Politics of Education

I. Course Description

Educational functioning from a political systems perspective; internal and external political forces influencing organizational effectiveness; shaping of educational policy; functional means of attaining and utilizing political power.

II. Rationale

Education, both k-12 and postsecondary, is probably facing unprecedented criticism—attacks—from stakeholders like never before in history. Hersh and Merrow (2005) actually began their text with these words: “Higher education, long viewed as the crown jewel of American education, is tarnished” (p. 1). With regard to k-12 education, Spring (2005) wrote that lessons from history teach us that “politicians are reluctant to praise public schools” (p. 3). What is wrong with education that it is the recipient of such contempt? I would argue the issue has little to do with education as education and more to do with education as a political pawn. Spring summarized it aptly: “Of course, state and local politicians, educational administrators, teachers’ unions, special interest groups, parents, and the general citizenry (have) their own interests in educational policy” (p. 1). Educational outcomes, then, are not necessarily a matter of teaching and learning, but who controls the education political agenda.


III. State Adopted Proficiencies for Teachers and/or Administrators/Counselors n/a

IV. TExES Competencies n/a

V. Course Objectives/Learning Objectives

- Construct a significant education political position as a result of assessing key political conflicts.
- Identify the key issues critical to the formulation of a dominant k-12 or higher education political position.
- Identify how political factions vie for control over various educational contributions to society.
- Differentiate the impact of various political decisions on the success of education.
- Summarize how scholarly literature relates to the political landscape of education.
- Interpret how scholarly literature applies to the politics of education.

VI. Course Topics

- Public Good and Politics of Education: No single group controls education although some may influence it more than others, each with their own ideas as to what function education should serve in society.
• Public Policy and Political Environment: Public policy and the political landscape are linked together in order to exert majority influence for the transformation of education into the ideals that shape the policy.
• Societal Good and Ideology: Political leaders, whether at the national or campus administrator levels, promote and maintain their views what education is and how it serves society.
• Governance, Leadership, and Political Control: Educational outcomes will be a function of both direct and indirect consequences of political actions.

VII. Instructional Methods and Activities

• Discussions: The purpose of discussion is to develop thinking skills in three areas: critical thinking; creative thinking; and dialogical thinking.
• Papers: A variety of written assignments provide opportunities to express scholarly perspectives as well as personal reflections.

VIII. Evaluation and Grade Assignment

• Readings: Required reading is from two texts. The chapters and due dates are listed below in the section on Course Schedule.

• Some Guidelines for the Final Written Assignment:
  a. Follow APA guidelines, including proper cover page and reference page. Up to 11% of points can be deducted for not following APA guidelines. Times New Roman 12 font is used throughout.
  b. Papers are to be double spaced throughout and use standard paragraph indentation. Often Word defaults to extra spacing between paragraphs. To have only double spacing throughout the paper, highlight your entire document; click on ‘Paragraph’ in the toolbar; under ‘Spacing’ make sure ‘Before’ and ‘After’ are set at ‘0’; under ‘Line Spacing’ click the arrow and select ‘Double’ and this will make the entire document double spaced.
  c. No first person or second person pronouns are to be used unless a paper or a section requires a reflection.
  d. The paper is left justified except for headings. Major headings must be centered, boldface, no italics, no underline. Sub-headings are left justified and boldface.
  e. Here are some keys for writing.
  1) Punctuation goes inside quotation marks. For example: Higher education finance “is not about collecting tuition and fees by which to pay bills” according to Grieves (2003, p. 18). Also, in scholarly and professional writing (in contrast to creative writing, e.g.) a series of concepts is separated by commas. For example: Stephens (2011) suggested higher education finance is complex, confusing, muddled, and often imprecise. If there is a series that requires colons and semi-colons for clarification the format is as follows. There are four major areas in which expenditures are designated: (a) salaries & benefits; (b) operations; (c) maintenance; and (d) activities (Grace, 2010). Never use abbreviations, such as ‘e.g.’ or ‘i.e.’ or ‘vs.’ in the body of the paper but only in parentheses. Never use ‘etc.’ because information must be provided and not assumed.
  2) Do not quote material extensively. At the doctoral level, it is expected you can evaluate material, synthesize it, and restate it in your own words while giving proper credit. For
example: Pollack (2006) wrote that public pressure has changed how states fund public higher education based on more accountability.

3) If you quote from a source make sure APA is followed, including following the format according to APA for citing from the internet (see the bottom of page 171 & top of 172 for internet citation information in text).

