

ANGELO STATE UNIVERSITY  
Department of Curriculum and Instruction

CI 6373 Educational Law  
EDG 6305 Legal and Ethical Principals



**Instructor:** [Dr. Jim Summerlin](#)

**Office:** [Carr Room 154](#)

**Phone:** 942-2647

**Email:** [jsummerlin@angelo.edu](mailto:jsummerlin@angelo.edu)

**Office Hours:** E-Office Hours are Monday through Friday 9:00 am to 11:00 am. I check my email very frequently and respond to students as quickly as possible. To visit me in person during the week, you may drop by my office at any time or you may call or email for an appointment that suits your schedule.

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### **Introduction**

In this course students will discover that successful educational leaders make good decisions based upon a balance of ethical and legal principals. Professional educators must be thoroughly familiar with the laws that form the conceptual framework of our educational system and understand that not all situations are covered by black-and-white laws. We will study the primary sources of law that most directly affect our educational system: constitutional, statutory, judicial, and administrative with an emphasis on Federal and state regulations. The objective is to provide students the information and knowledge necessary for effective decision-making during their career as a professional educator.

### **Meetings**

There are no required class meetings. Individual or group meetings with the instructor can be arranged by appointment. The course content is provided in an asynchronous, on-line mode, utilizing Blackboard as the delivery medium.

### **Blackboard**

Blackboard is your classroom and your primary communications link with your professor. Students should check the announcements as soon as they are enrolled in the course and frequently thereafter. An advantage of using Blackboard instead of attending face-to-face classes is that all of your assignments including the final are available to you the moment the course is opened. Read thoroughly all of the course content and all assignments to become familiar with the course requirements before beginning the first exercise.

If you need help with Blackboard call the Help Desk. Do not waste time trying to get technical help from your professor or other students; go directly to the experts.

### **Books**

You will find any or all of these books extremely useful but do not spend much money on them; Internet sources of information are available at no cost. New and used editions of these books are available from many sources and multiple vendors on the Internet. E-versions of some books are also available. There are many publications available on educational law but only one book is required for this course and it is not a law book.

## **Required Book**

American Psychological Association. (2009). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th ed.). Washington D.C: Author

## **Useful Resource Books**

Kemerer, F., Walsh, J., & Maniotis, L. (2005). *The educator's guide to Texas school law* (6th ed.). Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press. (the 5<sup>th</sup> edition works just as well and the 7<sup>th</sup> edition is available cheap in e-version)

Schimmel, D., Stellman, L., & Fischer, L. (2007). *Teachers and the Law*. Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Pearson Education

Kaplan, W. A. & Lee, B. A. (1995). *The law of higher education* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). Jossey-Bass: San Francisco (*4<sup>th</sup> edition costs over \$250!!, don't buy it!*)

Dunklee, D.R. & Shoop, R.J. (2006) *The principal's quick reference guide to school law*. (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press

Stader, D.L. (2013) *Law and ethics in educational leadership*. (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.) Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Pearson.

## **Goals**

Primary Goal - The goal of this course is for the new educational professional to become familiar with four sources of laws relevant to education: constitutional law, statutory law, administrative law, and judicial law. A professional educator must be able to readily find and interpret the pertinent law or policy when the need arises. To accomplish this, the student must know how and why laws are created and must understand the historically relevant court cases that have shaped public education.

An ASU goal for graduate students is to demonstrate the ability to be creative critical thinkers and to apply new technologies appropriate to their chosen discipline. Our primary goal and the final objective of this class support the ASU goal for graduate students.

Secondary Goal - A secondary but important goal of this course is to learn to communicate at a professional level with focus on written communication. Emphasis is placed on style, format, and use of valid and reliable sources of information. All submissions in this course must conform as much as possible to the APA Publication Manual, Sixth Edition. You will learn the subtle differences between academic and professional writing.

## **Objectives**

At the conclusion of this course, each student will be able to apply to current educational issues those Federal and State laws (including constitutional provisions, agency regulations, and court decisions) that directly and indirectly affect public education. They will be able to knowledgably discuss the laws that govern educational institutions and have experience in creating Legal Topic Guides on issues in education. You must master this objective to pass this course.

