Stephen F. Austin State University
James I. Perkins College of Education
Department of Human Services and Educational Leadership

EDLE 6375
Independent Study: First Amendment Litigation
Spring 2024

Instructor: Qualls
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Course Time & Location: Online

Cell Phone: 972.351.7078
Office hours: Thursdays 10:00-12:00

Zoom link: Assigned as needed

“If you don’t have time to read, you don’t have the time (or the tools) to write. Simple as that” (Stephen King)

I. Course prerequisites: Instructor approval

II. Course description and justification:

The number of credits you can register for each semester ranges from one to six. The number of credit hours chosen will be reflected in individual work plans. This course is not a part of any degree or certification. It will not substitute for any course (core or elective) in a degree plan.

The purpose of the course to provide a platform for group and individual study of the current state of litigation as related to First Amendment expression rights in educational settings. Work products may include proposals for conference presentation, materials for publication, extensions of dissertation work, and/or other creative artifacts.

III. Informing standards:
**A. Stephen F. Austin State University mission statement:** Stephen F. Austin State University (SFA) is a comprehensive institution dedicated to excellence in teaching, research, scholarship, creative work, and service. Through the personal attention of our faculty and staff, we engage our students in a learner-centered environment and offer opportunities to prepare for the challenges of living in the global community.

**B. James I. Perkins College of Education vision, mission, core values:** The James I. Perkins College of Education will be the college of choice for students striving to achieve professional excellence through exemplary programs that are recognized at the state, national, and international levels. The mission of the Perkins College of Education is to prepare competent, successful, caring, and enthusiastic professionals from diverse backgrounds dedicated to responsible service, leadership, social justice, and continued professional and intellectual development in an interconnected global society. Core values include academic excellence through critical, reflective, and creative thinking; life-long learning, collaboration, and shared decision-making; openness to new ideas; culturally diverse people and innovation and change; integrity, responsibility, diligence, and ethical behavior; and service that enriches the community.

**IV. Intended Learning Outcomes/Goals/Objectives:**

A. **Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs):**
This course is not a part of any program.

B. **Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs):**
SLOs are determined individually, based on the individual students’ selected projects and participation in group work.

**V. Pedagogical approach:**
This course follows an independent study instructional model.

**VI. Readings:**
Materials are determined by the needs of the projects chosen.

**X. Course Evaluations:**
Near the conclusion of each semester, students in the College of Education electronically evaluate courses taken within the COE. Evaluation data are used for a variety of important purposes including: 1) Course and program improvement, planning, and accreditation; 2) Instruction evaluation purposes; and 3) Making decisions on faculty tenure, promotion, pay, and retention. As you evaluate this course, please be thoughtful, thorough, and accurate in completing the evaluation. Please know that the COE faculty is committed to excellence in teaching and continued improvement. Therefore, your response is critical! In the College of Education, the course evaluation process has been simplified and is completed electronically through MySFA. Although the instructor will be able to view the
names of students who complete the survey, **all ratings and comments are confidential and anonymous**, and will not be available to the instructor until after final grades are posted.

**XI. Student Ethics and Policy**

**Institutional Absences (HOP 04-110)**
An Institutional Absence may be granted to a student who participates as a representative of the University in academic (including research), extra- or cocurricular, or athletic activities. Students will be excused for institutional purposes from otherwise required academic activity only when a valid Institutional Absence is approved by the appropriate administrative unit or official and the documentation of approval is provided to the faculty member at least five (5) days in advance.

Institutional absences will not be approved for keystone events, defined as: a special or unique assignment, test, project, experience, or other academic exercise identified by the Faculty member as critical for successful completion of standards of the class and unable to be missed. These events must be identified on the syllabus at the beginning of the semester and communicated to the students. Events added to the syllabus at a later date will not qualify for Keystone Event status. Keystone Events where the date/time is changed will no longer be considered a Keystone Event. Students should make themselves aware of any Keystone Events identified in the syllabus to ensure there are no conflicts.

For keystone events where the assignment dates vary, it is incumbent upon the students to work with their faculty member to not select a conflicting date.

