Loyola University Chicago  
School of Education  
ELPS 529: Proseminar in Higher Education

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Class Location: Maguire Hall, Room 401, Water Tower (1 E. Pearson)  
Class Time: 4:15 – 6:45 on Mondays

Course Description:

This course is designed to introduce new doctoral students to critical questions currently facing the American higher education system, while providing opportunities for students to learn and practice important skills necessary in their development as doctoral students. The course begins by examining a number of critiques of the American higher education system, including questions about why college has become so expensive, whether the investment is worth it for all students, who has access to different postsecondary options, and how this might change given recent rulings on affirmative action. Additionally, we will contemplate how a number of “disruptive technologies” may be changing the traditional ways in which higher education has operated in this country and how facets of globalism and technology are changing the ways in which we prepare students for the challenges of tomorrow. The course is designed to engage students in a critical examination of these questions, particularly questions around justice and equity, and to evaluate the various arguments and assumptions that underlie the major writings on these topics. Students will have an opportunity to reflect on these questions through blogs and class discussions, as well as an opportunity to explore important questions related to their own research interests through presentations and written reports. The class will also provide opportunities for students to engage different professionals who have written about these topics and/or work within different higher education arenas. Finally, throughout the course we will focus on emerging questions related to the doctoral journey, providing an open space to share, discuss, and contemplate the various roles and opportunities available to graduates of the program.

Course Objectives:

Through participation in the Proseminar, students are expected to:

1. Develop a critical understanding of the major issues and questions facing American higher education today;
2. Apply a critical lens to each of the course topics, with a particular emphasis on understanding the various dimension of justice and equity that underlie these issues;
3. Formulate a research topic based on individual interests and develop both written and presentation skills necessary in communicating their ideas;
4. Understand the goals, norms, and practices of the doctoral journey.

IDEA Learning Outcomes:

The following learning outcomes are considered either essential or important based on the IDEA course rating system:

1. Learning to analyze and critically evaluate ideas, arguments, and points of view
2. Learning to apply course material (to improve thinking, problem solving, and decisions)
3. Developing skill in expressing oneself orally or in writing
4. Learning how to find and use resources for answering questions or solving problems

Conceptual Framework:

A conceptual framework that emphasizes “Professionalism in Service of Social Justice” guides instructional, extracurricular, and professional activities at Loyola’s School of Education. The Loyola School of Education faculty are dedicated to promoting professionalism in the service of social justice by developing students’ knowledge, skills, ethics, and service to improve educational opportunities for all members of society. This course contributes to the realization of this framework by asking students to apply a social justice lens to each of the major issues facing higher education today, with a particular emphasis on deconstructing the underlying assumptions that makeup a particular argument or perspective on an issue. In this regard, students will contemplate important questions about who can afford higher education, who has access to higher education, and how different advances in higher education serve to maintain or disrupt historical patterns of inequality that constitute the history of American higher education.

Diversity:

Loyola’s School of Education is committed to the value of diversity in all of its courses. This course presents and encourages diverse perspectives on issues related to course topics, with particular attention to how current practices and policies can serve to reproduce or eradicate social inequalities present in our current higher education system.
Technology:

This course will rely heavily on technology offered through the Sakai course management system. Students will be expected to maintain an electronic blog throughout the course and access different electronic content and media through the course management system. Additionally, students will incorporate technology in their individual teach-in sessions and receive additional instructional support in accessing electronic resources and using online technologies.

Dispositions:

All students in the course will be assessed across the following dispositional areas: professionalism, fairness, and the belief that all students can learn. The rubric can be found in Appendix A of the syllabus and the assessments will be conducted at the end of the semester through LiveText.

