

**PSCI 4410**  
**Education Politics and Policy**  
**Spring 2026**

### **Class Meetings**

Tuesdays and Thursdays from 2:30 to 3:50pm in Wooten Hall 215.

### **Professor Contact**

**Name:** Professor Leslie K. Finger

**Pronouns:** she/her

**Email:** [leslie.finger@unt.edu](mailto:leslie.finger@unt.edu)

**Zoom Meeting Room:** <https://unt.zoom.us/j/5051071505>

**Office Location:** Wooten Hall 154

**Office Hours:** Fridays 10:30am-12:30pm in my office. **To attend office hours, sign up for a 15-minute slot** on [my Calendly page](https://calendly.com/leslie-finger/office-hours) (<https://calendly.com/leslie-finger/office-hours>) at least 12 hours ahead of time. I do not allow drop-ins. Write me directly to set up an appointment if you cannot make my office hours. In this case, we will likely meet on Zoom.

### **Course Website**

Most materials and communication will occur through the [course website](https://unt.instructure.com/courses/139748) (<https://unt.instructure.com/courses/139748>).

### **Course Description**

In this course, we will explore some of the major policy debates that have shaped the American school system. There have long been heated debates about what the education system should look like in the United States. For example, some believe there should be more integration between black and white students, others think there should be more school choice, while still others believe curriculum is far too race conscious, to name just a few major education policy debates. In each of these debates, there are active, committed interest groups made up of parents, teachers, civil rights activists and others on both sides that believe in the correctness and effectiveness of their proposed solution.

Through exploring these and other important education policy debates, students will learn how the American education system functions, how it has changed over time, and which actors have influenced it. They will gain a deep understanding of how various policies came to be, what their effects have been, and what the various stances on the policies are. While this is a political science course, it draws from history, political theory, public policy, and the economics of education. We will ask not just, “what” and “why” questions about the education system, but also “should” questions. Students will be encouraged to evaluate past and current policy debates and consider where they stand on these debates and how policies should change, if at all. While this is not a race and ethnic politics course, race and class will be important themes that will come up throughout the course. By providing an understanding of the education system, this course will also deepen students’ knowledge of U.S. politics and policy broadly.

There are no prerequisites for this course. This course is appropriate for any student with an interest in education, whether for personal or professional reasons.

## Course Objectives

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

1. Identify and explain how the education system in the U.S. functions and how it has changed over time.
2. Describe which actors and entities influence the system and in what ways.
3. Articulate some of the major current and past education policy debates.
4. Identify the role played by race and class in shaping the education system and education policy debates.
5. Analyze the education system and argue whether it should change and, if so, why and how.

## Office Hours

**I strongly recommend that you sign up for my office hours at least once during the semester,** though it is not mandatory. This will be a chance for us to get to know each other and check in about how the class is going. I also can answer any questions you have. Of course, free to meet with me more than that for any course or life-related issues. Please sign up on my Calendly (see “Office Hours” above). If those times do not work, please email me directly at [leslie.finger@unt.edu](mailto:leslie.finger@unt.edu) so we can find another time.

## Class Materials

You do not need to purchase any books for this class. All readings are available as pdfs on Canvas, via the [UNT library](https://library.unt.edu/) (<https://library.unt.edu/>), or via a link provided in the syllabus.

## Syllabus Revisions

I reserve the right to revise the syllabus as necessary. If this happens, it will be clearly communicated to you ahead of time.

## Course Technology

### Technology Requirements

During in-person class, we may use the internet, so you will need to have a laptop or another device that provides internet access. Outside of class, because readings are online, you will need the following technology in order to complete the course requirements:

- Computer
- Reliable internet access
- A word processing program that allows you to open and save documents as Microsoft Word files (all assignments will be submitted as Word files)
- [Canvas Technical Requirements](https://clear.unt.edu/supported-technologies/canvas/requirements) (<https://clear.unt.edu/supported-technologies/canvas/requirements>)

## Computer Skills & Digital Literacy

You will need to have the following skills in order to be able to access and use the course material and communicate with me:

- The ability to use Canvas
- The ability to use email
- The ability to use word processing programs

## Technical Assistance

Part of working in the online environment involves dealing with the inconveniences and frustration that can arise when technology breaks down or does not perform as expected. At UNT we have a Student Help Desk that you can contact for help with Canvas or other technology issues.

