknowledging each student by developing an individual learning profile, considering environmental and cultural factors that influence the learning process, implementing a dynamic curriculum, and using assessments as guides to support the learning process.

Throughout the course, participants will explore theoretical, philosophical, and empirical readings, reflect on observations, and engage in group discussions and activities to enhance understanding of developing effective strategies that acknowledge the needs of the individual in culturally and ability diverse classrooms, with the ultimate goal of ensuring that every student is able to learn and succeed.

EDU 582 Semiotics of Schools

2 credits

Students navigate multiple communication systems daily. As they move from one subject to another, they are taught to communicate using the symbolic language of that subject. As teachers, we should be aware of this circumstance and use this information to empathize with the experience of our students. We should also capitalize on identifying multiple ways of communicating with our students. While the symbolic communication of each subject contains unique elements, several practices are similar between these domains to help students gain understanding. This course provides a series of experiences for graduate students to learn about and compare symbol systems from different aspects of school. They will explore several subject areas to identify the unique *symbolic language* of these subjects.



At the core of this course is an exercise in developing empathy for students in our schools. By engaging in a variety of authentic experiences that challenge participants to demonstrate their understanding through different symbol systems, teachers can better understand the opportunities, expectations, and difficulties encountered by students in schools. This experiential approach will provide participants with insights about how to create engaging learning experiences and provide support and access for all students who may benefit from communication through a variety of symbolic approaches and sensory experiences.

EDU 583 Student-Centered Curriculum Design

2 credits

Putting all students at the center of curriculum design challenges educators to create curriculum so that all learners can engage and thrive. These powerful learning opportunities result in long-term skill and information retention for students, as well as high student engagement and investment. One approach to a student-centered curriculum is low floor, high ceiling (LFHC) instructional design; this method is grounded in a growth mindset philosophy creating student resilience and a love of learning. These types of curricular approaches allow for each student to both have an entry point and find a place for the challenge. To center students, educators need to have an understanding of who is in their classroom and how their own identities impact their work with students.

Educators in this course will form an understanding of the distinction between concepts, skills, and processes and the role of each in designing student-centered learning opportunities. This course will focus on designing learning opportunities for all students, utilizing the LFHC model as well as others such as Visual Thinking Strategies, and Universal Design for Learning. Additionally, this course will explore different strategies to get to know students and also offer opportunities to reflect on how educators' own identities impact their pedagogical approaches. Students will apply these models to both mathematical and non-math curriculum designs. Conceptual deep dives, problem-solving experiences, and the integration of assessment into daily instruction will anchor participant experiences. Through practicum prompts and assignments, students will identify effective practices for creating learning opportunities. Participants will uncover how to check for understanding of concepts and to coach learners from an instructional standpoint that supports and honors each individual.

EDU 584 Designing Curriculum for Critical Thinking and 21C Skills

2 credits

Social studies and science offer excellent lenses through which to teach and reinforce 21st century skills. Successful teachers of these subjects appreciate and understand the complexities of the content, the necessity for real-world applications for learning, the integration of anti-bias education, and the need for the explicit instruction of thinking skills. Curriculum designed in this way creates a classroom culture of inquiry, engagement, student ownership and voice, and the development of thinkers that can transfer skills to different domains.

Using a skills-focused approach, students in this course will learn how to design meaningful science and social studies experiences for students that reinforce critical thinking and other 21st century skills; align with social studies, science and social justice standards; and draw connections to other areas of curricular study.



In social studies, students will investigate the following elements from the National Council for the Social Studies standards:

- Purpose: intention and questions of social studies investigations
- Knowledge: what learners need to understand
- Processes: what learners will be capable of doing
- Products: how learners demonstrate understanding

Similarly, in science, students will investigate the following elements from the national Next Generation Science Standards:

- Science and engineering practices: skills necessary to conduct investigations
- Disciplinary core ideas: key ideas in each science domain
- Crosscutting concepts: connections across the four domains of science

Students will use the Learning for Justice Social Justice Standards to guide curriculum development. These include four domains: Identity, Diversity, Justice and Action (IDJA).

EDU 586 The Democratic Classroom: Student Agency and Advocacy 2 credits

We will examine the origins of democracy in education as well as what it means currently in the context of inclusion, equity, and social justice. Together we will explore how school curricula and culture can help youth to discover the ways they can become active, responsive, and compassionate participants in democratic processes. We will investigate how social-emotional learning and confidence intersect with academic learning. We will examine strategies to increase student voice and help create thriving learning communities marked by shared understanding, ownership, and mutual respect for diverse voices.

Participants in this course will help shape our exploration as we grapple with the following questions through lively discussions, salient readings, applicable research, and practicum experiences.

- How does a strong sense of voice deepen a student's learning experience?
- How do we design an equitable school and classroom culture that cultivates and responds to student identity and authentic experiences?
- How can students develop stewardship of their own learning experiences and communities?
- How can teachers facilitate growth in areas of agency and advocacy?
- What is the developmental nature of student voice and the role of reflective thinking across age groups?

