Loyola University Chicago  
School of Education

ELPS 405  
Introduction to Educational Policy Analysis

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Course Description
This course is an introduction to educational policy analysis that allows students to critically access the underlying assumptions and politics that guide particular policy choices and evaluate their design, implementation, and impacts.

We can ask whether the aim of educational policy analysis should be to offer solutions to problems for and/or with policymakers. Perhaps policy analysis should serve the public by offering critiques of policy, or perhaps it should seek to bring marginalized and historically excluded groups and perspectives into policymaking. Should we be questioning the very practice of policymaking and the predominance of “policies” in our contemporary world? These broad questions hint at the variety of entry points that can be taken when approaching the field of policy analysis. In this course we will frequently find it useful to distinguish between analysis for policy and analysis of policy. Overall, though, there are two main objectives to the course: (1) to explore the diversity that makes up the field such that students become familiar with various strategies, theoretical paradigms and knowledge-generation approaches that shape policy texts and agendas; and (2) to reflect on how different “policy logics” have shaped and continue to shape policymaking across institutional, state, national and international contexts. This last aim asks students to become familiar with the development of “policy science” over time, with leading research in the field, as well as with a wide repertoire of thinking tools that are at your disposal.

Essential Questions
I assume that all students in the course bring their own questions and will pursue answers to those questions across the semester. In addition, it is my hope that the readings and our discussions will help provoke new questions about education policy that are different than the ones with which you began the course. The following questions will guide our collective inquiry and reverberate across the course:

- What is education policy? What are (or should be) its aims? To what extent is education policy an instrument of governance? In what respects is it a socio-cultural practice?
- How is education policy ordered and understood through different theoretical lenses?
- What makes for valuable educational policy analysis? Must policy analysis focus on “problems” or “solutions”? Can or should researchers and practitioners also be policymakers?

Learning Outcomes
Students will demonstrate an ability to critically examine and conceptualize policies, design alternatives and argue persuasively for these alternatives while gaining fluency in current policy debates.

In this course I place particular emphasis on (1) your developing skills, competencies and points of view needed by professionals working in or interacting with the world of education policy analysis. I also
emphasize your (2) learning to apply course material (to improve thinking, problem solving, and decisions), (3) your earning to analyze and critically evaluate ideas, arguments, and points of view, and (4) your learning to apply knowledge and skills to benefit others or serve the public good.

This course also aims to advance the mission of the Cultural and Educational Policy Studies (CEPS) program at Loyola University Chicago which seeks to provide a multi-disciplinary examination of education policy and practice with an overarching emphasis on social justice. Toward this end, this particular course advances the preparation of our students to meet the following program outcomes:

- Graduates bring educational research to bear on forming and implementing educational policy and practice.
- Graduates recognize education’s cultural dimensions and leverage cultural analyses in their work to improve educational experiences and institutions.

These outcomes and objectives are infused across this course with the intent of enacting and advancing the vision that The School of Education of Loyola University Chicago is a community that transforms its members to impact urban and global communities through the principles of social justice. This is also encapsulated in the SOE Conceptual Framework “Our mission is social justice, but our responsibility is social action through education,” which is similarly an orienting perspective in the design of this course. From this Conceptual Framework SOE faculty have developed four conceptual framework standards (CFS) (http://www.luc.edu/education/mission/). CFS4: Candidates engage with local and/or global communities in ethical and socially just practices is specifically assessed in this course via the second paper, which is to be submitted via Sakai and also uploaded to Livetext. In relation to the course, this paper will be graded according to the evaluative criteria included in the paper assignment; in relation to the student’s meeting of the CFS standard this assessment will be evaluated according to the rubric posted on Livetext.

The Loyola SOE expects its students to exhibit a commitment to professionalism, social justice and inquiry. In this course students will be assessed on the degree to which they meet these dispositional expectations, rubrics for which can be found in LiveText. 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.

**Student Feedback**
Throughout the semester, I eagerly welcome your input on any/all 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 making adjustments as far as circumstances allow. At the end of the semester you will receive a request to evaluate the professor’s teaching using the online IDEA Campus Labs system. Please promptly respond to any emails you receive indicating that the evaluation is available. 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.

