Policy Studies in Higher Education

Mondays, 5.30-8.20 pm
Physics #112
Spring 2019

About the instructor
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Office hours: Mondays, 11.00 pm – 2.00 pm
Wednesdays, 11.00 pm – 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
This course is designed as part of a sequence of classes intended to prepare you for work in higher education as a scholar-practitioner. To that end, this course has two complementary objectives.

First, this class will familiarize you with basic principles and current issues of higher education policy. Every scholar-practitioner needs an understanding of educational policy because state and federal policy environments shape virtually every office on a campus. I seek to present core concepts in a way that they may be applied readily to educational practice. I will give special attention to the ways in which these topics touch upon other core issues in higher education – such as organization and administration, finance, and student choices – in an effort to integrate this course’s content with the other classes you will take while at UNT.

Second, this course will help you to develop the range of skills that characterize advanced scholar-practitioners in higher education. Necessary skills include the ability to write clear scholarly prose, and to present academic content orally. Course assignments will be graded accordingly. If you do not possess a copy of a “style guide” to writing, I highly recommend purchasing and familiarizing yourself with one. I remain partial to Strunk and White’s Elements of Style, but any of a number of guides can help you to improve your writing. Please note that this is a guide to writing style, mechanics and usage. Strunk and White is not a substitute for the “APA manual,” which is the official referencing guide of this department.
In addition, scholar-practitioners must be able to read and comprehend a variety of sources, including books, policy reports, and peer-reviewed journal articles. This will involve some familiarity with qualitative and quantitative research methods. If you do not possess this familiarity, simply do your best with course readings and raise relevant questions in class. You are responsible for learning all materials presented in the course, so please ask questions that you have so that you can hone your skills as a reader of academic content.

Assignments
There are four assignments in this course:

1. State case studies: Students will present single-state case studies orally. The oral presentation should last 10-12 minutes, and will be followed by questions/comments from the class. The case study should explore higher education within a state that is not covered by course readings (i.e., not Texas, Georgia, North Carolina, etc.). The case study should draw on data from multiple sources – e.g., SHEEO, the state governing agency, the Chronicle Almanac, peer-reviewed journal articles – in order to highlight key aspects of the state system.
   Each report should address:
   a. The state’s demographics, higher education history, and the composition of the system (publics/privates; two/four years, etc.).
   b. The state’s governance mechanism (centralized, coordinating, etc.).
   c. The state’s mechanism for funding higher education (appropriations, student aid, performance- vs. formula-based, etc.).
   d. The extent to which the state meets goals of access, affordability, and performance outcomes.
   e. Significant challenges facing the state in the future.
   10% of final grade.

2. Final examination: This take home exam addresses major themes and content from the course. Students will have one week to respond to exam questions using course materials. 40% of final grade.

3. Final paper: Each student will identify a topic of interest in higher education policy. The final presentation and paper covering this topic should:
   a. Be more specific than the general theme. For example, “access” or “economic development” is too general, but “tuition deregulation and enrollment patterns of low-income students” might work. Students must present their topics to the instructor for verbal approval/revision in week five, and present progress updates in week ten.
   b. Utilize relevant descriptive data from policy and nonprofit sources to highlight the nature and scope of the problem. The student should specify clearly whether the issue is analyzed on the state or federal level.
   c. Draw on scholarly sources (i.e., course readings, peer-reviewed journal articles, and books/chapters from reputable presses) in order to analyze the problem. Papers should draw on at least one of the major policy analysis and formation frameworks discussed in Unit I.
   d. Based on this scholarly analysis, propose at least three policy remedies that the state/federal body may undertake.
Term papers should demonstrate students’ fluency with higher education policy by allowing for detailed exploration of a particular topic, concept, or issue. All papers will analyze the topic in light of course readings and other relevant materials, and also will draw upon external readings. Evaluation is based upon demonstrated knowledge of material, quality of analysis, stylistic clarity, and writing mechanics. Students will present their reports (approximately 20 minutes per student) in weeks 13-15. These presentations are an important opportunity to develop the project, ensuring that the written portion of the assignment will be of high quality. Final papers will be approximately 10-12 pages. 40% of final grade.

