The United States is currently debating a host of important topics about education, including national standards, vouchers and charters, the financing of public schools, and the regulation of homeschooled and private schools. This course aims to introduce students to the academic discipline of political science by showing what it can contribute to understanding and entering these debates.

The course starts by reviewing the controversy surrounding the Race to the Top program. Then, we consider how political science studies the institutions, interests, and ideas involved in any policy debate.

Next, we survey how the subfields of political science—American politics, political theory, comparative politics, and international relations—provide insights on current political debates. In American politics, we study the transition from local to state and federal control of education. In political theory, we consider how John Dewey laid the foundation for progressive politics that has been challenged by economists who want to apply market principles to education. In comparative politics, we examine how scholars have studied other countries—particularly in Finland and Singapore—for insights about how the US should reform its education system. And in international relations, we investigate how scholars have used economic and national security arguments to justify transforming American schools.

In the final part of the course, students present on the current state of debates about federal involvement in education, market reforms, vouchers, charter schools, P-20 systems, and the regulation of homeschooleders.

Books
Course Requirements

(1) One week before the midterm, I will distribute 6 essay questions, and on the day of the exam we will roll a die to determine 2 questions. Well-written essays should incorporate material from the lectures, readings, presentations, and your own thoughts. You may study in groups, but the exam is close-booked. The exam is 1 hour.

(2) Near the end of the semester, students will participate a group presentation on the state of the debate on topics such as federal involvement in education, market reforms, vouchers, charter schools, P-20 systems, and the regulation of homeschoolers. Each student is expected to write his or her own 10-12 page research paper. You can share sources and ideas with other students in your group, as well as give each other feedback on drafts, but I ask that you write the paper on your own. Good papers should present the best evidence for both sides of the issue, including articles from newspapers, education journals, political science journals, and so forth. Bibliographies due on October 17.

(3) The final has the same format as the midterm.

(4) Class participation. Students are expected to come to class on time prepared to discuss the readings. I employ the Socratic method in the classroom, which means that I will often call on you even if your hands are down; be ready!

Grade Distribution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Midterm</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research paper</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research presentation</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final exam</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class participation</td>
<td>10</td>
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</tbody>
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Part I. Introduction

1. September 4: Race to the Top

2. September 8: Three Political Science Variables: Institutions, Interests, and Ideas
Part II. American Politics

   • Jesse H. Rhodes, An Education in Politics, pp. 26-39

4. September 15: The Structure of American Education Policy in the 1980s and 1990s
   • Jesse H. Rhodes, An Education in Politics, pp. 40-125

   • Jesse H. Rhodes, An Education in Politics, pp. 126-158

   • Jesse H. Rhodes, An Education in Politics, pp. 1-25, 159-194
   • Maranto and McShane, President Obama and Education Reform, chapter 3

Part III. Political Theory

7. September 25: John Dewey on Pedagogy
   • John Dewey, The Child and The Curriculum

8. September 29: John Dewey on Society and Education
   • John Dewey, The School and Society

9. October 2: John Dewey on Progressive Education and Politics
   • John Dewey, American Education and Culture, Progressive Education and the Science of Education

10. October 6: Friedman on Free Market Principles in Education
   • Milton Friedman, “The Role of Government in Education”
      http://www.edchoice.org/who-we-are/our-founders/the-friedmans-on-school-choice/article/the-role-of-government-in-education/

11. October 9: The School Choice Paradigm
   • John Chubb and Terry, “America’s Public Schools: Choice is a Panacea,” The Brookings Review (Summer 1990)
      pocketknowledge.tc.columbia.edu/home.php/viewfile/download/56544

12. October 13: Midterm

Part IV. Comparative Politics
13. October 16: The Flat World Thesis
   • Linda Darling-Hammond, The Flat World and Education, Ch. 1
   • *Bibliography of research paper due

14. October 20: America’s Educational Inequality
   • Linda Darling-Hammond, The Flat World and Education, Chs. 2-5

15. October 23: How Other Countries Do It, Part I
   • Linda Darling-Hammond, The Flat World and Education, Ch. 6, 7

16. October 27: How Other Countries Do It, Part II

Part IV. International Relations

17. October 30: Economic Prosperity, Part I
   • Endangering Prosperity, Chapters 1-3

18. November 3: Economic Prosperity, Part II
   • Endangering Prosperity, Chapters 4-7

   • U.S. Education Reform and National Security

20. November 10: Should America Emulate Chinese Schools?
   • Yong Zhao, World Class Learners, Chapter 5
   • Yong Zhao, Catching Up or Leading the Way, Chapter 9

Part V: Policy Debates

21. November 13: Should the federal government, the states, or localities take the lead in education?

22. November 17: Should the federal government mandate annual testing?
   • Yes: http://www.brookings.edu/research/papers/2015/01/08-chalkboard-annual-testing
23. November 20: Should the federal government support early childhood education?

24. November 24: Should the federal and state governments encourage charter schools?

25. December 1: Should the federal government or states create K-16 or P-20 systems?

26. December 4: How should the government regulate homeschoolers?

27. December 8: Should schools teach grit?
   • USDOE Report on “Promoting Grit, Tenacity, and Perserverance”

Final Exam: Tuesday, December 22, 1:30 pm