STANDARDS & ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEMS
Spring Term - 2015
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 Education 115

A. Instructor Information
Instructor: David T. Conley, Ph.D.
Phone: 541-915-2832
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 2 ½ 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.

The course uses two online formats: VTEL and Adobe Connect. When a course meeting is designated as VTEL, students must attend in person, either in 115 Ed or at the White Stag building in Portland. When a course meeting is designated as Adobe Connect, students must use Adobe Connect to participate, and may do so from wherever they please, providing the location has a fast internet connection.

(1) Class meetings

• Lectures

• Student presentations of material from assigned readings 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
All course readings will also be posted on Blackboard with the date by which they are to be read. 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 designated readings for discussion (25% of grade)
   o You will present a total of 6 readings over the course of the term.
   o You will select readings from those posted on the course Blackboard site. The six readings must include three from Accountability and three from Standards. I will provide some guidance on sources of interest, particularly as individual student interests become clearer, but the choice will be up to you.
   o Presentation involves the following:
     ▪ Sign up for your reading as far in advance as possible. Once one student has selected a reading, it is not available for others.
     ▪ Begin your presentation by briefly summarize main points in the reading because your classmates will not necessarily have read it.
     ▪ Make connections to the larger themes of the class (see syllabus sections B, C, D for examples).
     ▪ Develop an activity in which the rest of the class can engage to understand the reading more deeply and to connect the reading to other course readings.
     ▪ Conduct the activity.
     ▪ Conclude by presenting your worthy questions (see below) for discussion.
     ▪ Your presentation and activity should be in the 30-minute range.
2. Submit “worthy questions” for each week’s readings (25% of grade)

- As soon as you can after you read each assigned reading, generate three worthy questions and post them to Blackboard.

- A worthy question is one that cannot be answered with a simple response and that requires significant thought and contemplation about the reading. A worthy question connects the reading to bigger ideas and issues.

- Post your questions to Blackboard at least one day before the class in which the chapter will be presented.

- Be prepared to discuss your worthy questions or anyone else’s. This means you have done the reading and have visited the course Blackboard site to review the posted questions.

4. Optimal standards system or optimal accountability system (25% of grade)

- Draw upon the readings and class lectures, discussions, and presentations to write a paper that describes an optimal standards system system. The paper should be in the 10-page range. I expect some 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.

  *Optimal Standards System:* Using the standards systems that we have discussed in class, describe an optimal standards system (OSS). What are critical components of an OSS and the benefits of those components to educators and policy makers? Be sure to address the content and structure of your OSS (but not detailed standards at each grade level), the ways teachers should use the OSS, the relationship between your OSS and curriculum and instruction, the ways your OSS would be assessed, and the policy implications of your OSS.

5. Optimal accountability system (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 expect some 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.

  *Optimal Accountability System:* 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.

### H. Dates-Topics, and Readings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class topics, guest instructors, and due dates</th>
<th>Assigned Readings</th>
<th>Individual Readings Presentations</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week 1 (3/31)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>No class—Instructor traveling</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Week 2 (4/7)</strong></th>
<th>(VTEL)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Course overview and requirements</td>
<td>Course syllabus</td>
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<tr>
<td>Overview of standard and assessment systems</td>
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<th><strong>Week 3 (4/14)</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>First-generation accountability systems</td>
<td>Bob Linn: Ch. 1: The Future of Test-Based Educational Accountability</td>
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<tr>
<td>College and career readiness standards</td>
<td>PASS, Standards for Success, ACT College and Career Readiness Benchmarks, College Board Standards for College Success</td>
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<tr>
<td>1980s models, 1990s models, up to NCLB</td>
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<tr>
<td>BG: Summary of Smith and O’Day chapter</td>
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<td>TA: Putting the Pieces Together: Systemic School Reform</td>
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<th><strong>Week 4 (4/21)</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>No Child Left Behind and Accountability</td>
<td>Description of NCLB if you’re not familiar with it.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Turnaround Specialist</td>
<td>Watch parts 1 &amp; 2 of Turnaround Specialist before class.</td>
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<tr>
<td>High quality state standards and the Common Core State Standards</td>
<td>Common Core State Standards</td>
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<tr>
<td>ET: Work Readiness Standards and Benchmarks</td>
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<tr>
<td>BG: Achieving the</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class topics, guest instructors, and due dates</td>
<td>Assigned Readings</td>
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**Week 5 (4/28) (Guest instructor Ross Anderson)**