4. Class 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. 10% 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 are two required texts for this course:


In weekly assignments, I will refer to this text as “McMahon.”


In weekly assignments, I will refer to this text as “St. John.”
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 (i.e., 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 “intrinsic” (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.

A few readings, including those from Thomas Piketty’s (2014) *Capital in the twenty-first century*, Danielle Allen’s (2016) *Education and equality*, and Paula Stephan’s (2012) *How economics shapes science*, are available through the UNT library as electronic books. Here again, these chapters cannot be posted as part of the course reserve, but can readily be accessed from the library’s main page.

Finally, policy reports are available publicly through the body that published these documents. A simple google search using information in the citation should take you to the items that you will need to read.

**Academic Integrity**

All incidents of academic dishonesty will be reported to the Academic Integrity Office within the Office of the Provost. For any act of academic dishonesty, the instructor may impose a sanction from a warning up to and including an “F” in the course. Further and more stringent sanctions may be imposed from the Provost’s Office.

As discussed in the UNT Graduate Catalog ([www.unt.edu/catalog/grad](http://www.unt.edu/catalog/grad)):

A strong university is built upon the academic integrity of its members. As an intellectual enterprise, it is dependent upon trust, honesty, and the exchange of ideas in a manner that gives full credit and context to the sources of those ideas. UNT’s policy on the Student Standards of Academic Integrity is designed to uphold these principles of academic integrity. It protects the rights of all participants in the educational process and validates the legitimacy of degrees awarded by the university.

The policy covers categories of academic dishonesty such as cheating, plagiarism,
forgery, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, and sabotage. It includes descriptions of infractions, penalties, and procedures. In the investigation and resolution of all allegations of student academic dishonesty, the university’s actions are intended to be corrective, educationally sound, fundamentally fair, and based on reliable evidence. The full policy (18.1.16) is available online at http://vpaa.unt.edu/academic-integrity.htm.

If I suspect that you have engaged in academic dishonesty, I will deal with the situation as outlined in the University Policy shown above. You will be allowed to remain in the class during the entire time that the academic misconduct accusation is being investigated, adjudicated, and appealed. As noted above, the maximum academic penalty that can be assessed by an instructor is an F in the course. However, university officials use the academic misconduct information to decide if other misconduct sanctions are then to be applied, and the student has separate rights to appeal those decisions, remaining in the class until all appeals are exhausted.

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

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. 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. Renee LeClaire McNamara 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.

Access to information – Eagle Connect
Your access point for business and academic services at UNT occurs within the my.unt.edu site www.my.unt.edu. All official communication from the university will be delivered to your Eagle Connect account. For more information, please visit the website that explains Eagle Connect and how to forward your email: http://eagleconnect.unt.edu/
ADA statement
The University of North Texas makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Accommodation (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. Grades assigned before an accommodation is provided will not be changed. 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. For additional information see the Office of Disability Accommodation website at http://www.unt.edu/oda. You may also contact them by phone at 940.565.4323.

SPOT
The Student Perceptions of Teaching (SPOT) is a requirement for all organized classes at UNT. This anonymous short survey will be made available to you later in the semester, providing you a chance to comment on how this class is taught. I am very interested in the feedback I get from students, as I work to continually improve my teaching. I consider SPOT to be an important part of your participation in this class.

Emergency notification and procedures
UNT uses a system called Eagle Alert to quickly notify you 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). The system sends voice messages (and text messages upon permission) to the phones of all active faculty staff, and students. Please make certain to update your phone numbers at www.my.unt.edu. Some helpful emergency preparedness actions include: 1) know the evacuation routes and severe weather shelter areas in the buildings where your classes are held, 2) determine how you will contact family and friends if phones are temporarily unavailable, and 3) identify where you will go if you need to evacuate the Denton area suddenly. In the event of a university closure, please refer to Blackboard for contingency plans for covering course materials.

