Introduction
Welcome to Leading Curriculum and Instruction. This course is premised on a set of contentions that will frame and guide our learning. First, that all schools must prioritize high quality learning as their main mission. Second, that all learning is social in nature and occurs through interaction. Third, that effective leadership can be understood as both socio-cognitive and distributed. Fourth, that learning-focused leadership facilitates the kind of responsiveness required by schools in turbulent environments.

Our work this semester will focus on developing an evidence base for this set of contentions. Together we will examine research related to learning-focused leadership within schools and districts. As a result of our learning you will gain a deep understanding of the ways that school leaders, broadly defined, influence learning opportunities for teachers, students, and school communities.

Content
The content for this course is framed by socio-cultural theories of learning. At the heart of this theoretical perspective is the notion that learning occurs through social interaction. That is, people learn with, through, and because of their interaction with others in their contexts. Stated another way, one might say that learning is socially constructed in conversation with others and it is situated within context. Both the interaction and the context mediate or shape the ways that people make meaning or learn. This view is distinct from long-standing notions of learning as a fixed property of individuals. Instead, we will consider learning as part of our social fabric and a component of organizational growth.

This course is also framed by socio-cognitive theories of leadership. In contrast to traditional conceptualizations of leadership that posit authority in formal roles, we will use a definition of leadership that focuses on influence and we will examine how influence is distributed across people, materials, and situations. Education researcher and theorist James Spillane (2004) tells us,

Leadership is not simply a function of what a school principal, or indeed any other individual or group of leaders, knows and does. Rather, it is the activities engaged in by leaders, in interaction with others in particular contexts around specific tasks. (p.5)

Thus conceived, we will seek to understand leadership as it occurs through interaction and in context in much the same way that sociocultural theorists view learning.

The use of sociocultural and socio-cognitive theories as a framework for the course will aid our examination of the intersection between teaching, learning and leading. For much of the past century these areas of research have been treated separately, with little investigation into how they connect with and influence one another. We will work to integrate and make sense of these fields in relation to one
another, examining their mutual dependencies and reciprocal influences. Simply stated, we will seek to understand why the study of leadership must also be a study of teaching and learning. To facilitate scholarly engagement around this idea we will read theoretical and empirical works and engage in critical conversation intended to promote collective understanding of learning-focused leadership as it relates to educational scholarship and to the world of practice.

Design
The course design fosters deep engagement with the course content. Foremost, the course structure reflects scientific principles of how people learn. Bransford and colleagues (2000) explain,

> To develop competence in an area of inquiry, students must: (a) have a deep foundation of factual knowledge, (b) understand facts and ideas in the context of a conceptual framework, and (c) organize knowledge in ways that facilitate retrieval and application. (p. 16)

As such, this course provides factual knowledge about learning-focused leadership functions and tasks in the context of sociocultural and socio-cognitive frameworks and in a way that promotes linkages to schools and school communities. To aid our learning process, our engagement with the course content will be cyclical, or spiral, in nature. Rather than treating each new set of readings as discrete, we will continually refer back to previous readings and work to integrate new understandings in a way that facilitates the reorganization and retrieval of knowledge. The ability to organize information in ways that create new understanding (sometimes referred to as mental models or schemas) is a characteristic of experts and it will facilitate your ability to transfer your learning to other contexts such as the school or educational setting where you work.

Inherent in this learning process is the need to engage in metacognitive reflection, that is, to think about your thinking. We will use a number of strategies to aid metacognition including the use of protocols to guide and structure classroom conversations, group discussions intended to promote the exchange of ideas, and writing assignments in which you will explain your thinking related to the course content. The process of continuously dialoging with our classmates and ourselves is integral to the learning that we will do together and also mirrors the kind of interactive, learning-focused leadership that this course aims to promote in school communities.

Learning Goals
This course meets Ed.D. Educational Leadership Concentration learning goal 2:

> Serve as learning-focused leaders who create the conditions and engage in the practices necessary for educators to experience effective professional learning.

In line with this learning goal, course objectives include the following:

To develop and demonstrate a knowledge base related to:

- Sociocultural theories of learning
- Socio-cognitive theories of leadership
- The practices that comprise learning-focused leadership in schools & districts

To develop and demonstrate skills necessary for:

- Reflective and analytic thinking
- Application of concepts and knowledge to new contexts
- Effective written and oral communication
Thoughtful attention to these learning objectives should be evident in all course assignments, including class participation and in interaction with others.

**Required Texts and Sakai:**
Typically you will be assigned to read 2-3 articles each week and to complete related activities. Most readings will be available at our Sakai website. I may also post other materials (links to websites, videos, supplemental readings, etc…) that pertain to our course content. Some of these materials may be posted spontaneously in response to events going on in the world. You should check our Sakai site twice weekly to prevent missing important announcements or information.

You will also need to purchase three books:


See attached calendar for additional weekly readings.

**Preparedness and participation:**
It goes without saying (almost) that completing the reading assignments is a vital part of making this a successful course, both for yourself and for your classmates. Yet, reading is not enough. Participants are expected to come to class prepared to engage in discussions about the assigned readings, to teach and to learn from each other in the spirit of intellectual inquiry and personal growth, and to assist in crafting a dynamic and shared learning experience. As such, preparation for class will extend beyond mere reading or mechanical completion of assignments to include the kind of critical thought and reflection necessary for engaged participation.

