

EDHE 6850
Policy analysis in higher education
Matthews Hall #310
Tuesdays, 5.30-8.20 pm
Spring 2020

About the instructor

Barrett Taylor, PhD
Associate Professor
Matthews Hall #214J
T: 940.565.3238
E: barrett.taylor@unt.edu or bjt512@gmail.com

Office hours: Mondays, 11.00 am – 2.00 pm
Tuesdays, 11.00 am – 2.00 pm

Although I am in my office almost every weekday, I often have meetings scheduled during these times. I therefore strongly suggest that you email me to make an appointment before coming to my office. Simply write to me at one of the two addresses posted above, noting the days and times at which you are available to meet. I generally reply to email within 24 hours, and often even sooner.

Course objectives

A great deal of social scientific research focuses on individuals. Surveys of students, faculty members, and other individuals are common approaches to the study of higher education. These individuals are brought together into collective bodies – individual campuses, systems of colleges and universities, even state governments – in order to conduct educational activities. The purpose of this course is to outline ways for analyzing the behavior of these *collective actors*. We also focus on the ways in which collective actors in higher education relate to one another in *social fields* consisting of many organizations, individuals, and the rules and resource streams that frame their actions. Some such relations occur within a field (as when one university interacts with another), while other interactions cross field boundaries (as when a local government allocates funding to a community college). To do this, we review social theory, empirical research, and commonly used analytic techniques for the study of collective actors.

This course is intended to prepare students broadly for dissertation writing and original research on collective actors in higher education. It is not intended to familiarize students exhaustively with the range of techniques currently employed in policy research. Students who are interested in the mechanics and details of quantitative estimation should pursue relevant coursework through the Department of Educational Psychology or other academic units at UNT.

The instructor assumes familiarity with basic quantitative analysis (prerequisite of EPSY 6010) and fundamental social theories (prerequisite of **ONE** of: Policy Studies in Higher Education [EDHE 6550], Organization and Administration of Higher Education [EDHE 6710] or Higher Education Finance [EDHE 6760]). Core approaches such as linear

regression and widely used social theories such as critical race theory or academic capitalism will not be reviewed in the course.

Assignments

This course is an applied project seminar, meaning that each student will develop an individual project to be completed over the course of the semester. Each student should identify a topic of interest that can be explored using publicly available secondary data (or another dataset to which the student has ready access), and framed and analyzed using the theories, concepts and techniques presented in the course. As such, each project will highlight a complexity (via interaction terms, multilevel regression, etc.) of the field of higher education. The ideal project will yield a paper of publishable quality.

The three assignments for this course reflect varying stages of the completion of this project:

1. “Front matter” paper: The “front matter” of a research paper frames the analysis. Just so, the “front matter” paper should frame the student’s project in a format commonly found in academic journals. Papers should include:
 - a. A brief (maximum of two pages) introduction that includes research questions, links those questions to the concepts/theory used in the paper, and establishes the importance of the study.
 - b. A synthesis of literature that moves beyond summary to the development of a synthetic argument that frames the problem you will study. This section must draw on readings beyond the syllabus.
 - c. A theoretical framework that provides a general predictive model. While the theoretical model should be based on course readings, it should incorporate additional readings as appropriate. This model should flow logically from the review of literature, should dovetail with the research questions, and should be refined in the quantitative analysis to follow.
 - d. A methods section outlining data sources, variable selection, analytic technique, and limitations to the proposed analysis. In essence, this section should align the theoretical model with the proposed quantitative model.Because fonts and margins vary, academic journals typically impose word count requirements rather than page length requirements. This assignment is limited to 5,000 words, inclusive of tables, figures, and references. 40% of final grade.
2. Final paper: The final paper will include revised front matter alongside the results of the analysis and a discussion of implications for theory, future research, and/or policy. The paper should be formatted as a peer-reviewed journal article. Limit of 9,000 words, inclusive of tables, figures, and references. 40% of final grade.
3. Presentation and participation: **Attendance at all course sessions is required.** In accordance with Texas state law, absences on religious holy days will be considered excused. Students must complete assignments within a reasonable time frame after the absence at no penalty to their grade. I request that you let me know at your earliest convenience if you will be observing a religious holy day at a time during which we have scheduled a course meeting. If you must miss a course meeting for any other reason, please notify the instructor immediately. In addition to attendance, students are required to complete all readings and to

participate in all class sessions. Please note that “participation” does not necessarily require speaking, and certainly does not indicate speaking out of turn or talking over classmates. 20% of final grade.

