

# Graduate School Courses

## Graduate School Courses Degrees and Certificates

### Master of Arts in Educational Leadership and Societal Change

#### Program Description

The MA Program in Educational Leadership and Societal Change answers the need for global leaders with the practical skills and experience, foundational knowledge, and ethical commitments necessary to achieve lasting and effective societal change within the field of education, including but not limited to the classroom learning environment. Education takes place across a multiplicity of institutions – social, cultural, political, and economic – all of which have a profound bearing on our schools and the type of future citizens they produce.

The program takes an ecological approach to education, one that, as Lawrence Cremin (1976) wrote over thirty years ago, “views educational institutions and configurations in relation to one another and to the larger society that sustains them and is in turn affected by them.” As such, the MA program, like its home institution, Soka University of America, recognizes the symbiotic relationship between formal learning and the surrounding world in which we live.

Students study and conduct research into the historical roots of educational policies and problems as well as on the relationship between educational philosophies and practices. They do so in the context of contemporary social, political, economic and cultural currents that may or may not work for or against specific curricular trends, but that nevertheless provide critical background knowledge for educational leaders. Related areas of study include comparative and international education, multicultural education, educational psychology, gender and education, school administration policy and practice, and educational law.

The two-year program includes a summer fieldwork/research option (see SUMMER RESEARCH PROGRAM). Projects that entail human subjects research go through the University’s Institutional Review Board (IRB). Under the supervision of a principal faculty advisor, students integrate their fieldwork and educational research to produce a master’s thesis for graduation.

The program is designed to prepare students for advanced degrees (e.g., Ph.D. or Ed.D.) and for leadership roles in public and private schooling, governmental and non-governmental organizations, and in the entrepreneurial sector, particularly in the growing area of educational publishing and other media. Graduates are in excellent positions to initiate leadership in K-12 classroom settings, pursue supplementary state credentialing requirements for managerial positions as principals and vice principals or as administrators at the district-level, and work in public policy institutions around the world.

**Please note: This program is not a credential program. It does not qualify students for the State of California Teaching Credential or for the State of California Administrative Services Credential.**

#### Mission and Learning Objectives

The SUA Graduate School strives to provide an academic setting that nurtures students from a variety of cultures and national backgrounds, who seek to learn from shared experiences. The Graduate School also strives to develop critical thinking skills and to foster a commitment to lifelong learning, educational leaders as first and foremost lead learners. To this end, the Graduate School emphasizes small class sizes that cultivate close and informal relationship between teachers and students, rigorous academic endeavors, free and open dialogue, and an appreciation for human diversity.

The mission of Soka University of America's Master of Arts in Educational Leadership and Societal Change program is to provide graduate-level students with the broad interdisciplinary knowledge, research skills, and practical experience for cutting-edge leadership in the all-inclusive-world of education, locally, nationally, and internationally.

Upon completion of the MA in Educational Leadership and Societal Change program, students are expected to be able to:

1. Assess and manage barriers to school change – including legal policies, curricular practices, traditional learning theories, relations between teachers and administrators, parents and schools, schools and society – and develop strategies to overcome them, including case methods of societal change that are sensitive to wide variations in local needs and concerns, actors and agents;
2. Take demonstrable leadership, informed by an understanding of the historic relations between school and society, for the improvement of education and educational systems in an increasingly global, interdependent world;
3. Grasp the social and psychological relations of education broadly construed, assuming leadership around shared learning, teaching, and administrative goals and objectives;
4. Assess and measure the relative strengths and weaknesses of alternate models of school administration and leadership past and present;
5. Demonstrate in written, oral, and visual forms of communication the knowledge and skills conducive to learning environments that value diversity, lifelong learning, the mentoring skills of teachers, innovative and ethical decision-making at all levels, and the successful achievement of all school-aged youth;
6. Conduct advanced research (secondary as well as primary; qualitative as well as quantitative) that can draw lessons, historical or otherwise, for contemporary educational policies and practices, especially as they entail and/or inhibit societal change both nationally and internationally.

## Program Highlights

Through their studies students:

- Learn to utilize networks and coalitions for broad-based, popular initiatives and reforms;
- Analyze past and present models of administrative leadership for their effectiveness in promoting equality of educational opportunity and greater workplace democracy;
- Learn to promote meaningful collaboration among and between parents and school administrators; and
- Develop and demonstrate the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to create and maintain learning environments that value diversity, critical inquiry, curiosity and imagination, instructional leadership, innovative and ethical decision-making, reflective practice, and the successful achievement of all school-aged youth.

## Pedagogical Methods

Regular semester-long courses – lecture, group work, discussion, library research. These courses are taught in a more-or-less traditional graduate seminar format in which students read and discuss both common and individual readings, pursue a research project under the direction of a professor/mentor, and provide regular progress reports to the class as a whole for commentary and input.