Electronic Communication Policies and Guidelines:

The School of Education faculty, students and staff respect each other’s rights, privacy and access to electronic resources, services, and communications while in the pursuit of academic and professional growth, networking and research. All members of the university community are expected to demonstrate the highest standards of integrity, communication, and responsibility while accessing and utilizing technology, information resources, and computing facilities. A link to the Loyola University Chicago and School of Education official policies and guidelines can be found at: http://www.luc.edu/media/lucedu/education/pdfs/SOE_Cyberbullying_Policy.pdf

Course Pedagogy:

This is a student-centered, collaborative course, and as such, each of your unique backgrounds and past experiences are considered essential in understanding how you approach, frame, and interpret the educational content covered in this course. Based on the concepts embedded in constructivist learning theory, collaborative learning, and self-authorship, I see myself as a guide, tutor, and facilitator in the learning process, helping each of you achieve your individual learning objectives through a variety of teaching and learning mediums. I understand and acknowledge that we all learn differently and express our mastery of learning topics in forms that are often unique to the individual learner. Therefore, my expectations of each of you will vary based on your expressed learning styles and objectives for this course. Ultimately, I see this class as a community of scholars who are both teachers and learners albeit at varying stages of development based on our own life experiences, interests, and
motivations. As such, the class will be focused around the following learning tenets:

1. Shared responsibility among all learners (both teachers and students) for constructing and making sense of knowledge within a community of practice;

2. Students active involvement in all phases of the learning process, with a special emphasis on “thinking out loud” in class;

3. An appreciation of and support for multiple perspectives on knowledge and practice as well as opportunities to apply such understandings to relevant, open-ended, and realistic contexts;

4. An emphasis on the critical role that peers play in the learning process, especially as it relates to helping one another decode, make meaning, and promote understanding of the subject.

Course Expectations:

I expect each of you to take an active role in your learning both inside and outside of the classroom. Central to the achievement of this goal is an expectation that each of you will actively participate in classroom discussions and activities that are designed to help you achieve mastery of the varying topics related to the course. Thus, attendance is essential to the learning process and repeated absences will likely hinder your achievement of the objectives for this course. You have a responsibility to our classroom community to come to class prepared having made an earnest attempt to read the assigned readings and complete assignments by their respective due dates. My hope is that you will not merely try to complete the readings for the sake of completion but that you will take the time to critically read and reflect in order foster your own development and to stimulate classroom discussions. Each of you will be expected to participate in a number of group-based discussions and activities and I ask that you take this role seriously and become a productive colleague and collaborator throughout this course.

Academic Honesty:

Academic honesty is an expression of interpersonal justice, responsibility and care, applicable to Loyola University faculty, students, and staff, which demands that the pursuit of knowledge in the university community be carried out with sincerity and integrity. The School of Education’s Policy on Academic Integrity can be found at: http://www.luc.edu/education/academics_policies_integrity.shtml. For additional
academic policies and procedures refer to: http://www.luc.edu/education/academics_policies_main.shtml

Accessibility:

Students who have disabilities which they believe entitle them to accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act should register with the Services for Students with Disabilities (SSWD) office. To request accommodations, students must schedule an appointment with an SSWD coordinator. Students should contact SSWD at least four weeks before their first semester or term at Loyola. Returning students should schedule an appointment within the first two weeks of the semester or term. The University policy on accommodations and participation in courses is available at: http://www.luc.edu/sswd/

Harassment (Bias Reporting):

It is unacceptable and a violation of university policy to harass, discriminate against or abuse any person because of his or her race, color, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, disability, religion, age or any other characteristic protected by applicable law. Such behavior threatens to destroy the environment of tolerance and mutual respect that must prevail for this university to fulfill its educational and health care mission. For this reason, every incident of harassment, discrimination or abuse undermines the aspirations and attacks the ideals of our community. The university qualifies these incidents as incidents of bias.

In order to uphold our mission of being Chicago’s Jesuit Catholic University-- a diverse community seeking God in all things and working to expand knowledge in the service of humanity through learning, justice and faith, any incident(s) of bias must be reported and appropriately addressed. Therefore, the Bias Response (BR) Team was created to assist members of the Loyola University Chicago community in bringing incidents of bias to the attention of the university. If you believe you are subject to such bias, you should notify the Bias Response Team at this link: http://webapps.luc.edu/biasreporting/

Required Texts (Available at the Loyola University Bookstore):


**Recommended Text:** (Available through Amazon and other retail outlets)


In addition to these texts, I have assigned a number of required and recommended readings that are available on the Sakai course website. Students should also regularly review *The Chronicle of Higher Education* and *Inside Higher Ed* in order to promote informed discussions about current events related to course topics.