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 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 Blackboard 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 – Understanding policy

Week 1 – January 14, 2019 – Introduction and overview

January 21, 2019 – NO CLASS – Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday

Week 2 – Understanding the policy environment – January 28, 2019

  • Chapter 7, “Negative Partisanship and the Triumph of Trump,” pp. 142-173

  • Chapter 1, “Making Sense of Politics through Resentment,” pp. 1-25
  • Excerpt from Chapter 5, “Attitudes toward Public Institutions and Public Employees,” pp. 110-127


  • Chapter 1, “Identity-Based Democracy,” pp. 1-16

  • Introduction, “Confronting the Submerged State,” pp. 1-7

Finance and economics refresher (as needed)

  • “Introduction,” pp. 1-35
  • Available as an electronic book through UNT library


Discussion points: revenues; expenditures, costs; equilibrium; value; marginal costs/returns; subsidies; prices; hierarchies; peers; elite vs. access institutions; role of state governments; federal government and HE as a policy instrument; economies of scope and scale; strengths and weaknesses of economic frames of analysis; Piketty & Saez; Keynesianism and neoliberalism; politics vs. policy; competition vs. appropriation; governance vs. steering; the “hollowed out” state; academic capitalism; the old (Fordist) economy; the new (innovation) economy; external control of organizations; relating policymaking to theories

Week 4 – February 4, 2019 – Five frameworks for policy analysis

  • Ch. 1, “Two Concepts of Education,” pp. 1-26
  • Available as an electronic book through UNT library
• Discussion points: “liberal” in the US and the UK; sovereignty of individual; justice as fairness; veil of ignorance; HE as vehicle of opportunity

Human capital theory: McMahon, chapters 1-2
• Discussion points: portable knowledge and skills; wage premium; HE as economic growth

• Discussion points: higher education as a market; portability; competition; rational actor hypothesis

• Discussion points: interest convergence; microaggressions and critical race theory in higher education research; HE as sorting mechanism and reproducer of inequality

• Discussion points: policy incentives and responses; definitions and classifications; HE as means of accumulation; HE as site of contestation; colleges/universities in policy

Unit II – State governance and policy

*Week 5 – February 11, 2019 – The funding of state systems*
St. John, chapters 8-9

*Students present preliminary topic ideas in class.*

*Week 6 – February 18, 2019 – The structure of state systems*
St. John, chapters 7, 11-12
Policy and Higher Education. Available at http://www.gse.upenn.edu/pdf/irhe/Perpetuating_Disparity_Georgia.pdf


Four students present state case studies in class

*Week 7 – February 25, 2019 – Accountability in state systems*


• Chapter 4, “State Accountability Policies,” pp. 71-91


Four students present state case studies in class

*Week 8 – March 4, 2019 – Policy formation at the state level*


Four students present state case studies in class

*March 11, 2019 – No class – Spring break*
Unit III – The federal role

**Week 9 – March 18, 2019 – Federal student financial aid**


- Chapter 11, “Outside Financial Aid.”


Four students present state case studies in class

**Week 10 – March 25, 2019 – The federal government and R&D**

McMahon, Chapter 6


- Available as an electronic book through UNT library


- Available as an electronic book through UNT library

Students present project updates in class

**Week 11 – April 1, 2019 – National policy in a globalized world**


Available as an electronic book through UNT library

Instructor will answer students’ questions as an exam review

Final exams distributed in class

**Week 12 – April 8, 2019 – NO CLASS – Final examinations submitted to barrett.taylor@unt.edu no later than 5.00 pm**

Unit IV – Current issues in higher education policy
**Week 13 – April 15, 2019 – Student presentations I**

**Week 14 – April 22, 2019 – Student presentations II**

**Week 15 – April 29, 2019 – NO CLASS – Final papers submitted electronically to barrett.taylor@unt.edu no later than 5.00 pm.**