



EDUC 201: Foundations of American Education

Term: Fall 2026

Credits: 3.0

Lecture Times & Location: Tuesday & Thursday 1:00–2:15 p.m., Lovell Hall 130

Modality: In-Person

Alkimi University is a fictional institution created by Alkimi AI to demonstrate its products. It does not admit students, grant degrees, employ faculty, or accept payments. All people, places, policies, and figures in this document are invented.

Instructor Information

- **Instructor:** Dr. Joanna Quinlan (Clinical Assistant Professor of Teacher Education)
- **Email:** jquinlan@university.alkimi.ai
- **Office:** Lovell Hall 122
- **Office Hours:**
 - Monday & Thursday: 9:30–11:00 a.m. (In person, Lovell Hall 122)
 - Tuesday: 10:00–11:00 a.m. (Virtual via Zoom; link posted in Canvas)
 - Also available by appointment.

Course Description

Historical, philosophical, social, and legal foundations of American schooling, school governance and finance, and the teaching profession, with 15 hours of classroom observation. EDUC 201 introduces prospective educators to the historical, philosophical, sociological, and legal foundations of schooling in the United States. Students examine the historical expansion of public education, competing educational philosophies, the complex governance and financing of public school districts, and landmark judicial decisions defining student and teacher rights. A core component of the course is a mandatory 15-hour clinical field observation experience in local partner schools, connecting foundational theory to contemporary classroom practice.

Prerequisites

None.

Measurable Student Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of EDUC 201, students will be able to:

1. **Analyze Historical Milestones in American Education:** Trace the historical evolution of American schooling from the common school movement through civil rights legislation, desegregation, and modern standards-based accountability reforms.
2. **Evaluate Competing Educational Philosophies:** Compare essentialism, perennialism, progressivism, and social reconstructionism, identifying how each philosophical orientation shapes curriculum, pedagogy, and classroom climate.
3. **Deconstruct School Governance, Law, and Finance:** Analyze the legal structures governing public schools—including First and Fourteenth Amendment rights, mandatory reporting duties, and state funding equalization models.

4. **Conduct Structured Field Observations:** Complete 15 hours of focused field observation in assigned partner school classrooms, documenting instructional strategies, classroom management, and student engagement.
5. **Articulate a Professional Philosophy of Education:** Synthesize historical, philosophical, and clinical insights to author a coherent personal philosophy of teaching aligned with InTASC professional standards.

Required Course Materials & Approximate Costs

1. **Sadker, David M., and Karen R. Zittleman. *Teachers, Schools, and Society: A Brief Introduction to Education*. 6th ed., McGraw Hill, 2022.** Approx. \$85 print, \$50 digital rental.
2. **Spring, Joel. *American Education*. 20th ed., Routledge, 2022.** Approx. \$65 print or digital.
3. **Total estimated cost:** \$75 to \$115.

Generative AI Policy (AI Level 2: AI Permitted with Disclosure for Specified Tasks)

In accordance with Alkimi University Academic Policies (Student Handbook §5.8), EDUC 201 operates under **AI Level 2**.

- **What is permitted:** You may use generative AI tools to brainstorm educational philosophy prompts, explore historical timelines of landmark school desegregation court cases, and edit your personal educational philosophy statement for grammar and clarity.
- **What is prohibited:** You may not use generative AI to fabricate or draft clinical field observation notes, generate student reflection logs, complete weekly reading quizzes, or produce answers for examinations. Clinical observations must reflect authentic field experiences in assigned partner schools.
- **Disclosure:** All submitted reflection portfolios and philosophy papers must contain an AI disclosure statement identifying any tools used and describing their specific role in the writing process. If no tools were used, state: 'No generative AI tools were used in preparing this work.'

Grading Components and Weights

- **Midterm Examination 1:** 15% (In class, Thursday, October 1)
- **Midterm Examination 2:** 15% (In class, Thursday, November 12)
- **Personal Philosophy of Education Paper:** 15% (Due Friday, October 23 at 11:59 p.m.)
- **15-Hour Clinical Observation Log & Reflection Portfolio:** 20% (Due Friday, November 20 at 11:59 p.m.)
- **Weekly Foundations Canvas Quizzes:** 15% (Due Mondays at 11:59 p.m. in Canvas; lowest quiz score dropped)
- **Final Examination:** 20% (Monday, December 14, 2026, 1:00–3:00 p.m.)

Grading Scale (Alkimi University Standard)

- **A:** 93–100% | **A-:** 90–92%
- **B+:** 87–89% | **B:** 83–86% | **B-:** 80–82%
- **C+:** 77–79% | **C:** 73–76% | **C-:** 70–72%
- **D+:** 67–69% | **D:** 60–66% | **F:** Below 60%
- **Extra credit:** No individual extra credit assignments are offered in this course.

