PART I: INTRODUCTION, GOALS, AND EXPECTATIONS

Course Description
This course is intended to help students think critically about debates, research, and frameworks in contemporary higher education policy, with an emphasis on the interplay between domestic and international policy contexts. Throughout the semester, we will explore the tensions between key policy goals such as access and inclusion, accountability, and financing, as well as the consequences (intended and unintended) of those tensions. The course is not intended to provide an in-depth examination of these issues, but rather to help you become an informed and sophisticated consumer of higher education policy through two main strategies:

1. To explore the diversity that makes up the field of higher education policy. The readings for this class are intended to expose you to a variety of policy strategies, discursive styles, and purposes. In some sessions we will focus predominantly on the academic research brought to bear on policy debates, and how it is used—or not used—to shape policy agendas. However, we will also examine different types of policy documents used in domestic and international policymaking, such as issue briefs, white papers, reports, legislation, and measurement instruments.

2. To reflect on how different policy logics and truth regimes have shaped and continue to shape policymaking across institutional, state, national, and international contexts. This requires you to become familiar with leading research in the field, the different positions taken by influential policymakers (such as international organizations like the World Bank), and the repertoire of thinking tools at your disposal.

Course Objectives
Upon completion of this course, students should be able to:

1. Articulate current trends in higher education policy in the US and worldwide, including salient critiques of such trends;
2. Reflect on how different approaches to policy may impact issues like student access and success, governance, and the financing of higher education institutions;
3. Conduct nuanced comparisons of higher education policies in a variety of domestic and international contexts;
4. Compose well-argued, empirically-supported assessments of policy issues in higher education.

**Course Expectations**

This class is structured as a student-centered, collaborative course. As such, the class will be focused around the following learning tenets:

- Shared responsibility among all learners (both instructor and students) for constructing and making sense of knowledge within a community of practice;
- 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 course content.

With this in mind, I expect each of you to take an active role in your learning both inside and outside our virtual classroom. Likewise, an important aspect of a Jesuit education is learning to respect the rights and opinions of others. Please respect others by (1) allowing all classmates the right to voice their opinions without fear of ridicule, and (2) not using profanity or making objectionable (e.g. gendered, racial or ethnic) comments, especially comments directed at a classmate.

**Course Demands**

Graduate courses are demanding; adding the asynchronous online element adds further challenges. It is imperative that students keep up with the readings and assignments. It is a good idea to schedule specific times to devote to (this course). Some works are considerable longer than others, so check the syllabus each week and be certain you have allotted enough time to adequately cover the assigned readings.

**Course Feedback and Special Circumstances**

Students are urged to contact me should they have questions concerning course materials and procedures. If you have any special circumstance that may have some impact on your course work, please let me know so we can establish a plan for assignment completion. If you require assignment accommodations, please contact me early in the semester so that arrangements can be made with Services for Students with Disabilities (SSWD) (http://www.luc.edu/sswd/).

Throughout the semester, I welcome your input about course-related issues. If you have comments or suggestions about the class and how it might be improved, please do let me know—do not wait until the end of the semester. I take student feedback seriously and am open to make adjustments as far as circumstances allow.

**Statement of Intent**

By remaining in this course, students are agreeing to accept this syllabus as a contract and to abide by the guidelines outlined in this document.
PART II: LUC CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND DISPOSITIONS

A conceptual framework that emphasizes “Social Action through Education” guides instructional, extracurricular, and professional activities at Loyola’s School of Education. The Loyola School of Education faculty are dedicated to promoting professionalism in service of social justice by developing students’ knowledge, skills, ethics, and service to improve educational opportunities for all members of society.

This course houses a core assessment for the following Conceptual Framework Standard:

*CFS4: Candidates engage with local and/or global communities in ethical and socially just practices.*

Loyola’s School of Education is committed to the value of diversity in all of its courses. In our examination of policy issues in higher education, we will consider many issues related to social justice, such as equity, diversity, affirmative action, funding patterns, and access to higher education. Examining these issues illustrates how educational institutions both shape and are shaped by wider communities through their accommodation of and resistance to the ideas and values of those groups. This course addresses these issues and invites students to critically reflect on them for their own current and future professional practice in higher education.