**UIT Help Desk:** [UIT Student Help Desk site](http://www.unt.edu/helpdesk/index.htm) (<http://www.unt.edu/helpdesk/index.htm>)

**Email:** [helpdesk@unt.edu](mailto:helpdesk@unt.edu)

**Phone:** 940-565-2324

**In Person:** Sage Hall, Room 130

**Walk-In Availability:** 8am-9pm

**Telephone Availability:**

- Sunday: noon-midnight
- Monday-Thursday: 8am-midnight
- Friday: 8am-8pm
- Saturday: 9am-5pm

**Laptop Checkout:** 8am-7pm

For additional support, visit [Canvas Technical Help](https://community.canvaslms.com/docs/DOC-10554-4212710328) (<https://community.canvaslms.com/docs/DOC-10554-4212710328>)

## Assignments

**Reading Posts:** Students will write weekly reading posts of no more than 1-3 paragraphs (no more than 300 words total). Each week, you must do at least one post, though you can skip two weeks. You should have 11 posts total. Posts should address the readings for class that day and put them in dialogue. Taken together, what are the readings saying? What questions or issues does this raise for you? **Submit your post by noon the day of class.** In other words, you could write about the readings for Tuesday, and you would submit your post by noon on Tuesday. You are welcome to do posts for both classes each week, but you are only required to do one. That said, **you are expected to complete the readings for both classes, even when you don't do a post.** I will read the posts regularly and use them to shape the discussion in class.

**Posts will start the week of January 19. No posts are required the last week of class.** Posts should answer the following questions: 1) What was the main argument or point of the assigned readings (or movies or podcasts) taken all together? 2) How do the readings challenge, expand upon, or connect to other topics from the course? 3) What new questions or issues do they raise? In addition, you may also answer the following two questions: How does the reading challenge what you thought beforehand? How does the reading connect to something from your life? However, these two questions should be *supplementary* to your answers to the first three questions.

You will be graded on the degree to which it is clear from the posts that you understood the reading, the degree to which your writing is clear and correct in terms of grammar and spelling, whether you answer the first three questions above thoughtfully, and whether you show that you understand the course concepts. You will receive a progress report partway through the semester with your grade on the posts in the weeks preceding.

**Papers:** You will have two papers where you will choose from two prompt options and write an essay of 3-5 pages, using evidence from the course materials to make your case. The strongest essays will have a clear thesis, draw amply from the course to support that thesis, and address the counter-argument. Submit your papers as Microsoft Word documents. This makes it easier for me to leave you comments. More detailed guidelines are posted on Canvas. **Paper 1 is due Friday, February 6 at 10pm and paper 2 is due Friday, March 6 at 10pm.**

**State Policy Project:** You will choose a state to focus on during the second half of the semester. After choosing your state, you will research the state's policies as part of your State Policy Information Sheet (**due Friday, April 10 at 10pm**). You will then come up with a policy recommendation for how the state could improve its education. You will present this argument in presentations the last week of class, and hand in a 4-6 page paper making the argument on **Tuesday, May 5 at 10pm**. More information about the State Policy Project will be provided later on.

## Course Requirements

<b>Assignments</b>	<b>Due Date</b>	<b>% of Final Grade</b>
Weekly Reading Posts	Every week	10%
In-Class Participation		15%
Plagiarism Recognition Assignment	Friday, Jan. 23 at 10pm	1%
Paper 1	Friday, February 6 at 10pm	15%
Paper 2	Friday, March 6 at 10pm	15%
State Policy Project		
State Selection Survey	Friday, March 20 at 10pm	1%
State Policy Information Sheet	Friday, April 10 at 10pm	13%
State Policy Presentation	During class on April 30 & May 2	5%
State Policy Paper	Tuesday, May 5 at 10pm	25%
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>100%</b>

## Grading Scale

Here are the point values and the letter grade corresponding to them. If you are borderline, I will round to the nearest ones place. This means if you get an 89.5, that would round to a 90 and you would get an A, but if you get an 89.4, that would round to an 89 and you will get a B:

A = 90-100%

B = 80-89%

C = 70-79%

D = 60-69%

F = 0-59%

## Course Policies

### Communication Expectations

I will communicate with the class primarily through Canvas announcements, so please be sure that you are getting Canvas notifications.

To communicate with me directly, use regular email rather than the Canvas email messaging system. You can write me on my UNT email ([leslie.finger@unt.edu](mailto:leslie.finger@unt.edu)). I will try to respond to all emails within a day or less. Don't hesitate to write me if you have a question about something.

