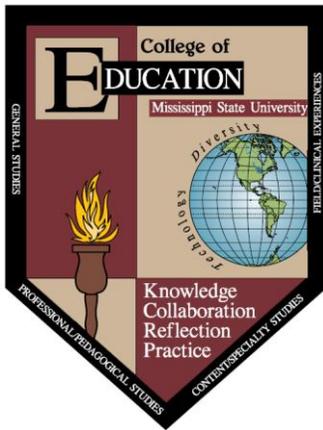# MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT of LEADERSHIP & FOUNDATIONS
COURSE SYLLABUS

Course Prefix and Number: EDL 8723

Course Title: Positive School Culture

Credit: 3 semester hours

Type of Course: Lecture

Catalog Description: The course focuses on the role of the school leader to shape a productive academic learning culture in his/her school.

College of Education Conceptual Framework:

The faculty in the College of Education at Mississippi State University are committed to assuring the success of students and graduates by providing superior learning opportunities that are continually improved as society, schools, and technology change. The organizing theme for the conceptual framework for the College of Education at Mississippi State University is educational professionals **-** dedicated to continual improvement of all students' educational experiences. The beliefs that guide program development are as follows:

1. **KNOWLEDGE** - Educational professionals must have a deep understanding of the organizing concepts, processes, and attitudes that comprise their chosen disciplinary knowledge base, the pedagogical knowledge base, and the pedagogical content knowledge base. They must also know how to complement these knowledge bases with the appropriate use of technology.

2. **COLLABORATION** - Educational professionals must continually seek opportunities to work together, learn from one another, forge partnerships, and assume positions of responsibility.

3. **REFLECTION** - Educational professionals must be willing to assess their own strengths and weaknesses through reflection. They must also possess the skills, behaviors, and attitudes necessary to learn, change, and grow as life-long learners.

4. **PRACTICE** - Educational professionals must have a rich repertoire of research-based strategies for instruction, assessment, and the use of technologies. They must be able to focus that array of skills on promoting authentic learning by all students or clients, while exhibiting an appreciation and commitment to the value and role of diversity.

Course Objectives:

Course objectives are linked to Educational Leadership Constituent Council (ELLC) Standards developed by the National Policy Board for Educational Administration for programs in school administration, as well as additional indicators for professionals created by the College of Education at Mississippi State University for the College Framework Program Outcomes (CFPO) document. Five (5) course objectives guide the selection of content and instructional strategies/activities. The five objectives focus attention on preparing educational leaders who will be to acquire the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to:

1. Demonstrate an understanding of school culture and climate. (ELCC 2.1, CFPO 13)
2. Develop competency in assessing school culture and climate. (ELCC 2.1, CFPO 10)
3. Demonstrate an understanding of how norms, values, and beliefs impact school culture and climate. (ELCC 2.1, CFPO 13, CFPO 14)
4. Demonstrate capability to develop a strategic plan for improving school culture and climate. (ELCC 2.1, CFPO 10)
5. Demonstrate an understanding of the role that a school leader should take in regard to collaboration strategies that promote diverse community involvement in continually shaping and sustaining a positive school culture and climate. (ELCC 2.1, ELCC 3.1, ELCC 4.1, CFPO 13)

Course Topics to Be Covered and Hours:

Course topics (45 hours of instruction) address the fundamentals of school culture and climate; developing competency in assessing school culture and climate; understanding how norms, values, and beliefs impact school culture and climate; gaining knowledge necessary to develop a strategic plan for improving school culture and climate; and the role that a school leader should take in regard to collaboration strategies that promote diverse community involvement in continually shaping and sustaining a positive school culture and climate. Major topics and related subtopics follow:

Fundamentals of school culture and climate (Time allocation: 9 hours; Objective(s) targeted: 1; Standard elements/indicators: ELCC 2.1, CFPO 13)
    Organizational culture theory
    Difference between culture and climate
    Terry Deal's contributions
    Impact of culture on school success and student learning
Developing competency in assessing school culture and climate (Time allocation: 12 hours; Objective(s) targeted: 2; Standard elements/indicators: ELCC 2.1, CFPO 10)
    Assessing the culture and climate of a given school setting
    School culture and climate inventories
    Impact of culture on school success and student learning
How norms, values, and beliefs impact school culture and climate. (Time allocation: 12 hours; Objective(s) targeted: 3; Standard elements/indicators: ELCC 2.1, ELCC 3.1, CFPO 13, CFPO 14)
    Norms in relation to organizational theory

Values in relation to organizational theory

Guiding beliefs in relation to organizational theory

Impact of norms, values, and beliefs on establishing a positive school culture

Addressing equity and diversity through school culture

Strategic planning for the purpose of improving school culture and climate. (Time allocation: 12 hours; Objective(s) targeted: 4; Standard elements/indicators: ELCC 2.1, CFPO 10)

Establishing goals to shape positive culture and communication

Selecting activities to put the goals into action

Measuring goal accomplishment

Monitoring progress

Role that a school leader should play in regard to collaborative strategies for promoting diverse community involvement in continually shaping and sustaining a positive school culture and climate. (Time allocation: 12 hours; Objective(s) targeted: 5; Standard elements/indicators: ELCC 2.1, ELCC 3.1, ELCC 4.1, CFPO 13)

Eight particular roles that school leaders play in shaping school culture

Collaborative decision making

Preventing and solving problems

Motivating teachers and staff

Building employee morale

Oral, written, and nonverbal communication (Time allocation: 6 hours; Objective(s) targeted: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5; Standard elements/ outcome indicators: ELCC 2.1, ELCC 3.1, ELCC 4.1, CFPO 10, CFPO 13 CFPO 14)

