

EPS 765: ISSUES IN EDUCATIONAL POLICY ANALYSIS

Fall 2017

Tuesdays 9am–12pm

Room 345 Education Building

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Office hours:

Tuesdays at 7:45-8:45am and 12:00-1:00pm in the Education Building Commons

Course Description

This graduate-level seminar is an introduction to education policy and policy analysis. In this course, we explore: (1) the purposes of education/policy; (2) theoretical and conceptual approaches to understanding education and analyzing policy; (3) contemporary models of education policy, and (4) the act of policy analysis. While focused on K-12 education policy in the United States, the course is organized to examine key ideas useful for thinking about the history of education, higher education and comparative international education.

The course proceeds in three parts. Part I sets a foundation for the examination of education policy, by considering normative values raised in education and scrutinizing the meaning of these, introducing students to a variety of “ways of seeing” or conceptualizing education policy, and examining the common sense notion that US public schools are failing. In Part II, we consider six models of educational reform using research on K-12 education in the US. We examine the implicit and explicit causal theories underlying each models and empirical evidence of policy outcomes, including academic achievement and constitutive effects. Part III of the course turns a critical eye to policy analysis itself. We investigate the disconnect between policy/policy analysis and practice, consider the political economy of policy analysis, and debate issues of knowledge, authority, ethics and in policy analysis. These weeks, along with the mid-term and final paper, are intended to help students further reflect on what it means to be a policy analyst and what kind of policy analysis they might engage in as part of their practice.

Learning Outcomes

The course is guided by the following objectives:

- You will be able to critically reflect on the normative values, goals, and purposes of education that guide and/or elude education policy
- You will be able to use competing theories and concepts to analyze education policy and identify the strengths and weaknesses of these approaches
- You will be knowledgeable about the policy design, assumptions, and outcomes of contemporary models of education policy
- You will develop your skills in thinking and writing about education policy.

Get the Most Out of This Class

Essential to learning is being introduced to and contemplating new ideas and ways of thinking. With this in mind, this course emphasizes reading, written work and classroom discussion. All three are essential to developing our individual and collective understanding of the course content and to being engaged scholars. To get the most out of class and contribute to the learning of others, you will:

- Do the readings and come prepared to discuss these.
- Actively engage in class discussion and activities.
- Take time in class and outside of class to hone your ideas and develop your writing.

Communicate with the Professor

If you have any particular learning needs or strategies, please come talk with me during the first three weeks of the semester to discuss how we can create an effective learning environment for you. Even if you don't feel like you have any "needs," please come talk to me at least once during the semester.

Learning accommodations – To request academic accommodations due to a disability, contact the UW Madison McBurney Disability Resource Center (263-2741). Please present me with a letter of confirmation from the McBurney Center no later than the third week of the semester. Additional information is available at <http://www.mcburney.wisc.edu/>

Religious observances – Students who miss course activities to participate in religious activities will be allowed to make up missed work, provided that they inform me of such obligations (via email) during the first two weeks of the semester.

Assignments

Learning and being in a community of engaged scholars means entering into conversations that have already begun. Writing is one way we do this, building on or speaking back to the writing and ideas that have come before us. When you draw on the work of others, please be careful to correctly represent that work and to attribute it to the appropriate sources. If you have questions about how to do this, please consult the American Psychological Association's *Publication Manual*. Parts of this document are available online or you may find it in the library or bookstore. I also encourage you to consult with me or the campus Writing Center (<http://www.writing.wisc.edu/>) about these issues or any other writing concerns you may have.

Due Dates for Assignments	
(Your choice)	Three reading reflections
Tuesday, Sept 19	Propose one or two policies for your policy brief
Tuesday, Oct 17	Bring outline or draft of your mid-term paper
Sunday, October 22	Mid-term due: "Ways of Seeing" Midterm Paper due
Tuesday, Dec 5	Bring draft of your policy brief
Tuesday, Dec 19	Final policy brief due

Over the course of the semester, students will complete the following assignments:

Reading Reflections

You will write **3 reflection papers (1-1.5 single-spaced pages each)**. These reflections are intended to help you explore more deeply readings of interest to you, enhance the quality of our class discussions, and allow me to gauge student understanding. You choose which weeks you will write, but **one must be done in Part III of the class**. The reflections should thoughtfully and critically engage with the readings. Start with a concise summary of the main arguments of the reading(s) you will reflect upon (approximately 3 sentences per reading). Then, focus on developing one or two ideas that you would like to discuss further. You might closely examine a key concept, compare texts, make connections between a reading and personal experience or current events, or raise and explain a question in depth. Use quotes and page numbers to ground your reflection in the readings.

Reflections are due in the course dropbox by 3pm on the Monday before the class for which the readings were assigned. These will not be given individual letter grades.