When I communicate with you individually through email, I expect you to respond within 24 hours. I will offer you the same courtesy. It is inappropriate to ignore emails from your instructors, so please don't put me in the position of having to write you multiple times if I reach out about something.

If we meet on Zoom, I expect you to have your camera on (and I will as well). I find that this creates a more genuine interaction and helps me get to know you better.

### Class Participation

Your active participation is crucial to the success of the course. This means being an active listener during lectures, and an active listener and participant during both whole-class discussions and small-group activities.

**I expect you to come to class having done the reading.**

### Attendance Policy

Students are expected to attend the weekly class session in person. While attendance in person is required, this is not the case if you feel sick. Staying home due to sickness will not impact your grade, **but you must communicate with me that you will be absent for this reason.** If you do not communicate with me, or are absent for any other reason, the absence will be considered "unexcused" and will count against your participation grade. That said, I allow students **to have one excused absence for UNT student group special occasions (e.g., conferences, participating in a performance, playing in a game for a UNT team, etc.)** In that case, I need some kind of proof that this is what the absence is for.

Of course, there will be exceptions made for family emergencies or other kinds of serious situations. Please communicate with me if that's the case.

Note that ***missing class will impact your grade.*** In general, your participation grade will only be in the 90's if you have no unexcused absences or very few (like 1) AND you are an active participant in class. **Students with more than 2 unexcused absences will not receive a grade higher than 89 for their class participation.**

**Note also that missing more than 5 classes put you at risk for a participation grade in the 70's or below.**

### Laptops and Other Devices

You are permitted to have your laptop or tablet in class, but you should not be doing anything on it other than looking at readings or writing down answers to group activities. **When I lecture, I ask that you take any notes by hand.** This is because I find it distracting when students are typing or texting during class. Research shows that writing notes by hand improves retention anyway. ☺

Wearing headphones, airpods, etc. in class is NOT permitted, unless you have an ODA accommodation for it. Texting, typing when not asked to, and other distraction will count against your participation grade, *even if you otherwise participate in discussions.*

### Late Work

**If you need an extension on an assignment, please reach out to me ahead of time.** Generally, I will approve late work for university-approved absences and personal issues if you communicate the situation in advance. Otherwise, assignments should be on time and **late assignments without valid approved extensions will receive a zero.**

Of course, if you are having an unexpected emergency, that's another story. In that case, please communicate with me as soon as you can to explain the situation so we can work out accommodations.

If you are having computer or technology issues, you must call the Helpdesk before reaching out to me. The Helpdesk will issue a "remedy ticket number." Always have the Helpdesk fill out a remedy ticket and provide

that information to me if technological problems make it difficult to hand something in on time. I will only consider accepting late assignments due to technological issues if I can verify the legitimacy of the issue. See the section called “Technical Assistance” for the Helpdesk’s contact information.

#### **Extra Credit:**

There will be an extra credit opportunity related to the rate of class participation on the Student Perceptions of Teaching (SPOT) evaluation. If at least 75% of the class takes the SPOT evaluation, everybody will receive 2 points on their final paper grade.

#### **Academic Integrity (aka plagiarism, AI, etc.)**

All work turned in for this course must be your own original work. Such actions as plagiarizing by using a source without giving it appropriate credit, or using material written by somebody else or by generative AI/chatbots like ChatGPT and presenting it as your own, represent violations of academic integrity. This includes using a tool like Grammarly. See [UNT Policy 6.003](#). Use of any artificial intelligence is not authorized for completion of assignments in this course.

Academic integrity is defined in the UNT Policy on Student Standards for Academic Integrity: [UNT Policy 6.003](#). This policy indicates the following constitute violations of academic honesty: a student has another person/entity do the work of any substantive portion of a graded assignment for them, which includes purchasing work from a company, hiring a person or company to complete an assignment or exam, and/or using generative AI tools (such as ChatGPT) and others (for a list see [UNT Policy 6.003](#))

If you are caught using AI or otherwise cheating, you will get a zero on the assignment. A second offense will result in being reported to the university.

That said, it is okay to discuss paper ideas with other students and even proofread each other’s papers. But all ideas and writing must be your own.

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## **UNT Policies**

### **ADA Policy**

UNT 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 a student with an accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding one’s specific course needs. Students 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. For additional information see the [ODA website \(<https://disability.unt.edu/>\)](#).