## General Information

This is a full-time program – i.e., students are enrolled on a full-time basis (9 or more credits per semester). It will take 2 years to complete this program, which requires 41 semester credits to graduate.

The courses in the program are offered in a traditional semester system (fall and spring) as well as in a unique block system – i.e., semester-based credit courses in 14-week-semester and 2 to 3-week-block sessions.

**Please note: This program is not a credential program. It does not qualify students for the State of California Teaching Credential or for the State of California Administrative Services Credential. Those students seeking teacher and/or administrative credentialing in California or elsewhere may consult the Program Director.**

**Program:** [MA in Educational Leadership and Societal Change](#)

**Type:** Master of Arts

## Year One Fall Block (August)

<b>Item #</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Units:</b>
EDU 501	Educational Leadership and Societal Change: A Comparative Perspective	

## Year One Fall Semester (Sept.-Dec.)

<b>Item #</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Units:</b>
EDU 503	History and Philosophy of Education and Leadership	
EDU 505	Leadership: Theory and Practice	
EDU 515	Psychology of Education	

## Winter Block (January)

<b>Item #</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Units:</b>
EDU 502	Ethnographies of Educational Leadership	

## Spring Semester (Feb.-May)

<b>Item #</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Units:</b>
EDU 504	International and Comparative Education	
EDU 506	Democratic Theory and Organizational Change	
EDU 508	Quantitative and Mixed Methods in Educational Settings	

## Summer

<b>Item #</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Units:</b>
Summer Research (Optional)		

## Year Two Fall Semester (Sept.-Dec.)

<b>Item #</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Units:</b>
EDU 507	Law, Policy and Ethical Decision-Making	
EDU 511	The MA Thesis Proposal	
EDU 517	Educational Assessment: Learners, Programs, and Institutions	

## Year Two Winter Block (January)

Item #	Title	Units:
EDU 512	Educational Leadership and Societal Change: The Distinguished Practitioners Series	

## Year Two Spring Semester (Feb.-May)

Item #	Title	Units:
EDU 513	Curriculum: Status, Issues, and Trends	
EDU 520	MA Thesis	
<b>Total credits:</b>		<b>41</b>

## Graduate School Courses Classes

### EDU 501: Educational Leadership and Societal Change: A Comparative Perspective

EDU 501 introduces first-year students to the main themes of the MA program, beginning with a critical inquiry into the dialectical relations of school and society. It examines social forces of change and persistence as the structural constraints, as well as the opportunities (for innovation and creativity, for example), within which schools, teachers, and administrators operate. Conversely, students study the generative results of school reform nationally and cross-nationally for the organization of society around the goals of education in general. Social structures – family, home, church, and community – educate no less than the school classroom and teacher. Through intensive readings and discussion, small-group projects, and weekly essays, the course, which takes place during the first Fall Block, asks students to reflect on ways in which the educational functions of school and society complement and oppose one another, foster needed changes, both in our schools and in the larger society, and impede them, protect valued traditions and act to destroy them. The need for leadership at all levels forces an examination as well of the types of leaders who in different societies and at different times have successfully brokered relations between schooling and societal change.

**Units:** 2

**Program:** [MA in Educational Leadership and Societal Change](#)

### EDU 502: Ethnographies of Educational Leadership

EDU 502 approaches educational leadership as the facilitation of a complex web of interconnections in which various actors, student and non-student alike, form together with the surrounding society a single ethnographic space for the production and contestation of meaning. Students study and analyze case studies of educational administration that inform and reflect a variety of surrounding cultures, each with its own unique norms and assumptions, historical evolution and guiding myths. The course utilizes firsthand accounts of the leadership experience in an effort to understand the world of leadership from the point of view of the leader and not simply of the outside observer. Taking place over the Winter Block, this course examines qualitative research methods that are descriptive, field-based, interpretive, and discovery-focused. A two-day long “shadowing” experience with local educational leaders, both school-based and non-school based, provides real-world opportunities for experiential learning and investigation.

**Units:** 3

**Program:** [MA in Educational Leadership and Societal Change](#)

## EDU 503: History and Philosophy of Education and Leadership

EDU 503 examines the social, historical, and philosophical foundations of contemporary schooling. The course explores the metaphysical, epistemological, moral, and political problems that educational philosophers have grappled with for centuries in their efforts to answer the question: What knowledge is most worth having? Beginning with the classical texts of Socrates and Confucius and concluding with such modern theorists of education as John Dewey, Paulo Freire, Jean Piaget, and the Japanese educator, Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, the course traces the changing relations of theory and practice, philosophy and rhetoric, speculative thought and applied knowledge in the historical evolution of education worldwide. Systems of thought variously described as positivistic, naturalistic, holistic, historicist, humanist, constructivist, empirical, relativistic and pragmatic have provided the basis for extensive argument and discussion in the social sciences, humanities, and more recently education. The course makes a thorough study of these and other ideas in the early development and contemporary expression of the history and philosophy of education and leadership.

