RUTGERS
Graduate School of Education

Graduate School of Education
Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey
10 Seminary Place
New Brunswick, NJ 08901-1183

http://gse.rutgers.edu

Phone: 848-932-3232
Fax: 732-932-6829

Teacher Leadership: Theory & Practice
Course # 15:267:622
3 Credits

Instructor: Tali Axelrod	Day & Time: Mondays 4:50-7:30
Phone Number: 908-377-0138	Location: Bishop House 211
Email: tali.axelrod@gse.rutgers.edu	Office Hrs: By arrangement
Mode of Instruction: ___ Lecture ___ Hybrid _X_ Seminar ___ Online	

Learning goals

This graduate seminar explores the theoretical foundations and research that surround the practice of teacher leadership. Teacher leadership increasingly encompasses an array of positions that are (a) non-supervisory, (b) focused on instructional improvement, (c) primarily aimed at teachers' capacity-building, and (d) typically, but not exclusively, located in schools (Mangin & Stoelinga, 2008). Variously labeled coordinator, facilitator, specialist, helper, trainer, lead, master, mentor, or coach—teachers are increasingly sharing leadership with all educators for addressing gaps in educational opportunity and ensuring that all children receive powerful and equitable instruction in our nation's public schools.

This course will explore teacher leadership as it occurs in relation to teaching and teachers' work and as it is situated in past and contemporary educational reform contexts. Teachers are, by the nature of their work, leaders within the classroom context. However classroom leadership is oriented primarily toward student learning environments and not on influencing learning opportunities for other adults. As teachers take on leadership roles outside the classroom, they tend to lead less from positions of power and authority, and more from peer or middle level vantage points.

Conversations about teacher leadership necessitate discussions about *educational leadership* with large and conceptions of leadership as distributed across people, situations, and actions. Thus, we will explore perspectives on educational leadership—building a sense of what makes "good" leadership. We'll also place teacher leadership in organizational context and discuss how work conditions and structural supports can facilitate or inhibit teachers' ability to effectively lead in schools. Our examination of teacher leadership will also extend beyond the reading of texts and students will work collaboratively to research teacher leadership, interviewing teacher leaders and analyzing the results in light of the readings.

Target Audience
This seminar is appropriate for graduate students who are preparing to study teachers' work, teachers as leaders, instructional coaching, or the professional development of teachers. The

course is intended to (1) help students become critical consumers of the related literature and (2) become analysts of the phenomenon by examining actual teacher leaders' experiences.

Specific Course Goals. At the conclusion of this course, students will—

1. Be familiar with the literature (both past and present) on teacher leadership and be able to connect that literature to conceptions of educational leadership and teacher learning.

2. Understand the organizational contexts of teacher leaders' work, including but not limited to: educational reform contexts, the conditions of classroom teachers' work, and the role of other educational leaders in developing and supporting teacher leadership.

3. Synthesize theoretical and empirical discussions about teacher leadership with developing understandings derived from interviews with actual teacher leaders.

Class materials/ Textbooks:

Readings will be available through the Sakai site.

Course Requirements

1. **Readings and class discussions.** The course readings will be provided electronically via Sakai. Students are expected to read the assigned articles carefully prior to each class and be prepared to discuss them during the class (including leading a class discussion).

2. **Midterm Paper.** Students will write a formal essay that demonstrates their understanding of the readings from weeks 1-6 as well as their thinking related to teacher leadership. This essay presents an opportunity for students to develop their reasoning and logic as well as their writing skills and use of APA formatting. Length 4-5 pages. Due: October 18th

3. **Investigating teacher leadership in practice—class research project.** We will investigate the work of teacher leaders by interviewing them and collecting documents related to their work. These data will be discussed and analyzed in class. Students will prepare a final paper that reflects their research into teacher leadership and the course readings. The steps and assignments related to this class project include:

   a. Work collaboratively with classmates to develop an interview protocol.

   b. Locate a teacher leader to interview. If you are a teacher leader, you will be encouraged to select a teacher leader who serves in a role that is different than your own.

   c. Conduct an audio-taped interview of the teacher leader using the protocol we developed and collect documents related to his/her work.

   d. Write a 1-page interview memo that captures your reflections and preliminary analysis.

   e. Transcribe the interview and post the transcription as well as supporting documents online for class access.

f. Discuss and analyze the teacher leader data in class and develop a set of topics/themes for further investigation. Students will then continue to think about a particular aspect of teacher leadership through course readings and, possibly their own search of further readings (not required but perhaps useful for some).

4. **Reference Manager Program.** Students will learn how to use an online reference tool and create their own account. We will look at Mendeley together in class and students can "share" their folder with the course instructor. This assignment will help you to organize your readings and citations, which is helpful for the qualifying exam.