### **Prohibition of Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation (Policy 16.004)**

The University of North Texas (UNT) prohibits discrimination and harassment because of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, or any other characteristic protected under applicable federal or state law in its application and admission processes; educational programs and activities; employment policies, procedures, and processes; and university facilities. The University takes active measures to prevent such conduct and investigates and takes remedial action when appropriate.

## Emergency Notification & 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.

## 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 student's 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. See UNT Policy 10.10, Records Management and Retention for additional information.

## 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. Visit UNT's [Code of Student Conduct](https://deanofstudents.unt.edu/conduct) (<https://deanofstudents.unt.edu/conduct>) to learn more.

## Access to Information - Eagle Connect

Students' access point for business and academic services at UNT is located at: [my.unt.edu](https://my.unt.edu). All official communication from the University will be delivered to a student's Eagle Connect account. For more information, please visit the website that explains Eagle Connect and how to forward e-mail [Eagle Connect](https://it.unt.edu/eagleconnect) (<https://it.unt.edu/eagleconnect>).

## Student Evaluation Administration Dates

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. Students will receive an email from "UNT SPOT Course Evaluations via IASystem Notification" ([no-reply@iasystem.org](mailto:no-reply@iasystem.org)) with the survey link and information about when the survey closes. 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](http://spot.unt.edu/) (<http://spot.unt.edu/>) or email [spot@unt.edu](mailto:spot@unt.edu).

## Sexual Assault Prevention

UNT is committed to providing a safe learning environment free of all forms of sexual misconduct, including sexual harassment, sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking. Federal laws (Title IX and the Violence Against Women Act) and UNT policies prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex, and therefore prohibit sexual misconduct. If you or someone you know is experiencing sexual harassment, relationship violence, stalking, and/or sexual assault, there are campus resources available to provide support and assistance. UNT's Survivor Advocates can assist a student who has been impacted by violence by filing protective orders, completing crime victim's compensation applications, contacting professors for absences related to an assault, working with housing to facilitate a room change where appropriate, and connecting students to other resources available both on and off campus. The Survivor Advocates can be reached at

[SurvivorAdvocate@unt.edu](mailto:SurvivorAdvocate@unt.edu) or by calling the Dean of Students Office at 940-565- 2648. Additionally, alleged sexual misconduct can be non-confidentially reported to the Title IX Coordinator at [oeo@unt.edu](mailto:oeo@unt.edu) or at (940) 565 2759.

## Academic Support & Student Services

### *Mental Health Support*

UNT provides mental health resources to students to help ensure there are numerous outlets to turn to that wholeheartedly care for and are there for students in need, regardless of the nature of an issue or its severity. Listed below are several resources on campus that can support your academic success and mental well-being:

- [Student Health and Wellness Center](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-health-and-wellness-center) (<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-health-and-wellness-center>)
- [Counseling and Testing Services](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services) (<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services>)
- [UNT Care Team](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/care) (<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/care>)
- [UNT Psychiatric Services](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-health-and-wellness-center/services/psychiatry) (<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-health-and-wellness-center/services/psychiatry>)
- [Individual Counseling](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services/services/individual-counseling) (<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services/services/individual-counseling>)

### *Additional Student Support Services*

- [Registrar](https://registrar.unt.edu/registration) (<https://registrar.unt.edu/registration>)
- [Financial Aid](https://financialaid.unt.edu/) (<https://financialaid.unt.edu/>)
- [Student Legal Services](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-legal-services) (<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-legal-services>)
- [Career Center](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/career-center) (<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/career-center>)
- [Multicultural Center](https://edo.unt.edu/multicultural-center) (<https://edo.unt.edu/multicultural-center>)
- [Counseling and Testing Services](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services) (<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services>)
- [Pride Alliance](https://edo.unt.edu/pridealliance) (<https://edo.unt.edu/pridealliance>)
- [UNT Food Pantry](https://deanofstudents.unt.edu/resources/food-pantry) (<https://deanofstudents.unt.edu/resources/food-pantry>)

### *Academic Support Services*

- [Academic Resource Center](https://clear.unt.edu/canvas/student-resources) (<https://clear.unt.edu/canvas/student-resources>)
- [Academic Success Center](https://success.unt.edu/asc) (<https://success.unt.edu/asc>)
- [UNT Libraries](https://library.unt.edu/) (<https://library.unt.edu/>)
- [Writing Lab](http://writingcenter.unt.edu/) (<http://writingcenter.unt.edu/>)

