EDPS 614 Politics of Education  
Spring Semester, 2014

Instructor: Betty Malen, Professor, TLPL Department  
Course Time and Place: Monday, 4:15-7:00 PM, 2102 Benjamin Building  
Consultations: By appointment; email malen@umd.edu; home phone, to be shared in class; office phone 301- 405- 3587 (the least dependable way to reach me).

COURSE DESCRIPTION: This course is an introduction to a complex, contested field of study. It begins with an overview of major traditions of research in the parent discipline, political science, and major streams of work in the politics of education field. The course focuses on conceptual perspectives that can be used to examine political dynamics in various organizational contexts (e.g., schools, universities and governmental arenas) and provides opportunities to apply conceptual perspectives to "mini" case studies of education policymaking processes in organizational settings of particular interest to students. The course addresses the political processes through which education policy choices are determined in various federal, state and local governmental arenas but places special emphasis on the politics surrounding the enactment and implementation of prominent education reforms.

MAJOR OBJECTIVES: This course seeks to help students:

   a) Develop a general awareness of prominent conceptual perspectives and literature bases that can be used to examine and interpret the "politics" of education in the numerous formal and informal arenas that comprise the education policy system,

   b) Develop a general awareness of the contested character of the concepts and contributions of various political models and empirical studies of political processes,

   c) Articulate and apply a foundational conceptual perspective that is a particularly fruitful way of getting at the political processes that shape the formulation, enactment, implementation and impact of education policies,

   d) Develop "the habit of being analytic" in their consideration of the political dimensions of education and in their responses to the political issues inherent in education settings,

   e) Become more familiar with the environmental forces, institutional features, policy network activities and interest group pressures that affect education policy making in governmental arenas and other organizational contexts,

   f) Acquire a basic understanding of the role(s) educators play (or might play) in multiple decision arenas, the resources and strategies that can be deployed to influence education policy and the aspects of leadership that may warrant special attention in efforts to exercise "political leadership."

*This course draws liberally, at times literally, on a course developed by the late Professor Tim L. Mazzoni, Jr., University of Minnesota.
MAJOR ASSUMPTIONS: This course makes several assumptions:

a) Education is fundamentally political in nature. Beyond being an avenue through which society seeks to "socialize" individuals, transmit values (including views of civic responsibility) and prepare persons for "productive roles" in their respective work places and broader communities, education is a "stage" on which social conflicts are manifest and "managed."

b) Education policy decisions are not only inescapably political but also particularly critical because they significantly shape if not ultimately determine the distribution of benefits and burdens in educational organizations and because they affect the distribution of benefits and burdens in the broader society.

c) These distributional decisions develop through processes that are based on power and that are characterized by bargains, negotiations, compromises and other forms of accommodation.

d) A course that focuses on the political dimensions of education policy issues, processes and choices must consist of more than information about governmental arrangements, community contexts, interest group pressures and the like. It must provide exposure to conceptual frameworks and opportunities to develop conceptual skills, since these are among the most fundamental "skills" required by those who wish to study "politics" and by those who seek to exercise leadership in organizational settings.

e) One of the most fundamental analytic skills involves the ability to explicate an orienting framework (a set of related categories, assumptions and questions) that could be used to guide the description, analysis and interpretation of political dynamics, to articulate a "way of thinking" about, a way of understanding political interactions. A closely linked skill involves the ability to acquire, assess and assemble data about political dynamics and to evaluate, integrate and interpret those data in light of the logic and limits of the orienting framework.

f) An orienting framework that combines analytic categories drawn from political systems and power-influence perspectives constitutes an appropriate introduction to and foundation for the study of politics in governmental and educational organizations.