5. **Final Paper.** Students will write a final (individual) paper that reports on your inquiry experiences in the course including: a description of the topic that you investigated; sources of data/information that you considered; discussion of findings/insights based on the data; implications for your professional work; next steps in your learning. You will be evaluated on the quality of your writing and your ability to synthesize and integrate ideas across the readings and your empirical research. Length: 8-10 pages. Due: December 13th

Grading Policies and Assignment Timelines

This is a graded course. The grade will reflect the following distribution across course activities.

- Participate & lead a class discussion . . . 20%   Variable due dates
- Midterm Paper (4-5 pages) . . . . 20%   October 18th
- Research project: interview . . . . 20%   November 2nd
  - Memo and transcription . . . . 5%   November 9th
- Reference Manager . . . . .10%   December 6th
- Final paper (8-10 pages) . . . . 25%   December 13th

Sequence of Class Sessions

The course design includes two parts. In the first half of the course we lay the groundwork for the study of teacher leadership. First, we situate the course with a general discussion about teacher leadership, reading three seminal articles. Then, we examine the two sides of the term, teacher leadership beginning with leadership and followed by an examination of teachers' work. These theoretical concepts form the basis of our discussions and inform how we understand teacher leadership development and practice. In the second half of the course, we examine contemporary teacher leadership in the context of educational reform, emerging roles and contexts for teacher leadership, and organizational support for teacher leaders' work. We conclude the course with a review of recent performance standards and guidelines for teacher leadership development.

Academic Integrity Policy:

Any violation of academic honesty is a serious offense and is therefore subject to an appropriate penalty. Refer to http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/integrity.shtml for a full explanation of policies.

Office of Disability Services:

Rutgers University welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, a student with a disability must contact the appropriate disability services office at the campus where you are officially enrolled, participate in an intake interview, and provide documentation: https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/documentation-guidelines. If the documentation supports your request for reasonable accommodations, your campus's disability services office will provide you with a Letter of Accommodations. Please share this letter with your instructors and discuss the accommodations with them as early in your courses as possible. To begin this process, please complete the Registration form on the ODS web site at: https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/registration-form.

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Course Schedule:

CALENDAR: Teacher Leadership			
	Date	**Readings**	**Notes**
PART I. LAYING THE GROUNDWORK FOR THE STUDY OF TEACHER LEADERSHIP In the first half of the course, we explore teacher leadership in three ways: 1) we read three classic articles about teacher leadership to develop a broad sense of the subject; 2) we examine conceptions of educational leadership to strengthen our understanding of what it means to "lead" education; 3) we investigate teachers' work and the constraints on that work to understand the conditions that might affect the development of "leadership" in teachers.			
1	9-08-15 Tuesday	**Introduction.** The first class we will establish class norms and begin to identify our collective knowledge base related to teacher leadership by asking, *What pre-existing knowledge do we bring to our study of teacher leadership?* We will also review the course structure, requirements, & some basic premises upon which this course rests, including leadership aims and practices as well as the norms and conditions of teaching. These concepts will set the context for learning about teacher leadership.	
		Smylie, M.A., & Denny, J.W. (1990). Teacher leadership: Tensions and ambiguities in organizational perspectives. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 26* (3), 235-259.	In preparation for class: • Review syllabus & Sakai • Complete profile
2	9-16-15 Wednesday	**What do we know about teacher leadership and its development over time?** In this session, we will learn how teacher leadership has been conceptualized historically and develop preliminary understandings about teacher leader roles and functions. We'll discuss trends in the conception and practice of teacher leadership and consider what teacher leaders do as well as what supports or inhibits their work.	
		Little, J.W. (2003). Constructions of teacher leadership in three periods of policy and reform activism. *School leadership & Management, 23*(4), 401-419. York-Barr, J., & Duke, K. (2004). What do we know about teacher leadership? Findings from two decades of scholarship. *Review of Educational Research*, 74(3), 255-316.	

