

# How Schools Work

## EDLE 2010

### Spring 2025

#### Instructor Information

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#### Course Description Objectives

This is an 8-week, 1.5 credit course that provides future teachers with an understanding of how schools work at the local, state, and federal levels. Content is covered through a lens that ensures all students learn, succeed, and thrive in school and beyond. Particular attention will be given to topics such as community, school funding, assessment, programs, curricula, policy, roles, professional learning, professional associations, and school safety.

#### Course Objectives

**Students will:**

1. Learn how schools work within larger systems.
2. Develop a deeper understanding of the various support roles and professional systems available in schools, especially towards the end of strengthening school-community partnerships.
3. Investigate K-12 school experiences, drawing on experiences at the classroom, school, and community-level.
4. Analyze studies of school communities.
5. Identify and explore existing disparities within schools or across schools within a district.

#### How to Succeed in this Course

**Class Meetings:** Our section meets every Tuesday and Thursday from 11:00am to 12:20 p.m. in Matthews 308.

**Office Hours:** Monday and Wednesdays 3:00 – 5:00 pm (Matthews Hall 218-C). If for some reason you are not able to meet in person during that time you can request a Zoom meeting link. What are some reasons to stop by during office hours? You can ask for clarification on content or an assignment, help me get to know you better as a learner/person, discuss career paths you may be considering or any number of reasons.

### Communication Expectations:

- Canvas is my primary tool for sharing information about course assignments/activities, but I also at times communicate via email. Please build into your routine time to check your UNT email daily (or forward it to an account you check daily).
- Please email me at [chris.long@unt.ed](mailto:chris.long@unt.ed) with any questions, concerns, and non-office hour appointment requests.
- DO NOT use the Canvas messaging system to contact me. I can respond much faster with the university e-mail address.
- I follow a 24-hour rule for email response. I always try to respond in this window and ask you to do as well. If an email comes in Friday (last work day of the week), I attempt to respond by Monday.
- CLEAR has a webpage for students that provides Online Communication Tips that you can use in thinking about how to communicate with your instructors (<https://digitalstrategy.unt.edu/clear/online-communication-tips.html>).

**University Resources:** UNT strives to offer you a high-quality education and a supportive environment, so you learn and grow. As a faculty member, I am committed to helping you be successful as a student. To learn more about campus resources and information on how you can be successful at UNT, go to [unt.edu/success](http://unt.edu/success) and explore [unt.edu/wellness](http://unt.edu/wellness). To get all your enrollment and student financial-related questions answered, go to [scrappysays.unt.edu](http://scrappysays.unt.edu).

### Required/Recommended Materials

**Readings:** All chapters, articles, and other readings will be provided and accessible as pdfs and/or hyperlinks via Canvas (see course outline below for more details).

**Digital Learning Statement:** This course has digital components. To fully participate in this class, students will need internet access to reference content on the Canvas Learning Management System. If circumstances change, you will be informed of other technical needs to access course content. Information on how to be successful in a digital learning environment can be found at [Learn Anywhere](https://online.unt.edu/learn) (<https://online.unt.edu/learn>).

### Attendance and Participation

- **Attendance:** This course is fast paced and organized around high levels of collaboration. Our sessions will involve small and whole group activities and discussions. Therefore, your attendance and participation are essential to the learning of everyone in our course. It is very difficult to be enriched by discussions and collaborations if you are not physically present or prepared for class. University policy 06.039 will be followed for attendance problems. If necessary, you may miss one class with a valid excuse (see university policy below for excused absences) and not face penalties related to your grade (thus you are encouraged to save this absence for illness or emergencies that may arise). You must let me know as soon as possible if you will be missing class. It is your responsibility to obtain all notes and handouts missed

during your absence. All assignments are due on dates indicated on the syllabus regardless of your absences. A second absence will result in a loss of points from the total grade (see points distribution below).