**Diversity**
Loyola’s School of Education is committed to the value of diversity in all its courses. This course presents and encourages diverse perspectives on higher education policy, with a special focus on critical perspectives that promote social justice imperatives in analyses of and for policy. The course content is intended to provide a broad perspective on some of the most pressing policy concerns in higher education in the US and in the world, including equitable access and success, higher education as a public good, and the equitable distribution of knowledge. This course addresses these issues and invites students to critically reflect on them for their own current and future professional practice in higher education.

**IDEA Course Evaluation Link for Students**
Each course you take in the School of Education is evaluated through the IDEA Campus Labs system. We ask that when you receive an email alerting you that the evaluation is available that you promptly complete it. To learn more about IDEA or to access the website directly to complete your course evaluation go to: [http://luc.edu/idea/](http://luc.edu/idea/) and click on STUDENT IDEA LOGIN on the left hand side of the page.

**IDEA Objectives**
The following outcomes are deemed ESSENTIAL to this course:

1. Gaining a basic understanding of the subject (e.g., factual knowledge, methods, principles, generalizations, theories)
2. Learning to analyze and critically evaluate ideas, arguments, and points of view
3. Developing skill in expressing oneself orally or in writing

**Dispositions**
All students are assessed on one or more dispositional areas of growth across our programs: *Professionalism, Inquiry, and Social Justice*. The instructor in your course will identify the dispositions assessed in this course and you can find the rubrics related to these dispositions in LiveText. For those
students in non-degree programs, the rubric for dispositions may be available through Sakai, TaskStream or another platform. Disposition data is reviewed by program faculty on a regular basis. This allows faculty to work with students to develop throughout their program and address any issues as they arise. The rubric for assessing dispositional behaviors can be found in Appendix A in this syllabus.

**LiveText**
All students, except those who are non-degree, must have access to LiveText to complete the benchmark assessments aligned to the Conceptual Framework Standards and all other accreditation, school-wide and/or program-wide related assessments. You can access more information on LiveText here: [LiveText](#).

**Syllabus Addendum Link**

- [www.luc.edu/education/syllabus-addendum/](http://www.luc.edu/education/syllabus-addendum/)

This link directs students to statements on essential policies regarding academic honesty, accessibility, ethics line reporting and electronic communication policies and guidelines. We ask that you read each policy carefully.

This link will also bring you to the full text of our conceptual framework that guides the work of the School of Education – *Social Action through Education.*
PART III: PARTICIPATION AND EVALUATION POLICY

Grading Policy

1. Participation on VoiceThread and related activities 30% of final grade
2. State or country background paper 25% of final grade
3. Policy/issue brief 25% of final grade
4. Comparative presentation 20% of final grade

Total points for an A:
94-100
Total points for an A-:
90-93
Total points for a B+:
87-89
Total points for a B:
84-86
Total points for a B-:
80-83
Total points for a C+:
77-79
Total points for a C:
74-76
Total points for a C-:
70-73

Late Assignments Policy
Unless otherwise announced, all assignments must be posted in Sakai by the end of the day (midnight) of the due date. Sakai provides a date and time stamp for all posted materials. You will be penalized points, equivalent to one letter-grade per day, for assignments posted after the due date. If there is an unavoidable problem getting an assignment in on time, please notify me ahead of time to make alternate arrangements.

Communications and Technology Policy
Email will be used as the primary mode of correspondence for this course. As such, it is imperative that you activate your Loyola University account and check it often. Please also check your Loyola spam mail and mail foundry to ensure course related messages are not misdirected.

Additionally, Sakai will be used as a source of continual updates about course material. You can expect that all emails to the instructor will be responded to within 48 hours (if not sooner), not including weekends.