Grades and evaluation

A course grade of “A” (90-100) indicates exemplary work. A “B” (80-89) denotes work that meets expectations of a graduate student. A “C” (70-79) is assigned to work that does not meet expectations of graduate student performance. Grades of “D” (65-69) and “F” (<65) are assigned when work is unacceptable.

Late assignments

Assignments are due at the dates and times specified in the syllabus. Late work will be penalized one plus or minus for each day that it is late

Course readings

There is one required text for this course:

Cameron, A. C., & Trivedi, P. K. (2010). *Microeconometrics using Stata (revised edition)*. College Station, TX: Stata Press.

In weekly assignments, I will refer to this text as “C&T.”

In addition to these texts, we will read from a variety of book chapters, peer-reviewed journal articles, and policy reports. Some of these documents will be made available to you through an electronic course reserve. This reserve is offered as a convenient way to access materials available through the UNT library, and its contents are intended only for educational “fair use” within copyright provisions (ie., you are not to distribute these documents to others).

Find the course reserve by clicking the “course reserve” link on the UNT library’s main page. You then can search for this class using the course number found at the top of this syllabus. The password for this reserve is “collectiveactors” (case-sensitive). You must not share this password with others outside the class. Further, library staff will not be able to provide the password to you should you lose it. Please ask a classmate or request a duplicate copy of the syllabus.

Peer-reviewed journal articles are available through the UNT library. They are not part of the electronic reserve because you can find them easily using the citation information found in this syllabus.

Succeed at UNT

- Show Up
- Find Support
- Take Control
- Be Prepared
- Get Involved

- Be Persistent

Academic Integrity and Academic Dishonesty

Academic Integrity is defined in the UNT Policy on Student Standards for Academic Integrity. Academic Dishonesty includes cheating, plagiarism, forgery, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, and sabotage. Any suspected case of Academic Dishonesty will be handled in accordance with University policy and procedures. Possible academic penalties range from a verbal or written admonition to a grade of “F” in the course. Further sanctions may apply to incidents involving major violations. The policy and procedures are available at: <http://vpaa.unt.edu/academic-integrity.htm>.

Acceptable Student Behavior

Student behavior that interferes with an instructor’s ability to conduct a class or other students' opportunity to learn is unacceptable and disruptive and will not be tolerated in any instructional forum at UNT. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior will be directed to leave the classroom and the instructor may refer the student to the Dean of Students to consider whether the student's conduct violated the Code of Student Conduct. The university's expectations for student conduct apply to all instructional forums, including university and electronic classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. The Code of Student Conduct can be found at www.deanofstudents.unt.edu

Disability Access

The University of North Texas makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Access (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide you with an accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding your specific needs in a course. You may request accommodations at any time, however, ODA notices of accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. Students are strongly encouraged to deliver letters of accommodation during faculty office hours or by appointment. Faculty members have the authority to ask students to discuss such letters during their designated office hours to protect the privacy of the student. For additional information see the Office of Disability Access website at <https://disability.unt.edu/>. You may also contact them by phone at 940.565.4323.

EagleConnect

All UNT students should activate and regularly check their EagleConnect (e-mail) account. EagleConnect is used for official communication from the University to students. Many important announcements for the University and College are sent to students via EagleConnect. For information about EagleConnect, including how to activate an account and how to have EagleConnect forwarded to another e-mail address, visit <https://eagleconnect.unt.edu>. This is the main electronic contact for all course-related information and/or material.

Emergency Notifications and Procedures

UNT uses a system called Eagle Alert to quickly notify students with critical information in the event of an emergency (i.e., severe weather, campus closing, and health and public safety emergencies like chemical spills, fires, or violence). In the event of a university closure, please refer to Canvas for contingency plans for covering course materials.

Observation of Religious Holy Days

If you plan to observe a religious holy day that coincides with a class day, please notify your instructor as soon as possible.

Retention of Student Records

Student records pertaining to this course are maintained in a secure location by the instructor of record. All records such as exams, answer sheets (with keys), and written papers submitted during the duration of the course are kept for at least one calendar year after course completion. Course work completed via the Canvas online system, including grading information and comments, is also stored in a safe electronic environment for one year. Students have the right to view their individual record; however, information about students' records will not be divulged to other individuals without proper written consent. Students are encouraged to review the Public Information Policy and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) laws and the University's policy.