4) Use the word ‘and’ when in the body of the paper and the ampersand (&) in parentheses, except in the reference page. For example: Davids and Lisenk (2005) related economic conditions and state agendas tend to drive the importance of higher education funding. An alternative to this is format is: Economic conditions and state agendas tend to drive the importance of higher education funding (Davids & Lisenk, 2005). Notice the placement of both the ampersand and the punctuation.

5) Never use first names when citing authors. Also, only use authors’ first and/or middle initials in the reference page and never in the body of the paper. The following is incorrect: … often lead to legal violations (Davids, P. R., & Lisenk, C. S., 2005).

6) Never use language such as: In the article “State Funding for Higher Education: The Elephant in the Room,” from the Higher Education Finance Journal, Kevin Harlow (2010) explained the difference between funding public higher education and private higher education. The proper structure is: Harlow (2010) delineated the difference between funding public higher education and private higher education.

f. Only scholarly and professional material is to be used for support and examples. Sources, such as magazines, wikipedia, dictionaries, and encyclopedias are neither scholarly nor professional sources. The only time non-professional and non-scholarly material can be used is when specifically designated by an assignment.

g. The running head for the cover page is different than the header for all other pages. Make sure this is correct. See pages 41-49 of APA for examples. To make the cover page header different than the following pages in your paper: click on ‘Page Layout’ in the tool bar; click on the arrow to the right of ‘Page Setup’; when the new popup window appears, click the ‘Layout’ tab; click the box ‘Different first page’; click ‘okay’ to save the format. Make sure you place information in the header and that it is not typed at the top of every page. Also, make sure you have appropriate page numbers. Word does not automatically default to Times New Roman 12 for header information so make sure you make the changes. Again, the entire paper is Times New Roman 12 font.

h. If the final paper does not conform to these and other APA standards, it will not be assessed, will be returned with a grade of ‘0’ and you will have three days to make the corrections to resubmit it from the time I return it to you.

i. Do not write an abstract as that is for research manuscripts.
1. *Online, Asynchronous Discussion:* There is one discussion topic that bridges the entire course. It begins Monday, June 11 and ends Thursday, July 5. It is important that you engage in the discussion frequently. The discussion assignment is worth up to 160 points.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Not satisfactory</th>
<th>Introductory</th>
<th>Practiced</th>
<th>Skilled</th>
<th>Total 80</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Content Knowledge</td>
<td>Inadequate</td>
<td>Demonstrates some understanding of the topic with little reference to course material.</td>
<td>Relates major concepts of the topic with solid reference to course material.</td>
<td>Identifies specific, relevant concepts of the topic with reliance on course material as well as additional information.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Points</td>
<td>0-18</td>
<td>19-27</td>
<td>28-35</td>
<td>36-40</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thinking Skills</td>
<td>Inadequate</td>
<td>Identifies a position that is somewhat related and support is evident.</td>
<td>Identifies a relevant position to the topic and demonstrates some support for it.</td>
<td>Contributions skillfully apply concepts from course and related material to build and support a position.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Points</td>
<td>0-18</td>
<td>19-27</td>
<td>28-35</td>
<td>36-40</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scholarship</td>
<td>Inadequate</td>
<td>Alludes to sources and/or support is weak.</td>
<td>References to sources and/or support are evident.</td>
<td>Cites sources directly and uses them for strong support of perspectives.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Points</td>
<td>0-18</td>
<td>19-27</td>
<td>28-35</td>
<td>36-40</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>Inadequate</td>
<td>Remains on mostly topic, dealing mainly with the proposed subject matter.</td>
<td>Remains on topic, alluding to additional material.</td>
<td>Expands the issue, bringing in additional relevant perspectives.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Points</td>
<td>0-18</td>
<td>19-27</td>
<td>28-35</td>
<td>36-40</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Up to 10% can be deducted for not following proper English writing and/or APA.
Disrespectful interaction can lead to 20% reduction in the grade.

Total \( \frac{160}{\text{}} = \% \)

**Discussion Guidelines:**

- The discussion begins Monday, June 11 and ends Thursday, July 5.
- Contributions to the discussion are to be posted early and often, however there is no set number. Since this is a discussion, only posting one or two times leaves little room for interaction and suggests that your postings are only to address the questions posed for the assignment and not interaction with others. The questions provide a basic framework to explore more deeply the concepts, theories, ideas, philosophies, and implications surrounding them. So, the discussion should move beyond the basic questions.
- During discussions you should be building a position and supporting it from a perspective that guides the issues and when appropriate with scholarly and professional literature. You must have at least one
posting that uses support from scholarly and professional literature. Other posts may be based on your experience, expertise, and opinions as long as you support it. For example, it not appropriate just to state something like, “The education system is broken and needs to be fixed.” The statement is acceptable only to the extent that you provide support for why you believe it.

