

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
College of Education – Department of Educational Organization and Leadership

EOL 561 — Education Politics and Policy
Spring 2009

Weekend format:

Fridays 6-9:50pm, Saturdays 9am-4:50pm (Jan 23-4, Feb. 20-1, March 13-4, May 1-2)

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OVERVIEW

Catalog Course Description

EOL 561 Examines the legislative and political processes in the formulation of current federal and state educational policies, together with the evaluation of policy and the formulation of policy alternatives. Prerequisite: EOL 548.

Objectives

This course helps students develop the critical skills necessary for understanding the political and policymaking processes in K-12 education, particularly at the state and national levels. More specifically, students will

- 1) learn about different approaches to policymaking in education, and different analytical frames for understanding education policies;
- 2) consider various perspectives for analyzing political consideration regarding education and education policymaking;
- 3) develop critical techniques needed to evaluate research supporting or challenging particular policies.

Course Materials

Feinberg, W., & Lubienski, C. (2008). *School Choice Policies and Outcomes: Empirical and Philosophical Perspectives*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Gladwell, M. (2002). *The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference*. Boston: Back Bay Books.

Henig, J.R. (2007). *Spin Cycle: How Research Is Used in Policy Debates — The Case of Charter Schools*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Kaestle, C.F., & Lodewick, A.E. (Eds.). (2007). *To Educate a Nation: Federal and National Strategies of School Reform*. Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas.

Kingdon, J. W. (2003). *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies*. New York: Longman.

Rothstein, R. (2004). *Class and Schools: Using Social, Economic, and Educational Reform to Close the Black–White Achievement Gap*. Washington, DC & New York: Economic Policy Institute & Teachers College.

Walberg, H. J., & Bast, J. L. (2003). *Education and Capitalism: How Overcoming Our Fear of Markets and Economies Can Improve America’s Schools*. Stanford: Hoover Inst. (free download at <http://www.hoover.org/publications/books/2995211.html>).

RECOMMENDED:

Bracey, G.W. (2006). *Reading Educational Research: How To Avoid Getting Statistically Snookered*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

NOTE: See also “Additional Resources” below.

CLASS NOTES

- 1) This is a discussion-oriented course, the success of which depends upon the free-flow of ideas. All students are encouraged to participate in the conversation, and individual students will be asked to lead discussion on particular topics. All members of the seminar need to show respect for other people in the class, and their ideas. Also, please remove all distractions such as cell phones, wireless laptops, etc.
- 2) All reading and written assignments must be completed on time. In the event of any tragic and unavoidable circumstances, I will try to make accommodations if I am notified *in advance* of class. Otherwise, grades will be lowered for assignments turned in after they are due.
- 3) Students should be familiar with the University’s policies on academic dishonesty, and avoid any appearance of such. See http://www.admin.uiuc.edu/policy/code/article_1/a1_1-402.html — the University of Illinois “Student Code” — especially Part 4 on “Academic Integrity.”
- 4) Students with documented disabilities that affect participation are encouraged to speak with the instructor regarding special accommodations.
- 5) Students must check their @illinois.edu email accounts, or have them forwarded to the accounts they normally use.

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

1) Participation (10 points)

Because this class is a seminar, your presence, and active and informed participation in the class discussion, are essential. Failure to contribute substantively to the conversation will have a detrimental impact not only on your grade, but, more importantly, on your learning experience. You should come prepared with a specific question or issue that you have about the readings for that class session.

2) Policy Brief (10 points)

Please write a policy brief on a policy topic of your choice within the scope of this course (for examples of policy briefs, see: http://www.heritage.org/Research/index_bg.cfm). Think of this as an argument or an advocacy piece. Alternatively, you may write an opinion piece or commentary intended for publication in the press (see examples of Commentaries at http://www.cato.org/subtopic_display_new.php?topic_id=64&ra_id=3). This may be in response to a policy or political issue raised in a chapter, book, or article from the class. This should be short (3 double-spaced pages maximum, including references). There is a skill involved in being concise for this genre, so page limits will be strictly enforced. Due by February 20.

3) Policy Analysis (10 points)

Drawing on the issue you have chosen for the preceding Policy Brief assignment, please provide a short (2-4 double-spaced pages) analysis of the political interests taking various positions on the topic, including their political or philosophical perspectives on the question. Use an identifiable theoretical framework to guide your analysis. Due by March 13.

4) Midterm Project (10 points)

For the midterm project, students will formulate and propose a project around a particular reform or reform proposal from within the scope of this course. Suggestions will be available. Proposals must be submitted by Feb. 20. Students' papers will be shared and discussed in class. You should select a topic based on your interests, class discussions, and *in consultation with the instructor prior to writing the assignment*. The mid-term paper should be 5 pages (double-spaced), arranged as follows, following a cover sheet:

- **page 1:** overview of issue; significance; and initial statement of the problem or question;
- **pages 2-3:** review and critique of literature or sources; perspectives or schools-of-thought; what we know and do not know;
- **page 4:** refined research question and research strategy; significance of your question and approach;
- **page 5:** bibliography.

This assignment will serve as the starting point for your research on your final project. Students may work collaboratively on these projects, around topics of common interest for the midterm and finals. Groups should not exceed three people.