Given the emphasis on email and Sakai communications, please make sure you:

- Check your email at least 3 times per week (more often is better).
- Be patient. Don’t expect an immediate response when sending a message. Generally, two days (not including weekends) is considered a reasonable amount of time to receive a reply.
- Include “subject” headings and use something that is descriptive and refers to a particular assignment or topic.
- Be courteous and considerate. Being honest and expressing yourself freely is important, but being considerate of others online is just as important as in the classroom.
- Make every effort to be clear. Online communication lacks the nonverbal cues that fill in much of the meaning in face-to-face communication.
Do not use all caps. This makes the message hard to read and is considered “shouting.” Check spelling, grammar, and punctuation (you may want to compose in a word processor, then cut and paste the message into the discussion or email).

- Break up large blocks of text into paragraphs and use a space between paragraphs.
- Sign your messages.

**Note: When sending emails through the Sakai system, please make sure you check the “Send a copy of this message to recipient’s email address.”**

**Required Texts**
There is no required textbook. All required readings are available on the Sakai course website. While most readings should be immediately available, I may adapt some of the content for later sessions based on class needs. If this is the case, I’ll let you know ahead of time.

**Course Assignments**
You will be expected to complete the following assignments:

1. **Participation (30% of final grade)**
   Participation is essential in an online asynchronous class environment. You are expected to participate through questions, critiques, illustrations, suggestions, and other forms of constructive feedback. I will assess your participation both by the “quality” and the frequency of comments. In this case, quality is defined as thoughtful, respectful, and insightful questions and comments that serve to strengthen the ensuing dialogue. All conversations will be reviewed to assist in determining your class participation and reading comprehension.

   - For this course the week begins on Saturday. On Friday nights I will make available that week’s Session on Sakai (under the Lessons tab), where you will find an introduction to the week’s readings as well as prompt questions to help guide your responses. On selected weeks there will also be a “Comments” box for certain tasks.
   - You will have Saturday through Tuesday 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.
   - Unless otherwise indicated, all responses to class readings must be posted through VoiceThread on Sakai. This is a communication system that will allow us to have interactive conversations throughout the semester.
   - Each week you will be assigned to a discussion group of 3-4 students. (You will find the group roster for that week under the corresponding Sakai Lesson tab.) You will be responsible for identifying the members of your group and respond to their posts on VoiceThread. The goal is to provide the opportunity for more in-depth discussion in a small group setting, as well as ensuring that all students benefit from interaction with their peers.
   - On Tuesday, you will be expected to post your initial response on VoiceThread. A late posting is considered any posting made after 11:59 pm on Tuesday CST.
   - On Wednesday, you are expected to respond to the posts by the members of your assigned group for that week. Again, a late response is considered any posting made after 11:59 pm on Wednesday CST.
   - 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 instructor and the class TA will respond to comments on Thursdays.
2. **State or country background paper** *(25% of final grade - Due March 27th, by 11:59pm CST/CDT)*

For this assignment, you will write a document that provides a **clear and concise overview of the current state of higher education in a given state (US) or country**. In writing this paper, keep in mind an audience that is unfamiliar with a) higher education systems in general; and b) the target country/state. In other words, your paper should be written in such a way that a lay person could learn about higher education in general and how higher education plays out in your target country/state. The paper should be **5-7 pages (excluding citations), double-spaced, and APA-formatted**.

Background papers (or background sections in broader reports) are an essential part of most policy documents. The purpose of this assignment is to help you develop skills in a) analyzing a higher education system as a whole; b) making difficult decisions about what information to include and what information to leave out when working within strict space limitations (a must in policy writing); and clearly and effectively condensing information from a variety of sources intended for a broad audience.

The background paper will be evaluated using the following criteria:
1. It should clearly identify the geopolitical entity under consideration (e.g., Kansas, Mexico, Oman);
2. It should identify key facets of the higher education system in the entity (e.g., number and types of institutions, enrollments, student composition, main financing strategies, governance, main challenges);
3. It should make appropriate use of supporting literature and evidence on the issue (e.g. higher education reports, national data, academic research);
4. It should be written cognizant of the audience for whom the brief is intended and include an executive summary or abstract;
5. It must be well-written throughout, and in an appropriate formal style and format.