- **Excessive absences and lateness/early departure:** In the event that you miss three or more classes, you will receive a failing grade unless agreed upon circumstances between you and the university allow it. Students who miss more than one hour of class will be considered absent from that class meeting. Chronic tardiness or early departure (arriving more than 15 minutes late or leaving more than 15 minutes early) will result in the lowering of a final grade at my discretion. Please note: it is your responsibility to drop this course, if necessary.
- **Participation:** *To ensure a high participation grade, come to class having read the assigned readings for the week.* What counts as full participation will of course look different depending on the student. You may demonstrate participation through any and all of the following means:
  - Asking questions or sharing ideas during class meetings.
  - Going above and beyond to respond and reflect on classmates' online discussion posts.
  - Talking, writing, and coordinating efforts in whole class or your small group discussions.
  - Asking questions and adding ideas to class and to discussion posts.
  - Completing thoughtful and thorough assignments where you engage and respond to instructor comments.
- **University Policy:** Research has shown that students who attend class are more likely to be successful. You should attend every class unless you have a university excused absence such as active military service, a religious holy day, or an official university function as stated in the [Student Attendance and Authorized Absences Policy \(PDF\)](https://policy.unt.edu/policy/06-039) (<https://policy.unt.edu/policy/06-039>). If you cannot attend a class due to an emergency, please let me know. Your safety and well-being are important to me.
- Students will be notified by Eagle Alert if there is a campus closing that will impact a class and describe that the calendar is subject to change, citing the [Campus Closures Policy](https://policy.unt.edu/policy/15-006) (<https://policy.unt.edu/policy/15-006>).

## Academic Integrity Policies

Plagiarism and Artificial Intelligence Generative AI programs often produce text that is plagiarized: it takes words and ideas from sources without attribution. Your credibility as a writer and student relies on both generating your own ideas in your own words and giving attribution (credit) to sources. See Academic Integrity Standards and Consequences regarding UNT policy on plagiarism (<https://policy.unt.edu/policy/06-003>).

## Supporting Your Success and Creating an Inclusive Learning Environment

I value the many perspectives students bring to our campus. Please work with me to create a classroom culture of open communication, mutual respect, and belonging. All discussions should be respectful and civil. Although disagreements and debates are encouraged, personal attacks are

unacceptable. Together, we can ensure a safe and welcoming classroom for all. If you ever feel like this is not the case, please stop by my office and let me know. We are all learning together.

We will discuss our classroom's habits of engagement and I also encourage you to review UNT's student code of conduct so that we can all start with the same baseline civility understanding ([Code of Student Conduct](#)) (<https://policy.unt.edu/policy/07-012>).

## Americans with Disabilities Act Compliance

The University of North Texas makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking reasonable accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Access (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide you with a reasonable accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding your specific needs in a course. You may request reasonable accommodations at any time; however, ODA notices of reasonable accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of reasonable accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. Students are strongly encouraged to deliver letters of reasonable accommodation during faculty office hours or by appointment. Faculty members have the authority to ask students to discuss such letters during their designated office hours to protect the privacy of the student. For additional information, refer to the [Office of Disability Access](#) website (<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/office-disability-access>). You may also contact ODA by phone at (940) 565-4323.

## Course Requirements/Schedule

### Participation & Attendance (15%)

- **Points for Participation and Attendance:** We meet for 8 consecutive weeks, twice a week. I will take attendance, and total participation points each class.
- **How to ensure that you will get full participation points:**
  - Asking questions or sharing ideas during class meetings.
  - Going above and beyond to respond and reflect on classmates' online discussion posts.
  - Talking, writing, and coordinating efforts in whole class or your small group discussions.
  - Asking questions and adding ideas to class and to discussion posts.
  - Completing thoughtful and thorough assignments where you engage and respond to instructor comments.

## Assessing Your Work

The table below outlines the way your assignments will be calculated into a final grade.

Assignments	Total %
Class Attendance & Participation	15%
Daily Assignments	15%
Communication Performance Task	20%
Interview with an Administrator	35%
Final	15%

### Final Grade Calculation:

- A = 90-100
- B = 80-89
- C = 70-79
- D = 60-69
- F = 59 or lower

**Format and APA Style:** Written assignments should adhere to APA-7 (American Psychological Association, 7th Edition) guidelines for style and format (1-inch margins, 12-point Times New Roman font, double spaced, left aligned text, page numbers appropriate citations, and references). For additional information, you may use the APA (7th addition) publication manual or visit the following site: [https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research\\_and\\_citation/apa\\_style/apa\\_style\\_introduction.html](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/apa_style/apa_style_introduction.html)

### Final Notes on Grading

- Grades are based on mastery of the content. As a rule, I do not grade on a “curve” because that is a comparison of your outcomes to others. I do, however, encourage you to find opportunities to learn with and through others. Explore [Navigate’s Study Buddy \(https://navigate.unt.edu\)](https://navigate.unt.edu) tool to join study groups. Maximize your learning with our coaching staff at the Learning Center. Forward together!
- Every student in my class can improve by doing their own work and trying their hardest with access to appropriate resources. Students who use other people’s work without citations will be violating UNT’s Academic Integrity Policy. Please read and follow this important set of guidelines for your academic success (<https://policy.unt.edu/policy/06-003>). If you have questions about this, or any UNT policy, please email me or come discuss this with me during my office hours.

