

Federal Policy Institute

At Teachers College, New York, NY and Washington, D.C.
September 2013 - February 2014

Federal education policy shapes the reality of contemporary American education. Sometimes obvious and sometimes subtle, education policy simultaneously unleashes possibilities and produces contentious polemics that reverberate through American schools and educational institutions. As a result, understanding the realities of federal policy construction and implementation is essential not only for educational leaders, but also for all who hope to improve the nature of American education. That understanding is perhaps best derived by combining policy theory and first-hand experience with individuals who make and influence federal educational policy.

Rated by TC students as “a course that changed my career,” the Federal Policy Institute examines historical and current debates over federal educational policy-making through an intensive week-long institute in Washington, D.C. linked with preparatory and follow-up sessions at Teachers College. While in Washington, D.C., participants will meet with leading policy makers from the legislative and executive branches of government, along with prominent representatives from key professional, advocacy, think tank, and member organizations. Upon return from Washington, D.C., students will prepare a policy analysis and present mock testimony on an educational policy topic germane to their interests.

The course examines the history and current status of federal policy-making through: (a) a week-long intensive institute in Washington, DC; (b) five interactive class meetings (three prior to the DC trip and two following); (c) a set of policy-related readings; and (d) the completion of all assignments. The course uses pre- and post-Washington assignments to prepare for and reinforce field-based work during the Washington week. While in Washington (January 13-17, 2013), participants will meet with leading federal policy makers from the legislative and executive branches of government, along with prominent representatives from key professional, advocacy, think tank, and membership organizations. In addition to discussing major current legislation and policy trends, participants will learn how the federal policy process impacts educational excellence and equity, with a focus on four contemporary issues:

- The Impact of the Standards, Assessment, and Accountability Movement on American Education
- Teacher Quality: Policies and Prospects
- Balancing the Public and Private Roles in Education
- The Social Context of Education (including Welfare, Social Equity, and Workforce Development)

Course Information *(updated 8/2013):*

- 3 credits [EDPA 4899 (CRN 31407)]
- 5 meetings at Teachers College
- Week-long institute in Washington, DC – 1/13/14 through 1/17/14
- Open to master's and doctoral students interested in policy

- Taught by Professor [Sharon Lynn Kagan](#), the Virginia and Leonard Marx Professor of Early Childhood and Family Policy.

Applications for this year's course are currently available. Please contact the National Center for Children and Families for more information at 212-678-8255 or segal@tc.edu.