**Note:** Under the “Session 3” in Sakai Lessons tab you will find a comment section. You’re expected to list the state or country you will focus on for this paper, and provide a brief explanation of why you’re choosing it. This assignment is not graded, but it must be submitted to move forward with your background paper.

3. **Group Presentation: Comparative Analysis of a Policy Issue in Two Different Contexts** *(25% - Due April 10th by 11:59 pm CST)*

With a partner, your assignment is to create a VoiceThread presentation where you compare a policy issue (e.g. financing of higher education) in the states/countries you focused on in the first assignment.

The purpose of this assignment is for you to concisely articulate the differences or similarities in how the policy has been implemented in each country, and to provide contextual information that helps explain those differences or similarities. What contextual factors help explain, for example, the difference in how the US and Canada allocate funding for higher education at the federal and state levels? Or, what contextual factors can help explain the similarities between student aid schemes in Colombia and Brazil?

This is an integrative assignment where you will have to consult extensively with each other about your respective country/state and a salient policy issue pertinent to both.

The presentation will be evaluated using the following criteria:
1. Your presentation should be between 7-10 minutes.
2. It should include a PowerPoint presentation that helps the audience better understand the topic.
3. It should be engaging for the audience and combine depth of information with visual appeal.
4. The PowerPoint should be carefully proofread for typos and spelling errors.

Note: Under “Session 5” in Sakai you will find a comment section. Please list the name of your presentation partner, as well as a few sentences explaining the focus of your presentation. (This may change, but by this point you should have at least a sense of what you intend to do.) This assignment is not graded, but it must be submitted to move forward with your presentation.

4. **Policy/issue brief (25% - Due May 5th, by 11:59pm CST/CDT)**

You will write a **policy brief addressing a pressing policy issue, topic, or problem, in the higher education context identified in the first assignment** (e.g. Arizona; China). The purpose of the policy brief is to help you deepen your understanding of a contemporary higher education issue in a format that is commonly used in the policy world. Your brief should be between **8-10 pages (excluding citations), double-spaced, and APA-formatted**. It should provide a concise yet thorough overview of the topic at hand and its main facets in your chosen context.

Some possible topics include, but are not limited to: Performance-based funding, financial aid, governance, student access, affirmative action, equity issues, student debt, accreditation, and quality assurance.

The policy brief will be evaluated using the following criteria:

1. It should focus on a higher education policy issue that is relevant to the society in your target context.
2. It should provide a brief statement of the policy problem.
3. It should include a discussion of the different facets of the policy issue, with appropriate subheadings.
4. It must reflect the course content.
5. It should make appropriate use of supporting literature and evidence on the issue (drawing on at least 6-10 sources) and you own scholarly reflection on the issue.
6. It should be written cognizant of the audience for whom the brief is intended and include an executive summary.
7. It must be well-written throughout, and in an appropriate formal style and format.