## Topics and Readings Module 1: Introduction

Tuesday, Jan. 13: Introduction

Thursday, Jan. 15: The Goals of Education

- Jennifer L. Hochschild and Nathan Scovronick. 2003. *The American Dream and the Public Schools*. Oxford University Press. Pages 1-27. (Available on Canvas)
- Optional but strongly encouraged:
  - David F. Labaree. 1997. “Public Goods, Private Goods: The American Struggle over Educational Goals.” *American Educational Research Journal*. 34(1): 39-81. (Available on Canvas)

Tuesday, Jan 20: The Formation of the Modern American School System

- Sara Dahill-Brown. 2019. *Education, Equity, and the States*. Harvard Education Press. Pages 53-78. (Available on Canvas)
- **Reading posts start this week!**

## Module 2: Desegregation in America's Schools

Thursday, Jan. 22: Desegregation and the Courts

- Justin Driver. 2018. *The Schoolhouse Gate: Public Education, the Supreme Court, and the Battle for the American Mind*. New York, NY: Penguin Random House. Chapter 5 (Pages 242-292). (Available on Canvas)

**Due Friday, Jan. 23 at 10pm:**

**Plagiarism Recognition Assignment (1% of grade)**

**(Upload a screenshot or pdf of your plagiarism certificate to Canvas that includes your name)**

Tuesday, Jan. 27: Factors Beyond the Courts

- Richard D. Kahlenberg. 2022. “Zoned Out in Texas: How One Mother Overcame Dallas’ Discriminatory Housing Laws.” *The Century Foundation*. <https://tcf.org/content/report/zoned-texas-one-mother-overcame-dallass-discriminatory-housing-laws/> Stop at the section called “Dallas’s Efforts to Combat Exclusion.”
- Listen to Episode 2 of *Nice White Parents* podcast, “I Still Believe in It.” <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/30/podcasts/nice-white-parents-serial-2.html?action=click&module=audio-series-bar&region=header&pgtype=Article>
- Optional:
  - Jason DeParle. 2018. “When Government Drew the Color Line.” *The New York Review of Books*. (Available on Canvas)

Thursday, Jan. 29: Housing and Causality

- Watch video “Why Randomize?” <https://youtu.be/Uxqw2Pgm7s8?feature=shared>

- Heather Schwartz. 2010. “Housing Policy is School Policy: Economically Integrative Housing Promotes Academic Success in Montgomery County, Maryland.” Century Foundation.  
<https://production-tcf.imgix.net/app/uploads/2020/03/01122003/tcf-Schwartz-2.pdf>

### Tuesday, Feb. 3: The Effects of Desegregation

- Jason Fletcher, Owen Thompson, and Garrett Anstreicher. 2022. “The Long-run Impacts of Court-Ordered Desegregation.” Centre for Economic Policy Research.  
<https://cepr.org/voxeu/columns/long-run-impacts-court-ordered-desegregation>
- R. Shep Melnick. 2020. “Desegregation, Then and Now.” *National Affairs*.  
<https://www.nationalaffairs.com/publications/detail/desegregation-then-and-now>
- Optional:
  - Steven Rivkin. 2016. “Desegregation Since the Coleman Report.” *Education Next*. 16(2).  
<https://www.educationnext.org/desegregation-since-the-coleman-report-racial-composition-student-learning/>

