Fall 2009

GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

Course Title: Education Policy: Comparative and International Perspectives
EDUC 873
Class Date and Time: Mondays, 7:20-10:00 PM
Class Location: 253 Krug Hall
Instructor: Valerie O. Sutter
Vsutter8@aol.com

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION
This course uses an interdisciplinary approach to study education policy and policymaking in comparative perspective. Lectures, discussions and readings will focus on description and analysis of educational policy issues in selected countries of Africa, Asia, Latin America, and Europe. The course also addresses education policy-related issues which transcend national boundaries and have implications for educators in internationalizing curricula and in fostering social justice and global awareness.

II. STUDENT OUTCOMES: At the conclusion of the course, students should be able to:

1. Identify and analyze the salient social, political, cultural, economic, and other factors that affect education policies in selected countries.

2. Apply an interpretation of policy in other educational systems to a more enlightened understanding of American educational policy making.

3. Identify, distinguish, and apply differing theoretical and methodological approaches to the comparative study of national education policies.

4. Understand the formation of educational policies as an ingredient of the planning process consistent with a value system and a country's overall development.

5. Describe, interpret and analyze educational problems in cross-cultural perspective.

6. Appreciate the complexity of the issues which must be addressed in the promotion of social justice, human rights and the creation of a sustainable global community and the role of education policies in pursuit of these goals.

III. Relationship to Program Goals and Professional Organizations:
The conceptual framework for this course is linked to the goals of the Graduate School of Education and more specifically to the mission of the Center for Education Policy as outlined in its Charter: (1) Translate education research into policy options and recommendations for a variety of audiences (decision makers, practitioners, and the public); (2) Conduct timely, sound, evidence-based analysis; and (3) Develop interdisciplinary and cross-sector education policy
networks. The student outcomes are linked to this mission, in particular to the importance of evidence-based analysis.

IV. NATURE OF COURSE DELIVERY

This course is taught using lectures, class discussions and student presentations.

V. REQUIRED READING


*Some articles will be assigned as additional required reading during the course.

VI. RECOMMENDED READING


**Journals:** (some examples)

*Comparative Education Review*, the journal of the Comparative and International Education Society

*International Journal of Educational Development*

*International Review of Education*

*Anthropology and Education Quarterly*

*Compare*

*Oxford Studies in Comparative Education*

*Comparative Education*

**VII. COURSE CONTENT**

**Class 1** (8/31) COURSE INTRODUCTION

Review content, assignments, etc.; introductions: your experiences and interests

Comparative and international education approaches and perspectives (as a field of inquiry; purposes; and resources)

Global trends and themes in education policy

We begin with ourselves: characteristics of American education; educational borrowing: what has American education borrowed from other countries? What can we learn from other nations?

**Class 2** (9/14) TRENDS: MARKET FORCES

What drives policy and why? Global competitiveness and academic olympics:
Comparative perspectives (TIMSS, PISA, etc.)

Reforms in British education: policy lessons from England (school choice, national standards, testing, etc.)

*Read for discussion: Nation at Risk and Rotberg: preface & 14. Also, in preparation for this class; peruse and note key comparisons: http://nces.ed.gov/timss

Class 3 (9/21) Political & Economic Transformation

Post-Soviet era: Russian education

Education and the rise of China: current trends


Class 4 (9/28) Focus on Asia: Tradition and Change

Singapore: more on market forces…investing in human capital; challenges to educational change

Japanese educational policy: current issues and reforms

South Korea: economic and education “miracle”?

The influence of culture

*Read: Rotberg, Chap.10 & 11.

Class 5 (10/5) Education and Development

Is education a human right?
Poverty, educational policy and the developing world (Millennium Goals)

Education for All: Focus on the education of girls

Child labor: going to work vs. going to school:

Class 6 (*Tuesday 10/13) Education and Development (cont.)

India: Education as a change agent? for the status quo? popular education alternatives (“Deevalaya”)

Sub-Saharan Africa: overview (colonial legacies and education trends)

*Final paper proposals due
**Class 7** (10/19) EDUCATION AND SOCIAL JUSTICE  
South Africa: educational policy’s role in pursuit of social justice in the post-apartheid era

Policy comparisons with the U.S.: segregation and beyond

Read for discussion: Fiske and Ladd, *Elusive equity* (paper due); also, Rotberg, chap. 3

**Class 8** (10/26) LATIN AMERICA  
Latin America: achievements, challenges and current trends

Cuba: academic achievement and education equity in the context of international isolation

Haiti: education challenges in a “failed”? state

Chile: school voucher policy and results

*Read Rotberg, chapter 4.*

**Class 9** (11/2) LATIN AMERICA & CARIBBEAN (cont.)  
Discussion: Freire’s *Pedagogy of the oppressed* (paper due)

Policy choices and popular education models: “Fe y Alegria” (Bolivia; Nicaragua); and “Escuela Nueva” (Guatemala and Colombia); “Progresa Oportunidades” (Mexico)

**Class 10** (11/9) EDUCATION AND CONFLICT  
Education as a component of US foreign policy: projects in Afghanistan and Iraq

Youth in the Middle East: trends

Education, human rights and democracy building

**Class 11** (11/16) POLICY PROMISES AND CHALLENGES  
Australia & New Zealand: education goals beyond an economic agenda

Sweden: education’s social welfare policies for the 21st century

Israel: equity and excellence compete

Turkey: educational borrowing and cultural traditions

*Read in Rotberg: 7, 8, 9, 13 & 15.*
Class 12 (11/23) CHANGING DEMOGRAPHICS
France, Canada and Germany: education traditions and growing diversity

“The World in a Zip Code”: Diversity in American schools

*Read Rotberg, 5, 6 & 12.

