Course Name: **Contemporary Social Trends** CRN 10159

**Instructor:** Dr. Marianne M. True

**Office Hours:** Before or after class and by appointment.

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Office Phone: 603.535.2660

Term and Year: Fall 2013

**Course Delivery:** Face – to – Face with online work

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**Catalog Description**

Problems and issues that relate to the present and the future of public and private education are the core of the course. They are identified in a forum that brings experience and current methodology together to address problems that relate to the specific roles of the course participants. Long-range and short range problem-solving strategies directed toward increasing the scope of curriculum options and expanding the broad applicability of instructional resources are addressed in terms of current situational models.

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**Course Overview**

**Course Objectives:** The student will have the opportunity to:

- demonstrate knowledge of key contemporary issues in education.
- collaborate with colleagues to explore problem-solving strategies as they address relevant issues in education.
- demonstrate his/her ability to explore issues from various viewpoints that represent a diverse constituency.
- analyze and interpret educational data, issues and trends, outlining possible actions and their applications.
- discuss the administrator's role in working collaboratively to create an environment where optimal student growth occurs.
- demonstrate his/her ability to understand organizational systems.

**Enduring Understandings:** Upon completion of the course, participants will understand that:

- One’s perceptions, biases and actions are rooted in the history of their own beliefs.
- The same data may be used effectively to argue both sides of an issue.
- Organizational systems are influenced by the constituencies within them.
- Collaboration can lead to deeper understandings of an issue.
Essential Questions:

1. What does it mean to make a thoughtful argument?
2. How does the “history of one’s belief” impact his/her perspective?
3. How may data be effectively and ineffectively used to make an argument?
4. What does how people respond to a situation say about them?
5. How might knowing another’s perspective impact your own?

COGS Hallmarks

- *Leadership & Advocacy* is addressed throughout this course as participants examine the skills needed and roles played by building level leaders.
- *Scholarship & Action* is addressed through the development of thoughtful arguments related to controversial issues in education.
- *Reflection & Innovation* is addressed as participants examine their own leadership, research and written and oral communication skills.
- *Professionalism & Service* is addressed as participants make thoughtful, research-based arguments in a professional manner.
- *Global Awareness & Social Responsibility* is addressed as participants look for real world applications.

Textbook List/Bibliography/Recommended Reading/Resources

**Required Text**

Noll, J. W. (2011-17th edition) *Taking sides: Clashing views on educational issues*. Guilford, CT: McGraw Hill/Dushkin. (Please note that this text is used as a springboard for the research topics that may be explored independently throughout the course.)

For assistance with APA style, see the APA website for rich resources: [http://www.apastyle.org/index.aspx](http://www.apastyle.org/index.aspx)

Additional resources may be contributed by students and the instructor during the term and will be posted in Moodle.

Professional Standards, Course Goals/Objectives, and Assessment

*In each of the 3 phases described in the Assignments column below candidates will have opportunities to address the following state and national standards:*

1.4 Steward a Vision
b. Candidates understand the theory and research related to organizational and educational leadership and engage in the collection, organization, and analysis of a variety of information, including student performance data, required to assess progress toward a district’s vision, mission, and goals.

**2.3 Apply Best Practice to Student Learning**
a. Candidates demonstrate the ability to facilitate and engage in activities that use best practices and sound educational research to improve instructional programs.

**3.2 Manage Operations**
b.

Candidates can use appropriate and effective needs assessment, research-based data, and group process skills to build consensus, communicate, and resolve conflicts in order to align resources with the district vision.

**4.1 Collaborate with Families and Other Community Members**
b. Candidates demonstrate an ability to use public information and research-based knowledge of issues and trends to collaborate with community members and community organizations to have a positive affect on student learning.

**5.3 Acts Ethically**
a. Candidates make and explain decisions based upon ethical and legal principles.

**6.1 Understand the Larger Context**
a. Candidates demonstrate the ability to use appropriate research methods, theories, and concepts to improve district operations.

**Relationship to State Standards**

**614.05**

(2) As relating to leadership for learners, the candidate shall understand and demonstrate knowledge or competency in:

- d. The value of assessing, using, and conducting research to improve student learning and professional development;

(3) As relating to visionary leadership, the candidate shall understand and demonstrate knowledge of or competency in:

- b. Communicating and interacting with parents and community agencies with regard to the education of children;

