GENERAL INFORMATION

Course Description

What is the aim of research in education policy? To offer solutions to problems for and/or with policymakers? To offer policymakers critiques of policy (“policy forensics”)? To give the marginalized a voice in policymaking? To problematize the practice of policymaking? These broad questions hint at the variety of “entry points” that can be taken when approaching the field of education policy, a field that is diverse and contentious. In this course I have two primary aims: (1) to explore the diversity that makes up the field, offering students a chance to become familiar with the various theories and research methods that have and continue to shape thinking about education reform, and (2) to reflect on how different “education policy logics” have shaped and continue to shape how we “do” education policy research. This last aim asks of you to not only become familiar with what has been done in the field, but to become aware of the various stances (currently) available, the lines of inquiry you may take, and the repertoire of thinking tools that are at your disposal.

Essential Questions

I assume that each student brings her or his own questions to this course and will pursue answers to those questions. In addition, it is my hope that the readings and discussions will help provoke new questions about education
policy that are different from those with which you began the course. The following specific questions will guide our collective inquiry, some of which are based upon a set of excellent questions posed by P. Taylor Webb (2013):

- What is education policy? What are (or should be) its aims? Is it an instrument of governance or a practice?
- How is education policy ordered and understood through different theoretical lenses?
- What makes for valuable education policy research? Must education policy research focus on “problems” and “solutions”? Can or should researchers also be policymakers?

**Primary Course Objective & Learning Outcomes**

In becoming familiar with the methods of analysis in education policy, and so as to respond to student questions and the course essential questions, students will need to summarize, analyze, and evaluate course texts by being able to recognize and speak to the different “education policy logics” (or ways of thinking about policy) that order and shape the research. Our goal will be to develop these skills together.

This course aims to advance the following Program learning objectives:

**Commitment to Social Justice.** Students will demonstrate the following competencies related to social justice and service:

An understanding of the ethical dimensions of higher education’s role in fostering social justice across the world; an understanding of, and ability to reflect critically on, historical and contemporary issues within higher education and to reflect on how colleges and universities can address these issues in a just society; a personal and professional commitment to social justice; an appreciation of and respect for diverse perspectives, cultures, lifestyles, ways of knowing, etc., and a commitment to serving others.

**Analytical Inquiry.** Students will demonstrate the following competencies related to analytical inquiry:

The ability to develop and support reasonable and logically sound interpretations; the ability to analyze various organizational, curricular, fiscal, legal, cultural, and historical structures, models, policies, and professional practices from multiple points of view and theoretical perspectives; the ability to use theoretical and empirical research to address and solve administrative and
instructional problems in colleges and universities; and the ability to continually assess and improve one’s own analytical abilities.

Research and Assessment Competence. Graduates will demonstrate the following outcomes related to research and assessment competence:

A thorough understanding of different paradigmatic assumptions and how they influence the research process; and, the ability to read and critically review various types of research studies.

Communication Skills. Students will demonstrate the following communication competencies:

Effective written communication skills that demonstrate high levels of clarity, comprehension, synthesis and critical thinking and analysis.

Student Dispositions

Each course in the School of Education focuses on one or more professional dispositions. Students in this course are offered opportunities to receive feedback on their dispositional growth in the areas of professionalism and fairness. The descriptions for the expected behaviors for the disposition(s) can be found on the rubric posted in LiveText for this course.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

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/

Diversity

This course addresses diversity in the field of education through many of its assigned readings. In addition, I as instructor will encourage class members to consider ways of thinking about diversity (e.g., social class, gender, ethnicity, religion, race, sexual and gender identity, and age) as we consider different topics. Diversity among enrollees in the course is critical to this course’s success. As instructor, I will promote full participation and contribution by all class members, asking that varied viewpoints be thoroughly considered and respected by all of our class.

