Education 764: Public Policy and Postsecondary Education (Winter 2005)

Center for the Study of Higher and Postsecondary Education
University of Michigan School of Education

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Class: Tuesdays, 1-4pm, 2320 SEB

Course Description:

Intended primarily for graduate students in higher education and public policy, this course will enable students to describe and interrogate contemporary public policy issues confronting American higher education. Selected policy issues will be probed in depth, drawing upon scholarly sources as well as public reports.

This course is cross-listed as Public Policy 732 and Political Science 734.

Objectives:

The primary aim of the seminar is to increase student understanding of contemporary public policy issues in higher education and the processes of policy advocacy and adoption. Students will gain a comprehension of the interaction and tension between and among higher education leaders, the media, and state and federal policymakers.

Upon completion of the seminar, students will be able to:

1. Understand some basic theories of policy making in the United States.
2. Understand the methods used to study policy, and to be a literate reader of policy analysis papers in higher education.
3. Articulate the political processes that constrain and facilitate policymaking.
4. Discuss the difficulties of policy implementation and various strategies for avoiding pitfalls.
5. Demonstrate expertise in at least one contemporary policy issue in higher education.

Course Requirements:

Class Participation. As in any doctoral course, students and faculty need to be co-owners of the class and collectively responsible for its quality and outcomes. I will take responsibility for the overall design and direction of the course and for the academic requirements, but the course will be facilitated as a seminar or inquiry in which all
participants hold themselves and each other accountable for a strong and rich intellectual enterprise and dialogue.

Your attendance is essential to a successful collective experience. The format of the class requires that each person come prepared to take an active role in class. This means not only having read the assigned materials, but also being prepared to discuss the salient issues, questions, and problems emerging from the readings, to utilize your knowledge and professional experiences in addressing the readings and any class activities, case problems, etc. Class participation also involves opening oneself to challenge and to be challenged by the ideas and topics of the session. Please notify me by email in advance if you are unable to attend any class session. Students who miss four or more class sessions must withdraw from the course. The quality of your class participation is worth 20% of your final grade.

Memos. Each week, students will write a 1-2 page memo (single-spaced) on the readings for the week. This is an opportunity for students to create a dialogue with the readings in a given week, and the responses will be discussed in class. Memos should be emailed to the instructor and the class by 11pm on the Sunday night prior to class. The memos will be graded as a portfolio at the end of the course. (20% of grade).

Research Paper. The intent of this assignment is to give you a chance to prepare your own analysis of a policy issue in postsecondary education. There are a number of possibilities of this paper, including a policy evaluation, research project, literature review, case study, or media analysis. This paper will be approximately 25 pages of text (double-spaced, not including appendices or bibliography). I will provide you with feedback throughout the process.

1. A brief description of the topic will be due in class on **February 15**.
2. Students should seek out the instructor as needed through the paper-writing process.
3. The final paper will be due by **March 29th**. Copies will be provided in class for all students in the course to read prior to the presentations (50% of grade).

Presentation. Each student will make a presentation to the class about the policy paper they have written and the major analytical issues that the paper addresses. These will be approximately 15 minutes each, with 15 minutes for questions, similar to an academic conference. (10% of grade)

Course Text and Reader:


All of the articles are on **electronic reserve**.
Course Schedule

Part I: Understanding Policy

January 11: Introduction to the Course

January 18: Introduction to Policy Issues


January 25: Understanding Governance & Political Context

Special Guest: Cynthia Wilbanks


February 1: Political Context & Policymaking

Stone, Policy Paradox, whole book.
WEEK OFF – MIKE IS DOING FIELDWORK

Part II: Analyzing Policy Issues in Higher Education

February 15: Faculty Tenure


February 22: Remedial Education


WEEK OFF – SPRING BREAK

March 8: College Admissions


**March 15: College Access**


**March 22: Merit Scholarships**

Campbell, Don. 2003, Summer. “*HOPE Springs Eternal.*” *National CrossTalk*.


**March 29: Higher Education Reauthorization: Controlling Costs**


**April 5: Emerging Developments: Policy and the Social Contract**


Student papers as assigned.

**WEEK OFF – AERA**

**April 19: Final Class Presentations**

Revised: January 9, 2005