### Thursday, Feb. 5: Recent Developments

- **SKIM:** Halley Potter and Michelle Burris. 2020. “Here is what School Integration in America Looks Like Today.” The Century Foundation. <https://tcf.org/content/report/school-integration-america-looks-like-today/>
- You will be assigned to one of the following case studies. Be prepared to explain it:
  1. Baton Rouge, LA and district succession:
    - a. Watch “Separate and Unequal.” 2014. *Frontline*.  
<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/film/separate-and-unequal/>
    - b. Brentin Mock. 2022. “The Baton Rouge Secession Attempt that Could Defund the Police.” *Bloomberg*. <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-08-09/a-wealthy-suburb-s-failed-bid-to-secede-from-baton-rouge>
  2. Ferguson (Normandy), MO and inter-district open enrollment:
    - a. Listen to “The Problem We All Live With – Part One”  
<https://www.thisamericanlife.org/562/the-problem-we-all-live-with-part-one>
  3. Charlotte-Mecklenburg, VA and court-ordered busing:
    - a. Alexander Nazaryan. March 22, 2018. “School Segregation in America is as Bad Today as it Was in the 1960s.” *Newsweek*.  
<https://www.newsweek.com/2018/03/30/school-segregation-america-today-bad-1960-855256.html>
  4. Dallas, transformation schools, and housing policy:
    - a. Kate Rix. 2022. “Dallas parents flocking to schools that pull students from both rich and poor parts of town.” The Hechinger Report.  
<https://hechingerreport.org/dallas-parents-flocking-to-schools-that-pull-students-from-both-rich-and-poor-parts-of-town/>
    - b. Richard D. Kahlenberg. 2022. “Zoned Out in Texas: How One Mother Overcame Dallas’ Discriminatory Housing Laws.” The Century Foundation.  
<https://tcf.org/content/report/zoned-texas-one-mother-overcame-dallas-discriminatory-housing-laws/> Start at the section called “Dallas’s Efforts to Combat Exclusion”
  5. Wake County, NC and controlled choice:
    - a. Rachel M. Perera, Deven Carlson, Thurston Domina, James Carter III, Andrew McEachin, and Vitaly Radsky. 2023. “Can school choice support district-led efforts

to foster diverse schools?" Brookings. <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/can-school-choice-support-district-led-efforts-to-foster-diverse-schools/>

b. David J. Armor. 2019. "The Problems with Economic Integration and Controlled Choice." Cato Institute. <https://www.cato.org/policy-analysis/problems-economic-integration-controlled-choice>

**Due Friday, Feb. 6 at 10pm: Paper 1 due on Canvas**

Module 3: School Boards

Tuesday, Feb. 10: School Boards and Democracy

- William G. Howell. 2005. "Introduction." In William G. Howell, Ed. *Besieged: School Boards and the Future of Education Politics*. Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press. Introduction. Pages 1-15, 21-22 (Available on Canvas)

Thursday, Feb. 12: School Board Elections

- Max Eden. 2021. "Move School Board Elections On-Cycle to Restore Local Control." American Enterprise Institute. (Available on Canvas)
- **NOTE: I may change this reading:** Frederick M. Hess and David L. Leal. 2005. "School House Politics: Expenditures, Interests, and Competition in School Board Elections." In William G. Howell, Ed. *Besieged: School Boards and the Future of Education Politics*. Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press. (Available on Canvas)

Module 4: Teachers and Teacher Unions

Tuesday, Feb. 17: Who Wants To Be a Teacher?

- Matthew A. Kraft & Melissa Arnold Lyon. 2024. "The Rise and Fall of the Teaching Profession: Prestige, Interest, Preparation, and Satisfaction Over the Last Half Century." *American Educational Research Journal*. 16(6): 1192-1236. (Available on Canvas) **ADD TO CANVAS**

Thursday, Feb. 19: Teacher Unions and Collective Bargaining

- Richard D. Kahlenberg. 2006. "The History of Collective Bargaining Among Teachers." In Jane Hannaway & Andrew J. Rotherham, Eds. *Collective bargaining in education*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press, 7-25. (Available on Canvas)

Tuesday, Feb. 24: Is Teacher Union Power a Problem?

- Richard Kahlenberg and Jay P. Greene. 2011. "Debate: Unions and the Public Interest," *Education Next*. 12(1). <https://www.educationnext.org/unions-and-the-public-interest/>
- Terry M. Moe. 2006. "Union Power and the Education of Children." In Jane Hannaway & Andrew J. Rotherham, Eds. *Collective bargaining in education*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press, 229-256. (Available on Canvas)

- Optional:
  - Steven Brill. 2009. "The Rubber Room: The Battle Over New York City's Worst Teachers." *The New Yorker*. <http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2009/08/31/the-rubber-room>

Thursday, Feb. 26: Teachers and Race

- Listen to Malcolm Gladwell. 2017. "Miss Buchanan's Period of Adjustment." *Revisionist History Podcast*, Season 2, Episode 3. <https://www.pushkin.fm/episode/miss-buchanans-period-of-adjustment/>
- Seth Gershenson, Cassandra Hart, Joshua Hyman, Constance A. Lindsay, & Nicholas W. Papageorge. 2018. "The Long-Run Effects of Same-Race Teachers." Centre for Economic Policy Research. <https://cepr.org/voxeu/columns/long-run-effects-same-race-teachers>

## Module 5: Spending

Tuesday, Mar. 3: School Spending Policy and the Courts

- Justin Driver. 2018. *The Schoolhouse Gate: Public Education, the Supreme Court, and the Battle for the American Mind*. New York, NY: Penguin Random House. Pages 317-330. (Available on Canvas)
- Matthew M. Chingos and Kristin Blagg. 2017. "Do Poor Kids Get Their Fair Share of School Funding?" Washington, DC: Urban Institute. (Available on Canvas)

Thursday, Mar. 5: Does Spending Matter?