**Reading List**
The following book is available for order from the Loyola University Bookstore.


Additional required readings will be posted on Sakai as PDF files. There are also a number of journal articles that are available through the Loyola library website.
Course Requirements
Attendance is required; if you have to miss a class, you are required to write a reaction paper discussing one of the readings for that week – also please email me in advance, whenever possible, if you will be missing a class. The make-up assignment will afford you the chance to have some interaction with the professor regarding the topics and discussions covered in class. These 3-5 page (750-1250 word) papers should be submitted to the professor in person, as printed-out papers, within two weeks of the missed class. Please do NOT submit make-up papers via email or through Sakai. Failure to write make-up reaction papers for any class absences will result in your grade being lowered one letter grade. Missing two (2) or more classes over the course of the semester will significantly hinder your learning and – unless arrangements are made with the professor – will result in your grade being lowered.

This course will use Sakai as the course management platform (http://sakai.luc.edu) and you must have working access to your Loyola email account in order to use Sakai and to access Loyola library resources (http://libraries.luc.edu). Either use your luc.edu address or set it to forward to another email account that you check regularly since the luc.edu email is the one I will use to communicate with you. This course also requires use of the LUC libraries’ on-line resources and Sakai tools as part of integrating technology into teaching and learning.

Electronic devices such as laptops and iPads may only be used in class if they do not disrupt the learning environment and only if you are using it for taking notes, referencing course materials, searching online for material related to course discussions, or, to a limited extent, browsing online to follow a train of thought stimulated by course material or discussion. Using electronic resources to engage in activities such as texting, emailing, using internet sites like Facebook or Twitter, playing games, or browsing the web for content not related to the course is not permitted and will result in your being barred from using your device in class in the future. Generally speaking I prefer that cellphones remain off during class, however if you have a family or professional situation that necessitates your being reachable please let me know at the start of class.

Some form of notetaking as you read is recommended so that you can easily raise questions about the text, objections and the like during our class discussions. You should read intelligently and critically: hold authors to the claims that they make about what they intend to accomplish; hold them accountable for faulty logic and unexamined assumptions; consider alternate explanations and views to the ones presented. Since class discussions will frequently refer to the text of these books and articles, you are required to bring copies of the readings to class. You will be graded on your participation in class discussions.

You are required to bring assigned readings to class the day that we are discussing them. When assigned texts / readings are available electronically I recommend that you bring a printed-out paper copy for ease of reference. However, if you prefer to use the electronic version please make sure to have it loaded to your device (laptop, iPad or similar) at the start of class. I do not permit students to access course readings via smartphone.

Pedagogical Orientation
This class is structured as a student-centered, collaborative course. I see us as a community of scholars who are both teachers and learners at varying stages of development. As such, the class will be focused around the following learning principles:
• We all share a responsibility as learners (both teacher and students) for constructing and making sense of knowledge within our particular community of practice;
• We strive to appreciate and support multiple perspectives on knowledge and practice; and,
• We place great emphasis on the important 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.
I expect each of you to take an active role in your learning and to join me in making this a dialogic learning experience. As you may know, there are particularly significant visions of dialogic learning in the work of the Russian philosopher of language, Mikhail Bakhtin and in the work of the Brazilian philosopher and education Paolo Freire. Bakhtin held that any socio-cognitive event requires not just “taking turns” as in a conversation, but also 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 than recognizing them as full human beings with the capacity to inquire and to contribute to meaning-making. I encourage you to:

—Pose questions, interpret and construct knowledge through your interactions with everyone in the class, 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 prespecified answer.
—Be willing to express disagreement with peers and with the professor in a respectful manner.
—Seek to engage one another’s responses by incorporating them into your questions or comments.
—Take responsibility for making the discussions useful and interesting.

Course Assignments
In addition to class participation this course requires three blog posts, two papers and participation in one group project. In this course I am considering a Blog Post to be a piece of polished writing in the 500-1000 word range. You will be required to submit 3 blog posts over the course of the semester (deadlines are 11:59pm CST on Tuesday September 19th, October 10th, and November 14th) in response to a specific prompt. Approach your blog post as a short essay; it should have something resembling an introduction and a conclusion and should use APA in-text parenthetical citation for any sources you discuss and a reference list at the end. Paper 1 (due 11:59pm CST Thursday October 26th) will be a Policy/Issue Brief paper that runs 8-10 pages (2000-2500 words excluding references). Paper 2 (due 11:59pm CDT on Thursday December 14th) will be a Policy Logic/Rationality Analysis Paper of comparable length. Additional information about each of these assignments will be provided on Sakai, however you should anticipate that each of these papers will require library research and additional reading on your part beyond the assigned course readings. The Group Presentation will require you and 3-4 classmates to work together preparing a background briefing on a particular policy issue in class on Thursday October 19th (students will sign up for topics of interest at the first class meeting).