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/

Use of Technology
As part of integrating technology into teaching and learning, the Sakai course management system (https://sakai.luc.edu/) will be used throughout this course. Additionally, you must have working access to your Loyola e-mail account. Either use your luc.edu address or set it to forward to another e-mail account that you check regularly since the luc.edu e-mail is the one that will be used to communicate with you.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Guidelines

What I expect from you:

• Be aware that this course uses Central European Summer Time (CEST), which is UTC + 2 hours, as its benchmark.

• Within the first week (14-20 June), I request that each student schedule a brief meeting with me via Skype. This is to allow us to get to know one another better and so that I can learn of your particular interests and aims. Please keep in mind that the course uses CEST, so plan accordingly.

• For this course the week begins on Saturday. You will have Saturday through Wednesday to complete the necessary readings for the course. Feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns you have as you are completing the reading.

• On Wednesdays you will be expected to post to the discussion board. A late posting is considered any posting made after midnight on Wednesday CEST.

• On Thursday you are expected to read fellow students’ posts and respond to one another. Again, a late response is considered any posting made after midnight on Thursday CEST.

• Please regularly check your Loyola email Monday through Friday.

• All written work must be submitted as Microsoft Word documents. This work must be double-spaced, and utilize Times New Roman 12 pt. font.
This course uses the APA style. Please be sure to use this for all assignments, including blog posts.

All work for the semester will be submitted via Sakai.

You must have Adobe Acrobat Reader installed on your computer in order to read the pdf files I will provide.

What you can expect from me:

• I will be available to respond to your questions/concerns via email, telephone or Skype.
  o You may contact me at jkowalczyk1@luc.edu. I will respond to all emails within 24 hours of receiving them Monday through Friday (9AM to 6PM CEST).
  o If you would like to schedule additional Skype meetings, please contact me at jkowalczyk1@luc.edu to set something up.
  o If you prefer to speak by telephone, you may reach me at 0039-346-371-8719.

• I will check my Loyola email regularly Monday through Friday. If you do not receive a reply from me (replying to an email or phone call) within twenty-four (24) hours during the work week (Monday 9 AM – Friday 6 PM), you should call/write me back to ask if I received your message.

• I will also participate in the conversation via discussion board and blog posts. In addition, I will provide a summary of our weekly virtual conversations, sent to you by Loyola email on Friday. I do this to try to wrap up each week’s work, in order to provide a unified to the various paths the conversation may take. My summaries are not intended to be definitive, but rather a provisional summary that may well lead to further conversation in the following weeks.

General information:
• The course will be divided broadly into three thematic sections, each section comprised of two weeks.

  -Policy 1.0- Education policy work as scientific problem-solving (working with policymakers; coming from a ‘rationalist’ model)

  -Policy 2.0- Education policy work as analysis of the effects of policy,
policy implementation, and policy as a practice (critiquing solutions/offering different solutions)

-Policy 3.0- *Education policy work as problematization* of the knowledge generated and utilized to identify and “solve” problems, objects, contexts (no solutions offered)

- At the beginning of each week (Saturday), I will post for the week in Sakai to help frame the readings and discussion/blog posts.

- This course will use two tools via Sakai: the discussion forum and blogs. This is meant to take the place of face-to-face classroom discussions, and therefore it is crucial that we all, myself included, take care to respond to one another thoughtfully and respectfully. In particular I aim to adapt dialogic instruction, which privileges collaborative inquiry, to our virtual classroom.

My primary aim is to use the discussion boards and blogs to foster the kind of dialogic learning I strive for in face-to-face settings. As you may know, the idea of dialogic learning stems in part from the work of the Russian philosopher of language, Mikhail Mikhailovich Bakhtin, and in part from the work of the Brazilian philosopher and educator, Paolo Freire. Bakhtin held that any socio-cognitive event requires not just “taking turns” as in a conversation, but a tension or conflict between interlocutors that is focused on the struggle to make meaning from various perspectives. Freire argued that a banking model of instruction devalues students, seeing them as mere receptacles in which to deposit information, rather full human beings with the capacity to inquire and contribute to meaning-making. Drawing upon their work, I have continually tried to create learning environments where teachers and students ask questions and figure things out together. That said, to do this requires all of us to be engaged.