3	9-21-15	**Educational leadership: What is it and how is it responsive to educational dilemmas?** Here we consider conceptions of educational leadership in general, asking how these conceptions inform our thinking about *teachers* as leaders. Moreover, we will consider leadership in the context of contemporary educational problems including: persistent achievement gaps, increasing cultural and linguistic diversity, and changing strategies for addressing these challenges.
		Marks, H.M., & Printy, S.M. (2003). Principal leadership and school performance: An integration of transformational and instructional leadership. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 39* (3), 370-397. Gardner, J.W. (2000). The nature of leadership. In *The Jossey-Bass reader on educational leadership* (2nd Ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass (Chapter 2, pp. 17-12). Shields, C. (2010). Transformative leadership: Working for equity in diverse contexts. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 46* (4), 550-589.
4	9-28-15	**Distributed Leadership: How distributed leadership inform our understanding of teacher leadership?** Many think that the leadership and responsibility for reaching high quality educational outcomes for all students can no longer be considered the work of the single heroic leader; rather it must be a responsibility that is shared across educators. Moreover, distributed leadership theorists contend that leadership is distributed across people, activities, and available resources (materials, tools), an idea that is especially relevant to teacher leadership.
		Timperley, H. (2005). Distributed leadership: Developing theory from practice. *Journal of Curriculum Studies, 37*(4), 395-420. Smylie, M., Mayrowetz, D., Murphy, J., Louis, K. (2007). Trust and the development of distributed leadership. *Journal of school leadership, 17*, 469-503. Mayrowetz, D. (2008). Making sense of distributed leadership: Exploring the multiple usages of the concept in the field. Educational Administration Quarterly, 44(3), 424-435.
5	10-5-15	**Organizational contexts of teacher leadership: Teachers' work conditions.** The next two weeks, we consider the characteristics of teachers' work and how those characteristics can affect the development and work of teachers as leaders. Teachers' work has traditionally been viewed as residing within the walls of the classroom—as the interactions between a teacher and students. The bureaucratic structure of schools has contributed to a sense of

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		isolation and individualism in classroom teaching and many of these cultural and professional norms persist.	
		Hargreaves, A. (1993). Individualism and individuality: Reinterpreting the teacher culture. In J.W. Little and M.W. McLaughlin (Eds), *Teachers' work: Individuals, Colleagues, and Contexts.* New York: Teachers College Press. Hargreaves, A., & Shirley, D. (2009). The persistence of presentism. *Teachers College Record, 111* (11), 2505-2534.	
6	10-12-15	**Organizational contexts of teacher leadership: Teachers' work conditions.** Building on last week's discussion of teaching norms that serve to isolate teachers and situate their work in classrooms and with students, this week we examine norms that afford teachers autonomy and resist efforts to develop peer assessment mechanisms.	
		Valli, L., & Buese, D. (2007). The changing roles of teachers in an era of high-stakes accountability. *American Educational Research Journal, 44* (3), 519-558. Yusko, B., & Feiman-Nemser, S. (2008). Embracing contraries: Assistance and assessment in teacher induction. Teachers College Record, 110(5), 923-953. Mangin, M. M. & Stoelinga, S. R. (2011). Peer? Expert? Teacher leaders struggle to gain trust while establishing their expertise. *Journal of Staff Development,* 32(3), 48-51.	**ESSAY 1 DUE OCT 18**
7	10-19-15	**What questions do we have about teacher leadership?** Building on our pre-existing understandings and the readings thus far, we will create an interview protocol for use in our empirical investigation of teacher leaders. We will begin this work online in a shared Google Doc where we post possible interview questions. Then, during class time we will continue to develop our common interview protocol.	
		Patton, M.Q. (1990). Qualitative interviewing. In, Qualitative Evaluation and Research Methods. Newbury Park: Sage. Chapter 7, 277-267. Brenner, M.E. (2006). Interviewing in Education Research. In J.L. Green, G. Camilli, & P. B. Elmore (Eds.), *Handbook of Complementary Methods in Education Research*. New York: Routledge.	In preparation for class: • Add interview questions to Google
PART II. TEACHER LEADERSHIP, EMERGING ROLES AND FUNCTIONS We spend the second half of the course delving more deeply into teacher leadership in the context of contemporary educational			

		issues and dilemmas—reading about and problematizing emerging roles and functions of teacher leadership. We then turn again to organizational contexts of teacher leadership with a focus on developing and supporting teacher leadership.	
8	10-26-15	**Leading from the middle: Contemporary meanings of teacher leadership.** Today's teachers are moving into leadership roles that focus on classroom practice in new and interesting ways. From teacher research to instructional coaching roles, teacher leaders are often positioned as mid-level leaders situated between the classroom and administrative roles in schools and districts. This week we will examine teacher leadership in the context of curricular reform and professional inquiry. We will focus on the complexity and positioning of teacher leadership work within contemporary school and district organizational contexts.	
		Leander, K., & Osborne, M. (2008). Complex positioning: Teachers as agents of curricular and pedagogical reform. *Journal of Curriculum Studies, 40*(1), 23-46. Paredes-Scribner, S.M., & Bradley-Levine, J. (2010). The meaning(s) of teacher leadership in an urban high school reform. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 46* (4), 491-522. Stoelinga, S.R. (2008), Leading from above and below: Formal and informal teacher leadership. In M. M. Mangin & S. R. Stoelinga (Eds.), *Effective teacher leadership: Using research to inform and reform* (pp. 10-35). New York: Teachers College Press.	In preparation for class: Interview
9	11-2-15	**Teacher leadership roles and functions: Building professional communities and leading teaching teams.** Much of what teacher leaders do is professional development work that involves groups of teachers. We turn this week to the subject of professional community and the role of teachers as leaders of these activities. In particular, we will consider the tensions and dilemmas of teacher community and the challenges that these tensions raise for the practice of teacher leadership.	
		Craig, C. J. (2009). Research in the midst of organized school reform: Versions of teacher community in tension. *American Educational Research Journal, 46* (2), 598-619. Achinstein, B. (2002). Conflict amid community: The micropolitics of teacher collaboration. *Teachers College Record, 104*(3), 421-455.	In preparation for class: • Complete interview
10	11-09-15	**Teacher leadership roles and functions: Building professional communities and leading teaching teams.** This week we continue to talk about how teachers can contribute to the development of professional communities.	