Please do not hesitate to take advantage of Loyola’s Writing Center (located at WTC and LSC). Tutors through the Writing Center can be an excellent resource for assistance with strengthening your writing. Info at http://www.luc.edu/writing/index.shtml. I too am happy to set up office hours to talk about your writing and offer assistance. I will provide advance feedback on paper 1 or 2 to anyone wishing to submit a complete draft two weeks in advance of the submission deadline.

Evaluation & Grading
Each of the blog posts will compose 5% of your grade in the course. The group project will form 10% of your final course grade. Each of the papers will compose 22.5% of your grade and your class participation grade will make up the remaining 30% of your grade. Your participation grade will be reflective of your engagement in class discussions and the insights and questions on assigned readings that you contribute towards your own and the entire class’ enlightenment. A rubric for assessing class participation is posted on Sakai. One-third of the way through the course (at the start of October) the Professor will provide you with feedback on your class participation to-date. The professor reserves the right to add specific additional assignments that will be factored into your participation grade. Except in very unusual circumstances, relating to family issues, health problems and the like, grades of "Incomplete" will not be given in this course.
SOE and University Policies
At the following link http://luc.edu/education/syllabus-addendum/ you may find the SOE and Loyola University Chicago policies relating to Accessibility, Conceptual Framework, EthicsLine Reporting Hotline, and Electronic Communication Policies and Guidelines.

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 university’s policies on academic honesty are located in the syllabus addendum link above. To plagiarize is to present someone else's writing or ideas as your own and will not be tolerated. There are several good “How not to plagiarize” guides available on the web, such as http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/using-sources/how-not-to-plagiarize. In class we will discuss how to cite and include the work of others in your own writing. Please also note that submitting the same paper or pieces of the same papers to meet the course requirements for two or more LUC courses is also academic dishonesty and will not be tolerated.

Course Schedule and Readings
The course schedule below shows required readings for each weekly unit. Prompts to guide your preparation will be posted on Sakai under Weekly Units.

Introducing and Mapping the Field

Week 1 – Thursday August 31st
Introduction—What is Education Policy? How might we / should we study it?

Week 2 – Thursday September 7th
Surveying Different Approaches to the Study of Educational Policy
Required reading:

Week 3 – Thursday September 14th
Situating Education Research and Researchers in Relation to Education Policy
  • Stovall, D. (2009). Race(ing), Class(ing), and Gender(ing) Our Work: Critical Race Theory, Critical Race Feminism, Epistemology, and New Directions in Educational Policy Research, 258-266.

Week 4 – Thursday September 21st
Blog #1 due by 11:59pm Tuesday September 19th
The Politics of Evidence and Data in Education Policymaking
  • Lubienksi, Scott, and DeBray (2014) "The Politics of Research Production, Promotion, and Utilization in Educational Policy" Educational Policy, p. 131-144.
  • plus one additional article of your choice from the March 2014 28(2) issue of Educational Policy
Week 5 – Thursday September 28th  
**Strategic Approaches to Policy Analysis I (Assembling Evidence)**  
- Additional reading posted on Sakai.

Week 6 – Thursday October 5th  
**Prospectus for Paper 1 due by 11:59pm Monday October 2nd**  
**Strategic Approaches to Policy Analysis II (Defining Problems and Selecting Alternatives)**  
- Additional reading posted on Sakai.

Week 7 – Thursday October 12th  
**Blog #2 due by 11:59pm Tuesday October 10th**  
**National Education Policy and Planning**  

Week 8 – Thursday October 19th  
**Group Presentations in Class**

Week 9 – Thursday October 26th  
**Paper One (Policy / Issue Brief) due by 11:59pm Thursday October 26th**  
*No Class CIES Fall Symposium*

Week 10 – Thursday November 2nd  
**Expanding the Tools for Policy Analysis**  
- Additional Reading TBD

Week 11 – Thursday November 9th  
**Anthropology and Education Policy**  
- Additional Reading TBD
Week 12 – Thursday November 16th
**Blog #3 due by 11:59pm Tuesday November 14th**

**Education Policy and Discourse Analysis**


Week 13 – Thursday November 23rd
**No Class US Thanksgiving Holiday**

Week 14 – Thursday November 30th

**Materiality and Actors in Education Policy**

- Additional Reading TBD

Week 15 – Thursday December 7th

**Deconstructing Policy Logics and Deconstructing Critique**


**Paper 2 (Policy Logic Analysis) due 11:59pm CST Thursday December 14th.**
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/ and click on STUDENT IDEA LOGIN on the left hand side of the page.

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.

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/

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.