- Paul Peterson. 2010. *Saving Schools: From Horace Mann to Virtual Learning*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. Chapter 7 (Pages 131-136) (Available on Canvas)
- C. Kirabo Jackson, Cora Wigger, and Heyu Xiong. 2020. "The Costs of Cutting School Spending: Lessons from the Great Recession." *Education Next*. 20(4). <https://www.educationnext.org/costs-cutting-school-spending-lessons-from-great-recession/>
- Optional:
  - Carmel Martin et al. 2018. "A Quality Approach to School Funding: Lessons Learned from School Finance Litigation." Center for American Progress. <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/quality-approach-school-funding/>

**Due Friday, March 6 at 10pm: Paper 2 due on Canvas**

Tuesday, Mar. 10: SPRING BREAK! NO CLASS.

Thursday, Mar. 12: SPRING BREAK! NO CLASS.

## Module 6: Accountability

Tuesday, Mar. 17: The History of Accountability

- Thomas S. Dee. 2020. "Learning from the Past: School Accountability Before ESSA." Hoover Education Success Initiative. Stanford University. (Available on Canvas)
- Emma Brown. 2017. "What Should America Do about its Worst Public Schools?" *Washington Post*. (Available on Canvas)

Thursday, Mar. 19: How Valid is Standardized Testing?

- Dan Goldhaber & Umut Özek. 2019. "How Much Should We Rely on Student Test Achievement as a Measure of Success?" *Educational Researcher*. 48(7): 479-483. (Access through UNT library)
- Jack Schneider. 2017. *Beyond Test Scores: A Better Way to Measure School Quality*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. Introduction and Chapter 1 (Pages 1-44). (Available on Canvas)

**Due Friday, March 20 at 10pm: Fill out state selection survey**

Tuesday, March 24: The Common Core

- Ashley Jochim & Patrick McGuinn. 2016. "The Politics of the Common Core Assessments." *Education Next*. 16(4): 44-52. <https://www.educationnext.org/the-politics-of-common-core-assessments-parcc-smarter-balanced/>
- Tom Loveless. 2021. "Why Common Core Failed." Brookings. <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/why-common-core FAILED/>
- Optional:
  - David Whitman. 2015. "The Surprising Roots of the Common Core: How Conservatives Gave Rise to 'Obamacore.'" Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution. (Available on Canvas)

Thursday, March 26: The Ideology of the Punitive Education State

- Daniel Moak. 2022. *From the New Deal to the War on Schools: Race, Inequality, and the Rise of the Punitive Education State*. University of North Carolina Press. "Introduction" (pages 1-16). (Available on Canvas and through UNT Library)

## Module 7: Curriculum Battles

Tuesday, March 31: Textbooks

- Emily Schmidt. 2022. "Required Reading: How Textbook Adoption in 3 States Influences the Nation's K-12 Population." APM Research Lab. <https://www.apmresearchlab.org/10x-textbook-adoption#:~:text=The%20process%20of%20textbook%20adoption,i.e.%20state%20board%20of%20education>
- Dana Jepson. 2002. "Fact or Fiction: The SBOE's Role in Textbook Adoption." House Research Organization. Texas House of Representatives. <https://hro.house.texas.gov/focus/textbook.pdf>
- Optional:

- Chester E. Finn & Diane Ravitch. 2004. *The Mad, Mad World of Textbook Adoption*. Thomas B. Fordham Institute. Pages 1-34. (Available on Canvas)