GENERAL CONTENTS, STRUCTURE AND APPROACH: The course is structured around five units. The first provides a broad overview of the field of study. The second concentrates on a conceptual framework that is a particularly helpful (and foundational) guide to the analysis of political dynamics. The third and fourth units examine political dynamics in federal, state and local arenas. The final unit confronts issues associated with the exercise of political leadership. As the attached general outline and tentative course calendar indicate, units are not given "equal time." Unit II is the crux of this course. Units will be addressed through a combination of readings, discussions, lectures, case applications and written assignments.

COURSE QUALIFIERS: This course is an abbreviated introduction to complex, contested concepts, not a thorough, let alone exhaustive treatment of these notions. It addresses important aspects of politics, but neglects or gives short shrift to other aspects that are arguably as important as the matters emphasized. The multiple "antecedents" of political activity and the messy
methodological challenges that confront those who seek to study politics are among the key issues that get very short-shrift. Students are encouraged to view this course as a "tip of the iceberg" exposure to the politics of education, as a springboard for further study.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:** The five course requirements are described below.

1. **Reading Assignments.** Each student is responsible for the readings noted on the syllabus. These readings are available on line and from the instructor. Other readings may be assigned (or substituted) during the semester as the instructor learns more about students' interests and backgrounds. The set of readings includes classic and contemporary conceptual and empirical works that illustrate and augment ideas presented and discussed in class sessions. The set also includes a few more journalistic accounts of political actors and policy issue dynamics. These selections are prioritized via required and recommended designations on the course schedule. In some readings, language choices are problematic (e.g., gender biased). While these choices are understandable (e.g., time period when piece was written), they are not endorsed. The menu of readings is used to provide a common information base and accommodate different learning styles. Students who wish to pursue some of the ideas introduced in this course in greater depth may contact the instructor for additional references/bibliographies.

2. **Class Participation.** Each student is expected to participate in class sessions, through questions, critiques, illustrations, suggestions and other forms of feedback (e.g., summaries of key ideas in readings, alternative interpretations of ideas/issues, reactions to student approaches to their papers and critiques of readings and/or presentations). Participation will be assessed in terms of the quality, not the frequency of comments.

3. **Reading Reviews.** Each student is expected to complete two reviews of course related readings. The reviews can be based on course readings and/or relevant articles/chapters that students locate. Reviews of writings other than those included on the course syllabus should be cleared with the instructor. These reviews are intended to help develop the habits of (a) carefully reading, recording and synthesizing information, (b) critically inspecting lines of argument, and (c) systematically searching the readings for connections, contradictions, issues and questions that warrant attention. More detailed instructions are provided on the attachment entitled Reading Reviews. Due dates are noted on the course calendar; examples of strong reading reviews are posted online; re-writes are permitted and may be required. Students should be engaged in a "review of readings" process each week as they prepare for class.

4. **Governing Board Paper.** Each student is expected to prepare a short (5-7 pages) analysis of the public meeting behavior of a governing board in education. The paper is intended to help students see how concepts addressed in class are manifest in "real-world" settings. The content of this assignment is set forth on the attachment entitled Governing Board Paper. The due date is on the course calendar. This assignment will be discussed in class. Examples of student-produced governing board papers may be provided in class; two example (Hershey paper, Curtis paper) are posted online. Re-writes are permitted and may be required.

5. **Political Analysis Paper.** Each student is responsible for preparing a political analysis of an education policy decision. The paper is intended to help students articulate a framework for
political analysis and use that framework to guide a “mini” case study of an education policy decision. Students may select, in consultation with the course instructor, the decision event they wish to examine. The content of this paper is set forth on the attachment entitled Political Analysis Paper. This assignment will be completed in installments due throughout the term so students can receive feedback before they submit their final paper. The various due dates are noted on the course calendar. This assignment will be discussed in class. In addition, detailed instructions for each installment and sample papers by Molly Hershey, Kristin Harris, and Katya Narozhnaya are posted online. Like the student-generated papers, the published examples of political analyses that are part of the required course readings should help students see how to carry out and communicate a case study of political dynamics. Re-writes are permitted, they also may be required.

