STANDARDS & ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEMS
Spring Term - 2014
Course Syllabus

EDLD 641 Seminar Standards & Accountability Systems
Credits: 04
UO Grading Option (all students): Optional
Majors Grading Option (majors only): Optional
Time/Location: Tuesdays, 16:00 – 19:50 in HEDCO 230T

A. Instructor Information
Instructor: David T. Conley, Ph.D.
Office: 1700 Millrace (EPIC)
Phone: 541-246-2667 (Lizzie Dunklee, executive coordinator)
Office Hours: by request via e-mail
Email: conley@uoregon.edu

B. Course Description and Organizing Questions
This course has two distinct components: 1) the development of educational standards systems over the past 2½ decades with special attention paid to college and career readiness standards; 2) the rationale, nature, and operationalization of accountability systems in education. As the course demonstrates, these two components are inextricably intertwined in practice, and it is necessary to have a deep understanding of each if one is to have a true understanding of either.

The course explores standards systems generally and specific sets of standards along with accountability models, systems, and strategies at the national, state, and local levels. Issues addressed include theoretical and philosophical dimensions of accountability and standard setting; accountability and standard setting policy; characteristics and designs of standards and assessment systems; alignment of standards and assessment systems; college and career readiness standards, assessments, and accountability indicators.

The course is structured around the following questions:

1. What are standards? What is their proper role in public education systems?
2. What do standards systems look like? What are the strengths and weaknesses of various approaches?
3. What types of data, including assessments, do we need to collect to determine whether we are achieving the standards?
4. Should cut scores be established for standard and assessment systems? What are the proper uses and limitations of cut scores?

5. What is the history and evolution of college and career readiness standards? Why are these necessary and important?

6. What is the legitimate role of the state in the establishment of systems of standards and accountability for schools?

7. What are the effects of standards and accountability systems on teaching, teachers, students, and learning?

8. What are the political and social issues associated with the adoption and implementation of standards and accountability systems?

9. Why do we have accountability systems in public education? Is it possible to make public schools accountable in a way that achieves policy goals and also values the professionalism of educators?

10. What is the relationship between accountability systems and the political process in states and at the federal level?

11. What do state accountability systems look like? How are they different? Why are they different? How do they function in practice? What effects, intended and unintended, do they have on schools?

12. What are the relative strengths and weaknesses of various approaches to accountability for schools?

13. What is the current role of the federal government in educational accountability? What would a proper role be for the federal government in educational accountability?

14. What are the differences in accountability systems designed for students, teachers, schools, and districts?

15. Do accountability systems work? What mechanisms contribute to successful accountability systems? What mechanisms are not productive?

C. Course Goals

Students are expected to develop skills in the following areas:

- Accessing quality information regarding standards and accountability
- Analyzing policy development & implementation related to standards and accountability systems
- Comparing and contrasting educational accountability systems
- Critiquing standards, including college and career readiness standards
- Aligning standards & assessments
D. Big Ideas

- Standards and accountability systems are here to stay, however imperfect they may be. The goal is to learn how to do them right and how to balance state control and local creativity.
- States are still learning how to express their recently acquired role as the primary controllers of K-12 policy and finance, and current standards and accountability systems are mechanisms in service of this new authority.
- Standards and accountability systems are inherently political, yet can also be tools that mediate between the state and school as expressions of common values and goals.
- State standards and accountability systems serve multiple sometimes-conflicting purposes.
- Implementing standards and accountability systems involves changes that are central to teaching and learning, and changes in these areas are the most difficult for schools to make.
- Establishing standards and aligning large-scale assessment systems to them is an imprecise process that involves human judgment, although technical considerations play an important role. Knowing the limitations of human and technical approaches is a critical skill in standard setting.
- College and career readiness standards are a relatively recent development, and their role is becoming increasingly important.

E. Course Structure

This course is a combination of instructor and student input in even measures. This means that you will be expected to complete assigned readings, actively participate in class discussions, work out of class independently between class sessions, and take considerable initiative to go beyond the bare minimum in order to make the class worthwhile for you and your colleagues.

1. Class meetings
   - Lectures
   - Student presentations of material from texts and assignments
   - In-class assignments
   - Participation in in-class discussions and activities

2. Outside of class activities
   1. Readings
   2. Out-of-class assignments
   3. Writing, rewriting, and editing written assignments
F. Course Resources

Two texts are required.


The Ryan and Shepard book can be purchased at the UO Bookstore or ordered from any online bookseller. The Conley book will be provided free of charge in electronic format and at wholesale cost for anyone wishing to purchase a hard copy.