**Note:** Under “Session 7” in Sakai you will find a comment section. You’re expected to list the state or country you will focus on for this paper, and provide a one paragraph explanation of why you’re picking that topic. This is to ensure the scope and feasibility of the policy brief is within the parameters of the assignment. This assignment is not graded, but it must be submitted to move forward with your policy brief.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week of</th>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Readings</th>
<th>Tasks/Due</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 2/17    | 1       | Introduction to class Types of policy documents | View introductory video on Sakai/Panopto  
Readings  
• Watch mini-lecture on types of policy documents  
• Policy documents posted on Sakai | Read syllabus; respond to prompt questions by 2/21; respond to classmates by 2/22 |
| 2/24    | 2       | Frameworks to understand policy | Readings  
• Simons, Olssen, and Peters (2009), Chapters 1 and 2 (pp. 54-70 only). | Respond to prompt questions by 2/28; respond to classmates by 3/1 |
| 3/3     | 3       | Policy Environments | Readings  
• Bracco et al. (1999)  
• Fielden (2008), pp. 1 – 44  
• Perna and Finney Ch. 2  
• Capt (2013) | Respond to prompt questions by 3/7; respond to classmates by 3/8  
Post chosen state/country for background paper. |
| 3/10    | 4       | Spring Break (No Class) | | |
| 3/17    | 5       | Public v. Private |  
• Rhoades & Slaughter (2006)  
• Pasque (2010), Ch. 2  
• Peercy & Svenson (2016)  
• Fielden & LaRocque (2007) | Respond to prompt questions by 3/21; respond to classmates by 3/22  
Post partner for group presentation. |
| 3/24    | 6       | Cost-sharing and funding |  
• Johnstone (2004)  
• Callan (2002)  
• Wangenge-Ouma (2012)  
• Carlson (2016) | Respond to prompt questions by 3/28; respond to classmates by 3/29  
Policy Brief due March 27th. |
| 3/31    | 7       | Access & Equity |  
• Gilbert & Heller (2013)  
• Iverson (2012)  
• Campbell & Voight (2015)  
• Egron-Polak and Boisfer (2011) | Respond to prompt questions by 4/4; respond to classmates by 4/5  
Post chosen issue for policy brief assignment. |
References


Appendix A: Student Dispositions

The SOE unit-wide dispositions, *Commitment to professionalism, social justice, and inquiry* will be evaluated per a 4-level rubric that indicates the degree to which the student meets the dispositional expectation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level 1</th>
<th>Level 2</th>
<th>Level 3</th>
<th>Level 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Does Not Meet Expectation</td>
<td>Partially Meets Expectation</td>
<td>Meets Expectation</td>
<td>Exceeds Expectation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### PROFESSIONALISM

- **Candidate fails to demonstrate acceptable professional and ethical behavior in scholarship, coursework, or other program-related activities.**
- **Candidate demonstrates an emerging ability to meet expectations for professional and ethical behavior (i.e. appropriate communication, academic integrity, timeliness and follow-through, collegiality) in scholarship, coursework, and other program-related activities.**
- **Candidate demonstrates professional and ethical behavior when faced with challenges (i.e. appropriate communication, academic integrity, timeliness and follow-through, collegiality) in scholarship, coursework, and other program-related activities. AND Candidate demonstrates a basic understanding of expected professional and ethical behavior in his or her field.**
- **Candidate demonstrates exceptional professional and ethical behavior when faced with challenges (i.e. appropriate communication, academic integrity, timeliness and follow-through, collegiality) in scholarship, coursework, and other program-related activities. AND Candidate demonstrates a sophisticated understanding of expected professional and ethical behavior in his or her field.**

### SOCIAL JUSTICE

- **In written work and class participation candidate demonstrates a lack of reasoning about the complexity of social justice within educational settings.**
- **In written work and class participation candidate demonstrates an emerging ability to articulate a framework for reasoning about the historical, philosophical, sociological and political complexities of social justice within educational settings.**
- **In written work and class participation candidate demonstrates and articulates a coherent framework for reasoning about the historical, philosophical, sociological and political complexities of social justice within educational settings.**
- **In written work and class participation candidate demonstrates and persuasively articulates a robust framework for reasoning about the historical, philosophical, sociological and political complexities of social justice within educational settings.**

### INQUIRY

- **In written work and class participation candidate demonstrates a lack of interest in inquiry.**
- **In written work and class participation candidate demonstrates an emerging willingness to challenge existing knowledge, and a commitment to collaborative problem solving and construct new knowledge within the humanities and/or social sciences.**
- **In written work and class participation candidate demonstrates curiosity, a willingness to challenging existing knowledge, and a commitment to collaborative problem solving and constructing new knowledge within the humanities and/or social sciences.**
- **In written work and class participation candidate demonstrates risk-taking curiosity, a willingness to challenging existing knowledge, and a robust commitment to collaborative problem solving and to constructing new knowledge within the humanities and/or social sciences.**