COURSE GRADES: Course assignments are weighted as follows:

- 10% Class Participation
- 20% Two Reading Reviews
- 20% Governing Board Observation Paper
- 50% Political Analysis Paper

Criteria for evaluation of these course requirements are noted on the attachments that describe each assignment and on the class participation section of the syllabus. If students have questions or concerns about the grades they receive, they should speak with the instructor, directly. Per university policy, students may appeal grades. The procedures for doing so are contained in the graduate studies handbook. The department has an academic appeal's committee that students may contact for information and assistance.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY: The Student Honor Council has asked us to include the following statement on all course syllabi: The University of Maryland, College Park has a nationally recognized Code of Academic Integrity, administered by the Student Honor Council. This Code sets standards for academic integrity at Maryland for all undergraduate and graduate students. As a student you are responsible for upholding these standards for this course. It is very important for you to be aware of the consequences of cheating, fabrication, facilitation, and plagiarism. For more information on the Code of Academic Integrity or the Student Honor Council, please visit our website: http://www.shc.umd.edu.

DISABILITY-BASED ACCOMMODATIONS: Any class member who has a documented disability and wishes to discuss academic accommodations should contact the instructor ASAP.

RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES: Students will not be penalized because of observances of their religious beliefs. Whenever possible, students will be given reasonable time to make up any academic assignment that is missed due to participation in a religious observance. It is the student's responsibility to inform the instructor of absences for religious observances.

MEDICALLY-NECESSITATED ABSENCES: Absences for illness will be accommodated under the conditions specified in the university policy. For more information, go to (http://www.president.umd.edu/policies/v100g.html). Students should contact the instructor if
they will miss more than one class for medical reasons and discuss how to document the medically-necessitated absences and how to make-up the missed class sessions.

**COURSE EVALUATIONS:** The Office of Institutional Research, Planning and Assessment has asked faculty to include the following statement on their syllabi: *As a member of our academic community, you as a student have a number of important responsibilities. One of those responsibilities is to submit your course evaluations each term through CourseEval UM in order to help faculty and administrators improve teaching and learning at Maryland....You can access the submission system at (www.courseevalum.umd.edu). For additional information refer to https://www.irpa.umd.edu/Assessment/CourseEval/stdt_faq.shtml.*

**INVITATIONS, SUGGESTIONS:**

a) Conversations and conferences re: the written assignments or other course-related matters can be initiated at any time throughout the semester, in class sessions or at other times.

b) In preparing for class, students are encouraged to (i) "map" the readings, to make notes regarding the purpose, thesis, major lines of argument and nature/quality of evidence used to develop the ideas; (ii) "step back" and ask what the readings say about the session topics identified on the syllabus and then (iii) "step back" again and ask how the readings relate to the course aims. Following each class, students are encouraged to re-read or otherwise review the articles/chapters to clarify ideas, clinch insights, generate additional questions, etc. If talking about the readings with others helps, consider forming an "in person," "by phone" or "on email" study group. These strategies may or may not work for everyone since people learn in different ways. Try them; modify them; invent alternative strategies.

c) In developing the written assignments, consider the following process: keep a record of ideas/insights/issues; put the ideas in outline form (sentence outline if possible, but a phrase outline can also be helpful): talk through the ideas with another person; write a draft; interrogate your script; share a draft and invite candid reaction; weigh the feedback; rewrite.

**TOPICAL OUTLINE, UNIT OVERVIEWS, PROPOSED SCHEDULE**

**UNIT I   OVERVIEW OF APPROACHES TO THE STUDY OF "POLITICS"

This section introduces students to major traditions of work in the parent field of politics and its allied field, the politics of education. The aim is to give students a general understanding of the scope and nature of work that falls under the elusive, contested term "politics." More specifically, this section seeks to (a) expose students to alternative ways of examining politics, (b) encourage a basic understanding of how the approach taken in this course fits into the broad and variegated field of study known as the politics of education, (c) explore the reasons political models of organizational activity have evolved, (d) identify the conditions under which political perspectives might be especially relevant "lenses" to employ, and (e) articulate the reasons political perspectives might be especially helpful in understanding the dynamics of schools, colleges and universities as well as the dynamics of governmental units.
1/27/2014 Session 1: Introduction to the Course and the Terrain