Additional course readings will also be posted on Blackboard and assigned usually a week before they are due. *These materials will be very central to the course and need to be read.*

Each student is expected to have access to Blackboard and to be actively using and checking his or her uoregon email account or whichever email account is associated with the student’s Blackboard identity.

G. Course Requirements

Complete the following assignments successfully at an acceptable level of quality as described in sections K and J:

1. **Present a chapter for discussion from each of the two books (25% of grade)**
   - Present for class discussion a chapter from each of the books
   - Chapters are assigned in Week 1. Presentations begin soon thereafter. *It is therefore important not to miss the first class meeting.*

2. **Identify and discuss three issues worthy of discussion from each chapter (25% of grade)**
   - After you read each assigned chapter or supplemental reading, generate three worthy questions.
   - Post your questions to Blackboard at least one day before the class in which the chapter will be presented.
   - Be prepared to discuss the issue questions. This means you have done the reading and have visited the course Blackboard site to review the posted questions.

4. **Optimal accountability assignment (25% of grade)**
   - Draw upon the readings and class lectures, discussions, and presentations to write a paper that describes an optimal accountability system. The paper should be in the 10-page range. I do not expect significant additional research beyond the readings and related materials. The paper is to follow APA style guidelines and will include in-text citations as appropriate when sources are referenced.*

   *Using the Common Core State Standards and PARCC and Smarter Balanced assessments of the Common Core as a foundation,*
describe an optimal accountability system (OAS). What are critical components of an accountability system and the benefits of including those components within the system? Be sure to address student accountability, teacher accountability, school accountability, district accountability needs, state accountability needs, and federal accountability needs.

- You may submit the final paper individually or in groups of up to 3 people. If you decide to work in a group, increase the length in proportion to the number of people in the group.
- You should use the Key Cognitive Strategies Model to help you as a guide to developing a quality product. The model consists of the following elements:
  - Problem Formulation
    - Hypothesize
    - Strategize
  - Research
    - Identify
    - Collect
  - Interpretation
    - Analyze
    - Synthesize
  - Communication
    - Organize
    - Construct
  - Precision and Accuracy
    - Monitor
    - Confirm
- Work Flow: We will include a series of class activities that are meant to scaffold your workflow to help you complete the assignment on time.
  - Activity 1: Create a graphic organizer that depicts generally the critical components you plan to include in your optimal accountability system. This graphic should not only include the components but also illustrate how these components are related to one another. Potential frameworks to consider include essential components and outcomes, or in terms of inputs, outputs, and outcomes. Bring your graphic organizer to class on the day designated below and be prepared to discuss with your colleagues.
  - Activity 2: Expand your graphic organizer into an outline that more specifically articulates your plans for your paper. This outline should include the references you think you may use to
support your argument. Bring your outline to class on the day
designated below and be prepared to discuss with your
colleagues.

- **Activity 3:** Excerpts of previous papers describing optimal
accountability systems will be posted on Blackboard. On the
day designated below, read those excerpts and come to class
prepared to constructively critique those excerpts. Additionally,
bring to class a draft of one expanded section of your outline to
discuss with your colleagues.

5. **Standards critique (25% of grade)**

- Prepare a critique of standards systems. This is a very open-ended
assignment. You should draw on what you’ve learned in the class and
elsewhere. The only requirement is that you *support all assertions with
evidence*. Length is in the ten-page range. Hopefully course readings
and class discussions will elicit enough ideas to stimulate you to know
how you want to approach this assignment.

**H. Dates-Topics, and Readings**

**Week 1 (4/1)**

- Course overview and requirements
- Podcast: *Turnaround Specialist*
- Ryan/Shepard: Ch. 1, Linn- Educational Accountability Systems
- Conley: Introduction

**Week 2 (4/8)**

- Ryan/Shepard: Ch. 3, McDonnell- The Politics of Educational Accountability: Can the Clock Be Turned Back?
- Conley: Ch. 1: The New Challenge: All Students College and Career Ready

**Week 3 (4/15)**

- Ryan/Shepard: Ch. 4, Koretz- Further Steps Toward the Development of an Accountabilty-Oriented Science of Measurement
- Ryan/Shepard: Ch. 5, Kiplinger- Reliability of Large-Scale Assessment and Accountability Systems
- Conley: Ch. 2, College Readiness, Career Readiness: Same or Different?