Mid-term Paper: Ways of Seeing Paper

The purpose of this mid-term assignment is help you better understand an education policy issue of interest to you and different theoretical/conceptual perspectives on educational policy.

Imagine that in honor of David Tyack's (1976) article "Ways of seeing: An essay on the history of compulsory schooling," which we are reading in class, the *Harvard Educational Review* has decided to publish a special issue of their journal. With Tyack's article as inspiration, use two different "ways of seeing" introduced in the class to write a concise **6-7 page (double-spaced, 12 point font)** submission to the special issue. **The paper is due in the course dropbox by midnight on Sunday, October 22nd.**

Your submission should clearly, concisely, and accurately (1) describe a specific policy that has been adopted, (2) explain the main tenets of two different "ways of seeing," (3) analyze the policy or practice from the perspective of each "way of seeing," and (4) draw some conclusions about what is "seen" and what is missed from each perspective and/or what we learn about the policy or practice you are examining. This is not a research paper, but you must ground your submission in scholarly work, including texts we have read in this class.

Final Paper: Policy Brief for Education

The final product for the class gives you an opportunity to synthesize key ideas and skills in the course, write a policy brief, and think critically and creatively about the direction of education policy in Wisconsin (or a site of your choice).

The State of Wisconsin is currently at an educational crossroads. While ACT scores are some of the highest in the country and almost 90% of schools were rated as meeting or exceeding expectations on the state report card, NAEP scores for African Americans are among the lowest in the country and cuts to education are some of the largest in the nation at a time when student poverty and educational expectations are both growing. Recent policy, legislation and budgeting has addressed charters and vouchers, standards and accountability, teacher evaluation, and school funding. What should we be doing to strengthen or improve education in Wisconsin?

In a **8-10 page (single-spaced, 12 point font) policy brief**, that draws on course materials and additional research on the state of education in Wisconsin and policies you believe are promising, you will address questions that organize this course and are central to policy analysis: What is/are problems? What goals or values do we have for schooling, education, or young people? What initiative/s might address these goals (e.g. improve educational experiences and outcomes)? What is the evidence? And, what should be done?

Choose your audience: local policymakers, educational activists, etc.. Local legislators—a traditional audience for policy analysis—are very busy, but are looking for good ideas backed by well-informed analysis. Alternatively, you might decide that your brief should go to educational activists like community groups, parents, or others, who—though not typically conceived of as an audience for policy analysis—might use it to inform their work, organize their efforts, and push for the kinds of educational change not typically broached in formal policy channels.

Your proposal must be clear, concise, thorough (provide evidence and address arguments for and against the proposed course of action) and accurate (acknowledge what you do not know). This paper should be based on your synthesis of existing research and policy texts (not primarily a collection of new data, though that could play a part). The goal is to inform but also argue for a particular course of action. This is an opportunity to improve the education and flourishing for thousands of school children across the State of Wisconsin, but the potential to do so depends, in part, upon a thoughtful, well researched, politically astute, and convincingly argued brief. **The paper is due in the course drop box by midnight on Tuesday, December 19th.**

*If you choose to draw on your paper for preparing a 1-2 page policy brief for the Scholars Strategy Network, it will replace one of your three reflection papers. The brief also will be due on Tuesday, December 19th.

We will discuss this assignment and potential research topics in greater depth in class.

Grading

The grade you earn in this class will be based on the quality of your class participation and written assignments.

Class participation and attendance	= 20%
Reading reflections	= 20%
Ways of Seeing Paper	= 20%
Policy Brief	= 40%

Grades (A-F) will be calculated on the following basis:

A	= 93-100%
AB	= 88-92%
B	= 83-87%
BC	= 78-82%
C	= 70-77%
D	= 60-69%
F	= 0-59%

Course Schedule

*Schedule subject to change
at instructor's discretion

PART I: FOUNDATIONS

Week 1 (9/12): Introduction

*No assigned readings.

Week 2 (9/19): What are the purposes of education?

* *Bring in a one page description of 1-2 policies on which you would like to focus your final policy brief. Bring in two copies.*

Labaree, D. (1997). Public goods, private goods: The American struggle over educational goals, *American Educational Research Journal* 34(1), 39-81.

Coleman, J. (1968). The concept of equality of educational opportunity. *Harvard Educational Review*, 38(1), 7-22.

Freire, P. (1974). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. (Rev.) New York: Continnum. (Chapter 2, pp. 52-67).

“History of the Wisconsin Idea” (2012). Access at: <http://wisconsinidea.wisc.edu/history-of-the-wisconsin-idea/>

Week 3 (9/26) – Conceptualizing Education Policy, I

Anyon, J. (2005). What ‘counts’ as educational policy? Notes toward a new paradigm, *Harvard Educational Review*, 75(1), 65-88.