**Units:** 3

**Program:** [MA in Educational Leadership and Societal Change](#)

## EDU 504: International and Comparative Education

EDU 504 introduces students to the theoretical, conceptual, and methodological questions and concerns that have animated scholarship and practice in the field of comparative and international education from its mid-twentieth century beginnings. While students consider the history of borrowing and lending educational ideas and best practices, the primary focus of the course is contemporary. Seminal questions to be examined: How do 'global' economic forces impact K-18 education? What are the transnational concerns surrounding culture? Who are the actors and institutions that educate for 21st century Learning? Course topics may include the internationalization of higher education; international testing regimes; neoliberalism and its varied reform motivations, meanings, and structures; and a constellation of counter-discourse developments attached to education for sustainable development and educational wholeness. These seminal questions provide the opportunity to pursue fundamental questions of purpose, theory, method, and various empirical logics in international and cross-national inquiry in educational policy studies.

**Units:** 3

**Program:** [MA in Educational Leadership and Societal Change](#)

## EDU 505: Leadership: Theory and Practice

EDU 505 explores the theory and practice of leadership across a variety of cultures, genre, perspectives, and individual cases, where the kind and degree of leadership is essential for achieving educational objectives that promote peaceful human development. The history of modern thought about leadership is one of debate about the most effective ways of influencing behavior, whether for the sake of individual happiness or to bring about beneficial societal change. Nowhere is this problem felt perhaps more acutely than in schools and other educational institutions, where students, educators and administrators form the nucleus of a socialization process the outcome of which affects all of us. As aspiring educational leaders and administrators, students conduct research on the most challenging and controversial issues within school systems, familiarize themselves with research-supported best

practices in school leadership, and become intelligent consumers of research as it impacts the theory and practice of leadership generally. Course topics include Leadership Development; Effective School Leadership; School Reform and Restructuring; Organizational Development; Curricular Administration and Student Achievement; Resource Management; Preparing to be a School Leader; and Effective Professional Development.

**Units:** 3

**Program:** [MA in Educational Leadership and Societal Change](#)

## EDU 506: Democratic Theory and Organizational Change

EDU 506 examines movements of democratic change, historical as well as contemporary, that have resulted over time in new institutional and organizational forms that in turn contribute to shaping the educational process. Political democracy describes a tension between individual rights and community responsibilities, between freedom and equality – and the resolution of those tensions through peaceful, democratic means. Students study the process of organizational change under conditions of democratic rule, in which in theory decision-making is a transaction among and between competing group, institutional, and individual interests. The course introduces students to the work of such early and contemporary democratic theorists as Walt Whitman, John Dewey, Jurgen Habermas, Chantal Mouffe, Archon Fung and Erik Olin, Lawrence Goodwyn, and Christopher Lasch. Course topics include the role and function of teacher unions; setting academic standards in a democracy; the limits and possibilities of classroom and workplace democracy; excellence and inclusion; school choice; problems of democratic elitism; and building a democratic movement culture in our schools.

**Units:** 3

**Program:** [MA in Educational Leadership and Societal Change](#)

## EDU 507: Law, Policy and Ethical Decision-Making

EDU 507 introduces a critical and pragmatic examination of leadership through key legal and policy contexts that govern daily and long-range ethical decision-making by educational leaders. The course examines the law and policies that govern educational organizations in relation to the cultural, social, economic and political standards embodied in state and federal codes, case law, and the policies that educational leaders encounter in their day-to-day work. Addressing the following seminal questions, the course takes a two pronged approach of law and the policies it produces framed by the ethical educational leader: Whose right to an education? What does it mean to be educated within policies and laws? How should we think about school, success, and opportunity in a democratic society? What is the pragmatic stance for the ethical school leader with educational policy? Law and policy development is undergirded by the relationship between a leader's values and decision making.

**Units:** 3

**Program:** [MA in Educational Leadership and Societal Change](#)

## EDU 508: Quantitative and Mixed Methods in Educational Settings

EDU 508 is a first-year graduate-level survey of quantitative and mixed (qualitative and quantitative) research methods commonly found in educational studies. The general content base of this course is twofold: 1) research

planning and design and 2) data analysis and reporting. Through reading published empirical research, as well as class activities and discussion, students will recognize the theoretical, practical, and sociocultural constraints on all parts of educational research, from questions and design to analysis and interpretation. Students gain an understanding of common and differentiating features of typical research designs; ethical, legal, and diversity considerations in research studies in education; descriptive statistics and basic inferential statistics including measures of central tendency, dispersion, correlations, and group comparisons; basic measurement concepts including validity and reliability and the role of measurement in inquiry; planning and integration techniques for mixed methods analysis; and quality indicators in published research.