In addition to providing an overview of course requirements, expectations, assumptions, logistics and the like, the first session will introduce students to major traditions of study in political science and in the "politics of education." This session will give students an opportunity to discuss how the study of politics has evolved, to develop a more grounded sense of the various ways one might study "politics," and to secure a general orientation to and justification for the approach to the study of politics emphasized in this course. This session sets the stage for a more in-depth treatment of these matters in the following class.

Readings (Required):


Readings (Recommended):


2/3/2014 Session 2: Selecting an Orienting Framework: Multiple Models, Major Traditions

This session will revisit the discussion of approaches to the study of "politics," provide an overview of the analytic framework emphasized in this course and elaborate the rationales for combining the political systems and power-influence perspectives. This session will (a) concentrate on components of political systems perspectives and the reasons why an understanding of the institutional context is so critical, and (b) address the limitations of the political systems perspective, particularly as a vehicle for unpacking the play of power among diverse but interdependent actors who simultaneously compete and cooperate to influence decision outcomes. Since power is a pivotal but "primitive" concept, we will address alternative views of power introduced in the readings and begin discussing the analytic categories we will use to unpack the relative power of actors and the ways broad structures and human agency interact to shape decision outcomes.

Readings: (Required, continued on next page):


One of the following: Read for an understanding of why political models of organizations have surfaced in the field of organizational theory, why scholars may be reluctant to employ them, and the conditions under which these models might be appropriate approaches to the study of organizational decision-making and organizational change. Be prepared to share with the class the central lines of argument in the reading you selected.


Bolman, Lee G. & Deal, Terrence E. (1993). "Power, conflict and coalitions," & "The manager as politician," Reframing organizations, pp. 183-239. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass (Newer editions are available; this older version still works well; it serves as an excellent overview of many of the ideas we will be discussing and addresses the key ideas noted in the preface to these readings).

Readings (Recommended, continued on next page):
Unit II A FRAMEWORK FOR POLITICAL ANALYSIS

This unit will lay out the key components, central assumptions, and general assessments of the analytic framework emphasized in this course. This framework capitalizes on two major traditions of work in political science (the systems and the behavioral). It combines these traditions into an open-ended yet manageable heuristic device that can be used to guide the analysis of political developments. The framework recognizes that "context" situates and mediates political behavior but focuses on "agency," on the mobilization of power and the resultant interplay of influence among diverse actors in organizational contexts.

2/10/2014 Session 3: Political Systems and Power-Influence Perspectives

This session will review the rationales for the eclectic perspective used in this course and the key components of the political systems perspective. Following this recap, the class will move to the categories of the power-influence perspective.

Readings (Required):
Geary, L. Sue (1992). "Review of the literature and explication of the conceptual perspective," pp. 9-58, in Author, The policymaking process resulting in fiscal policy for special education in the state of Utah. Dissertation, Department of Educational Administration, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, UT. (Read to see how literature bases inform the construction of a conceptual framework to examine power relations, not for an understanding of the policy "window" used for examining political processes).


Session 4: Power-Influence Categories (Continued) First Review Due

This session will continue to unpack the concept of power by working through the set of analytic categories that enable one to get at major aspects of this phenomenon.


Session 5: Power-Influence Categories (Continued)

As in previous sessions, we will be working to understand how the analytic categories help one expose, inspect and interpret patterns of political activity in organizational contexts.

**Readings (Required, continued on next page):**


Readings (Recommended):


We will continue to work our way through the analytic categories that can help us uncover and interpret the power-based interactions that are such an integral part of political dynamics.