Sexual Discrimination, Harassment, & Assault

UNT is committed to providing an environment free of all forms of discrimination and sexual harassment, including sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking. If you (or someone you know) has experienced or experiences any of these acts of aggression, please know

that you are not alone. The federal Title IX law makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender are Civil Rights offenses. Because of Texas Senate Bill 212, as a UNT employee, I am required by law to report sexual misconduct, relationship violence, stalking, and crimes. I cannot keep those things confidential if you reveal any of those to me. If you need a confidential resource available on campus or in the local community then I can refer you.

UNT has staff members trained to support you in navigating campus life, accessing health and counseling services, providing academic and housing accommodations, helping with legal protective orders, and more.

UNT's Dean of Students' website offers a range of on-campus and off-campus resources to help support survivors, depending on their unique needs:

http://deanofstudents.unt.edu/resources_0. Esther Oppong is UNT's Student Advocate and she can be reached through e-mail at SurvivorAdvocate@unt.edu or by calling the Dean of Students' office at 940-565-2648. You are not alone. We are here to help.

Student Perceptions of Teaching (SPOT)

Student feedback is important and an essential part of participation in this course. The student evaluation of instruction is a requirement for all organized classes at UNT. The survey will be made available during weeks 13 and 14 of the long semesters to provide

students with an opportunity to evaluate how this course is taught. Students will receive an email from "UNT SPOT Course Evaluations via IASystem Notification" (no-reply@iasystem.org) with the survey link. Students should look for the email in their UNT email inbox. Simply click on the link and complete the survey. Once students complete the survey they will receive a confirmation email that the survey has been submitted. For additional information, please visit the spot website at www.spot.unt.edu or email spot@unt.edu.

Retention of student records

Student records pertaining to this course are maintained in a secure location by the instructor of record. All records such as exams, answer sheets (with keys), and written papers submitted during the duration of the course are kept for at least one calendar year after course completion. Coursework completed via the Canvas on-line system, including grading information and comments, is also stored in a safe electronic environment. You have a right to view your individual record; however, information about your records will not be divulged to other individuals without the proper written consent. You are encouraged to review the Public Information Policy and F.E.R.P.A. (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act) laws and the university's policy in accordance with those mandates at the following link: <http://essc.unt.edu/registrar/ferpa.html>

Unit I: Framing questions about collective actors

January 14, 2020 – Introductions and syllabus review

January 21, 2020 – Asking collective actor questions

Schofer, E., & Meyer, J. W. (2005). The worldwide expansion of higher education in the twentieth century. *American Sociological Review*, 70(6), 898-920.

Taylor, B. J., & Cantwell, B. (2019). *Unequal higher education: Wealth, status and student opportunity*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

- Chapter 2, “A field account of unequal higher education,” pp. 41-52

Tuchman, G. (2009). *Wannabe U*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

- Chapter 1, “Wannabe University is transformed,” pp. 1-24

C&T, Ch. 1

Application: familiarity with secondary data sources on institutions including IPEDS, WebCASPAR and the Delta Cost Project

January 28, 2020 – Collective actors, field contexts and mechanisms

Fligstein, N., & McAdam, D. (2012). *A theory of fields*. New York: Oxford University Press.

- Chapter 1, “The Gist of It,” pp. 1-33

Kauppinen, I., Cantwell, B., & Slaughter, S. (2017). Social mechanisms and strategic action fields: The example of the emergence of the European Research Area. *International Sociology*, 32(6), 796-813.

Ray, V. (2019). A theory of racialized organizations. *American Sociological Review*, 84(1), 26-53.

Tomaskovic-Devey, D., & Avent-Holt, D. (2019). *Relational inequalities: An organizational approach*. New York: Oxford.

- Chapter 1, “Generating Inequalities,” pp. 1-18

Application: insheet/infile, outsheet/export, merge/append, reshape ... using data on Arizona’s public four-year universities

February 4, 2020 – Linking concepts to measurements

Baker, D. (2019). Pathways to racial equity in higher education: Modeling the antecedents of state affirmative action bans. *American Educational Research Journal*. doi: 10.3102/0002831219833918

Foster, J. M., & Fowles, J. (2018). Ethnic heterogeneity, group affinity, and state higher education spending. *Research in Higher Education*, 59(1), 1-28.