(c) The program shall be flexible enough to allow for individualized programs of study and experience.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Assessment Tool</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Phase I:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Evaluative Criteria for Phase 1:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• First, pick a partner who shares your interest in one of the topic choices.</td>
<td>• The topic is clearly defined.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Select a topic from the choices given (See hand-out) or choose one that reflects a contemporary issue in your field and is of mutual interest to you and your partner.</td>
<td>• Arguments made are rooted in research rather than opinion.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Choose a pro or con position.</td>
<td>• The candidate responds directly to the arguments posed by his/her partner.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Read text articles (Noll) associated with this issue.</td>
<td>• Opposing views are considered and addressed using current research.</td>
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<td>• Check out pertinent web sites.</td>
<td>• The candidate highlights/discusses key points raised in the Moodle discussion rather than reading the discussion itself.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Locate three (3) additional, current, appropriate resources (at least one professional journal article, minimum).</td>
<td>• The participant articulately demonstrates both clarity and synthesis of research material.</td>
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<td><strong>IN MOODLE:</strong></td>
<td>• The participant stays within the timeline given.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• <strong>Clearly define</strong> the issue. Formulate an argument in favor or against the issue, incorporate articles, use web site(s) and other appropriate resources, and acknowledge and counter the opposing view. In short, demonstrate your in-depth understanding of the issue as well as your professional communication skills.</td>
<td><strong>Phase II: Leadership and Problem Solving Assignment:</strong> In Phase II you will address a new issue <em>collaboratively</em> with a partner.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• A <em>minimum</em> of three postings per topic from each participant should occur. (We will discuss the format.)</td>
<td>• In this case, pick the pro or con to read and share with your partner.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• It is strongly recommended that your original posting be completed no later than September 13th.</td>
<td>• Research the topic. (minimum 3 articles as before)</td>
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<td>• Come to class on September 23rd prepared to share your findings with your colleagues.</td>
<td>• Work collaboratively with your partner to</td>
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**Evaluative Criteria for Phase 2:**

• The topic is clearly defined.
• Arguments made are rooted in research rather than opinion.
• The candidate responds directly to the arguments posed by his/her partner.
• Opposing views are considered and addressed using current research.
**problem-solve** one of the issues in relation to one of your work sites.

Example: The issue is school size. You work at a small school that wants to provide more opportunities for students OR you work at a large school feeling students are getting lost in the cracks.

- Working collaboratively, you inform your partner, summarize what each has learned...Use the discussion board and any other means to clearly SYNTHESIZE what you’ve learned... to problem solve.
- The last posting set will demonstrate your collaborative ability to make recommendations for the site, given both the context of the site and the research you have done.

Note: You need only problem solve for one of your work sites.

Come to class on October 7th prepared to share your findings with your colleagues. In short, you will take us through the process you and your partner(s) experienced. What were the key findings? What did you learn? What recommendations, based on a careful review of each side of the issue, do you have for the site?

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**Phase III: **Final Paper/Presentation

- Your final paper addresses a contemporary issue of concern to you.
- It’s specific to your site and/or work
- You will research, synthesize and problem solve, culminating in a final paper, using APA format.
- Prepare a Power Point or similar visual presentation using technology to be presented to the class.
- Presentation due October 21st. A hard copy of your power point should be turned in to the instructor at the start of class.
- Final paper due October 26th no later than 11:59 pm.

**Evaluative Criteria for Phase 3 Final Paper:**

- The candidate highlights/discusses key points raised in the Moodle discussion rather than reading the discussion itself.
- The participant articulately demonstrates both clarity and synthesis of research material.
- The candidate demonstrates his/her ability to make recommendations for the site, given both the context of the site and the research conducted.
- The participant stays within the timeline given.
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Content of Course Which Addresses Technological Standards/Competence</th>
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This course is managed through Moodle 2, which requires that students are able to work in an online environment, both for posting information and gathering information. Also, this course requires scholarly research using online databases and electronic search engines.

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<tr>
<th>Evaluation Plan/Grading Scale</th>
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- **Class Attendance and Participation** – This course is rooted in full class and on-line discussions. These discussions, as well as in-class activities cannot be duplicated. The candidate will show evidence of having read and reflected on class activities and assigned readings. He/She will participate in class in a knowledgeable and collaborative manner. (25%)

- **MOODLE** – Candidates will be required to participate in Moodle discussions as they relate to course content and react/respond to their colleagues in a thoughtful, collegial, and timely manner. Candidates will also be responsible for discussing any ancillary materials (i.e., articles) distributed for discussion by the instructor. (30%)

- **Written Assignments** - In addition to written Moodle work, the candidate will complete a final paper that demonstrates thoughtful reflection and proper use of English grammar. Evidence of post-graduate level work using APA format is required. (30%)

- **Presentation** - The candidate will present key components of their final paper to the class using technology. (15%)

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<th>Grading Scale:</th>
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<tr>
<td>94-100 = A</td>
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<tr>
<td>90-93 = A-</td>
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<tr>
<td>87-89 = B+</td>
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<tr>
<td>84-86 = B</td>
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<tr>
<td>80-83 = B-</td>
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<tr>
<td>77-79 = C+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>74-76 = C</td>
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<tr>
<td>70-73 = C-</td>
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<tr>
<td>0-69 = F</td>
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Incompletes: An instructor may decide to enter a grade of incomplete (IC) on a student’s record if unusual circumstances prevent completion of the course on time, and a minimal portion of the total class work needs to be completed. The course must be completed by the date specified by the instructor which cannot exceed one year beyond the original term of course completion. If the course is not completed by this date, the grade specified by the instructor will be recorded. If no grade is specified, a default grade of F will be recorded. The instructor is responsible for documenting and notifying the student of the work to be completed and the deadline. A student may not graduate with an incomplete on his or her transcript.