Oral communication

Spoken English skill essentials: voice articulation, enunciation, tone, pace, flexibility, pauses at key places, eye contact, stance (body position), and so forth

Application of oral skills: face-to-face conversation, telephone conversation, reading aloud, choral reading, storytelling, monologues, speeches, and so forth

Written communication

Written English skill essentials: word usage, grammar, punctuation, mechanics, and spelling Sentence construction

Paragraph development

Outlining

Application of written skills: memoranda, letters, e-messages, e-reports, reports, meeting agenda and minutes, book reviews, critiques, essays, scholarly research papers, resumes, and so forth

Nonverbal communication

Text Approved for the Course:

The instructors teaching this course shall require the following approved text:

Deal, T. E. & Peterson, K.D. (2009). *Shaping school culture: Pitfalls, paradoxes, and promises.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

It should be noted that any change in relation to the textbook selected for the course must be approved by the faculty member listed as professor of record.

Methods of Instruction:

Three basic instructional strategies—nano-lecturing, demonstrating, and doing (hands-on learning) are recommended for teaching the course. The coined term "nano-lecture" refers to a clear, concise 20-30 minute lecture addressing a particular topic. Demonstrating (e.g., showing) calls for providing a visible explanation or picture of what is to be learned. Doing (e.g., hands-on activities) pertains to actively involving candidates in applying the knowledge, skills, and depositions learned through projects requiring problem solving and decision making.

Suggested Student Activities:

Student activities should address the seven course objectives, ELCC standards and elements, CFPO indicators, and 15 topics providing the content framework for the course. Suggested student activities include question-answer sessions, discussion sessions, brief analytical papers based on assigned readings, scholarly research papers, panel participation, quizzes, and comprehensive examinations, and role playing in relation to simulated public speaking occasions. The course instructor should consider the suggested student activities listed in the official syllabus (i.e., syllabus on file in the department office and the office of the University Committee on Courses and Curriculum) when developing a more detailed (e.g., specific activities selected and dates that assignments are due) teaching syllabus for a particular semester.

Participation in question-answer and discussion (instructor-candidates and candidates-candidates) sessions, panel presentations, simulated speeches, solving case studies, and so forth
Sessions should focus on enriching the classroom teaching and learning process through spontaneous thinking expressed through oral communication
Brief analytical papers (300-500 words), plus abbreviated outlines, on selected topics
Research projects and scholarly papers (3,000-5,000 words), plus formal outlines, on assigned topics
Quizzes (e.g., true/false, multiple-choice, and short-answer format) on assigned readings and the final examination (essay format) addressing application of the content covered in the course

Honor Code:

Academic honesty is expected in relation to the honor code: *As a Mississippi State University student I will conduct myself with honor and integrity at all times. I will not lie, cheat, or steal, nor will I accept the actions of those who do*. Refer to *Mississippi State University Policy and Procedures for Handling Academic Misconduct.*

Technology:

Technology in the form of smart-board writing, document projection, audio projection, visual (film) projection, and computer-generated projection will be used throughout the sessions of the course.

Diversity:

As the objectives and topics presented previously indicate, diversity (e.g., religion) will be addressed throughout the course in relation to lectures, assigned readings, and discussions.

Disability:

Students with disabilities will be accommodated in the course by scheduling class sessions in a building, adjacent to a parking lot with handicap provisions, with classrooms providing easy accessibility. The classroom scheduled for the course will also provide electronic equipment for meeting the needs of the visual and hearing impaired.

Field Component:

Students will compare simulations prepared in course assignments with their actual school facsimiles and then discuss similarities and differences with their principals. Each course in the newly designed program leading to principal certification will contain field components as part of course requirements.

Evaluation of Student Progress:

Assignments completed by program candidates will be evaluated in relation to four components: (1) content substance (i.e., quality of the coverage for a particular topic), (2) content organization (i.e., logical and reasonable narrative presentation), (3) oral/written communication essentials (i.e., word usage, punctuation, mechanics, spelling, grammar, sentence construction, paragraph development, etc.) as appropriate, and (4) specifications (i.e., typeface, print-size, spacing, identification, title, margins, indentation, and so forth for written communication or volume, articulation, enunciation, tone, pace, flexibility, eye contact, body position, and so forth for oral communication).

All assignments (oral and written), quizzes, and the final examination will be assessed on a three-point rubric: unsatisfactory, satisfactory, and excellent. Rubric scores will be converted into metric percentages. The term "unsatisfactory" signifies that less than 70 percent of the expectations for the assignment were met. The term "satisfactory" signifies that expectations for the assignment were met at the 70-89 percent level. The term "excellent" signifies that expectations for the assignment were met at or above the 99 percent level.

The student's grade for the course will be determined as follows:

Participation in oral communication activities such as question-answer and discussion sessions, motion picture film critiques, panel presentations, simulated speeches, problem-based case studies, and so forth constitutes 20 percent of the grade determined for the course.

Brief analytical papers , plus abbreviated outlines, constitute 50 percent of the grade determined for the course.

Research/creative projects and accompanying scholarly papers and/or creative endeavors (3,000-5,000 words), plus formal outlines when feasible, constitute 20 percent of the grade determined for the course.

Quizzes (e.g., true/false, multiple-choice, and short-answer) on assigned readings and the final examination (essay format) covering course content constitute 10 percent of the grade determined for the course.

Conversion of percentage ranges to letter grades for grading purposes is presented below:

90 or more percent = A
80-89 percent = B
70-79 percent = C
60-69 percent = D
59 percent or less = F

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