## Course Schedule, Readings, & Due Dates

This is the tentative schedule and is subject to change. Topics may change based on student feedback or instructor discretion.

**Week 1:** How have schools worked for you?

**Goals/Activities:** Gain an overview of the course, ask questions, and review the main assignments. Consider how K-12 schools worked for you and discuss as a class.

**Week 2:** School = community.

**Goals/Activities:** Explore the how a school works better when the community is engaged.

**Week 3: Standards, Assessment and Accountability**

**Goals/Activities:** To understand how schools measure learning.

**Week 4:** Schools don't work without teachers.

**Goals/Activities:** Unpack the role of teachers in schools and how they can be best supported through their careers.

**Week 5:** Leadership and schools.

**Goals/Activities:** Examine the way that school leaders support schools—including a discussion of teacher leaders.

**Week 6:** Public policy and schools.

**Goals/Activities:** Examine the way that policies affect how schools work.

**Week 7:** Bringing it all together: What is a school without students?

**Goals/Activities:** Identify how and in what ways students should be supported to make schools work better.

**Week 8:** Summarize your learning: Final exam and presentation

**Goals/Activities:** This week will be a summative assessment of your learning.

## Chapter 149. Commissioner's Rules Concerning Educator Standards Subchapter AA. Teacher Standards §149.1001.

The standards identified in this section are performance standards to be used to inform the training, appraisal, and professional development of teachers.

**Instructional Planning and Delivery.** Teachers demonstrate understanding of instructional planning and delivery by providing standards-based, data-driven, differentiated instruction that engages students and makes learning relevant for today's learners.

**Knowledge of Student and Student Learning.** Teachers work to ensure high levels of learning, social-emotional development, and achievement outcomes for all students, taking into consideration each student's educational and developmental backgrounds and focusing on each student's needs.

**Content Knowledge and Expertise.** Teachers exhibit an understanding of content, discipline, and related pedagogy as demonstrated through the quality of the design and execution of lessons and the ability to match objectives and activities to relevant state standards.

**Learning Environment.** Teachers interact with students in respectful ways at all times, maintaining a physically and emotionally safe, supportive learning environment that is characterized by efficient and effective routines, clear expectations for student behavior, and organization that maximizes student learning.

**Data-Driven Practices.** Teachers use formal and informal methods to assess student growth aligned to instructional goals and course objectives and regularly review and analyze multiple sources of data to measure student progress and adjust instructional strategies and content delivery as needed.

**Professional Practices and Responsibilities.** Teachers consistently hold themselves to a high standard for individual development, collaborate with other educational professionals, communicate regularly with stakeholders, maintain professional relationships, comply with all campus and school district policies, and conduct themselves ethically and with integrity.

### EC-12 Professional Pedagogy and Responsibilities (PPR) Standards Addressed:

The beginning EC-12 teacher knows and understands:

**Competency 001:** human developmental processes and applies this knowledge to plan instruction and ongoing assessment that motivate students and are responsive to their developmental characteristics and needs.

**Competency 002:** student diversity and knows how to plan learning experiences and design assessments that are responsive to differences among students and that promote all students' learning.

**Competency 005:** how to establish a classroom climate that fosters learning, equity and excellence and uses this knowledge to create a physical and emotional environment that is safe and productive.

**Competence 007:** principles and strategies for communicating effectively in varied teaching and learning contexts.

### EC-12 Tech Apps Standards Addressed:

The beginning EC-12 teacher knows and understands how to:

**Standard I.** use and promote creative thinking and innovative processes to construct knowledge, generate new ideas, and create products

**Standard II.** collaborate and communicate both locally and globally using digital tools and resources to reinforce and promote learning.

**Standard III.** make informed decisions by applying critical-thinking and problem-solving skills.