You are encouraged to:

—Pose questions, interpret and construct knowledge through your interactions with everyone in the cohort, myself included.

—Strive to pick up on, elaborate and question what your colleagues are saying.

—Ask authentic questions for which you do not have a pre-specified answer.
—Seek to engage one another's responses by incorporating them into your further questions or comments.

—Take responsibility for making the discussion (via discussion forum or blogging) useful and interesting.

My hope is that as a cohort you have already begun to create the optimal conditions for collaborative work: that you express yourself respectfully and honestly; that you find engaging one another a valuable part of your learning process, and that you feel safe to explore ideas and raise questions with one another. I'm looking forward to joining your ongoing conversation.

• You are welcome to supplement your postings (so long as links are given via the Sakai tools) with videos, audio recordings, and/or pictures.

• The assigned librarian for this course is Tracy Ruppman, who can be reached at truppman@luc.edu.

Assignments & Grading

Participation:

Regular and active participation is an essential, unmistakably important aspect of this online course. The expectation of the instructor is that students will log on a minimum of two times every seven days. It is critical that you read all of the module/assignment materials as well as all of the public discussion and blog materials. Your full participation on a weekly basis is not only a requirement, it is an essential aspect of the online course process. All students are expected to do the work assigned and to notify the instructor when emergencies arise that make it impossible to do so.

The grading policy basically rewards two things: the quality and timeliness of your responses and assignments.

—In terms of quality, your submissions should be well-written, follow the style and format guidelines listed above and clearly address the issues being discussed. Note: your posts on the discussion board (Forum) may take a more informal approach and do not require the use of APA, etc.

—I also emphasize timeliness as this course is especially constrained in terms of the time available to us. For this reason, please note these guidelines specifically related to deadlines:
Guidelines for Discussion Board posts in Forum:

- I will read all posts and will respond occasionally; when necessary I will act as a moderator; and I will provide a summary of the conversation/follow-up at the week’s end.
- Your original post to the discussion board (not a reply to other students) should be at a minimum 150 words.
- You must respond to at least two other classmates, each reply having a minimum of 75 words.
- Your post ought to:
  - demonstrate understanding of the topic being discussed;
  - highlight connections you are making between readings and discussion;
  - relate new information with material previously covered and/or with prior knowledge;
  - discuss at a critical level (in other words, not just reciting facts from the reading, discussion, etc.);
  - offer reasons for your opinions.
- Posts that appear after the deadlines will not be graded.
- Discussion board etiquette: no offensive language; no rudeness; be respectful, even when you disagree; and clearly state what you believe, even if you’re disagreeing.

You may also refer to the following rubric as regards the discussion board: http://www.luc.edu/media/lucedu/facultycenter/pdfs/rubric_asynchronous_rev.pdf

Guidelines for Blogging:

- Your original post ought to be approximately 300 words.
- Keep your audience (us) in mind as you write: you’re blogging to start a conversation.
- Describe/summarize the work/topic you are focusing on in as short a space as possible.
- Know the points you want to make beforehand.
- Regarding your conclusions: keep it simple, add your final thoughts and leave things open (such as asking a question), so as to invite discussion.
- Check for spelling, grammar, and flow.
- Use APA.
- When commenting on a blog, give a substantive, thoughtful response (approximately 100 words).
- Provide some context for your comment, be respectful, make a point, and proofread.
Written Assignment #1: Op-ed Essay

Your assignment is to write an op-ed essay on a policy issue in which you are interested. Write an opinion you would like to see in print. It is expected that you take seriously the challenge of adding something new to the public conversation and that you write something you would like to have people read. In preparing for this assignment, consider where you would want to see your op-ed published and select and attach a copy of an editorial you admire from that publication. Use the selected editorial as a model for your own.