EDU 591 Learning Communities 2 credits

The term *classroom culture* refers to the various elements that contribute to the atmosphere and experience of a learning environment, including the physical space, artifacts, traditions, routines, expectations, and interpersonal connections that are present within it. Both implicitly and explicitly, it directly impacts the relationships teachers build with students, the connections students make with each other, and how families engage with the school community.

A learning community is shaped by its values and beliefs, and how those are exemplified through actions, language, and artifacts. The success of a classroom culture can be assessed by observing student behaviors and learning outcomes—these reflect their sense of belonging and contribution to a positive and effective culture. This course explores various factors that shape classroom cultures



and provides meaningful experiences for participants to enhance their comprehension and facility with these cultural forces.

EDU 592 Elements of Assessment 3 credits
Assessment is the often complex and controversial process of measuring what students know and can do. When used for authentic purposes, assessment can also be understood as the “why” of teaching (curriculum representing the “what” and instruction the “how”). Most importantly, meaningful assessment builds confidence, spurs action, and helps students and teachers grow and improve.

In this quarter, students will examine their current understanding of and experiences with assessment, explore the purposes of assessing, identify the types of assessments typically used inside formal learning environments, and learn to analyze the elements of effective assessment design.

We will also investigate assessment as a window as well as a ladder, discuss how to use assessments to grow teaching practice, and accept that we may never really know all that students have learned.

EDU 593 Designing Assessment 3 credits
Continuing our exploration into the purpose, type, and selection of various assessments, we will now delve into the design, scoring (rubrics), and feedback routines for assessment. Together, we will design and evaluate authentic assessments and scoring rubrics. We will also explore assessment management, student self- and peer-evaluation and instructional feedback. Course time will include discussions and activities focused on authentic assessments, performance genres, and assessment criteria (going beyond validity and reliability and into issues of *credibility, usefulness, balance, honesty, intellectual rigor, and feasibility*). We will also use an equity-based lens to our design and evaluative work.

EDU 595 Designing a Culture of Inquiry 3 credits
What is inquiry-based learning? How can you integrate inquiry in the classroom to spark curiosity and engage students in deeper learning? *Designing a Culture of Inquiry* will examine the definitions, theories and impacts of inquiry and identify strategies for enacting inquiry in planning, instruction and assessment. We will highlight inquiry tools and methods that can be transferred across diverse early childhood and middle school contexts and domains.

Instructors and participants will share and discuss classroom experiences and create plans to integrate new inquiry tools into our work. Additionally, woven throughout the course will be ongoing opportunities to understand inquiry as it relates to the reflective practitioner. Participants will actively engage in the inquiry cycle and investigate how it can provide a guide for continuous professional growth and deeper student learning.

EDU 701 Capstone – Proposal & Design 2 credits
Educators use Action Research to study their own practices, take action and affect change in their classroom or school. Students will identify the topics, resources, practicum setting and advisory team members who will support them during their research, and finalize their capstone proposal. They will begin putting all of the pieces in place needed to conduct their capstone projects (research design,

arrangements, permissions, timelines, etc). Students will meet weekly with the course instructors and additionally with their advisors to report on their progress, seek feedback, and solve any issues that arise. Once their topic has been finalized, students will begin the research for their Capstone Projects. Students will consider issues of DEI in research design and incorporate how to control for bias in their project plan. By the end of this quarter students will have conducted a literature review related to their capstone topic, made all necessary arrangements to conduct their projects, and should be able to answer these questions:

- What is the issue/problem that your research addresses?
- What do you hope to learn?
- What approach(es) will I use to conduct my action research?
- How can you control for bias in your research design?

EDU 702 Capstone – Practicum & Synthesis

2 credits

This quarter, students will use their practicum settings to implement their capstone projects. Class time will focus on examining and refining methods for collecting and reviewing data from the project, comparing information from the capstone experience to other available research or communication, monitoring progress of projects, and problem-solving issues related to project execution. Students will analyze their resources to identify where bias exists, where it has been accounted for and how it might impact their project. Students will also discuss methods for interpreting data. Assignments will focus on communicating data collection progress, examining methods for determining and sharing outcomes, drafting the Methods section of their project, and revising and finalizing the Introduction and Literature Review. Students will meet 1 hour/week with their cohort for class time and 1 hour/week with their advisors over the course of the quarter as their projects evolve. Students work to finish their action research by the end of the quarter to allow time for synthesizing information collected during the spring quarter.

EDU 703 Capstone – Reflection, Composition & Presentation

2 credits

What effect has your capstone project had on your understanding? What does it add to your broader educational community and how will it impact your future work? This quarter focuses on the analysis, reflection and presentation of capstone projects. Students will analyze their data and observations using coding strategies and thematic analysis. Students will finish their capstone report by writing the findings and discussion sections. This quarter, students continue to meet 1 hour/week with their cohort for class time and 1 hour/week with their advisors over the course of the quarter as their projects wrap up. Written findings will be presented during the final weeks of the quarter. They will apply the technology and communication skills gathered throughout the program to present their projects in a succinct fashion to the faculty, advisors and other students.