

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

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**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**

Fiske, E.B. & Ladd, H.F. (2004). *Elusive equity: Education reform in post-apartheid South Africa*. Washington, DC: Brookings.

Freire, P. (1986). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. New York: Continuum.

National Commission on Excellence in Education (1983). *A nation at risk: The imperative for educational reform*. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office. Available online at <http://www.ed.gov/pubs/NatAtRisk/index.html>.

Postiglione, G. A. (Ed.) (2006). *Education and social change in China: Inequality in a market economy*. Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe.

Rotberg, I.C., (Ed.) (2004). *Balancing change and tradition in global education reform*. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow, 2004.

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

#### **VI. RECOMMENDED READING**

Achebe, C. (1959). *Things fall apart*. New York: Anchor Books .

Arnové, R. F. & Torres, C.A. (1999). *Comparative education. The dialectic of the global and the local*. Baltimore: Rowman and Littlefield.

Baker, D. P. and G. LeTendre (2005). *National differences, global similarities: World culture and the future of schooling*. Stanford: Stanford U. Press.

Barber, B.R. (1995). *Jihad vs. mcworld; how globalization and tribalism are reshaping the world*. New York: Ballantine/Random House.

Beauchamp, E. R. (2001) *The comparative education reader*. New York.: Falmer.

Carnoy, M. (2006). *Education and social transition in the third world*. Princeton: Princeton U. Press.

- Carnoy, M., Gove, A., & Marshall, J. (2007). *Cuba's academic advantage; why students in Cuba do better in school*. Stanford: Stanford U. Press.
- Chubb, J. & Moe, T. (1992) *A lesson in school reform in Great Britain*. Washington: Brookings.
- DeCoker, G. (Ed.) (2002). *National standards and school reform in Japan and the United States*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Eggers, D. (2006). *What is the what*. New York: Vintage/Random H.
- Friedman, T. L. (1999). *The Lexus and the olive tree. Understanding globalization*. New York: Random House.
- Friedman, T. L. (2005). *The world is flat. A brief history of the 21<sup>st</sup> century*. New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux.
- Fuller, B. (1991). *Growing up modern. The western state builds third-world schools*. New York: Routledge.
- Hannum, E. and Park, A. (Eds.). (2007). *Education and reform in China*. London: Routledge.
- Hosseini, Khaled. (2003). *The kite runner*. New York: Riverhead .
- Jansen, J. D. (2009). *Knowledge in the blood; confronting race and the Apartheid past*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Levy, S. (2006). *Progress against poverty. Sustaining Mexico's Progres-Oportunidades Program*. Washington: Brookings.
- Lewis, C.C. (1995). *Educating hearts and minds. Reflections on Japanese preschool and elementary education*. Cambridge, UK and New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Lewis, M.A. & Lockheed, M. E. (2006). *Inexcusable absence; why 60 million girls still aren't in school and what to do about it*. Washington, DC: Center for Global Development.
- Lifelong learning in the global knowledge economy; challenges for developing countries*. (2003). Washington, DC: The World Bank.
- Lutz, C.A. & Collins, J.L. (1993). *Reading National Geographic*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Mezlekia, N. (2000). *Notes from the hyena's belly*. New York: Picador/St. Martin's Press.
- Miller, D. C., et al (August 2007). *Comparative indicators of education in the United States and other G-8 countries: 2006*. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Dept. Of Education.

