

The College of Charleston
POLI 308.01- Education Policy
Fall 2016
M/W/F 11:00 A.M-11:50 A.M.
Maybank 307

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Office Hours: M/W/F : 9:15-10:30 A.M. and by appointment

Course Description

This course is designed to introduce students to the major issues and challenges that influence the development of federal education policy in the United States. The course will examine the major judicial rulings, legislative statutes and executive actions – 1954 to the present- and their impact on the organization, governance and administration of American public schools from *Brown V. Board of Education* to the *Every Child Achieves Act of 2015*, the reauthorization of No Child Left Behind. Particular attention will be paid to the continuing policy debates regarding achievement, standards and accountability in American public schools.

At the end of the semester students should be able to (a) analyze, interpret and explain the political and policy influences that shape the current American education system; (b) identify the implications for future education policy including the role of public education as an instrument of democracy and (c) understand the critical role of citizen engagement in determining the future of American public education.

The following federal and state enactments will form the core of these discussions:

1. *Brown v. Board of Education, Shawnee, KS et al, 347 U.S. 483 (1954)*
2. The Elementary and Secondary Act of 1965 – (ESEA), P.L. 89-10, as amended by subsequent reauthorizations.
3. “A Nation At Risk- The Imperative For Educational Reform”- The National Commission on Excellence in Education, USDOE, 1983.
4. GOALS 2000: EDUCATE AMERICA ACT of Act of 1994- P.L. 103-382
5. The Improving Schools Act of 1994- P.L. 103-382
6. The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001- P.L. 107-110
7. Every Child Achieves Act of 2015- P.L. 114-95
8. National Governors Association Common Core State Standards
9. *Abbeville School District ,et al vs State of South Carolina*

Course Requirements

- A. Regular class attendance is expected of all students. Attendance will be recorded via a daily sign-up sheet. Absences will be excused only if they are officially validated.
- B. Expectations for class participation include reading assignments prior to class, joining in class discussions, respecting the opinion of others and turning in assignments on time. Late assignments will incur severe grade penalties.

- C. The use of cell phones and other electronic devices during class is prohibited. Permission is required to use computers and I pads for note-taking and verification may be required at any time.
- D. Students are strongly encouraged to utilize office hours and/or schedule appointments to discuss assignments, readings or any other class-related issues.
- E. Students who are receiving services through the Center for Disability Services, are scheduled to travel with an athletic team or who will participate in a student government related or other official off- campus activity during the semester must present a letter of verification signed by the appropriate college official.
- F. Students are encouraged to utilize the Center for Student Learning (CSL), Adlestone Library, First Floor, academic support services for assistance in study strategies and course content. The Center offers tutoring, supplemental instruction, study skills and a variety of workshops. These services are available to you at no extra cost. You may visit the CSL website at <http://csl.cofc.edu> or call (843) 953-5635.
- G. Students who plan personal (i.e. non-emergency) off-campus trips or travel prior to a scheduled exam (ex: Midterm or Final) will not receive excused absences nor the opportunity to make up the examination.
- H. Each student is required to select a current education policy issue for research and study during the semester from a list provided by the instructor. At the end of the semester students studying the same topic are required to make a group presentation to the class.

Grading

The semester grade will be based on the following: a five part research paper, a Midterm Exam, a Final Exam and class participation as follows:

A. Research paper, Part 1	10%
B. Research Paper, Part 2	10%
C. Research Paper, Part 3	10%
D. Research Paper, Part 4	10%
E. Research Paper, Part 5	10%
F. Midterm Examination	15%
G. Final Examination	20%
H. Class participation	15%

Required Textbook

Epstein, Neil, Ed. **Who's In Charge Here? The Tangled Web of School Governance and Policy**, Education Commission of the States/Brookings Institution Press, Washington, D.C., 2014.

Students are also expected to read and be prepared to discuss each of the referenced federal and state federal enactments.

August 2016

Wed	24	Introductions and Class Overview
Fri	26	Introductions – Syllabus Review
Mon	29	Introduction to Public Policy
Wed	31	Introduction to Pubic Policy

September

Fri	2	Public Policy defined Epstein- Chapter One
Mon	5	Governance defined Epstein Chapter Two
Wed	7	Administration defined
Fri	9	Evolution of American Public Education Policy (Handout)- Paper One due
Mon	12	Evolution of American Public Education Policy
		<u>The Federal Role in Education Policymaking</u>
Wed	14	Federalism and State Legislatures (Handout)
Fri	16	Federalism and State Legislatures Epstein, Chapter Three
Mon	19	Brown v Board of Education , et al – (Handout)
Wed	21	Brown v Board of Education
Fri	23	The Elementary and Secondary Act of 1965 (ESEA) – President Lyndon Baines Johnson
Mon	26	The Elementary and Secondary Act of 1965
Wed	28	ESEA – Reauthorizations and policy shifts Paper Two due
Fri	30	ESEA – Reauthorizations and policy shifts

October

Mon	3	“ A Nation at Risk “ – The National Commission on Excellence in Education – President Ronald W. Reagan
Wed	5	“A Nation at Risk” – Findings and Recommendations
Fri	7	The 1989 National Education Summit- President George H.W. Bush
Mon	10	The National Goals Panel
Wed	12	Goals 2000 – The Plan for American 21 st century education
Fri	14	Midterm Examination