- Use your experience, knowledge, background, and scholarly and professional literature to address the questions and advance the discussion. Although experience, knowledge, and background (and opinions) are welcome and should be used as examples, illustrations, and clarifications, they are not the basis for advanced work in a doctoral program. Therefore, it is imperative to use the material as support where needed. When citing scholarly and professional material, APA format is to be followed. References are to be provided at the bottom of a post when cited in the text of your responses.

- Run spell check. Or, type your response in Word then copy and paste it into the discussion. Be careful to double check your postings when you do this because sometimes additional characters show up in the transfer.

- Interaction is to be on a professional level, which also includes standard English language protocols. Absolutely no "texting" language, for example: ur for "you are"; btw for "by the way"; G2CU for "good to see you"; or anything else found on the list from the following link or texting language invention. An occasional LOL (laugh out loud) is okay, though. Frankly, some things are just too funny not to reply without an occasional LOL. [http://www.innocentenglish.com/news/texting-abbreviations-collection-texting-slang.html](http://www.innocentenglish.com/news/texting-abbreviations-collection-texting-slang.html)

- Do not use second person pronouns, such as you, your, yours, unless the information is directed to a specific person. They do not apply in this type of professional interaction as they are too informal. See the APA manual as well for how "you" can be used in specific instances.

- Responses are to be education related. People may have different backgrounds, however, this is an education course and input must be within this field of study, or related to it.

- Sometimes responses prompt personal discussions. Personal discussions are to be done at a different setting and not to be conducted during the discussion.

- Sometimes responses trigger related topics and these should be explored when relevant to the main topic.

- This is a discussion, not a paper. So, thoughts, ideas, perceptions, and building a position often develop throughout the course. Please do not provide lengthy posts, again, as this is not a paper. It is important to be succinct, precise, and direct, as well as strong with support (all skills applied to the dissertation).

- Discussions will be assessed according to intellectual contributions based on relevance to the material and advancement of scholarly thought. A rubric has been provided in this syllabus and will be the basis for assessment. APA, appropriate grammar, syntax, and punctuation will also be considered.

3. **Reflective Journal**: There are numerous topics covered in the course and as an educator, you have experience and expertise. The reflective journal is an opportunity to think about the condition of education and your reflections about its condition. Since this is based on your informed views, your perspective can include, but is not limited to political systems; internal and external political forces influencing organizational effectiveness; formation of educational policy; and political power. The idea is to ponder an important topic in education and describe your thoughts in three areas:
a. **Context:** Convey your ideas and insights about an educational, political issue to where you have a vested interest in it. In essence, what political conflicts are you encountering that affect you personally? This section is approximately 1-2 pages long worth up to 25 points.

b. **Reflection:** Describe why this context is so important to you. What is it about the political conflict that has you concerned? This section is approximately 1-2 pages long worth up to 50 points.

c. **Analysis:** Relate what you can learn from the issue. What is so important about the political conflict that you need to know it? This section is approximately 1 page long worth up to 25 points.

Make sure you use each of the previous sections as a heading in your paper. The paper must be at least three pages long but no longer than five pages of text, have an appropriate cover page, and if you cite material, have a reference page. The paper is to be Times New Roman 12 font, be double-spaced, and follow basic, English writing standards. Since this is a reflection paper, use first person pronouns (e.g., I, me, we, us). Never ever use second person pronouns (e.g., you, your, you’re). If the paper does not meet these basic requirements, it will be sent back with a grade of 0 and you will have three days to resubmit it from the time I return it.

The paper is to be submitted via email to: randall.bowden@tamucc.edu. It is due no later than midnight on the assigned date.

3. **Final Assignment:** There are numerous topics covered in the course and as an educator, you have experience and expertise. You may select any topic related to education as long as it relates to a political struggle. Follow the requirements below for the paper.

   a. **Introduction:** This section conveys the context of the education environment and ends with the purpose of your paper in 1 short paragraph. Describe the context of an innovative education issue in four to five sentences, then provide the purpose of the paper. For example: It is the purpose of this paper to assess the effects of standards based testing in a global environment. This section is worth up to 10 points.

   b. **Education Innovation:** Select an innovative education issue. Provide a 1 short paragraph (4-5 sentences) description of the issue that precisely describes what makes it innovative. This section of the paper is worth up to 30 points.

   c. **Article Reviews:** Using scholarly literature from peer reviewed journals, select three articles related to the innovative education issue and review them according to the following:

      1) Give a two or three sentence overview of one article followed by the statement of the purpose of the article. Every article that is well written should have a clear purpose statement, such as: The intent of this study was to assess the value of an integrated core according to its benefits and drawbacks. This is 1 short paragraph.