More information on Institutional Absences, including how to apply, can be found at [https://www.sfasu.edu/deanofstudents/student-resources/institutional-absences](https://www.sfasu.edu/deanofstudents/student-resources/institutional-absences).

**Code of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity**

- The Code of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity (HOP 04-106) outlines the prohibited conduct by any student enrolled in a course at SFA. It is the responsibility of all members of all faculty, staff, and students to adhere to and uphold this policy.

Articles IV, VI, and VII of the new Code of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity outline the violations and procedures concerning academic conduct, including cheating, plagiarism, collusion, and misrepresentation. Cheating includes, but is not limited to: (1) Copying from the test paper (or other assignment) of another student, (2) Possession and/or use during a test of materials that are not authorized by the person giving the test, (3) Using, obtaining, or attempting to obtain by any means the whole or any part of a non-administered test, test key, homework solution, or computer program, or using a test that has been administered in prior classes or semesters without permission of the Faculty member, (4) Substituting for another person, or permitting another person to substitute for one’s self, to take a test, (5) Falsifying research data, laboratory reports, and/or other records or academic work
offered for credit, (6) Using any sort of unauthorized resources or technology in completion of educational activities.

Plagiarism is the appropriation of material that is attributable in whole or in part to another source or the use of one’s own previous work in another context without citing that it was used previously, without any indication of the original source, including words, ideas, illustrations, structure, computer code, and other expression or media, and presenting that material as one’s own academic work being offered for credit or in conjunction with a program course or degree requirements.

Collusion is the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing academic assignments offered for credit or collaboration with another person to commit a violation of any provision of the rules on academic dishonesty, including disclosing and/or distributing the contents of an exam.

Misrepresentation is providing false grades or résumés; providing false or misleading information in an effort to receive a postponement or an extension on a test, quiz, or other assignment for the purpose of obtaining an academic or financial benefit for oneself or another individual or to injure another student academically or financially. For additional information, go to https://www.sfasu.edu/docs/hops/04-106.pdf.

Withheld Grades Semester Grade Policy (HOP policy 02-206)

Ordinarily, at the discretion of the instructor of record and with the approval of the academic chair/director, a grade of WH will be assigned only if the student cannot complete the coursework because of unavoidable circumstances. Students must complete the work within one calendar year from the end of the semester in which they receive a WH, or the grade automatically becomes an F. If students register for the same course in future terms the WH will automatically become an F and will be counted as a repeated course to compute the grade point average. For additional information, go to https://www.sfasu.edu/docs/hops/02-206.pdf.

- Students with Disabilities
  To obtain disability-related accommodations, alternate formats, and/or auxiliary aids, students with disabilities must contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS), Human Services Building, and Room 325, 468-3004 / 468-1004 (TDD) as early as possible in the semester. Once verified, ODS will notify the course instructor and outline the accommodation and/or auxiliary aids to be provided. Failure to request services promptly may delay your accommodations. For additional information, go to http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/.

- Student Wellness and Well-Being
  SFA values students’ overall well-being, mental health and the role it plays in academic and overall student success. Students may experience stressors that can impact both their academic experience and their personal well-being. These may include academic pressure
and challenges associated with relationships, emotional well-being, alcohol and other drugs, identities, finances, etc.

If you are experiencing concerns, seeking help, SFA provides a variety of resources to support students’ mental health and wellness. Many of these resources are free, and all of them are confidential.

**Other important course-related policies:**

***Other SFA policy information is found in the Handbook of Operating Procedures (HOP)***

**XII: Resources**

- **On-campus Resources:**
  - **The Dean of Students Office** (Rusk Building, 3rd floor lobby)
    - [www.sfasu.edu/deanofstudents](http://www.sfasu.edu/deanofstudents)
    - 936.468.7249
    - dos@sfasu.edu

  - SFASU Counseling Services • [www.sfasu.edu/counselingservices](http://www.sfasu.edu/counselingservices)
    - Health and Wellness Hub (corner of E. College and Raguet) • 936-468-2401

  - SFASU Human Services Counseling Clinic • [www.sfasu.edu/humanservices/139.asp](http://www.sfasu.edu/humanservices/139.asp)
    - Human Services Room 202 • 936-468-1041

  - **The Health and Wellness Hub** “The Hub”
    - Location: corner of E. College and Raguet St.