Course Schedule (Fall 2026)

Week	Dates	Topics & Readings	Assignments & Deadlines
Week 1	Aug 27	The Teaching Profession and InTASC Standards: Motivations for teaching, professional expectations, code of ethics, InTASC teacher standards, and orientation to Teacher Education admission requirements. <i>Reading: Sadker & Zittleman, Ch. 1–2</i>	<i>First day of classes: Wed Aug 26.</i>

Week	Dates	Topics & Readings	Assignments & Deadlines
Week 2	Sep 1, 3	Clinical Field Experience Orientation: Field placement protocols, background clearance verification, professional dress code, classroom observation etiquette, and logging observation hours. <i>Reading: Clinical Placements Handbook</i>	<i>Wed Sep 2: Add/section change deadline.</i>
Week 3	Sep 8, 10	Historical Foundations: Colonial Era to Common Schools: Dame schools, Horace Mann and the common school movement, tax-supported public schooling, and the feminization of teaching. <i>Reading: Sadker & Zittleman, Ch. 5; Spring, Ch. 1</i>	<i>Mon Sep 7: Labor Day (no classes). Wed Sep 9: Census date (last day to drop without a W).</i>
Week 4	Sep 15, 17	Historical Foundations: The Struggle for Educational Equity: Native American boarding schools, African American schooling under Jim Crow, Mendez v. Westminster, and Brown v. Board of Education. <i>Reading: Sadker & Zittleman, Ch. 5; Spring, Ch. 3</i>	—
Week 5	Sep 22, 24	Philosophical Perspectives on Education: Traditional philosophies (perennialism, essentialism) versus student-centered philosophies (progressivism, social reconstructionism, existentialism). <i>Reading: Sadker & Zittleman, Ch. 8</i>	—
Week 6	Sep 29, Oct 1	Developing a Teaching Philosophy: Examining classroom authority, purpose of schooling, instructional methods, and authoring the personal philosophy statement; Midterm Examination 1 in class. <i>Reading: Sadker & Zittleman, Ch. 8</i>	Midterm Examination 1 (in class).
Week 7	Oct 6, 8	School Governance: Federal, State, and Local Roles: Tenth Amendment authority, state boards of education, chief state school officers, local school boards, superintendents, and community politics. <i>Reading: Sadker & Zittleman, Ch. 7; Spring, Ch. 8</i>	—
Week 8	Oct 15	Financing Public Education: Equity and Adequacy: Local property tax disparities, state equalization formulas, federal Title I funding, school voucher debates, and judicial funding litigation. <i>Reading: Sadker & Zittleman, Ch. 7; Spring, Ch. 9</i>	<i>Oct 12–Oct 13: Fall break (no classes). Fri Oct 16: Midterm grades due.</i>
Week 9	Oct 20, 22	Legal Rights and Responsibilities of Teachers: Teacher contracts, academic freedom, copyright guidelines, social media ethics, liability, negligence, and mandatory child abuse reporting duties. <i>Reading: Sadker & Zittleman, Ch. 9</i>	Personal Philosophy of Education Paper due Fri Oct 23 at 11:59 p.m.
Week 10	Oct 27, 29	Legal Rights of Students: First Amendment free speech in school (Tinker, Hazelwood), Fourth Amendment search and seizure (T.L.O.), due process, and student privacy (FERPA). <i>Reading: Sadker & Zittleman, Ch. 9</i>	—
Week 11	Nov 3, 5	Curriculum Standards, High-Stakes Testing, and Accountability: Evolution from A Nation at Risk to NCLB and ESSA; state academic standards, hidden curriculum, textbook politics, and censorship. <i>Reading: Sadker & Zittleman, Ch. 10; Spring, Ch. 10</i>	<i>Fri Nov 6: Last day to withdraw (W) or elect Pass/No Pass.</i>
Week 12	Nov 10, 12	Social Realities and School Culture: Poverty, food insecurity, trauma-informed schooling, youth mental health, and the role of schools as community social hubs; Midterm Examination 2 in class. <i>Reading: Sadker & Zittleman, Ch. 4</i>	Midterm Examination 2 (in class).
Week 13	Nov 17, 19	School Choice, Charters, and Privatization: Magnet schools, charter schools, homeschooling, education savings accounts, and market competition arguments in contemporary education reform. <i>Reading: Spring, Ch. 4–5</i>	15-Hour Clinical Observation Log & Reflection Portfolio due Fri Nov 20 at 11:59 p.m.
Week 14	Nov 24	Clinical Field Experience Debriefing: Cross-placement analysis of observation data, teacher instructional moves, classroom management paradigms, and student engagement dynamics. <i>Reading: Selected field observation field notes</i>	<i>Nov 25–Nov 27: Thanksgiving break (no classes).</i>

Week	Dates	Topics & Readings	Assignments & Deadlines
Week 15	Dec 1, 3	Next Steps: Admission to Teacher Education: Requirements for formal admission to Teacher Education (45 credits, 2.750 GPA, basic skills testing), program benchmarks, and professional ethics. <i>Reading: Teacher Education Candidate Handbook</i>	—
Week 16	Dec 8	Course Synthesis and Final Examination Review: Integration of historical, philosophical, legal, and financial themes in American education; preparation for the comprehensive final examination. <i>Reading: Course review packet</i>	<i>Wed Dec 9: Last day of classes. Thu Dec 10: Reading Day.</i>
Finals	Dec 14	Final Examination: Monday, December 14, 2026, 1:00–3:00 p.m., Lovell Hall 130.	Comprehensive examination on history, philosophy, governance, law, and teacher professional standards.

