

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

EOL 561 — Education Politics and Policy
Spring 2007

Weekend format, 323 Educ.

Christopher Lubienski
338 Education Bldg.
(217) 333-4382
club@uiuc.edu
Office Hours: to be announced

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

- Easton, N. (2000). *Gang of Five: Leaders at the Center of the Conservative Crusade*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Gladwell, M. (2002). *The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference*. Boston: Back Bay Books.
- 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.

(available for free download at <http://www-hoover.stanford.edu/publications/books/edcap.html> notice the dash, not dot, after www).

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 www.uiuc.edu/admin_manual/code/code_contents.html — the “Code of Policies and Regulations” — especially Section 33 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 UIUC email accounts, or have them forwarded to the accounts they normally use.

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

1) Participation (20%)

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%)

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). Alternatively, you may write an opinion piece or commentary for publication in the press (see examples at <http://www.cato.org/research/education/vouchers.html>). 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 23.

3) Policy Analysis (10%)

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. Due by March 30.

4) Midterm Project (10%)

For the midterm project, students will formulate and propose a project around a particular question on a policy or political issue from within the scope of this course. Suggestions will be available. Proposals must be submitted electronically *before March 26*. Students' papers will be shared and discussed in class. You should select topics based on your interests, class discussions, and in consultation with the instructor prior to writing the assignment. The paper should be 5 pages (double-spaced), arranged as follows:

- **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) Final Project (50%)

The final project is an individual or group research paper and presentation deriving from the Midterm, focusing on policymaking around a particular issue. 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, preferably from scholarly or peer-reviewed sources. The class periods on April 27 and 28 will be reserved 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 April 27.

6)* 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.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- *Braun, H., Jenkins, F., and Grigg, W. (2006). 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>
- §DeBray, L. (in press). Changing institutional relationships in the congressional formation of federal education policy during the ESEA reauthorization, 1998 to 2001. To appear in C. F. Kaestle (Ed.), *To Educate a Nation: Federal and National Strategies of School Reform*. Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas.
- §DeBray, L., Lubienski, C., & Scott, J. (in press). The institutional landscape of interest group politics and school choice. *Peabody Journal of Education*.
- *First Class Education. (n.d.). [The “65% Solution” Website.]
--available: <http://www.firstclasseducation.org/>
- *LeFevre, A. T. (2006). *Report card on American education: A state-by-state analysis*. Washington, DC: American Legislative Exchange Council.
--available: http://www.alec.org/fileadmin/2006%20Ed%20Report%20Card_ALEC.pdf
- §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.
- §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.
- §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., & 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>

§Lubienski, S. T., Lubienski, C., & Crane, C. C. (under review). Achievement differences among public, private and charter schools: The role of school climate, teacher certification and instruction. Submitted to *American Educational Research Journal*.

§Luntz, F. (1998). *Language of the 21st century*. Washington, DC: The Luntz Research Companies.

*New Commission on the Skills of American Workers. (2006). *Tough choices or tough times*. (Executive Summary). Washington, DC: National Center on Education and the Economy.

--Executive Summary available:

http://www.skillscommission.org/pdf/exec_sum/ToughChoices_EXECSUM.pdf

*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.

§Suskind, R. (1994a, July 26). Against all odds: In rough city school, top students struggle to learn — and escape. *Wall Street Journal*, pp. A-1, 8.

§Suskind, R. (1994b, September 22). Class struggle: Poor, black and smart, an inner-city teen tries to survive M.I.T. *Wall Street Journal*, pp. A-1, 6.

*= available on-line

§=will be provided over email or in class

†= published in the *American Educational Research Journal* (Vol. 43, # 4, Winter, 2006)