Readings (Required):


Readings (Recommended):


3/10/14 Session 7: Power-Influence Categories, Adaptations and Extensions

This session will be devoted to completing the layout of the analytic categories and discussing how scholars have adapted and extended this approach to political analysis.

Readings (Required):
Re-read Geary on measuring power and influence and Conner, et al. section on gauging influence of the youth organizations they studied.


Readings (Recommended, continued on next page):


3/17/2013  Spring Break

3/24/14 Session 8: Adaptations/Extensions and Assessments (Continued)  First Installment, Political Analysis Paper Due

This session will be devoted to examining how others have described, adapted or extended key concepts to examine political developments captured under the rubric of the "new institutionalism."

**Readings (Required, continued on next page):**

Any one of the following: Be prepared to share with the class a summary of the line of argument in the selection you chose and be prepared to talk about how the selection draws on institutional theory to explain political developments.


**UNIT III: POLITICAL PROCESSES AT THE FEDERAL AND STATE LEVEL**

This unit draws on course concepts and studies of political processes to examine how politics may play out in federal and state arenas. Both units of government are actively, arguably heavily involved in the domain of education. The unit highlights patterns of politics at the federal and state levels, discusses "explanations" of these patterns, and considers the impact of federal and state activism on "local control."

**3/31/2014 Session 9: Understanding Federal Involvement and State Activism in Education**

The federal government has been intermittently involved in education throughout our history but many argue that the federal government has become more aggressively involved in recent years. While states were often cast as the "weak link" in the federal-state-local system especially in the 1950's and 1960's, many recognize that they have intensified their involvement in education and have become prominent if not dominant actors in the federal-state-local "triangle" of governmental units that "make education policy". This session reviews reasons for federal and state activism and highlights the implications of the more intense and sustained involvement for the long-standing tradition of "local control" of public schools (and the autonomy of higher education institutions). We use the foundational framework we've been developing to analyze these dynamics and begin looking at more focused theories that seek to explain these developments.

**Readings (Required):**


Readings (Recommended, continued on next page):


4/7/2014 American Education Research Association Conference (AERA)

4/14/2014 Session 10: Federal and State Education Politics (Continued)

This session continues our discussion of federal and state involvement in education and theoretical orientations that may be particularly helpful for examining dynamics and explaining developments in those arenas.


Curtis, Kimberly (2011). The politics of non-incremental school finance reform: A case study analysis of Vermont’s Act 60 as a test of Mazzoni’s arena model. Dissertation, University of Maryland, College Park. (Focus on chapters 1, 2 and 6).
UNIT IV: UNDERSTANDING POLITICAL DYNAMICS AT THE LOCAL LEVEL

Although federal and state governments have become active, influential forces, local units still have incentive and opportunity to make or "remake" education policies, particularly during the implementation stages. This unit "zooms in" on local contexts to see how politics may "play out" in smaller organizational arenas through the formal actions of authorized governing boards or special committees and through the informal exchanges that occur in the seemingly routine, "ordinary" day-to-day interactions that are part and parcel of organizational activity.

4/21/2014  Session 11: Understanding/Influencing Political Dynamics at the District Level
Second Installment, Political Analysis Paper Due

The local school district is a long-standing but controversial governance arena. Some contend that local districts are presently overpowered by federal and state government; others argue that local entities are still vibrant arenas in which critical education policy decisions are hammered out. Some argue that local districts are outmoded, that school boards are essentially irrelevant or hopelessly non-functional, that other governance arrangements such as mayoral control, state-wide "open-enrollment" options or various private-public partnerships would be more effective ways to structure schools; others argue that local districts and their governing agents are an integral part of efforts to balance state and local interests and a critical avenue for democratic, responsive governance. This session begins to look at some of the various “takes” on politics at the district level and the strategies districts use to deal with the political pressures surrounding them.

Readings (Required):


One of the two: Be prepared to provide class members a clear synopsis of the major lines of argument advanced in the piece you select.