    - To support the health and well-being of every Lumberjack, the Health and Wellness Hub offers comprehensive services that treat the whole person – mind, body and spirit. Services include:
      - Health Services
      - Counseling Services
      - Student Outreach and Support
      - Food Pantry
      - Wellness Coaching
      - Alcohol and Other Drug Education

    - [www.sfasu.edu/thehub](http://www.sfasu.edu/thehub)
      - 936.468.4008
      - thehub@sfasu.edu

  - **Crisis Resources:**
    - Burke 24-hour crisis line 1(800) 392-8343
    - National Suicide Crisis Prevention: 9-8-8
    - Suicide Prevention Lifeline 1(800) 273-TALK (8255)
    - Crisis Text Line: Text HELLO to 741-741
**III: Additional Information Specific to Educator Preparation – Ed.D-Leadership students who are in the K-12 Concentrate are included in the Educator Preparation Program**

- **Code of Ethics for the Texas Educator:**
  - The Texas educator shall comply with standard practices and ethical conduct toward students, professional colleagues, school officials, parents, and members of the community and shall safeguard academic freedom. The Texas educator, in maintaining the dignity of the profession, shall respect and obey the law, demonstrate personal integrity, and exemplify honesty and good moral character. The Texas educator, in exemplifying ethical relations with colleagues, shall extend just and equitable treatment to all members of the profession. The Texas educator, in accepting a position of public trust, shall measure success by the progress of each student toward realization of his or her potential as an effective citizen. The Texas educator, in fulfilling responsibilities in the community, shall cooperate with parents and others to improve the public schools of the community. This chapter shall apply to educators and candidates for certification.

- **To complete Certification/Licensing Requirements in Texas related to public education and other professional settings, you will be required to:**
  - Candidates must undergo a criminal history background check prior to clinical teaching and prior to employment as an educator. The public school campuses are responsible for completing the criminal background check. A person who is enrolled or planning to enroll in a State Board for Educator Certification-approved educator preparation program or planning to take a certification examination may request a preliminary criminal history evaluation letter regarding the person’s potential ineligibility for certification due to a conviction or deferred adjudication for a felony or misdemeanor offense.
  - A Preliminary Criminal History Evaluation is a non-mandatory, non-binding evaluation of an individual’s self-reported criminal history. In addition, the agency obtains your name-based Texas criminal history information. The service is provided to the requestor for a **non-refundable fee**. The requestor will receive an evaluation letter by email from agency staff advising of potential ineligibility for educator certification. You are eligible to request a Preliminary Criminal History Evaluation if:
    - You enrolled or planning to enroll in an educator preparation program or,
    - You are planning to take a certification exam for initial educator certification, and
You have reason to believe that you may be ineligible for educator certification due to a conviction or deferred adjudication for a felony or misdemeanor offense.

- You are not eligible for a preliminary evaluation of your criminal history if you do not have a conviction or deferred adjudication for a felony or misdemeanor offense.
- In addition, you must complete the fingerprinting process when you apply for certification. Participation in the evaluation does not preclude you from submitting to a national criminal history review at the time you apply for your educator certification. Your criminal history will be reviewed and you may be subject to an investigation based on that criminal history, including any information you failed to submit for evaluation.
- Provide one of the following primary ID documents:
  - Passport
  - driver’s license, state or providence ID cards
  - a national ID card, or military ID card to take the TExES exams
  - YOU must provide legal documentation to be allowed to take these mandated examinations that are related to certification/licensing requirements in Texas. If you do not have legal documentation, you may want to reconsider your major while at SFASU.
- Successfully complete state mandated a fingerprint background check. If you have a history of criminal activity, you may want to reconsider your major while at SFA.
- For further information, contact the Office of Assessment and Accountability at 936-468-1282 or edprep@sfasu.edu.