## **Course Grading**

A student may earn a maximum of **100 points** in the class. The final course grade will be assigned on this scale. 90 – 100 is an A, 80 – 89 is a B, and 70 - 79 is a C. Any score below 70 is an F. All work must be submitted by midnight on the last day of the semester. You may keep track of your grades by clicking on the “Student Grade Book” button on the left of your Blackboard screen. If you have a question about a grade email the instructor immediately.

## **Penalty for Late Work**

Each assignment requires extensive Internet research and reading multiple documents. So to be successful, you must begin each assignment immediately after finishing the previous one. Late work will be accepted but there will be a 10% penalty per day for a late submission.

## **Course Activities**

A fundamental activity is reading: read the textbook, read journal articles, and read Internet articles written by professionals. Expect to spend a 100 hours reading for this course. Students must analyze laws, policies, and court decisions then evaluate them for applicability. Students must take responsibility to learn:

1. how to find and identify laws on any topic using the Internet
2. how to read a court decision and synthesize the judges’ findings with their chosen profession
3. to distinguish valid and reliable information from opinion and propaganda
4. proper citations and referencing using APA style and format

## **Course Assignments**

There are eight weeks and eight assignments. The warm-up exercise may have a low point value, but without this foundational knowledge you will struggle with the rest of the course. So do a thorough job on the initial assignment. Detailed instructions and help for each assignment are provided on Blackboard.

### **Week One - Warm up exercise.**

Using the Internet to find valid and reliable resources for original legal documents must be mastered in this warm up exercise. Consider it a “Treasure Hunt” because every answer to every question will be extremely valuable to you during this course and for the rest of your professional career. **5 points**

### **Week Two - Sources of law.**

Students investigate the categories of sources of educational law and professional ethical standards. Knowledge of the categories of sources will be derived initially from the Course Material in Blackboard, from the Internet or from resource books. The knowledge gained in this exercise is then submitted in the form of an academic article written using APA style and format. The goals of this assignment are to gain or refresh knowledge of the broad categories of laws and codes of ethics, to comprehend the technical aspects of how the laws originate, and to analyze the applicability of the source of laws to the educational system. **5 points**

### **Week Three - Constitutional law.**

Students read and analyze the United States and Texas constitutions to determine their relevance to the school systems in Texas. Students may derive initial information by reading about the constitutions in government textbooks, published articles, or even encyclopedia articles. Student's understanding of the relevance of the constitutions will be assessed by evaluation of a written assignment. Information in the paper must be obtained directly from the legal documents themselves. The goal of the assignment is for students to synthesis knowledge of the two documents with their multitude of amendments into a well-organized understanding of the legal chain of authority over the system of public schooling in Texas. **15 points**

### **Week Four - Statutory law.**

Students investigate federal and state legislative bodies with emphasis on statutes that directly or indirectly influence the school system. Students will explain the origin of a legal code and of a statute and summarize their direct impacted on education. Topics should be chosen from the list in the instructions and should be pertinent to the student's area of specialization. The goal of the assignment is for the student to gain experience in independent investigation of pertinent statutes using the original legal document instead of relying on published summaries and applying guidelines on the statutes that were written by others. **15 points**

### **Week Five - Judicial law.**

Students will read, analyze, and explain important court decisions that have influenced the Texas educational system. They will demonstrate comprehension of the social and educational relevance of the cases by discussing their current significance. The goal of the assignment is for students to gain legal wisdom (ethical behavior?) instead of legal knowledge. Students will comprehend the pattern of reasoning utilized by the courts in formulating their decisions on these socially relevant issues and gain the ability to apply that reasoning in their chosen profession instead of searching for a specifically relevant law. **15 points**

### **Week Six - Administrative law.**

Students investigate the sources of administrative laws using information derived from the Internet. The goal of this assignment is for the student to garner an in-depth understanding of the role of administrative regulations in administering the educational system. **15 points**

### **Week Seven – Educational Laws.**

Students chose one narrow topic or problem from their area of study and investigate the laws that affect it. This is vital preparation for the final assignment. The objective is for the student to create a list of laws from each of the four primary sources of educational law that are pertinent to the chosen topic. **15 points**

### **Week Eight - Creation of a legal topic guide.**

Students will utilize everything they have learned in this course to develop a legal topic guide in a format of their choice. The purpose of the guide is to identify and briefly explain to new professionals the laws that set the parameters for professional decision-making in a specific problem area. The guide must be in the student's area of specialization and will utilize the list created in week seven. This is the culmination of the course. **15 points**

**Questions? Email me!**