Course Policies

Attendance Policy

Punctual attendance and active participation are mandatory for all seminar meetings. In-class case analyses, mock school board hearings, and field reflection workshops require full collaborative presence. If an unavoidable illness or emergency occurs, notify Dr. Quinlan before class. Accumulating more than two unexcused absences will result in a reduction of your course grade. Students who miss the first two class meetings without notifying the instructor may be dropped. Students may miss class for religious observance without penalty if they notify the instructor in writing within the first two weeks of the semester (by Wednesday, September 9, 2026). Absences for university-sponsored activities (athletics, performances, conferences) are excused with a letter from the sponsoring office at least one week in advance.

Late Work Policy

Written assignments submitted late will be penalized 10% per calendar day for up to 72 hours. Submissions beyond three days late will not be evaluated. Weekly Canvas quizzes must be completed prior to the posted Monday deadline.

Mandatory 15-Hour Field Observation Requirement

Candidates must complete 15 verified hours of classroom observation in an assigned partner school and submit a signed verification log. Failure to complete all 15 hours results in an incomplete (I) or failing grade (F) for EDUC 201.

School of Education Gateway Standard

Teacher education candidates must achieve a minimum grade of C+ in EDUC 201 and maintain a cumulative GPA of 2.750 to qualify for formal Admission to Teacher Education.

Final Exam Policy

The final examination (Monday, December 14, 2026, 1:00–3:00 p.m.) is scheduled by the University Registrar and can't be moved without the Dean's written approval (Faculty Handbook §5.5). A student with three or more final exams on the same calendar day may reschedule one of them. Requests go to the instructor of the middle exam by the last day of classes. For this term, send the request by Wednesday, December 9, 2026 (Student Handbook §6.4).

Academic Integrity

Alkimi University is an academic community devoted to rigorous scholarship, open intellectual inquiry, and uncompromising ethical conduct. All students are subject to the regulations of the Alkimi University Academic Integrity Policy. Academic dishonesty—including plagiarism, cheating on examinations, unauthorized collaboration, fabrication of empirical data, and unauthorized submission of academic work generated by artificial intelligence—undermines the integrity of the university and carries severe

disciplinary sanctions. Sanctions range from a failing grade on an assignment or exam to an administrative course failure recorded as an 'XF' on the official transcript, academic suspension, or expulsion. Suspected violations are formally investigated and resolved through the Office of Academic Integrity in accordance with Faculty Handbook §6. For detailed information, consult the Office of Academic Integrity, Lovell Hall 315, (555) 555-0163, integrity@university.alkimi.ai.

Accessibility Services

Alkimi University is committed to providing equitable educational access and reasonable accommodations for all students with documented disabilities, including physical, sensory, psychological, learning, and chronic health conditions. Students requesting academic accommodations must formally register with the Office of Accessibility Services, Harlan Hall 204, (555) 555-0155, access@university.alkimi.ai. Once approved, students will receive an official Faculty Accommodation Letter detailing approved accommodations. Students should present this letter to the instructor as early in the semester as possible, and at least one week prior to any exam or assignment requiring accommodation. Accommodations cannot be applied retroactively.

Student Wellness and Mental Health

Your physical health, psychological well-being, and mental health are essential to your academic success. If you experience heightened stress, anxiety, depressive symptoms, personal trauma, or academic burnout, free, confidential counseling and medical care are available through the Hollis Health & Counseling Center, located in the Hollis Center. Routine appointments are available Monday–Friday 8:00 a.m.–6:00 p.m. and Saturday 10:00 a.m.–2:00 p.m. during the semester by calling (555) 555-0190 or emailing health@university.alkimi.ai. Urgent, 24/7 crisis psychological counseling is accessible immediately at (555) 555-0199.

Campus Student Support Services

- **Academic Advising Center:** Lovell Hall 101 | (555) 555-0158 | advising@university.alkimi.ai
- **Writing Center:** Whitcombe Library 3rd Floor | Free consultations on papers, reports, and research projects at any stage.
- **Whitcombe Library:** Whitcombe Library, Main Floor | (555) 555-0170 | askalibrarian@university.alkimi.ai
- **Hollis Health & Counseling Center:** Hollis Center | (555) 555-0190 | 24/7 Counseling Line: (555) 555-0199 | health@university.alkimi.ai
- **Office of Clinical Placements:** Lovell Hall 122 | Observation placement assistance, background check paperwork, and cooperating teacher coordination with Dr. Quinlan.