Class 13 (11/30) TECHNOLOGY & EDUCATION
Promises and challenges of educational technology: One Laptop per Child, etc.

COMING HOME/WORLD VIEWS: policy implications
Global interdependence, human rights and social justice: a role for education policy? Global trends and local impact for education policy

Final papers/projects: student presentations

*Read for discussion: Rotberg, 16 and conclusion

Class 14 (12/7) FINAL CLASS: ANSWERS? QUESTIONS?
Continuing: final papers/projects: student presentations

Course summary and conclusions; lessons learned? remaining questions?

VIII. PERFORMANCE BASED EVALUATION

A detailed rubric for evaluation of student performance is included on the last page of this syllabus. The following components will be evaluated using that rubric.

1. Class participation, including in-class assignments.

2. Completion and discussion of required readings.

3. Three (3) short written assignments (3-4 pages) related to the required books (Postiglione, Fiske & Ladd, Freire). These papers are due on the day the book is discussed in class. Guidelines for these assignments will be explained the first day of the course.

4. Select, read and review (1) one comparative education research article of interest to you and relating to educational policy in another country. In a short oral presentation (about 5-10 minutes) summarize and lead a discussion of your article. During each class session, usually at the beginning, one (or two students) will present; be prepared to hand out a brief, one (1) page outline to all class members: outline should include: complete citation for your article; author’s thesis or main
5. A paper or project about a specific education policy (ies) in another country or countries and related to a theme, issue, or idea included in the course content or objectives. This paper should pose a question, show evidence of scholarly research, and include critical-interpretive assessments and conclusions. This paper must be prepared in APA style and be approximately 15 pages in length. Papers will be presented to the class (15-minute presentations) at the last 2 class sessions. A proposal (written) for the final paper is due at Class 6 (10/13). The final paper is due at the last class (12/7).

Grades:
Participation and class discussion: 10%
Short written assignments on (3) required readings: 30%
Oral presentation of journal article: 10%
Final paper: 50%

EVALUATION
Grading Scale:

A = 96-100  A- = 92-95
B+ = 89-91  B = 85-88  B- = 80-84
C+ = 76-79  C = 73-75
F = 72 and below -- A grading rubric is attached.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR ALL GSE STUDENTS

The Graduate School of Education (GSE) expects all students to read and abide by the following:

✓ Students are expected to exhibit professional behavior and dispositions. See www.gmu.edu for a listing of these dispositions.
✓ Students must follow the guidelines of the University Honor Code. See http://www.gmu.edu/catalog/apolicies/#TOC_H12 for the full Honor Code.
✓ Students must agree to abide by the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing. See http://mail.gmu.edu and click on Responsible Use of Computing at the bottom of the screen.
✓ Students with disabilities who see accommodations in a course must be registered with the GMU Disability Resource Center (DRC) and inform the instructor, in writing, at the beginning of the semester. See www.gmu.edu/students/drc or call 703-993-2474 to access the DRC.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade/Points</th>
<th>Quality of Written Work</th>
<th>Completeness of Work</th>
<th>Timeliness</th>
<th>Class Participation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>A</strong> 96 – 100</td>
<td>Exceptional quality and insight; a rare &amp; valuable contribution to the field.</td>
<td>100% complete</td>
<td>100% on time</td>
<td>Outstanding; facilitates and promotes conversation focused on the topic; questions &amp; comments reveal thoughtful reaction. Good team participant</td>
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<td>A- 92 – 95</td>
<td>Convincingly on target; demonstrates evidence of understanding and application; clear and concise writing; the reader is not distracted by grammar and/or spelling and citation errors.</td>
<td>Accurate &amp; seamless writing; virtually a complete product</td>
<td>Almost always on time; rare but forgivable tardiness (such as serious personal or family illness). Instructor is notified in advance that a paper may be late.</td>
<td>Well above average doctoral student; actively helps move group toward goal.</td>
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<td><strong>B+</strong> 89 – 91</td>
<td>Competent; provides credible evidence of understanding and application; some lapses in organization, citations and/or writing clarity.</td>
<td>Moderate shortcomings; minor elements missing that distract the instructor’s ability to see the product as a whole.</td>
<td>Assignments late more than once or without prior conversation with instructor; not necessarily chronic.</td>
<td>Reliable and steady worker; questions and comments reveal some thought and reflection.</td>
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<td>B 85 – 88</td>
<td>Evidence of understanding presented but incomplete; writing indicates gaps in logic; grammar and/or spelling errors distract the reader. Weak or insufficient citations.</td>
<td>Evidence of effort but one or more significant and important points are missed or not addressed.</td>
<td>More than half the assignments are late, but none are excessively late.</td>
<td>Doesn’t contribute often, but generally reveals some thought and reflection. Follows rather than leads group activities.</td>
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<td>B- 80 – 84</td>
<td>Barely passable for graduate credit; only enough to get by; little evidence of understanding; assignments lack clarity and organization; little evidence of proof reading. Citations absent or inaccurate.</td>
<td>Barely sufficient; work is the least that could be done to justify graduate credit.</td>
<td>Excessively or repeatedly late.</td>
<td>Few meaningful contributions to class discussions. Little evidence of participation.</td>
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<td>C 79 and below</td>
<td>Undergraduate level and quality; unsophisticated; assignments show little or not connection to course content or concepts.</td>
<td>Insufficient evidence of understanding and application; important elements missing or difficult to find.</td>
<td>Excessively or repeatedly late.</td>
<td>Weak or minimal participation; passive; often sidetracks group.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>F</strong></td>
<td>Unacceptable</td>
<td>Difficult to recognize as the assigned task.</td>
<td>Missed or not submitted. Incompletes not made up.</td>
<td>No constructive participation; destructive; demeaning toward other points of view.</td>
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