**Units:** 3

**Program:** [MA in Educational Leadership and Societal Change](#)

## EDU 511: The MA Thesis Proposal

Students work on their MA Thesis Proposal under the supervision of a principle faculty advisor, building on the knowledge base acquired in EDU 502 and 508 to equip students with the research skills they will need to complete their MA Thesis. Work includes evaluating the quality of published research; discussing the implications of various studies in view of the strengths and weaknesses of the research; and using library-based secondary and primary sources in addition to online sources as tools for conducting and/or evaluating research studies.

**Units:** 3

**Program:** [MA in Educational Leadership and Societal Change](#)

## EDU 512: Educational Leadership and Societal Change: The Distinguished Practitioners Series

EDU 512 takes advantage of the Winter Block to bring to campus a series of distinguished practitioners – leaders who have made a discernible difference in a school, a district, at the state and/or national level to advance humanistic, community-based education and learning – to explore with students the special themes and concerns of the MA Program in Educational Leadership and Societal Change. Five to six visiting practitioners rotate through the class for two days at a time over a three and a half week long seminar designed to provide the benefits of time and place-tested professional judgement and experience, including insights into the special challenges to successful and effective educational leadership not only as it impacts schools but the entire society.

**Units:** 2

**Program:** [MA in Educational Leadership and Societal Change](#)

## EDU 513: Curriculum: Status, Issues, and Trends

EDU 513 examines the issues and trends surrounding what schools teach and why. Central to the course is the student viewpoint that examines how young people at various levels of schooling experience the curriculum. By examining historical and current debates on what an educated citizen should look like, what a general education is for, and what kind of education is most worth having, students form and articulate their own views on these considerations. The course introduces the basics of curriculum mapping and planning, while also exploring the dynamics of the curriculum-making process at institutional levels – who or what decides which courses will be taught,

selects the material to be taught, and sets proficiency standards for achievement. Over the course of the class, students engage with common themes from curriculum research such as the professionalization of teaching and the teacher-proofing of the curriculum; cultural conflicts and the impacts on curriculum making and choice; the hidden versus the explicit curriculum; how access to the curriculum is impacted by class, race, and gender; the specialization and fragmentation of knowledge; standardized learning for standardized testing; and textbooks and the consumption model of education.

**Units:** 3

**Program:** [MA in Educational Leadership and Societal Change](#)

## EDU 515: Psychology of Education

EDU 515 explores the psychology of learning with a focus on how theoretical and empirical knowledge about human cognition, emotion, and attitudes can be applied in schools and other educational settings. As an interdisciplinary blend of psychology and education, it necessarily addresses both theoretical and practical issues. As a branch of psychology, it investigates the science of human behavior, especially the behaviors connected to motivation and learning. As education, it emphasizes practice and applied knowledge that inspires positive individual development and social change. Students gain an understanding of key concepts in the areas of human development, learning theory, and motivation; explore applications of concepts in contemporary educational settings through case studies and other activities; and consider contemporary issues in the field from various individual perspectives and cultural contexts.

**Units:** 3

**Program:** [MA in Educational Leadership and Societal Change](#)

## EDU 517: Educational Assessment: Learners, Programs, and Institutions

EDU 517 offers a critical review of types, purposes, procedures, uses, and limitations of assessment strategies and techniques. Students are introduced to emerging trends in assessment, various assessment techniques and models, and how the assessment process is used to evaluate individuals, programs, and institutions. Students consider how to determine appropriate assessment tools for different educational contexts, and how to recognize the implications of these assessment decisions for social justice and social change. Students gain not only the assessment competencies they will need as educational leaders but the communicative skills to convey the results of assessment to their publics clearly and effectively, helping build support for schools and for initiatives that educators wish to carry out. As a final class assignment each student writes an assessment report, utilizing concepts and tools learned in the course.

**Units:** 3

**Program:** [MA in Educational Leadership and Societal Change](#)

## EDU 520: MA Thesis

Students spend the last semester of the Program preparing and completing their MA Thesis under the supervision of a principle faculty advisor.

**Units:** 4

**Program:** [MA in Educational Leadership and Societal Change](#)



# Summer Research (Optional)

Occurring between the first and second year, the Summer Research Program is a non-credit bearing instructional option designed to enable graduate students to conduct pre-MA-thesis research at one or more discrete locations either in the United States or abroad. Students identify a field site(s) where they can obtain first-hand experience as well as pursue research in an area of scholarly interest. Given the experiential nature of the program, it is expected that the theoretical framework of the study will contain both quantitative and qualitative elements, include a comparative dimension, and involve a large degree of face-to-face and/or on-site data collection, a creative combination of “talk, text, and interaction” (Silverman 2000).

*For more information, please inquire with the Program Director.*

**Units:** 0

**Program:** [MA in Educational Leadership and Societal Change](#)