**Week 4 (4/22)**

- Ryan/Shepard: Ch. 6, Kiplinger and Hamilton- Equating and Linking of Educational Assessments in High-Stakes Accountability Systems
- Ryan/Shepard: Ch. 7, Haertl- Standard Setting
• Conley: Ch. 3: The Four Keys to College and Career Readiness
• Conley: Ch. 4: The Four Keys Continued: Learning Skills and Transition Skills

**Week 5 (4/29)**
*(Guest instructor or student-led class)*

• Ryan/Shepard: Ch. 9, Briggs and Wiley- Causes and Effects
• Conley: Ch. 5: Toward Deeper Learning
• Conley: Ch. 6: Deeper Learning at the Classroom Level
• **OAS Activity 1: Graphic Organizer Discussion**

**Week 6 (5/6)**
*(Shortened class or guest instructor)*

• Ryan/Shepard: Ch. 10, Ryan- Fairness Issues and Educational Accountability
• Ryan/Shepard: Ch. 11, Herman- Accountability and Assessment: Is Public Interest in K-12 Education Being Served?
• Conley: Ch. 7: A Closer Look at the Common Core State Standards
• Conley: Ch. 8: The Common Core State Standards and College and Career Readiness
• **OAS Activity 2: Outline Discussion**

**Week 7 (5/13)**

• Ryan/Shepard: Ch. 12, Rosenberg- A View from the Teacher Trenches: Accountability and the Betrayal of the Standards Vision
• Ryan/Shepard: Ch. 13, Miller- Data for School Improvement and Educational Accountability: Reliability and Validity in Practice
• Conley: Ch. 9: The Consortia Assessments and College and Career Readiness
• Conley: Ch. 10: From an Assessment System to a System of Assessments

**Week 8 (5/20)**

• Ryan/Shepard: Ch. 14, Dunbar- Enhanced Accountability for School Accountability and Student Achievement
• Conley: Ch. 11: Where To from Here?
• **OAS Activity 3: Paper Critique and Discussion**

**Week 9 (5/27)**
*(Guest instructor or student-led class)*

• Ryan/Shepard: Ch. 15, Baker- Learning and Assessment in an Accountability Context
• Ryan/Shepard: Ch. 16, Feuer- Future Directions for Educational Accountability: Notes for a Political Economy of Measurement

Week 10 (6/3)

• Course wrap-up
• Papers due

I. Grading

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>How determined:</th>
<th>Points possible:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Presentation of a chapter for discussion (Your PowerPoint or other document should be posted to the Blackboard Discussion Board by noon the day you are scheduled to present).</td>
<td>Using PowerPoint or another means of presentation, student presents key concepts and discussion points from the assigned chapter(s).</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter discussion questions: (1) post questions via Discussion Board, (2) discuss in class</td>
<td>Student posts discussion questions and comes to class prepared to discuss with classmates.</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description and analysis of Optimal Accountability System</td>
<td>Student prepares and submits on time as directed in the syllabus a paper on the Optimal Accountability System (OAS) and comes to class prepared to discuss the paper.</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standards critique</td>
<td>Student writes a critique of standards.</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Grading

A 150-200
B 100-149
C below 100

Make-up work or a grade of Incomplete are generally not available
**J. Performance Expectations**

Assignments are judged on the degree to which they meet the following standards. The judgment is made in a comprehensive fashion. Therefore, a serious shortcoming on one criterion can be sufficient for the assignment to be judged insufficient as a whole. Writing quality is considered separately.

*Exceeds Expectations*

- Evidence of extensive research using appropriate source material
- Interesting or engaging description, analysis and/or interpretation as appropriate
- Demonstrated knowledge of and insight into the topic being presented
- Extensive breadth and depth of investigation or analysis
- Submitted on time
- Regular attendance at all class meetings

*Meets Expectations*

- Evidence of sufficient research using appropriate source material
- Clear description, analysis, and/or interpretation as appropriate
- Demonstrated knowledge of topics being presented
- Sufficient breadth and depth of investigation or analysis
- Submitted on time
- Regular attendance at almost all class meetings

*Does not Meet Expectations*

- Evidence of insufficient research or inappropriate source material
- Unclear or minimal description, analysis, and interpretation as appropriate
- Inadequate knowledge of topics being presented
- Submitted late
- Irregular attendance

**K. Expectations for Writing Quality**

*General Writing Quality Expectations*

Writing is a key element of a graduate course and a graduate education. One of the goals you should have for your graduate education is that your writing will improve. Good writing takes time; it cannot be done the week before an assignment is due. I strongly advise you to allot sufficient time for all aspects of the writing process, including pre-writing, outlining, researching, drafting, editing and rewriting, polishing, and final review. If you do so, you will find that the quality of what you produce will improve, and your pride in your written products will increase.