Kelchen, R., Rosinger, K. O., & Ortagus, J. C. (2019). How to create and use state-level policy data sets in education research. *AERA Open*, 5(3), 1-14.

Application: sample definition, temporal horizons, variable identification and selection, scaling and transforming variables, hypothesized response functions

February 11, 2020 – Framing via descriptive questions

C&T, Ch. 2

Chetty, R., Friedman, R. N., Saez, E., Turner, N., & Yagan, D. (2017). *Mobility report cards: The role of colleges in intergenerational mobility*. Cambridge, MA: Opportunity Insights.

- Report available at: https://opportunityinsights.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/coll_mrc_paper.pdf

Loeb, S., Dynarski, S., McFarland, D., Morris, P., Reardon, S., & Reber, S. (2017). *Descriptive analysis in education: A guide for researchers*. (NCEE 2017–4023). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance.

- Report available at: <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/pubs/20174023/pdf/20174023.pdf>

Mitchell, M. N. (2012). *A visual guide to Stata graphics (third edition)*. College Station, TX: Stata Press.

- Chapter 3, “Twoway graphs,” pp. 89-152

Application: sum, sort, by, gen, twoway, egen, scaling/logging variables, inflation controls ... using Arizona data from the week before

Unit II: Strengthening inferences about collective actors

February 18, 2020 – Testing inferences I

C&T, Ch. 3

Barringer, S. N., Leahey, E., & Salazar, K. (2020). *What catalyzes research universities to commit to interdisciplinary research?. Working Paper*. Dallas, TX: Southern Methodist University.

Cantwell, B., Taylor, B. J., & Johnson, N. (2020). Ordering the global field of academic science: Money, mission, and position. *Studies in Higher Education*, 45(1), 18-33. doi: 10.1080/03075079.2018.1506916

Application: reg, xi, outreg2, graphical interpretation using predict

February 25, 2020 – Testing inferences II

C&T, Ch. 8

Hearn, J. C., & Rosinger, K. (2014). Socioeconomic diversity in selective private colleges: An organizational analysis. *The Review of Higher Education*, 38(1), 71-104.

Zhang, L. (2010). The use of panel data models in higher education policy studies. In J. C. Smart (Ed.), *Higher education handbook of theory and research*, vol. 25 (pp. 307-349). Dordrecht, the Netherlands: Springer.

Application: xtset, xtreg, xtserial and standard errors in panel analysis, historical time, within-unit time

March 3, 2020 – Conditioning inferences using interaction terms

Brambor, T., Clark, W. R., & Golder, M. (2006). Understanding interaction models: Improving empirical analyses. *Political Analysis*, 14(1), 63-82.

Hainmueller, J., Mummolo, J., & Xu, Y. (2019). How much should we trust estimates from multiplicative interaction models? Simple tools to improve empirical practice. *Political Analysis*, 27(2), 163-192.

Taylor, B. J., Cantwell, B., Watts, K., & Wood, O. (in press). Partisanship, White racial resentment, and state support for higher education. *The Journal of Higher Education*.

Application: generating and interpreting continuous X dichotomous interaction terms

March 10, 2020 – No class – Spring Break

March 17, 2020 – Workshop for your questions

Angrist, J. D., & Pischke, J. (2009). *Mostly harmless econometrics: An empiricist's companion*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

- Chapter 2, “The experimental ideal,” pp. 11-24

March 24, 2020 – Strengthening inferences about categories and choices

Cho, A., & Taylor, B. J. (2019). Alignment between universities and their affiliated professional schools: Organizational segmentation and institutional logics in the USA. *Higher Education*, 78(3), 463-478. doi: 10.1007/s10734-018-0352-0.

Dickson, T., & Taylor, B. J. (2019). Predictive ability of institutional factors on entry-level physical therapy program adoption. *Physical Therapy*, 99(7), 849-861.

C&T, Ch. 14

Application: logistic regression, SPOST

March 31, 2020 – No class – “Front matter” paper to barrett.taylor@unt.edu by 5.00 pm

Unit III – Your own analyses of collective actors

April 7, 2020 – Students meet individually with instructor as needed

April 14, 2020 – Students meet individually with instructor as needed

April 21, 2020 – Student presentations I

April 28, 2020 – Student presentations II

May 4, 2020 – Final paper (revised “front matter” plus results and discussion) due to barrett.taylor@unt.edu by noon