This session provides additional “takes” on the politics shaping local school district efforts to provide equitable educational opportunities. It unpacks some of the barriers to achieving this ideal as well as some of the obstacles associated with realizing principles associated with the notion of democratic governance. In addition, the session looks at advocacy efforts of local actors.

**Readings (Required):**


**Readings (Recommended, continued on next page):**

The book series on urban education reform developed by Clarence Stone and colleagues and writings on Chicago school reform by Anthony Bryk and Dorothy Shipps provide insightful accounts of the politics of recent education reform initiatives in major cities. I have these books on my shelf and would be happy to share them with students who are interested.


5/5/2014 Session 13: Understanding and Influencing Political Dynamics in Organizations

Educators have been reluctant to admit that schools, colleges and universities are political systems, that interactions in these settings are every bit as "political" as those in governmental arenas. A growing body of evidence supports the theoretical expectation that educational organizations are inescapably, if not always visibly "political" and that the denial of "politics" is, itself, a political strategy that fosters an image of being "above" politics. Ironically, another tendency is to label most any disconcerting development or "dysfunctional" dynamic in organizations as "politics." Thus it seems politics is never-present and ever-present. This session tries to sort through the issues associated with efforts to understand the "everyday" politics of organizational life, particularly in school settings.

**Readings (Required):**


**Readings (Recommended, continued on next page):**


**UNIT V: UNDERSTANDING AND EXERCISING POLITICAL LEADERSHIP**

Units to date illustrated the complex nature of political dynamics and the various ways actors may acquire power and exercise influence for good or ill. This unit focuses on political leadership.


What distinguishes political leadership from other types of power-based interactions? How might political leadership be identified? developed? exercised in "micro" and "macro" arenas?

**Readings (Required):**

**Readings (Recommended):**


**Session 13, Part 2: Appraising the "Framework" and the Course**

This portion of the class "steps back" to appraise the approach emphasized in this course. Is it a sensible, useful way of thinking about the "politics of education?" Can it enhance one's understanding of political dynamics and generate insights for action? Does it offer a set of "transferable tools" that could be used to uncover, interpret and affect political dynamics in various educational contexts? These sorts of issues will be given "center-stage" status now that students have been using the approach in the development of their case studies. This portion of our final meeting will be devoted to a discussion of the course as well as options students might consider should they wish to pursue work in "policy studies," and individual conferences, as needed, to arrange for completion of student initiated or instructor-required re-writes of course assignments.

If students wish, and if the proposed arrangement does not constitute an imposition on students, the final class session will be held at my home in Annapolis. If any student is inconvenienced or would be unable to attend class at that site, we will meet on campus.
EXPLANATION OF ASSIGNMENTS

READING REVIEWS

Purpose: These reviews are intended to help students analyze and synthesize readings, discover connections or contradictions, and identify issues and implications embedded in readings.

Content/Format: In a 2-3 page essay, students should discuss a reading selected from the required or recommended works noted on the syllabus or from articles/chapters students have located and cleared with the instructor. Reviews should have two major divisions:

1) Synopsis of article or chapter that identifies the purpose (what the piece is trying to do), the basis of the writing (what data sources/methods or combinations of methods are drawn upon to construct the piece); the major ideas and the supporting lines of argument and evidence, and

2) Response to article that provides critical commentary on adequacy of lines of argument and/or analytic observations such as connections between main ideas of article and ideas discussed in class or addressed in other readings; implications of article or insights regarding how article triggers questions, generates insights, has "utility" (or reasons article does not, in your judgment, make a contribution to your understanding of politics generally, or education politics more specifically)

Evaluation: Reviews constitute 20% of the course grade. The evaluation is based primarily on the accuracy of the synopsis and the logic of the review. Each review is expected to demonstrate coherent organization and reasoning, succinct but sensible development of key ideas and appropriate use of the English language.