Mon	17	Goals 2000: Educate America Act – P.L. 103-227 President Bill Clinton
Wed	19	Improving America’s Schools Act (ESEA reauthorization)-P.L. 103-382 – President Bill Clinton
Fri	21	A Nation at Risk revisited – the Koret Task Force
Mon	24	No Child Left Behind Act of 2002 – P.L. 107-110 – President George W. Bush
Wed	26	No Child Left Behind Act of 2002
Fri	28	Every Child Achieves Act of 2015 –P.L. 114-95- President Barack Obama
Mon	31	Every Child Achieves Act of 2015 Paper Three Due

November

State and Local Roles in Educational Policymaking

Wed	2	State Legislatures and Education Policymaking (Handout)
Fri	4	State Legislatures and Education Policymaking- Policy Committees
Mon	7	Fall Break – No Class
Wed	9	State Legislatures and Education Financing
Fri	11	State Boards of Education
Mon	14	Local School Boards – Organization and governance Paper Four Due
Wed	16	Local School financing
Fri	18	Local School financing
Mon	21	Group One- Class Presentation
Wed	23	Thanksgiving Holiday- No Class
Fri	25	Thanksgiving Holiday- No Class
Mon	28	Group Two- Class Presentation
Wed	30	Group Three – Class Presentation

December

Fri	2	Group Four- Class Presentation Paper Five Due
Mon	5	Semester Review
Tu	6	Reading Day
Tu	13	Final Examination 8:00 A.M.-11 A.M. Maybank 307

Required Assignments

The policy research assignment provides the opportunity to explore the development of a current controversy in American education. You will explore the legislative goals, the political influences, the key stakeholders that support or oppose the policy and make a judgment about the effectiveness of the policy in achieving its stated goals. You will select your research topic from the following:

- I. **Common Core** – the push for national standards in American education. **The policy question:** should there be a standard national curriculum in English and mathematics for American public schools?
- II. **State Control of Public Education.** **The policy question:** Should the federal Department of Education be abolished and all curriculum decisions be made in individual states?
- III. **School Choice-** **The policy question:** Is school choice a solution to student under-achievement?
- IV. **Private Governance of public schools-** **The policy question:** Should the leadership of public schools that fail to close the achievement gap be turned over to private enterprise ?

Outline for writing research papers

- Papers 1 through 4 should be a maximum of 5 double-spaced pages, excluding charts, graphs and appendices.
 - Paper 5 should not exceed 10 double-spaced pages, excluding charts, graphs and appendices.
 - Papers for your selected topic should follow the outline below:
- I. **Common Core – the push for national standards**
 - a. **Paper One** – Explain the history and organization of the National Governors Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers. Define the term “Common Core State Standards.”
 - b. **Paper Two-** Identify and explain the policy rationale for the NGA’s support for common core state standards. Define the standards they identify as “Common Core” and why they believe these standards are critical to the American economy.

- c. **Paper Three-** Identify the states that initially adopted the Common Core state standards. State whether the decision to adopt the standards was made by the Legislator, the Governor, the State Dept. of education or some other entity.
- d. **Paper 4-** Identify the states that reversed their position on the Common Core standards and their reason for this decision. Identify the political influences, if any that led to this reversal.
- e. **Paper 5-** Based on the information above, if you were a governor would you vote to maintain or reverse your position on adopting the Common Core state standards. State the rationale for your position.

II. State Control of public education

- a. **Paper One –** Describe the history, organization and policy goals of the U.S. Department of Education. Name the current Secretary.
- b. **Paper Two-** Describe the current relations of DOE with the 50 states including programs and funding for state/federal education programs.
- c. **Paper Three-** Identify the constituent groups- including states – that support the abolition of the U.S. Department of Education. Give three specific arguments made by these group for their support. Identify the groups that oppose the abolition of the Department and their reasons.
- d. **Paper Four-** For those who support abolishing the DOE what do they propose would happen to the current federal programs and the current ESEA reauthorization?
- e. **Paper Five-** Based on the above information do you support or oppose the abolition of the U.S. Department of Education?

III. School Choice as a model for failing public schools

- a. **Paper One –** Define the term “school choice”. Provide a succinct history of the school choice movement.
- b. **Paper Two-** Explain the term “failing schools” as used by the school choice movement. What are the standards/criteria for defining a school as “failing”?
- c. **Paper Three-** Explain the processes available to parents for utilizing choice in selecting a school. What are the elements over which parents have choice, i.e. selection of school only? Selection of teachers? Administrators? Curriculum? Etc.
- d. **Paper Four –** Explain the specific ways by which school choice address and mitigate student underachievement
- e. **Paper Five –** Based on the above information make a policy argument for why school choice is or is not an effective solution to the problem of student underachievement.

IV. Private governance of public schools

- a. **Paper One** – Explain the history of private takeover of public schools including the factors that influenced this trend. Identify the two largest private enterprises in this venture.
- b. **Paper Two** – Explain the legal procedure by which such a transfer is made, (i.e., by state law, by local board policy, state department of education, etc.). Identify the states that have made such transfers and the major policy rationale for this decision.
- c. **Paper Three** – Explain the procedure by which private enterprises (a) fund their operations; (b) select students for enrollment and (c) govern their operations.
- d. **Paper Four** – Explain the administrative structure, teacher selection procedures, curriculum and parental involvement in a privately run school.
- e. **Paper Five** – Based on the latest available research and policy reports, is there evidence that private takeovers of public schools a viable solution to the problem of student underachievement? Would you support or oppose an expansion of this education policy?