Stone, D. (2002). *Policy as Paradox: The Art of Political Decision Making*. Revised edition. (Introduction, pp. 1-14).

Tyack, D. B. (1976). Ways of seeing: An essay on the history of compulsory schooling. *Harvard Educational Review*, 46(3), 355-389.

Week 4 (10/3) – Conceptualizing Education Policy, II

Lipman, P. (2011). *The new political economy of urban education: Neoliberalism, race and the right to the city*. New York: Routledge. (Chapters 1 & 2, pp. 1-44).

Gillborn, D. (2005). Education policy as an act of white supremacy: whiteness, critical race theory and education reform, *Journal of Education Policy*, 20(4), pp 485-505.

Sutton, M., & Levinson, B. A. (Eds.). (2001). Introduction. *Policy as practice: Toward a comparative sociocultural analysis of educational policy* (Vol. 1). Greenwood Publishing Group. (pp. 1-22).

Recommended:

Ball, S. J. (1993). What is policy? Texts, trajectories, and toolboxes. *Discourse*, 13(2), 10–17.

Koyama, J. P., & Varenne, H. (2012). Assembling and Disassembling Policy as Productive Play. *Educational Researcher*, 41(5), 157-162.

Week 5 (10/10): Problem Definition and the Achievement Gap

Stone, D. (2002). *Policy as paradox: The art of political decision making*. Revised edition. Everyone will read pp. 133-135, plus an additional chapter (symbols, numbers, causes) to be assigned in class.

Rothstein, R. (2004). Social class, student achievement, and the black-white achievement gap. *Class and schools: Using social, economic, and educational reform to close the black-white achievement gap*. Washington, DC: Economic Policy Institute. (Chapter 1, pp. 1-60).

Ladson-Billings, G. (2006). From achievement gap to the education debt: Understanding achievement in U.S. schools,” *Educational Researcher*, 35(7), 3-12.

Hess, F. M. (2011). Our achievement-gap mania. *National Affairs*, 9, 113-129.

Recommended:

Gutiérrez, R. (2008). A “gap-gazing” fetish in mathematics education? Problematizing research on the achievement gap. *Journal for Research in Mathematics Education*, 357-364.

PART II: MODELS OF EDUCATION POLICY

Week 6 (10/17): Policy Models & State-Centered Model (Desegregation)

* *Come to class with an outline of your argument for your midterm paper.*

Hochschild, J. & Scovronick, N. (2003). Desegregation. *The American dream and the public schools*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. (pp. 28-51).

Ladson-Billings, G. (2004). Landing on the wrong note: The price we paid for Brown. *Educational Researcher*, 3-13.

Wells, A.S. (2014). *Seeing past the “colorblind” myth: Why education policymakers should address racial and ethnic inequality and support culturally diverse schools*. Boulder, CO: National Education Policy Center. Available from

<http://nepc.colorado.edu/publication/seeing-past-the-colorblind-myth> [Executive Summary, and pp.1-7]

Recommended:

Glass, I. (2015) Episode 562 of This American Life: “The problem we all live with”. Available: <https://www.thisamericanlife.org/radio-archives/episode/562/the-problem-we-all-live-with>

Week 7 (10/24): Rationalizing Schools (Standards, Testing, & Accountability)

**Mid-term paper due in course dropbox by Sunday, October 22 at midnight.*

Smith, M. S., & O'Day, J. (1991). *Putting the pieces together: Systemic school reform* (CPRE Policy Brief, RB-06-4/91). New Brunswick, NJ: Consortium for Policy Research in Education.

Committee on Incentives and Test-based Accountability in Public Education (2011). *Incentives and test-based accountability in education*. Hout, M. & Elliot, S.W. (Eds.). Washington, DC: National Academies Press. [Executive Summary and chapter TBA]

Booher-Jennings, J. (2005). Below the bubble: “Educational triage” and the Texas accountability system. *American Educational Research Journal*, 42, 231-268.

Leonardo, Z. (2007). The war on schools: NCLB, nation creation, and the educational construction of whiteness. *Race Ethnicity & Education*, 10(3), 261-278.

Week 8 (10/31): The Market Model (Privatization, Competition, & Choice)

Chubb & Moe (1990). Choice Is a Panacea. In *Brookings Review*, Summer, p. 4-12.

Jabbar, H. (2015). “Every kid is like money”: Market-like Competition and School Leader Strategies in New Orleans. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*. Early online edition. DOI: 10.3102/0162373715577447

Scott, J. & Wells, A.S. (2013). A more perfect union: Reconciling school choice policy with equality of opportunity goals. In Carter, P. L., & Welner, K. G. (Eds.). *Closing the opportunity gap: what America must do to give every child an even chance*. Oxford University Press. (pp.123-140).