Resources: See the sample reviews by Elia Powers and Kristin Harris. Powers reviewed Prestine’s article, “The struggle for control of teacher education...” and McAdam’s chapter on “The framing functions of movement tactics…” and Harris reviewed Kanter’s chapter on “Power failure in management circuits…”

GOVERNING BOARD OBSERVATION PAPER

Purpose: This paper asks students to apply a narrow set of course concepts to the analysis of a public governing board meeting (e.g., a local school board, a school site council, a faculty senate, a higher education coordinating council, a state school board, a legislative committee). Students may describe how a particular concept is manifest or "test" a generalization from the readings.

Content/Format: 5-7 typed pages; four major divisions

1) Short summary of meeting (e.g., type of board, date of meeting, major agenda items/issues)

2) Statement of focus of observation (e.g., use of information, type/extent of
citizen participation, presence of symptoms of group think; examples of particular political strategies

3) Analysis of meeting in terms of focus of observation

4) Implications of analysis for understanding politics and influencing boards

Evaluation: This paper counts for 20% of the course grade. The evaluation is based on the systematic application of a set of categories or generalizations and insights that can be gleaned about political processes and ways to exert influence on them. The paper is also expected to demonstrate coherent organization and reasoning, use of observational data to support the analysis, and appropriate use of the English language.

Note: Students should attach a copy of the governing board agenda to the paper

Resources: Two sample papers (Hershey, Molly. (2003) “Group Think and the Maryland State Board of Education,” and Curtis, Kim on “Nonparticipation” at a local school board meeting) are posted online; other samples are available from the instructor; just ask.

POLITICAL ANALYSIS PAPER

Purpose: This paper requires students to apply the framework for political analysis presented in class to a particular decision event. In short, the paper examines, from a power-influence perspective, x's decision to do y. We will discuss criteria to consider in selecting a decision to analyze. Students should feel free to discuss their choice of a decision event with the instructor.

Data Base: Field-based information (e.g., gathered through interviews, augmented by documents and printed materials where possible), on the processes through which an important education policy decision was made. Suggestions for acquiring and analyzing field data will be presented in class.

Content/Format: 20-30 typed pages; 5 major sections

1) Introduction -- clear, concise, early statement of purpose and identification of decision event,

2) Analytic Framework -- the major categories and underlying assumptions of framework that guides data collection and analysis of decision event; be sure to tether this layout to course readings on key components of this framework and deal with both the definition of the category and its analytic function,

3) Description/Assessment of data base (e.g., profile of informants interviewed, procedures to collect/analyze data, limitations of data base, adequacy of information base in light of the purpose of this assignment)
4) Major Findings/Interpretations -- the relevant players, their goals, resources, influence strategies, impact on decision outcomes in this setting

5) Conclusions and Implications -- the major insights acquired from case study, discussed in light of course concepts and related readings and discussed in light of insights regarding the manner in which actors can influence education policy decisions.

**Evaluation:** This paper accounts for 50% of the final course grade. The evaluation is based on the systematic definition and application of the analytic categories. The paper should demonstrate coherent organization, cogent reasoning, explicit use of data to support interpretations and conclusions; capacity to "tether" findings of the case to course concepts and related literatures; and appropriate use of the English language. Field notes must be submitted with the paper.

**Resources:** More detailed instructions for each installment are posted online. Four sample papers (by Molly Hershey, Kristin Harris, Elia Powers and Katya Narozhnaya prepared for EDPS 614) are also posted on line. Hershey’s paper deals with the politics of Children First, an initiative launched in New York City; the Harris paper deals with the NCBL policy, the Powers paper deals with a curricular change in the journalism department and the Narozhnaya paper focuses on MHEC’s decision to curb a new doctoral program in the Maryland higher education system. The book *Getting the Facts*, by Jerome Murphy, may be helpful particularly if this assignment is your first field research experience. Check the library or see the instructor if you wish to consult this reference on conducting field research. Although this book is written as a way to carry out program evaluation research, the discussion of qualitative methods is also relevant for qualitative case studies of political processes.