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EDLD 559.01: School Public Relations for the Principals

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1. **Course Description**

This course will investigate the appropriate leadership and management roles of the modern school principal as they relate to school community relations. This course will include some of the more traditional approaches to public relations typically attributed to business. However, the primary objective is to have the student understand political theory and how an awareness of this can be helpful in developing and maintaining a good relationship with internal and external publics.

2. **Culminating Outcome**

Often, practitioners reject the application of leadership theory to their day-to-day work in favor of the “real world” approach to problem solving. This attitude is at best uninformed and at worst, anti-intellectual. Powerful theories help us explain what goes on around us. Therefore, using the text, other teaching materials and class discussions, students will develop a comprehensive community relations plan. It is also required that students work on actual work problems and share their progress with the class (field experience).

3. **Enabling Outcomes Including OPI Standards**

Your study of leadership theory, both in this class and outside, should include but not be limited to the following topics:

- Develop an understanding of your beliefs, vision, operating principles as they relate to public relations. [OPI 10.58.701 1b]
- Conflict and change in modern school governance
- Principal/Superintendent/Board relationships.
- The nature of community participation in schools [OPI 10.58.704 1b, i]
- Site politics and school reform [OPI 10.58.704 1a,v; 1b,ii]
- Principal as effective communicator (internal and external publics) [OPI 10.58.704 1b, vi]
- Schools as social systems
- Dealing with the media [OPI 10.58.704 1b v
- The politics of education and democracy
- The changing community and its expectations [OPI 10.58.704, 1a]
- Using community relations to build an improved future [OPI 10.58.701, 1a]
- Communicating during a crisis
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ISLLC standards embedded in this course are 4, 5 and 6. “Knowledge, dispositions and performances” too numerous to list here are included in a matrix available from the department chair.

**Standard 4**
A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by collaborating with families and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources.

**Standard 5**
A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner.

**Standard 6**
A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by understanding, responding to, and influencing the larger political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context.

*Students are required to reference the ISLLC standards contained in this syllabus and any others they have developed in their work in the course, and reference/document those standards in their presentation to their comprehensive exam committee.*

4. **Activities**

Activities may include:

- Individual written assignments and oral presentations
- Large and small group discussions of readings, professional experiences and emerging ideas and concepts
- Students will also be asked to find material to be presented to the class on a variety of topics germane to the study of public relations.
- Individual and small group presentations on other activities in which collaboration and team work is expected
- A mid-term presentation on field experiences
- A final examination or projects

**Field experience** is an important requirement of this course. Fifteen hours (verified by a journal and signature from a mentor) of field experience is intended to connect the student with the realities of educational leadership as it relates to school community relations.

**Class activities** require the active participation of all class members. The instructor subscribes to a philosophy of learning that holds that everyone engaged in learning, teaches every other engaged person. That is, an open mind, participating in meaningful discussion is a powerful learning environment. When someone is not in class and thereby not engaged in the
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discussion, the learning environment for everyone else is diminished. Therefore, class attendance is very important.

**Student contributions** will be judged on a demonstrated understanding of the knowledge base, the ability to translate and apply that knowledge to real situations and the student’s ability to communicate effectively during times of disagreement among colleagues. **Informed** contributions to class discussions are critical to collective learning and professional development. It is expected that all students will foster their own learning and the learning of others through their positive and thoughtful engagement in class activities.

**Leading Class Discussions (Weekly)**

As a part of the reading assignments, each student is expected to bring to class, the following week, three higher order, thought provoking questions or insights for class discussion. This question should be in writing and will be submitted to the instructor or class members. The questions should be used as a tool to generate class discussion and students will be expected to teach the class the concept or idea behind the questions.

**Individual Class Presentation (30 minutes)**

Students will make a group presentation on a comprehensive school/community relations plan and describe how the theories or concepts learned in class relate to that plan. Do not bring a CSRP’s from your district and present them. This work is to be original, no retreads!

5. **Grading**

- Class attendance and quality of participation in class discussions 15%
- Quality of presentation from readings as assigned 15%
- Final examination 35%
- Comprehensive school community plan 35%

**Important Note:** The comprehensive school community relations plan is a benchmark assignment and if you are seeking a master’s degree will be made a part of your portfolio. It may be synthesized with other benchmark assignments from other classes and be a part of your comprehensive examination presentation.

6. **Required Readings**

- Other readings as may be assigned.
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**School of Education Mission Statement**
The School of Education shapes professional practices that contribute to the development of human potential. We are individuals in a community of lifelong learners, guided by respect for knowledge, human dignity and ethical behavior. To advance the physical, emotional, and intellectual health of a diverse society, we work together producing and disseminating knowledge as we educate learners.

**Educational Leadership Mission Statement**
The mission of Educational Leadership at The University of Montana is to develop leaders for learning organizations who are guided by respect for knowledge, human dignity, and ethical behavior. This is accomplished by providing high quality academic and professional opportunities. We subscribe to a definition of leadership wherein individuals assume evolving roles within influence relationships requiring their contributions in order to achieve mutual purposes.

**Professional Standards for Student Performance**
Graduate students in the Department of Educational Leadership at The University of Montana are expected to:

- Demonstrate professional vision in the practice of educational administration
- Accept responsibility and accountability for class assignments in their role as members of the class
- Demonstrate growth during the period of their graduate career
- Demonstrate good decision making and an awareness of organizational issues from a variety of perspectives
- Demonstrate imagination and originality in the discussion of educational leadership issues
- Understand the relationship between theory and practice and the value of reflective leadership
- Demonstrate a moral, humanistic, ethical and caring attitude toward others
- Demonstrate an ability to build trust and positive relationships with others
- Demonstrate a tolerance for diversity and a warm acceptance of others regardless of their backgrounds or opinions
- Demonstrate emotional stability and an ability to work well with other members of the class, including the instructor
- Demonstrate an ability to express himself/herself well in speech and writing, and
- Demonstrate mastery of fundamental knowledge of course content and an understanding of its application

It is the belief of the faculty that those entering educational administration should represent the most capable in our profession and that those who do not demonstrate the ability to perform the above list of qualities, should not be educational leaders. These standards have been adopted by the Educational Leadership faculty and are used both for admission to the program and to judge student progress. Failure to demonstrate the aforementioned qualities, on a consistent basis, may result in removal from classes and/or the educational leadership program.