- Mundy, K. (Ed.). (2008). *Comparative and international education: issues for teachers*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Nafisi, A. (2003). *Reading Lolita in Tehran*. New York: Random House.
- Nicholls, J. (2006). *Textbooks across cultures: international debates and perspectives*. Oxford: Symposium.
- Paton, A. (1940). *Cry, the beloved country*. New York: Scribner's.
- Postiglione, G. A., and Tan, J. (Eds.). (2007). *Going to school in East Asia*. Westport, CT.: Greenwood.
- Rao, N. and Smyth I. (Eds.). (2005). *Partnerships for girls' education*. Great Britain: Oxfam.
- Reimers, F. (Ed.) (2000). *Unequal schools, unequal chances: The challenges to equal opportunity in the Americas*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Rivoli, P. (2005). *The travels of a T-shirt in the global economy: An economist examines the markets, power, and politics of world trade*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley and Sons.
- Rohlen, T. P. & LeTendre, G.K. (Eds.) (1998). *Teaching and learning in Japan*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Sachs, J. (2005). *The end of poverty. Economic possibilities for our time*. New York: Penguin Press.
- Segall, W. E. (2006). *School reform in a global society*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield.
- Singer, P.W. (2005). *Children at war*. New York: Pantheon.
- Stearns, K. (1996). *School reform: Lessons from England*. Princeton: Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.
- Stevenson, H.W. & Stigler, J.W. (1994). *The learning gap: What we can learn from Japanese and Chinese education*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Stigler, J. W. & Hiebert, J. (1999). *The teaching gap. Best ideas from the world's teachers for improving education in the classroom*. New York: Simon and Schuster.
- Stiglitz, J.E. (2003). *Globalization and its discontents*. New York: Norton.
- Stromquist, N. and Monkman, K. (Eds.) (2000). *Globalization and education: Integration and contestation across cultures*. Lanham, MD: Rowan & Littlefield.
- Suarez-Orozco, M. M. & Qin-Hillard, D.B. (Eds.) (2004). *Globalization: Culture and education in the new millennium*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

- Tobin, J. J., Yeh Hsueh, M. Karasawa (2009). *Preschool in three cultures revisited; Japan, China and the U.S.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Tomasevski, K. (2003). *Education denied: costs and remedies.* London & New York: Zed.
- Weber, E. (2006). *Teaching in the new South Africa at Merrydale High School.* Lanham, MD: University Press of America.
- Weiner, M. (1991). *The child and the state in India.* Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Wolf, P. J. & Macedo, S. (Eds.) (2004). *Educating citizens. International perspectives on civic values and school choice.* Washington, DC: Brookings.
- Wolff, L., Navarro, J.C. and Gonzalez (Eds.). (2005). *Private education and public policy in Latin America.* Washington: PREAL.
- Wright, D. B. (2003). *The promise of the revolution. Stories of fulfillment and struggles in China's hinterland.* Lanham, Boulder and New York: Roman & Littlefield.

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

\*Read for discussion: Postiglione, *Education and social change in China*. Paper due. Also, Rotberg, 1 & 2.

**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 (“Deepalaya”)

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); "Progresos 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 21<sup>st</sup> 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

point; 2 or 3 key findings; your insights (i.e. value of the article, connection to course themes, etc.

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](http://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](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](http://www.gmu.edu/students/drc) or call 703-993-2474 to access the DRC.

<b>Grade/Points</b>	<b>Quality of Written Work</b>	<b>Completeness of Work</b>	<b>Timeliness</b>	<b>Class Participation</b>
A 96 – 100  A- 92 – 95	Exceptional quality and insight; a rare & valuable contribution to the field.  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.	100% complete  Accurate & seamless writing; virtually a complete product	100% on time  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.	Outstanding; facilitates and promotes conversation focused on the topic; questions & comments reveal thoughtful reaction. Good team participant  Well above average doctoral student; actively helps move group toward goal.
B+ 89 –91  B 85 – 88  B- 80 – 84	Competent; provides credible evidence of understanding and application; some lapses in organization, citations and/or writing clarity.  Evidence of understanding presented but incomplete; writing indicates gaps in logic; grammar and/or spelling errors distract the reader. Weak or insufficient citations.  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.	Moderate shortcomings; minor elements missing that distract the instructor's ability to see the product as a whole.  Evidence of effort but one or more significant and important points are missed or not addressed.  Barely sufficient; work is the least that could be done to justify graduate credit.	Assignments late more than once or without prior conversation with instructor; not necessarily chronic.  More than half the assignments are late, but none are excessively late.  Excessively or repeatedly late.	Reliable and steady worker; questions and comments reveal some thought and reflection.  Doesn't contribute often, but generally reveals some thought and reflection. Follows rather than leads group activities.  Few meaningful contributions to class discussions. Little evidence of participation.
C 79 and below	Undergraduate level and quality; unsophisticated; assignments show little or not connection to course content or concepts.	Insufficient evidence of understanding and application; important elements missing or difficult to find.	Excessively or repeatedly late.	Weak or minimal participation; passive; often sidetracks group.
F	Unacceptable	Difficult to recognize as the assigned task.	Missed or not submitted. Incompletes not made up.	No constructive participation; destructive; demeaning toward other points of view.

