

EDST 554: Summer 2014
Instructor: Michelle Stack

What does policy mean? What comes to mind when you hear the word “policy”? Can you think of a time when someone responded to your frustration, confusion or anger with some version of “Sorry, that’s the policy”. How does something become “the” policy? Who is a policymaker? Who is a policy activist? In this class, we will explore these questions and look at the messiness of the competing values and beliefs that are part of educational policy.

We will examine how educational policy influences what and how we think about education. We will also examine how, when and why individuals and organizations choose to engage or disengage from policy processes. Guest speakers will include educational activists and individuals who have held senior policy making roles in education.

EDST 554 will help participants:

1. To interpret policy from multiple perspectives;
2. To apply theoretical concepts in analyzing policy and policy activism;
3. To explore current educational policy debates;
4. To understand the connection between politics and policy and the competing interests involved in the educational policy arena;
5. To examine the everyday impact of policy in your lives;
6. To examine educators as policy actors;
7. To develop a critical understanding of the complex ethical issues associated with educational policy;
8. To analyze how young people, educators, academics and activists use diverse forms of communication (e.g. –Commentary pieces, podcasts, videos, blogs, graphic novels and comedies) to influence policy.