Course Objectives

• **Students will have an opportunity to complete in-depth study and analysis of four major issues facing public education through action research, field visits, class discussion and meetings with Los Angeles school policy makers.**
  - Understand and analyze the role of activism and organizing as stakeholders attempt to engage in the public education policy process.
  - Engage high level policy makers and learn about the policy process relating to four significant policy issues facing the Los Angeles (Teacher Evaluation, Food/School Lunch Policy, the Public Education Budget and The Parent Trigger/Community Organizing)
  - Interact with leading public education experts in Los Angeles to gain insight from their expertise and experience in our efforts to understand and respond to the perceived crisis in public education
  - Study and reflect upon important texts (both contemporary and historical) that inform equity, social justice and critical race perspectives on public education
  - Understand the impact of poverty, systemic racism and conditions on classroom instruction and student achievement.
  - Understand the impact of state and federal funding as well as the persistent budget crisis on LAUSD students, teachers and families.
  - Complete meaningful primary source research aligned with, assisting or informing Comprehensive Projects, post graduate plans, and internship/career opportunities
  - Offer the opportunity for internships, externships or other placements in public education offices and schools aligned with students’ research and career interest.
  - Create a unique opportunity for individual and small group feedback, guidance and engagement around research, field work and internship possibilities that will improve Comp project quality and clarify graduate/summer placement planning
Required Text:

Strongly Recommended Texts:

Charles Kerchner (et al) 2008. *Learning from Los Angeles: Institutional Change in American Public Education*

Important Public Education Texts
Jonathan Kozol. 1989. *Savage Inequalities*

Theodore Sizer 1992. *Horace’s Compromise*

Pedro Noguera. 2003 *City Schools and the American Dream*

Linda Darling-Hammond. 2010 *The Flat World and Education*

Marion Orr and John Rodgers. 2010 *Public Education for Public Engagement*

Additional articles and texts will be required. These will be posted on Moodle and/or distributed in class. Check emails and moodle regularly for updates.
Class Structure

The class will meet for the first three weeks of the semester to establish background and framework for the semester. After the first three weeks, the class will meet formally twice a month. Students will have individual Tutorial sessions the first or the third week of the semester. The class will meet with policy makers once a month. There will be four required lectures and/or panels during the semester.

Students will be strongly encouraged to participate in an internship, externship (Spring Break or other arrangement) or school-based or CBO based field work. This primary research will be part of the guiding coursework of the semester. Seniors working on their Comps can either use the field work/internship as appropriate primary source research or get feedback through the group and tutorial process.

Students will be required to attend at least four public lectures, panels, school board meetings or conferences over the course of the semester. Information from these sessions is expected to be included in the final research project.

Assignments and Grading

Class Attendance, Individual Meetings, Participation 30%

Issues Analysis Paper 30%

Action Research Project 40%

• Class Attendance and participation is hugely important this semester. You will be credited for participation in the small group discussions, field work/internship/action research and for your tutorial sessions. Field work or internship placements will be determined by each student’s individual research/career interest. Tutorials are designed to provide one-to-one guidance and direction on research that relates to either future career or placement goals as well as supervision on field work.

• The Issues Analysis Paper is an in-depth look at one of the four public education policy dilemmas studied in class. The paper must be approximately 5-7 pages in length and include at least three sources beyond the class material. A more detailed assignment will be distributed at a later date. The Issues Analysis Paper is due by March 14th at 6 p.m.

• The Action Research Project is designed to be the culmination of class discussions, field work, tutorial sessions, and outside research. It is a comprehensive analysis of a major public education issue that relates directly to the student’s comprehensive project or career/post graduate plans. The project will be the equivalent of at least 12-15 pages in length and must include some form of field work or primary source research. A much more detailed description will be distributed and a class meeting about the project will take place in early March.
Tentative Course Outline (Practicums will adjust based on student’s research areas)

**January 25th:** Course Overview, Present Dilemmas in Facing Public Education in Los Angeles, Detailed discussion of course requirements and structure

**February 1st:** Whole Group Activity: Where I stand: Where We Stand
Initial Individual Meetings: Research Area and Placement Ideas

**February 8th-29th** Practicum: The Intentional Public School Funding Crisis

**March 7th:** Whole Group Activity
Individual Meetings

**March 14th-28th** Practicum: The Challenge of Transforming School Lunch Policy

**April 4:** Whole Group Activity
Individual Meetings

**April 11th-25th** Practicum: Almost 60 years after Brown, the Status of Equality and Segregation in Los Angeles Schools

**May 2nd-16th** Practicum: The Future of Public Education in Los Angeles and Beyond

Note: Practicum topics and dates are subject to change based on students’ research interests and field placements. A more detailed list of guest speakers and readings will be forthcoming.