      2) Provide three to four sentences of the findings or major points made in the article. Provide one sentence that describes how the information is related to the innovative education issue selected above. This is 1 short paragraph.

Follow this pattern until all three articles are reviewed. Refer to the information in the syllabus above on “Some Guidelines for the Final Written Assignment” when writing this section, as well as the entire paper. This section of the paper is worth up to 45 points.
d. **Implications**: As an education professional, explain *two* implications of how effective political issue is. Implications can be viewed as outcomes, or consequences, or insinuations, or practices, or policy. This section of the paper is to be 2 paragraphs and is worth up to 50 points.

e. **Conclusion**: This section of the paper summarizes the major points made and reiterates the purpose of the paper. This section of the paper is one short paragraph and is worth up to 10 points.

Make sure you use each of the previous sections as a heading in your paper. The paper must have an appropriate cover page and a reference page. The paper is to be Times New Roman 12 font, be double-spaced, and follow APA standards. Do not use first person pronouns (e.g., I, me, we, us). Never ever use second person pronouns (e.g., you, your, you’re). If the paper does not meet these basic requirements, it will be sent back with a grade of 0 and you will have three days to resubmit it from the time I return it.

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### Assignment Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignments</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td>160 points</td>
<td>June 11-Thursday, July 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflection</td>
<td>100 points</td>
<td>July 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Assignment</td>
<td>145 points</td>
<td>July 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>405</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Grading**

90-100% = A; 80-89% = B; 70-79% = C; 60-69% = D; 50-59% = F

### IX. Course Schedule and Policies

#### A. Course Schedule

**Required Reading**

- K = *Higher education for the public good* text by Kezar et al.
- S = *The politics of American education* text by Spring

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topics and Assignments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>Review Syllabus; Introductions; Navigating Blackboard 9; <em>Public Good and Politics of Education</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Have read before today</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>K chapters 1, 2, &amp; 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S chapter 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6.11 Public Policy and Political Environment
Have read before today
K chapters 4, 5, 6, & 7
S chapters 2 & 3
~Discussion Begins

6.18 Societal Good and Ideology
Have read before today
K chapters 8, 9, & 10
S chapters 4 & 5
~Discussion Continues

6.25 Governance, Leadership, and Political Control
Have read before today
K chapters 11, 12, & 13
S chapter 6, 7, 8, & 9
~Discussion Continues

7.2 Conclusions
~Discussion Ends July 6
~Reflection paper due July 6
~Final Assignment due July 6

B. Course Policies

Attendance/tardiness: It is expected that you attend every class session and are on time.

Late work: No late work is accepted except for extenuating circumstances approved by the instructor.

Extra Credit: No extra credit work is provided.

Cell Phone/Electronic Device Usage: Cell phones and other electronic devices are to be turned off during class time. Approved electronic devices include the use of a computer for note taking.

Academic Integrity/Plagiarism:

University students are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the highest standards of academic honesty. Academic misconduct for which a student is subject to penalty includes all forms of cheating, such as illicit possession of examinations or examination materials, falsification, forgery, complicity or plagiarism. (Plagiarism is the presentation of the work of another as one’s own work.) In this class, academic misconduct or complicity in an act of academic misconduct on an assignment or test will result in and “F” for an assignment. Additional academic dishonesty and/or plagiarism will result in an “F” for the course.
Dropping a Class

I hope that you never find it necessary to drop this or any other class. However, events can sometimes occur that make dropping a course necessary or wise. Please consult with me before you decide to drop to be sure it is the best thing to do. Should dropping the course be the best course of action, you must initiate the process to drop the course by going to the Student Services Center and filling out a course drop form. Just stopping attendance and participation WILL NOT automatically result in your being dropped from the class. Friday, June 22, 2012 is the last day to drop a class with an automatic grade of “W” this term.

Required methods of scholarly citations: APA 6th Edition

Classroom/professional behavior

It is expected that classroom, campus, and community behavior are exemplary of professionals and scholars in higher education. Although we can have a great deal of fun and should enjoy the educational experience, overall behavior should reflect dignity and respect for each other, the field of study, and the society we serve.

X. Textbooks

- ISBN-10: 0787973823

- ISBN-10: 0415884403

XI. Bibliography