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<tr>
<th>Next-generation accountability systems</th>
<th>New Era of Educational Assessment</th>
<th>TM: Next Generation Accountability Systems: An overview of current state policies and practices, CCSSO</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Turnaround Specialist</td>
<td>Watch parts 3 &amp; 4 of Turnaround Specialist before class.</td>
<td>BG: Tucker: Fewer, Better Tests Can Boost Student Achievement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Common Core State Standards and college and career readiness</td>
<td>Getting Ready for College, Careers, and Common Core, ch. 2</td>
<td>ET: Designing Common Assessments to Be Measures of College and Career Readiness --David T. Conley</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ET: Seeing the Future: How CC will affect math/English in grades 3-12 across America</td>
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**Week 6 (5/5) (Guest instructors Michael Their and Paul Beach)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Accountability in California, Oregon, and other states</th>
<th>Measures for a College and Career Indicator: Final Report</th>
<th>BG: Can schools be held accountable without standardized tests?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>TM: Standardized Tests and the CCSS, Brown Center</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aligning standards, learning progressions, domain progressions</td>
<td></td>
<td>BG: ELA learning progressions</td>
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**Week 7 (5/12)**

<p>| The Consortia | Getting Ready for College, Careers, and Common Core | TA: Testing To, and Beyond, the Common Core |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Class topics, guest instructors, and due dates</strong></th>
<th><strong>Assigned Readings</strong></th>
<th><strong>Individual Readings Presentations</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>assessments and systems of assessment</td>
<td>Core, ch. 9&lt;br&gt;Creating Systems of Assessment for Deeper Learning</td>
<td>By Linda Darling-Hammond</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International comparisons</td>
<td></td>
<td>ET: What do international tests really show about U.S. Student Performance-Carnoy/Rothstein&lt;br_TM: How well are American students learning? Brown Center</td>
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**Week 8 (5/19) (Guest instructor Liz French)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard setting</th>
<th>Materials on standard setting for this exercise</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Implementation issues</td>
<td>Getting Ready for College, Careers, and Common Core, ch. 8</td>
<td>TA: States’ Progress and challenges in implementing Common Core State Standards&lt;br_TM: Testing the Tests, Joan Herman&lt;br_BG: ETS Transforming</td>
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**Week 9 (5/26) (In-classroom)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Present and discuss Optimal Standards System paper (turn in paper on 6/2)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Students present their papers in 10-minute summary for discussion and reaction.</td>
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**Week 10 (6/2) (In-classroom)**

<p>| | | |
| | | |
| | | ET: Reporting School Quality in Standards-Based Accountability Systems--Robert L. Linn |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class topics, guest instructors, and due dates</th>
<th>Assigned Readings</th>
<th>Individual Readings Presentations</th>
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</table>
|                                              | ET:  Sizing Up State Standards 2008  
TA: Standards Aren’t Enough by Susan H. Fuhrman | Students present their papers in 10-minute summary for discussion and reaction. |
| Present and discuss Optimal Accountability System paper (turn in paper on 6/9) |                  |                                   |
### I. Grading

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement:</th>
<th>How determined:</th>
<th>Points possible:</th>
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<tr>
<td>Presentation of readings (Your PowerPoint or other document should be posted</td>
<td><em>Using PowerPoint or another means of presentation, student presents key concepts and discussion points from the assigned reading(s).</em></td>
<td>50</td>
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<tr>
<td>to the Blackboard Discussion Board by noon the day you are scheduled to present).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Readings presentation, worthy questions</td>
<td><em>Student posts worthy questions on reading, then presents reading to class as directed in syllabus, including discussing worthy questions.</em></td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description and analysis of Optimal Standards System</td>
<td><em>Student prepares and submits on time as directed in the syllabus a paper on the Optimal Standards System (OSS) and comes to class prepared to discuss the paper.</em></td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description and analysis of Optimal Accountability System</td>
<td><em>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.</em></td>
<td>50</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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<td>200</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grading</td>
<td><strong>Grading</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>A</strong> [150-200]</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>B</strong> [100-149]</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>C</strong> [below 100]</td>
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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 members 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.