Course Calendar/Agenda

September 9, 2013
Discussion: Course Overview
Key Trends and Issues in Education
Moodle course components
Partner Selection
Presentation Requirements
History of A Belief Exercise
Work on Topic I, in preparation for September 23rd class

Assignments:

Complete Effective Arguments assignment in Moodle by September 15th.

Complete Phase 1 exercise in Moodle. Come to class on September 23rd prepared to share a synopsis of your collective Phase I results.

September 23, 2013
Discussion: Moodle Topics: Phase I Presentation
Assignment: Complete Phase II exercise in Moodle. Come to class on October 7th prepared to share a synopsis of your collective Phase II results.

October 7, 2013
Discussion: Moodle Topics: Phase II Presentation
Paper Topic Round Table
Final Paper Research

October 21, 2013
Final Presentations
Final paper due October 26, 2013 at 11:59 pm:

Instructor Additions

N/A

Assessment Rubrics

See evaluative criteria beginning on p. 3 listed under “Assessment Tool” column.
University Policies and Procedures

- **Email Policy:** PSU has a specific policy related to email correspondence:

  3.1.0.3 The University has a responsibility to protect students’ and staff rights as well as ensure the accuracy of its business processes based on e-mail correspondence. Therefore, email containing official business of the University shall be addressed to the person’s official University email address and should not be addressed to alternative addresses.

  In order to comply with this policy, CoGS staff members use only PSU email addresses. We ask that you please use your Plymouth e-mail address for all correspondence with us, your advisees and students.

- **ADA Policy:** Plymouth State University is committed to providing students with documented disabilities equal access to all university programs and facilities. If you think you have a disability requiring accommodations, you should contact the PASS office in Lamson library (535-2270) to determine whether you are eligible for such accommodations. Academic accommodations will only be considered for students who have registered with the PASS Office. If you have a Letter of Academic Accommodation for this course from the PASS office, please provide the instructor with that information privately so that adaptations can be made to meet your needs. Course materials online comply with the Web-based Intranet and Internet Information and Applications Standards in accordance with ADA Section 508.

- **Academic Integrity:** Academic integrity is the foundation of the pursuit of knowledge. All members of the academic community are expected to be dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge in an honest, responsible, respectful, and ethical manner. Every violation of academic integrity is an affront to the academic community. Violations of academic integrity make fair evaluation impossible and cast doubt upon the seriousness with which students accept the responsibility of acquiring an education. Members of the academic community are expected to report all instances of those violations of academic integrity that come to their attention. Both faculty and administration consider it their duty, as guardians of academic standards and intellectual honesty, to enforce the academic integrity policy by prosecuting all cases of violation of academic integrity to the fullest extent. Students are urged to consider that it is the toleration of violations of academic integrity, and not the reporting of it, that is dishonorable. Please refer to the Graduate Catalog for more information and the entire policy.

- **Plymouth State University Curtailed Operations Information:** Plymouth State University normally remains open through inclement weather. Because most students live within minutes of the campus, every effort is made to avoid an official closing. There may be times, however, when an emergency or extreme weather conditions necessitate a general closing of the University.

  Please sign up for PSU Alert Emergency Text Messaging at: plymouth.edu/alerts

  Following are the PSU curtailed operations and/or class cancellation notification procedures:
In the event of severe weather or an emergency, the University Administration will do all it can to decide on and post notifications of class/event cancellations and/or facility closures by 6:00 a.m. for classes running during the day. For canceling evening classes, the decision is usually made and communicated no later than 3:00 p.m. Every effort will be made to make the decision as early as possible. If you are wondering, call the storm line (603-535-3535) or check the PSU website.

Use your own judgment about travel during inclement weather; the best choice is the one that keeps you safe. Notify your instructor(s) if you have to miss a class.

- **Lamson Library and Learning Commons**
  Access to the IT Help Desk is available at 603-535-2929. Log in to MyPlymouth to access all of the Lamson Library and Learning Common resources and services. The Writing Center and the PASS office are located in the lower level of Lamson; the Help Desk is on the Main Floor.