I expect written assignments to be free of basic grammatical and spelling errors and formatting problems. If you use track changes at any point any time, make sure that they are removed prior to submitting your assignment. Additionally, I expect you to use basic
writing conventions throughout your assignments (e.g., paragraphs and headings as appropriate). Please proofread your assignments before submitting them.

**Writing Scoring Guide**

Written assignments will be judged on the degree to which they meet the following standards. The judgment will be comprehensive, or holistic, in nature. Therefore, a serious shortcoming on one criterion can be sufficient for the assignment to be judged insufficient as a whole.

*Meets Expectations for Graduate Level Writing*
- Evidence of sufficient research or appropriate source material
- Clearly written
- Well organized
- Evidence of proper research techniques and strategies
- No grammatical or spelling errors, or few grammatical or spelling errors that do not interfere with ability of reader to comprehend all points and to read without breaks in fluency
- Accurate use of APA 6th edition formatting

*Does Not Meet Expectations for Graduate Level Writing*
- Evidence of insufficient research or appropriate source material
- Not clearly written
- Poorly organized
- Numerous grammatical or spelling errors that interfere with ability of reader to comprehend all points and to read without breaks in fluency
- Submitted late
- Inaccurate use of (or does not use) APA 6th edition formatting

Assignments containing multiple basic grammatical, spelling, or formatting problems will automatically be returned ungraded and must be corrected before being resubmitted. This will make the assignment late, which has an adverse effect on the grade it receives.

**Assignment Drafts and Revisions**

Generally speaking, it is not possible to submit drafts of assignments for review before the due date. However, we are available to discuss drafts at length in class if you have questions while you are completing your assignments. In addition, you may ask questions via email, phone, or by appointment at any time in the course. Revisions of written assignments will not be possible after the final due date, so please plan to ask questions in class before an assignment is due if you have questions about expectations.

**APA Formatting**

We expect all writing assignments to be consistent with the APA 5th edition publication manual. You can find many resources online that list general APA guidelines, and we also encourage students to purchase the APA 5th edition if they do not already have a copy. Students completing a dissertation or Master’s degree final project in the social
sciences will be expected to submit those documents using the APA 5th edition guidelines.

Getting Help with your Writing

I will provide you only with very general feedback on your writing, and I will provide this feedback to the group as a whole, not on individual papers. Please note that I am not equipped to teach writing in situations where writing requires significant improvement. In such situations, I suggest students consult campus-based resources designed to help them with their writing. If I believe your level of writing is such that you are not likely to be able to complete course requirements successfully, I will notify you as soon as I have sufficient evidence.

L. Class Policies

Respect for Diversity

In order to thrive and excel, a culture must honor the rights, safety, dignity, and well being of all member no matter their race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, or disability. The concept of diversity encompasses acceptance and respect in understanding that each individual is unique, and recognizing individual differences which can include race, ethnicity, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, age, physical abilities, religious beliefs, or other ideologies. To the extent possible and appropriate, this course will explore these differences in a safe, positive, and supportive environment.

Student Supports

Appropriate accommodations will be provided for students with documented disabilities. This documentation must come in writing from Disability Services in the Office of Academic Advising and Student Services. To obtain this document contact Molly Sirois at 346-1155 or sirois@oregon.uoregon.edu. If you have a documented disability and require accommodation, you must meet with the course instructor within the first two weeks of the term.

Student Conduct

UO Student Conduct Code is contained in each term’s schedule of classes. All COE students are subject to the regulation stipulated in this code. Please be sure you are familiar with the content of the code as it relates to this course.

Any assignment not explicitly identified as group work must be done individually. You are encouraged to discuss problems with other students, but you may never use other student's solutions, ideas, or written material in any way without specific acknowledgement. The use of sources (ideas, quotations, paraphrases) must be properly acknowledged and documented. Particular care must be taken to attribute content from online sources appropriately.

The student conduct code allows an instructor to impose an appropriate sanction for a student found guilty of academic dishonesty, up to and including an N or an F. The instructor also has the obligation to report any such incident to the university authorities.
Beyond the regulations, students are encouraged to conduct themselves in a manner consistent with individuals entering a profession. Such conduct includes courtesy, demeanor, and attire appropriate to the setting.