PSC 2224 (10): The Politics of Education Policy [CRN 57016]  
Spring 2017, Monday and Friday, 9:35-10:50, Hall of Government 101  
The George Washington University, Department of Political Science

Instructor: Eric Lawrence  
email: edl@gwu.edu  
Office: Monroe 464  
Office Hours: Friday 11:00 to 12:30, or by appt.  
Phone: 994-4826

Course Description
Politics infuses education in the United States. Parents, children, teachers, the business community, and elected officials at all levels of government have large stakes in the provision of education. Education funding makes up a large share of state and local budgets, which generates budget politics. Education levels help determine economic success, so students, parents, and politicians highly value education. People differ in their conceptions of the purpose of education, which generates value conflicts. And unlike many policy domains, all citizens have had extended direct experience with the education system, so (nearly) everyone has strong opinions about what’s wrong and what’s right with American schools. All this adds up to charged debates about how schooling should be provided in the United States.

This course examines the politics of education policy in the United States. Because education values vary across actors, we begin the class with a consideration of the goals of education. These normative issues will persist throughout the semester, but we will attempt to distinguish between the normative (the way things ought to be) and the positive (the way things actually are) as best we can. We will survey the state of education policy, using concepts from political science to help us make sense of why education policy proceeds as it does. And we will also study changes in education policy and politics over time, which will inform where education policy is today and, perhaps, the direction of education policy in the near future.

Learning Objectives
As a result of completing this course, students will:

• Recall and explain institutional and systemic features of the U.S. system of education at the federal, state, and local levels of governance.

• Accurately apply political science concepts and theories that relate to the U.S. system of education.

• Demonstrate the ability to think critically about the politics of education policy, as evidenced by performance on exams and class participation.

Required Text
Other Readings: Additional readings on the syllabus can be found on the course web page on Blackboard and/or linked from the syllabus posted on Blackboard.

**Grades**

As a rule, there will be no make-up exams or deadline extensions given in this course. Exceptions only will be made with prior consent for planned events such as sponsored GWU activities or religious observances or under unusual circumstances such as a documented medical emergency.

Your course grade will be based on the following components:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Weight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quizzes (10, drop 2 lowest)</td>
<td>8 x 5% = 40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Think tank education talk</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm exam</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final exam</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In class group participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTE: IN ACCORD WITH UNIVERSITY POLICY, THE FINAL EXAM WILL BE GIVEN DURING THE FINAL EXAM PERIOD AND NOT THE LAST WEEK OF THE SEMESTER

The midterm and final exams will be closed book, closed note exams, though you will be allowed to bring a single page (front and back) of notes.

**Participation and Reading**

You are expected to attend lecture and complete each reading assignment before the class period(s) for which it is assigned. Doing the reading prior to class will make it easier for you to follow lecture. I am not going to lecture for 75 minutes a session. I plan to keep slides as minimal as possible.

No-laptop policies are cropping up in classrooms at GW and at other schools across the country. These policies have emerged to confront the distractions laptops can create for the laptop-using students, the students sitting near them, and the professors delivering lectures. Because of my concern for the second category, the students sitting near laptop users, this class will be a no-laptop class, except when we are doing in-class group work. When we do that, I encourage you to bring your laptops, as they will help with your projects. I ask that you also put away your cell phones during class. You can text, tweet, snapchat, etc. after class. I will run the quizzes through Blackboard, so you can take your quizzes via your phone or other electronic device.

**University Policies**

**Average minimum amount of out-of-class or independent learning expected per week:**

In a 15-week semester, including exam week, students are expected to spend a minimum of 100 minutes of out-of-class work for every 50 minutes of direct instruction, for a minimum total of 2.5 hours a week. A 3-credit course should include 2.5 hours of direct instruction and a minimum of 5 hours of independent learning or 7.5 hours per week. More information about GW’s credit hour policy can be
found at: provost.gwu.edu/policies-forms (webpage); or provost.gwu.edu/files/downloads/Resources/Assignment-Credit-Hours-7-2016.pdf (form)

University Policy on Religious Holidays

• Students should notify faculty during the first week of the semester of their intention to be absent from class on their day(s) of religious observance.
• Faculty should extend to these students the courtesy of absence without penalty on such occasions, including permission to make up examinations.
• Faculty who intend to observe a religious holiday should arrange at the beginning of the semester to reschedule missed classes or to make other provisions for their course-related activities.

Support for Students Outside the Classroom

Disability Support Services (DSS)

Any student who may need an accommodation based on the potential impact of a disability should contact the Disability Support Services office at 202-994-8250 in the Rome Hall, Suite 102, to establish eligibility and to coordinate reasonable accommodations. For additional information please refer to:

https://disabilitysupport.gwu.edu/

The University's Mental Health Services offers 24/7 assistance and referral to address students' personal, social, career, and study skills problems. Services for students include: crisis and emergency mental health consultations confidential assessment, counseling services (individual and small group), and referrals.

https://healthcenter.gwu.edu/mental-health-services

Academic Integrity Code

Academic dishonesty is defined as cheating of any kind, including misrepresenting one's own work, taking credit for the work of others without crediting them and without appropriate authorization, and the fabrication of information. For the remainder of the code, see:

https://studentconduct.gwu.edu/code-academic-integrity

Security

In the case of an emergency, if at all possible, the class should shelter in place. If the building that the class is in is affected, follow the evacuation procedures for the building. After evacuation, seek shelter at a predetermined rendezvous location.
Course Calendar

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Animating question/topic</th>
<th>Reading(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Normative considerations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Animating question/topic</th>
<th>Reading(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

The Upshot. January 18, 2017. “Some Colleges Have More Students From the Top 1 Percent Than the Bottom 60. Find Yours.”

Descriptions of what we know about education policy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Animating question/topic</th>
<th>Reading(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

QUIZ #1

QUIZ #2

Guest lecture on school finance issues: Drew Atchison, AIR

Theoretical considerations: Where are the politics in the politics of education?


The (changing) politics of school reform


3.6 Who controls our schools?  Henig, chapter 1.

QUIZ #4

3.10 What accounts for the rise of mayors, governors, and presidents in education governance?  Henig, chapter 2

3.20 First half review

QUIZ #5

3.24 MIDTERM EXAM

3.27 How do courts and legislatures influence education policy?  Henig, chapter 3

3.31 How do the emerging reform regimes diverge from traditional governance regimes?  Henig, chapter 4

4.3 QUIZ #6 What do the new regimes portend for the future of education politics and policymaking?  Henig, chapter 5
### Hot button topics: school choice, accountability, and corporate reformers

| 4.10 | question carries over from 4.7 | readings carry over from 4.7 |
Also read four brief responses to the piece at the bottom of the page. |
**A brief excursion into higher education**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5.3 <em>(designated Monday)</em></td>
<td>Final exam review</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Course schedule subject to change due to extenuating circumstances.