#### Thursday, Apr. 2: Ethnic Studies and Critical Race Theory

- Watch online through UNT library: Ari Luis Palos & Eren Isabel McGinnis. 2012. *Precious Knowledge*. Independent Lens Films.
- Jonathan Zimmerman. 2022. *Whose America? Culture Wars in the Public Schools*. University of Chicago Press. Conclusion (Pages 237-257). (Available on Canvas)
- Optional:
  - Julie Depenbrock. 2017. “Ethnic Studies: A Movement Born of a Ban.” *NPR*. <https://www.npr.org/sections/ed/2017/08/13/541814668/ethnic-studies-a-movement-born-of-a-ban#:~:text=In%20Jr%20Arimboanga's%20ninth%2Dgrade,The%20class%20is%20ethnic%20studies.>
  - Miriam Pawel. 2021. “Ethnic Studies in California: An Unsteady Jump From College Campuses to K-12 Classrooms.” *Education Next*. 21(3): 24-31. <https://www.educationnext.org/ethnic-studies-california-unsteady-jump-from-college-campuses-to-k-12-classrooms/>
  - For additional background on CRT, read: Fortin, Jacey. 2021. “What Is Critical Race Theory? A Brief History Explained – The New York Times.” *The New York Times* <https://www.nytimes.com/article/what-is-critical-race-theory.html> and available on Canvas
  - Benjamin Wallace-Wells. 2021. “How a Conservative Activist Invented the Conflict over Critical Race Theory.” *The New Yorker*. <https://www.newyorker.com/news/annals-of-inquiry/how-a-conservative-activist-invented-the-conflict-over-critical-race-theory>

#### Tuesday, Apr. 7: Book Bans

- Marcelo S.O. Goncalves, Isabelle Langrock, Jack LaViolette, & Katie Spoon. 2024. “Book Bans in Political Context: Evidence from US Schools.” *PNAS Nexus*. 3(6): 1-9. <https://academic.oup.com/pnasnexus/article/3/6/pgae197/7689238>
- Robert Kim. 2022. Banning Books: Unlawful Censorship, or Within a School’s Discretion?” *Phi Delta Kappan*. 103(7): 62-64. <https://kappanonline.org/banning-books-unlawful-censorship-discretion-kim/>

#### Thursday, Apr. 9: NO CLASS – PROFESSOR FINGER AWAY AT A CONFERENCE

#### **Due Friday, April 10 at 10pm: State Policy Information Sheet**

#### Tuesday, April 14: The Impact of Curriculum Battles

- Vladimir Kogan. 2025. "How Adult Culture Wars Affect Student Learning." *EducationNext*. 25(4) <https://www.educationnext.org/how-adult-culture-wars-affect-student-learning-no-adult-left-behind-excerpt/>
- David Campbell. 2008. "Voice in the Classroom: How an Open Classroom Climate Fosters Political Engagement Among Adolescents." *Political Behavior*. 30: 437-454. (Available on Canvas). **Focus on the Theory and Hypotheses, Results, and Conclusion sections.**

## Module 8: School Choice

### Thursday, April 16: Private School Choice

- Terry M. Moe. 2001. *Schools, Vouchers, and the American Public*. Washington, D.C: Brookings Institution Press. Pages 15-24. (Available on Canvas)
- David DeMatthews. Torri D. Hart, and David S. Knight. 2025. "3 waves of school vouchers: A history of expansion and exclusion." Brookings. <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/3-waves-of-school-vouchers-a-history-of-expansion-and-exclusion/>
- John E. Chubb & Terry M. Moe. 1990. "America's Public Schools: Choice is a Panacea." *The Brookings Review*. 8(3): 4-12. (Available on Canvas)

### Tuesday, April 21: Charter Schools

- Philip M. Gleason. 2019. "Let the Search Continue: Charter Schools and the Public Interest." *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*. 38(4): 1054-1062. (Available on Canvas)
- Helen Ladd. 2019. "How Charter Schools Threaten the Public Interest." *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*. 38(4): 1063-1071. (Available on Canvas)
- Dale Rusakoff. 2019. "The Secret to Success Academy's Top-Notch Test Scores." *The New York Times*. (Available on Canvas)

### Thursday, April 23: Homeschooling

- Heath Brown. 2021. *Homeschooling the Right: How Conservative Education Activism Erodes the State*. New York: Columbia University Press. Excerpts from the introduction and Chapters 2 and 3. (**UPDATE EXCERPT** Pages 1-17, 49-54, 61-74, 93-97) (Available on Canvas and online through UNT library)

## Module 9: Conclusion

### Tuesday, April 28: State Policy Presentations

### Thursday, April 30: State Policy Presentations

**Due Tuesday, May 5 at 10pm: State Policy Paper due on Canvas**