5) Research Project (40 points)

The final project is an individual or group (of no more than 3) research paper (and presentation...see below) deriving from the Midterm, focusing on policymaking around a particular reform or reform proposal, with particular attention to the research basis for the reform (or proposal) and the political agendas around it. Please seek feedback from the instructor as well as from other students as you form your ideas and as the project progresses. Students should anticipate that the final paper will be approximately 8-12 double-spaced pages, with *at least* one additional page of references, the majority from scholarly, peer-reviewed sources. Drafts need to be submitted electronically by March 7 (Please make sure to get a copy to your reviewers as well.)

6) Peer Reviews (10 points)

Students will be responsible for providing comprehensive, written reviews for at least one other project. These are expected to offer substantive feedback to the authors as the projects are completed, and will also be used as the basis for in-class discussions during the final presentations of the projects. Reviews are due March 13.

7) Class Presentation (10 points)

The class periods on May 1 and 2 will be used for students to present and discuss their projects. Each presentation should take approximately 20 to 30 minutes, including 5-10 minutes for discussion. Please email any PowerPoint files (not required) to the instructor before the class. All papers are due no later than the beginning of class on May 1.

8)* Reflection on Content Area Standards # 3 Management and # 2 School Culture and Instructional Program (C/NC)

**Only for EOL students seeking certification*

Each student will prepare papers that consider the function of representative democracy and political culture in making policies that determine the operation and management of the public schools and in determining the instructional programs of those schools.

In preparing this assignment for inclusion in the Professional Program Portfolio, each student also must add a reflective statement on how this assignment improved his or her understanding of the superintendent’s role in developing, influencing, and implementing policy that affects school culture and instructional programs.

PLEASE NOTE: All written assignments should include an appropriate cover page, and should be typed (double-spaced, 12 point font, one-inch margins), using the citation style of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (5th ed.)*. See: <http://www.apastyle.org/>. Poor writing will have a detrimental impact on your grade.

Grading Scale

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Points</u>
A	94-100
A-	90-93
B+	87-89
B	84-86
B-	80-83
C+	77-79
C	74-76
C-	70-73
D+	67-69
D	65-66
F	0-64

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

*= available on-line §= will be provided Ψ= available electronically through the UI Library

* AdvanceIllinois.org (website)

§ Anrig, G. (2007). *The conservatives have no clothes: Why right-wing ideas keep failing*. Hoboken, NJ, John Wiley & Sons. (chapter 7)

* Braun, H., Jenkins, F., and Grigg, W. (2006a). A closer look at charter schools using hierarchical linear modeling (NCES 2006–460). U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Institute of Educational Sciences. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.
--**available**: <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/pubs/studies/2006460.asp>

* Braun, H., Jenkins, F., & Grigg, W. (2006b). Comparing private schools and public schools using hierarchical linear modeling (No. 2006-461). Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics.
--**available**: <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/pubs/studies/2006461.asp>

Ψ Coleman, J. S. (1966). Equal Schools or Equal Students? *The Public Interest*, 4: 70-75.

Ψ DeBray-Pelot, E., Lubienski, C., & Scott, J. (2007). The Institutional Landscape of Interest Group Politics and School Choice. *Peabody Journal of Education*, 82 (2-3), 204-230.

* Friedman, M. (1955). The Role of Government in Education. *Economics and the Public Interest*. R. A. Solo (Ed.). New Brunswick, NJ, Rutgers University Press. pp. 127-34.
--**available**: <http://www.schoolchoices.org/roo/fried1.htm>

Ψ Lubienski, C. (2003). Innovation in education markets: Theory and evidence on the impact of competition and choice in charter schools. *American Educational Research Journal*, 40(2), 395-443.

Ψ Lubienski, C. (2005). School choice as a civil right: District responses to competition and equal educational opportunity. *Equity and Excellence in Education*, 38(4), 331-341.

Ψ Lubienski, C. (2006). School diversification in second-best education markets: International evidence and conflicting theories of change. *Educational Policy*, 20(2), 323-344.

§ Lubienski, C., Crane, C. C., & Lubienski, S. T. (2008, May). What Do We Know About School Effectiveness? Academic Gains in a Value-Added Analysis of Public and Private Schools. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 89 (9) 689-695.

- *† Lubienski, C., & Lubienski, S. T. (2006). Charter, private, public schools and academic achievement: New evidence from NAEP mathematics data. (Paper No. 111). New York: National Center for the Study of Privatization in Education, Teachers College, Columbia University.
--**available**: <http://www.ncspe.org/readrel.php?set=pub&cat=126>
- Ψ Lubienski, C., Weitzel, P., & Lubienski, S.T. (2009). Is There a “Consensus” on School Choice and Achievement? Advocacy Research and the Emerging Political Economy of Knowledge Production. *Educational Policy*, 23 (1), 161-193.
- Ψ Lubienski, S. T., Lubienski, C., & Crane, C. C. (2008). Achievement Differences and School Type: The Role of School Climate, Teacher Certification and Instruction. *American Journal of Education*, 115 (1), 97-138.
- § Luntz, F. (1998). *Language of the 21st century*. Washington, DC: The Luntz Research Companies.
- * Peterson, P. E., & Llaudet, E. (2006). On the public-private school achievement debate (No. PEPG 06-02). Cambridge, MA: Program on Education Policy and Governance, Harvard University.
--**available**: <http://www.ksg.harvard.edu/pepg/research.htm>
- § Tough, P. (2006, November 26). What it takes to make a student. *The New York Times Magazine*. p. 44.
--**available**: <http://www.nytimes.com/2006/11/26/magazine/26tough.html>
- †= published in the *American Educational Research Journal* (Vol. 43, # 4, Winter, 2006)