As you read for class, take time to reflect on the concepts presented by the authors and make connections with your own experiences in schools. Reflect on similar and contrasting examples or theories that you have encountered in your professional and academic life. Take notes, write down questions, and “talk back” to the text. This kind of engaged reading facilitates learning. It will also be useful when you participate in class discussion, work in small groups, and complete formal written assignments.

Please be mindful of how you use technology during class time. While it is appropriate to bring your laptop to class sessions and use it during class time, it should not distract you from the course. Surfing the web, tweeting, social networking, responding to email, etc… are not appropriate uses of your computer (smart phone, tablet, etc…) during class time. As a general rule, avoid having your eyes permanently fixed to your computer screen as it gives the impression that you are not invested in the conversation and it is disrespectful of your classmates’ contributions. Relatedly, set your phone to vibrate and do not text during class.
**Time commitment:**
Please keep in mind that this is a doctoral level class. Be prepared for a reading and writing intensive experience. A general rule of thumb is to budget 2-3 hours of study time for each credit hour in addition to the time spent in class. This means committing an average of 9-12 hours per week to this course. The exact amount of time you will need depends on your familiarity with the subject, the speed at which you read, your writing and study skills, and the knowledge/grades you aim to attain. The intensive nature of graduate school and students’ multiple commitments make effective time management imperative. I suggest blocking out time in your calendar for each of your classes. Scheduling class time and study time will help ensure that you are able to meet the time commitments necessary to be successful.

**Attendance:**
Regular attendance is crucial to your own development and to the progress made by the rest of the class. Thus, you should make every effort to attend all class sessions. The expectation is that you will miss no more than 5 class hours (the equivalent of two class sessions), whether excused or unexcused. After missing 5 class hours, subsequent absences will result in the loss of 1% from the student’s overall grade for each class hour missed. Students who are absent from class sessions are still expected to participate in any online discussions and electronically submit any assignments due. There is no way to “make-up” class discussions, which cannot be recreated. Attending part of class, if possible, is usually preferable to missing the entire class.

Students are expected to arrive to class on time. Arriving to class more than 5 minutes after the start of the class session is considered being late. Lateness is disruptive and it impedes your learning. Three late arrivals are considered equivalent to missing one hour of class. Penalties for chronic lateness will be incurred. Attendance is part of the participation grade.

**Office Hours, Correspondence:**
Office hours are by appointment. The best way to contact me is through email at melinda.mangin@gse.rutgers.edu. Emails from me will be sent to your gse account.

**Formatting Written Work:**
Your written work should conform to the formal standards articulated by the American Psychological Association 6th Edition. Purdue Online Writing Lab (Purdue OWL) is a hand electronic guide. Most importantly:

- Times New Roman, 12 point font
- One inch margins on all sides
- Page numbers
- Cover page that includes title, course, student, professor, date
- Left alignment with default spacing between words and letters
- Double spaced lines with only one hard return between indented paragraphs

Learning these standard procedures now will make writing your dissertation easier. Typically, students neglect to follow these procedures due to mere inattention; however, incorrect formatting may result in a loss of points.
Assignments
You will have two graded writing assignments. The first will focus on sociocultural theories of learning and the second will address distributed leadership in action. Due dates are on the calendar. Additional information will be provided as the work is assigned. All assignments will be submitted electronically. Your document should be labeled with your last name. Rewrites of essay 1 will be accepted. Rewrites are due one week after the papers have been returned with comments. Rewriting an essay does not ensure a higher grade. Grades are commensurate with quality, not effort.

Evaluation Late work is not accepted without prior arrangement and permission from me. Please contact me prior to the due date about potential difficulties.

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<tr>
<th>Graded Assignments:</th>
<th>Rutgers Ed.D. Grading Scale:</th>
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<tr>
<td>Essay I</td>
<td>93 - 100% A</td>
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<td>Essay II</td>
<td>88 - 92% B+</td>
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<td>Participation</td>
<td>83 - 87% B</td>
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<td>78 - 82% C+</td>
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University Policies
Academic Integrity. At the graduate level, any infraction of the academic integrity policy can result in expulsion. I strongly urge you to review Rutgers University policy on academic integrity: [http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/](http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/) as well as the supporting information, which includes resources for students to help identify and avoid academic dishonesty. Matters of academic integrity will be resolved by the Office of Student Conduct.

Disability Accommodation Policy. Any student who believes that s/he may need an accommodation in this class due to a disability should contact The Office of Disability Services for Students ([http://disabilityservices.rutgers.edu/](http://disabilityservices.rutgers.edu/)). Any student who has already received a letter of accommodation should contact me privately to discuss implementation of his/her accommodations. Failure to discuss implementation of accommodations with the instructor promptly may result in denial of your accommodations.

Policy Prohibiting Discrimination & Harassment. Rutgers University policy prohibits discrimination and harassment based upon: race, religion, color, national origin, ancestry, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, disability, genetic information, atypical hereditary cellular or blood trait, marital status, civil union status, domestic partnership status, military service, veteran status, and any other category protected by law. The Rutgers University Policy Prohibiting Discrimination and Harassment can be viewed at [http://policies.rutgers.edu/PDF/Section60/60.1.12-current.pdf](http://policies.rutgers.edu/PDF/Section60/60.1.12-current.pdf) For additional Rutgers University policies see: [http://www.rutgers.edu/](http://www.rutgers.edu/)

Note: Although the course syllabus and calendar have been carefully constructed, it is not always possible to foresee the path that our learning will take or circumstances that may shape the experience. Therefore, you should interpret the syllabus and calendar as guides, rather than fixed and unchanging documents. Assignments or course sessions may be added, deleted, or altered. (See attached calendar of classes.)