Review the executive summaries of the following reports:

- Flanders, W. (2017). *Apples to apples: The definitive look at school test scores in Milwaukee and Wisconsin*. Milwaukee, WI: Wisconsin Institute for Law and Liberty. Available from: <http://www.will-law.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/apples.pdf>
- Gleason, P., Clark, M., Tuttle, C. C., and Dwoyer, E. (2010). *The evaluation of*

charter school impacts: Final report (NCEE 2010-4029). Washington, DC: National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education.

Week 9: (11/7) – Teacher Professionalization

Darling-Hammond, L. (2010). Doing what matters most: Developing competent teaching. *The flat world and education*. New York: Teachers College Press. (Chapter 7, pp. 194-233).

Milner, H.R. (2013). *Policy reforms and de-professionalization of teaching*. Boulder, CO: National Education Policy Center. Available from <http://nepc.colorado.edu/publication/policy-reforms-deprofessionalization>.

Good, A., Barocas, S.F., Chavez-Moreno, L., Feldman, R., & C. Canela. (2017). A Seat at the Table: How the Work of Teaching Impacts Teachers as Policy Agents. *Peabody Journal of Education*, 92(4). Available from <http://www.tandfonline.com/eprint/eijd2uAER9nDmqKEfQgI/full>

Week 10: (11/14) – Democratic or Community Control

- * *Come prepared to represent the person/group profiled in the chapter you are assigned.*
- * *Bring an annotated bibliography of at least eight references for your final project.*

Perlstein, D. (2004). *Justice, justice: School politics and the eclipse of white liberalism*. New York: Peter Lang. (Everyone will read chapter 1, and you will be assigned to read chapters 2, 6, 8, or 9).

Recommended:

Designs for Change. (2012). Chicago's democratically-led elementary schools far outperform Chicago's "Turnaround Schools." Chicago: Designs for Change.

Oakes, J. et al. (2017). *Community schools: An Evidence-based strategy for equitable school improvement*. Boulder, CO: National Education Policy Center. Available from: <http://nepc.colorado.edu/publication/equitable-community-schools>

Trujillo, T. & Rénee, M. (2012). *Democratic school turnarounds: Pursuing equity and learning from evidence*. Boulder, CO: National Education Policy Center. Available from <http://nepc.colorado.edu/publication/democratic-school-turnarounds>.

PART III: DILEMMAS AND COMPLEXITIES OF POLICY ANALYSIS

Week 11: (11/21) – The Evidence, Research, and Local Education Policy Making

Coburn, C. E., Toure, J., & Yamashita, M. (2009). Evidence, interpretation, and persuasion: Instructional decision making in the district central office. *Teachers College Record*, 111(4), 1115-1161.

Henig, J. (2009). The *New York Times*/AFT charter school controversy. *Spin cycle: How research is used in policy debates: The case of charter schools*. Washington, DC: Russell Sage Foundation. (pp. 1-14).

Recommended:

Weiss, C. & Bucuvalas, M. (1980). Chapter 9: Reports of actual use of research. In *Social science research and decision making*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Week 12 (11/28) – The Stubborn Continuity of Classroom Practice

Tyack, D. & Cuban, L. (1995) *Tinkering toward utopia: A century of public school reform*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. (pp. 40-109, and pp.134-145).

Diamond, J. B. (2007). Where the rubber meets the road: Rethinking the connection between high-stakes testing policy and classroom instruction. *Sociology of Education*, 80(4): 285-313.

Week 13 (12/5): Policy Brief Workshop

* *Bring two copies of your draft brief to share with your classmates.*

Bardach, E. (2012). Introduction and Part I. *A practical guide for policy analysis: The eightfold path to more effective problem solving. Fourth edition*. Los Angeles: Sage. (xv-16).

Week 14 (12/12): Rethinking Policy Analysis: Policy Knowledge & Political Economy

Apple, M. W. (2006). *Educating the "right" way: Markets, standards, God, and inequality*. New York: Routledge. [Excerpts on the managerial and professional new middle class]

Young, M. (1999). Multifocal educational policy research: Toward a method for enhancing traditional educational policy studies. *American Educational Research Journal*, 36, 677-714.

Dyrness, A. (2011). Participatory research and the politics of change, *Mothers united: An immigrant struggle for socially just education*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, (pp. 199-221).

Dumas, M.J., & Anderson, G. (2014). Qualitative research as policy knowledge: Framing policy problems and transforming education from the ground up. *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, 22 (11). Available from: <http://dx.doi.org/10.14507/epaa.v22n11.2014>