It is also recommended that students become familiar with the following publications in the higher education field:

2. Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis
3. Journal of College Student Development
4. Journal of Diversity in Higher Education
5. Journal of Higher Education
6. Journal of Student Affairs Research and Practice
7. Review of Higher Education
8. Research in Higher Education
9. Teachers College Record

**Teaching Materials:**

**Course Assignments:**

1. **Participation (10%)**

This class is largely dependent on your presence in class (especially given our small numbers), including your participation and engagement in class discussions, exercises, and other planned activities. Please come to class prepared, having critically and thoughtfully evaluated the weekly readings as well as engaging in other outside sources that might be beneficial to our class-based discussions.
2. **Weekly blog: Life as a doctoral student (10%)**

As all of you are just beginning your doctoral journey, I would like you to keep an active blog (through Sakai) that details your journey, including your thoughts, reactions, and contemplations about your experience as a doctoral student. I want this to be an open and honest space where you can ponder your collective experience as a doctoral student both inside and outside of the classroom. While I will be reading your blogs each week, I will leave it up to each of you to decide whether you want to keep this private or open to others in the classroom (which I would encourage you to consider).

3. **Issues Paper: 3-5 pages (20%)**

In order to develop a better sense of your individual writing styles, I would like you to develop a short paper in response to the following questions facing higher education today: Given the escalating costs of a college degree, do you think college is worth the investment? Additionally, do you think a college-for-all mentality is the right approach to instill within our educational system? Due date: September 22 at the beginning of class.

4. **Literature review: 20 pages (40%)**

The final project for this course is a literature review on a topic of your choice. My hope is that you will choose a topic that is close to your heart and one that you are contemplating as a potential area of dissertation research. The literature review should ideally:

- Provide a good sense of the topic by clearly defining it and then identifying the mains themes or perspectives, key issues and points of contention or consensus;
- Provide a more detailed analysis of critical and significant works in the field, evaluating the quality of the research—and thus one’s confidence in the conclusions—as well as reporting key findings;
- Provide an overview of what is missing, yet to be done, or in need of resolution.

A strong literature review is an important first step to any research project and the cornerstone of your comprehensive examination and a critical aspect of your dissertation. I encourage you to focus on a well-defined topic (versus aiming for an exhaustive review—e.g. almost everything written on the topic) and an in-depth analysis and critique of a finite number of carefully selected, substantive works (15 or so depending on your topic). Please provide me with a written outline of your topic (1-2 pages) by Monday, September 29. The final paper will be due the last day of class on December 1.
5. **Teach-In: 1 hour session based on your research interests and literature review project (20%)**

In addition to your literature review, each of you will be charged with teaching the class about your topic during the final weeks of the semester. You will each have approximately one hour and I will leave the format of your teach-in to your own creative style and pedagogical interests.

**Evaluation Procedures:**

The following criteria and procedures will be used to evaluate your work in this course.

**Evaluation Criteria:**

1. Evidence during class discussion and in written assignments that course readings have been completed on time and with thought;
2. Effective use of relevant literature and its vocabulary and frameworks to support claims;
3. Balanced and critical discussion of ideas and arguments, with particular attention to underlying values and assumptions;
4. Original thinking that adds insight;
5. Consistent, well-prepared class attendance and participation;
6. On-time submission of assignments;
7. Correct grammar, spelling and punctuation; concise writing (i.e., not wordy).

**The most common problems that detract from grades on assignments are:**

1. Superficiality – Lack of adequate thought and substance, usually due to inadequate time spent on the assignment;
2. Inattention to instructions – Each assignment includes detailed instructions that should be read carefully before starting the project and reviewed again before submitting your work;
3. Poor editing – particularly “typos” and grammatical errors
4. Lateness – See policy below.

Note that all of these problems can be reduced by starting projects early, and the first two can be reduced by revising and asking others to review drafts.

**Due Dates and Policy on Lateness and Absences:**

All assignments are due on the dates posted in this syllabus. Late assignments may be penalized one half-grade for each late day (or portion of a day). To avoid
a reduction in grade, students with emergency situations must contact me in advance of the class to negotiate an alternative due date. Regular class attendance and active participation in class discussions and activities are a requirement for this course. Therefore, missing class or coming to class unprepared will be reflected in the final participation grade for this course.