		Nelson, T.H., Slavit, D., Perkins, M., & Hathorn, T. (2008). A culture of collaborative inquiry: Learning to develop and support professional learning communities. *Teachers College Record, 110*(6), 1269-1303. Cobb, P., McClain, K., de Silva Lamberg, T., & Dean, C. (2003). Situating teachers' instructional practices in the institutional setting of the school and district. *Educational Researcher*, 32(6), p. 13-24.	In preparation for class: • Complete memo & transcript
11	11-16-15	**Instructional leadership: Mentoring.** This week we will explore teacher mentoring, a prominent teacher leadership activity that is also referenced in readings for other weeks. We will also take time in class to examine the interview transcripts and documents and engage in deductive and inductive analysis. We will search for themes across the data set and begin to identify topics for further research and examination.	
		Stanulis, R. N., & Floden, R.E. (2009). Intensive mentoring as a way to help beginning teachers develop balanced instruction. *Journal of Teacher Education, 60* (2), 112-122. Read interview transcripts on Google Drive.	In preparation for class: • Post completed transcripts on Google
12	11-23-15	**Instructional leadership: Coaching.** Instructional coaching has become a common approach to formal teacher leader roles. This week we explore the activities that coaches engage and some of the dilemmas for teachers who take on these formal roles. We will consider the effects of coaching on teacher practice.	
		Marsh, J., McCombs, J., Lockwood, J., Martorell, F., Gerwhwin, D., et al. (2008). Implementation of Florida's coaching program: The day-to-day work of coaches. In Authors, *Supporting literacy across the sunshine state: A study of Florida middle school reading coaches* (p. 81-117), Santa Monica, CA: RAND. Newman, S. B., & Cunningham, L. (2009). The impact of professional development and coaching on early language and literacy instructional practices. *American Educational Research Journal, 46* (2), 532-566.	
13	11-30-15	**The development of teacher leadership: Organizational support for teacher leadership.** Teachers do not lead in a vacuum. Their work is situated in organizational contexts and dependent on relations with other professionals, including other leaders—often the school principal or district administration. This week we consider how	

		principals and district leaders can support the development and the work of teacher leaders.	
		Matsumura, L.C., Sartoris, M., Bickel, D.D., & Garnier, H.E. (2009). Leadership for literacy coaching: The principal's role in launching a new coaching program. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 45* (5), 655-693. Gallucci, C., Van Lare, M., Yoon, I., & Boatright, B. (2010). Instructional coaching: Building theory about the role and organizational support for professional learning. *American Educational Research Journal, 47* (4), 919-963.	
14	12-7-15	**The promise and challenge of teacher leadership—developing standards to guide practice.** Although seemingly critical to achieving ambitious educational reform goals, teacher leadership is ambiguous territory for many practitioners. The work of teacher leadership is amorphous and often not well-supported—either monetarily or through organizational supports. Policy advocates, researchers, and practitioners are working together on this problem through the development of performance standards and guidelines for teacher leadership. This week we will examine several policy documents and an article that provide guidelines for teacher leader development.	
		Center for Strengthening the Teaching Profession (CSTP) (2009). *Teacher leadership skills framework.* Teacher Leadership Exploratory Consortium (2010). *Teacher Leader Model Standards.* National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality (2010). *Teacher leadership as a key to educational innovation: Action steps and promising strategies for state, district, and university officials.* Davis, S.H., & Leon, R.J. (May, 2009). Teaching Gil to lead. *Journal of School Leadership, 19,* 266-298.	
15	12-14-15	Exam Day: DO NOT MEET	**FINAL PAPER DUE: DECEMBER 13**