Op-ed Essay Guidelines:

- 700-800 words
- 12-point font and double space
- APA style
- Once you’ve decided upon a topic, gather information regarding what people are currently saying about it. What is the debate and where is it happening?
- Take care with crafting your opening hook, placement of thesis statement, length of sentences and closing punch line.
- Keep intended audience of the publication in mind, especially regarding your use of academic jargon.
- Take a stand: make a specific recommendation.
- An “A” op-ed does the following:
  - Argument: Smoothly integrates components of classical argumentation (see attached document on argument).
  - Style: Writing is engaging and effective for its intended purpose and audience; reflects attention to strategic and varied use of syntax and diction.
  - Language Conventions: Smoothly integrates sources using a variety of methods (quote, paraphrase, summary); contains very few or no errors with respect to language conventions.

Written Assignment #2: Final paper

Your final paper prompt will be detailed later on in the course. It will not be a typical research paper, though you may need to do some additional readings outside of the required reading. My aim for this paper is to provide you with an opportunity to reflect upon the three policy logics we have explored through a particular theme or topic you have chosen and followed over the last six weeks.
Your grades will be calculated as follows: 30% participation (discussion board & commenting on blogposts); 10% each blogpost; 20% the op-ed paper; and 30% for your final paper.

Textbooks & Readings

You are required to purchase one text for this course:


All other readings will be available electronically (uploaded to Sakai-Resources or available online via Loyola Library) or can be found at the websites indicated in the syllabus.

Calendar

**NOTE:** This is a 6-week course, so you may find the reading load per week heavier than you are used to in a full semester. Please budget your time well!

**Module 1: June 14-20**

Introduction: Thinking about Education Policy

*Required readings

Set 1: Overviews


Set 2: Focused Discussion on Higher Ed

*Suggested further reading*


*Skype appointments*
*Post to Discussion Forum Wednesday, June 18*
*Respond to colleague(s) in Forum Friday, June 20*

**Module 2: June 21-27**
Policy 1.0: Policy as finding Solutions, the “Rational” model

*Required readings*


Select one of the following:


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Select one of the following, to read selections only (tba):


*Suggested further reading:


*Discussion Board post due Wednesday, June 25
*Comment on colleague(s) post(s) due Friday, June 27
*Blogpost 1 due Friday, June 27  [INDEPENDENT PROJECT]

**Module 3: June 28-July 4**
Introducing Policy 2.0: Critical analysis of policy

*Required Readings

Reading 1:


Readings 2:


(Note: You can access the above book using this link: http://luc.eblib.com/patron/FullRecord.aspx?p=356241)


*Comment on colleague(s) blogposts by Wednesday, July 2
*Post to Discussion Forum Wednesday, July 2
*Respond to colleague(s) in Forum by Friday, July 4

**Module 4: July 5-11**

*Critical policy analyses*

*Readings*


Recommended (but not required) are the following:


A lecture by Giroux on higher education at this link: http://youtu.be/98n-0eEs6Ck

*Discussion board post due Wednesday, July 9
*Comment on colleague(s) post(s) due Friday, July 11
*OP-ED ASSIGNMENT DUE FRIDAY, JULY 11 (11:59 pm CEST)

**Module 5: July 12-18**
Policy 3.0: Problematizing Education Policy

*Required readings


*Suggested further readings


*Post to Discussion Forum Wednesday, July 16
*Respond to colleague(s) in Forum Friday, July 18
*Blogpost 2 due Friday, July 18

**Module 6: July 19-25**
Analyses that Problematize?

*Required readings

For the last week, I would like you to select two of the following five pieces to read. (This will end up being about 40 pages of reading, total.)


Deadlines:
*Respond to colleague(s) 2nd blogposts by Wednesday, July 23
*Discussion Board post due Wednesday, July 23
*Respond to colleague(s) discussion board posts by Friday, July 25

FINAL PAPER DUE Monday, JULY 28, 11:59 pm CEST