Grading:

1. Participation (10%)
2. Weekly blog: Life as a doctoral student (10%)
3. Issues Paper: 5 pages (20%)
4. Teach-In: 1 hour session based on your research interests and literature review project (20%)
5. Literature review: 20 pages (40%)

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Course Outline:

August 25: Course Overview and Introductions

Activity:

1. Developing a sense of purpose as a doctoral student: Emerging questions for the developing professional

September 1: Labor Day Holiday—No Class

September 8: The lost decade: Just how much trouble is higher education in, really?

Required Readings:


**Recommended Readings:**


**Activity:**

1. Designing a comprehensive literature review—an overview of approaches and techniques to develop and organize your work.

**September 15: The cost disease in American higher education: How did college become so expensive and is it worth it?**

**Required Readings:**


**Recommended Reading:**


**Guest Speaker:**

1. TBD

**September 22: Access and opportunity in American higher education: Is higher education a passive agent in the systematic reproduction of White racial privilege across generations?**

**Required Readings:**


**Recommended Readings:**


**Guest Speaker:**

1. Special guest, Tracy Ruppman, will discuss using electronic resources to build a body of evidence in constructing a literature review

**September 29: The educational benefits of diversity: What is the future of affirmative action policies in the aftermath of the *Fisher* case?**

**Required Readings:**


**Recommended Readings:**


**Guest Speaker:**

1. Special guest, Aliza Gilbert, will join us for a working session as we discuss her current research on undocumented students

**October 6:** Fall Break—No Class

**October 13:** Globalism and higher education: What steps are necessary in preparing students to become global citizens?

**Required Readings:**


**Recommended Readings:**


**Guest Speaker:**

1. Special guest, Blanca Torres-Olave, will discuss her emerging work in international and comparative education.
**October 20: The digital age in higher education: How has (and will) technology transform the academy?**

**Required Readings:**


**Recommended Reading:**


**Guest Speaker:**

1. TBD

**October 27: Community colleges: Are they currently meeting the needs of students in the 21st century?**

**Required Readings:**

Recommended Readings:


Guest Speaker:

1. Special guest, Jean Kartje, who currently works as the Vice President for Academic Affairs at the College of DuPage will offer her perspectives on issues currently facing community colleges.

November 3: For-profit colleges: Disruptive technologies or innovations within pre-existing structures?

Required Readings:

3. United States Senate (2012, July 30). *For profit higher education: The failure to safeguard the federal investment and ensure student success (Executive Summary).* Majority Committee Staff Report and Accompanying Minority Committee Staff Views: U.S. Senate, Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee.

Recommended Readings:


Guest Speaker:

1. TBD
November 10: The Professoriate: What challenges lie ahead?

Required Readings:


Guest Speaker:

1. Special guest, Dr. Bridget Kelly, will discuss her research related to the professional pathways of women of color in the academy and provide an opportunity for us to provide feedback on a current manuscript under development.

November 17: Student topical presentations

Required Readings: TBA

November 24: Student topical presentations

Required Readings: TBA

December 1: Course conclusion

1. Celebratory breakfast at the home of Mark Engberg and concluding thoughts and reflections on the first semester of the doctoral program.
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<td>Student meets all deadlines</td>
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<td>Student attends class and is punctual for all professional obligations</td>
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<td>Student communicates promptly with faculty, supervisors, employers, and peers (no longer than 2 business days)</td>
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<td>Student is able to express himself or herself appropriately (verbally and in writing) with faculty, supervisors, employers, and peers</td>
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<td>Student is able to work effectively with peers on assignments</td>
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<td>Student demonstrates ethical behavior in all professional and graduate student work</td>
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<td>Student adequately addresses feedback provided on coursework (e.g., grammar, APA style, content)</td>
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<td>Student accurately cites material in academic work ascribing appropriate credit for information conveyed</td>
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<td>Fairness</td>
<td>Student demonstrates exceptional ability to understand the situations of others and responds in an appropriate, proactive manner</td>
<td>Student demonstrates ability to understand the situations of others and responds in an appropriate, proactive manner</td>
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<td>Student is considerate (verbally and nonverbally) of appropriately expressed feelings and opinions of others</td>
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<td>Student exhibits active listening skills</td>
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<td><strong>All students can learn</strong></td>
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