

EPS 518: Introduction to Debates in Higher Education Policy

Professor Sara Goldrick-Rab

SYLLABUS

Fall 2014

Mondays, 2:25-5:25 pm

Location: Education L185 unless otherwise indicated

Class begins on September 8th, 2014

Logistics

Dr. Goldrick-Rab's contact information:

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@saragoldrickrab

I will hold office hours each week at various time and days. You may sign up for appointments with me using <https://sgoldrickrab.youcanbook.me>

All course materials (including readings, technology assistance, etc.) are located on the class Learn @UW page. It is your responsibility to check this page often.

For questions about finding and locating class readings or any technical difficulties with Learn @UW or Twitter, email **Minh Mai** mmai@wisc.edu, with a subject line: Requesting help with EPS 518.

Course Description

In this course I hope that you will learn to think critically about several debates in contemporary higher education policy. Class discussions will explore the tensions between key policy goals such as quality, equity, and efficiency, and the results (including unintended consequences) of those tensions. We will also examine the theory and research brought to bear on policy debates, and how it is used—or not used—to shape policy agendas. By the end of this class, you should be able to read and think critically about an array of higher education policies, communicate effectively regarding your thinking on higher education policy issues with others, carefully analyze higher education policies, and clearly and succinctly convey your thinking in writing.

Accommodations

If you need accommodation please bring them to my attention right away. I honor all requests from McBurney, and will also adapt to special situations (within reason) as needed. It is always best to come to office hours and seek pre-emptive extensions on assignments rather than fail to submit materials.

Technology

We will utilize technology in strategic ways in this course in order to enhance your learning.

Twitter: Each member of the class should obtain a twitter account and follow #EPS518 during the semester. This hashtag will be used to provide you with material you may use for your class projects and for your blogs. It will also be used to facilitate tweet-chats with guest speakers.

Google Hangout: You will need a Gmail account in order to participate in Google Hangouts throughout the semester.

Medium: This is the blogging platform we will use for the class; it can be accessed using your twitter account.

Information on how to use these technologies is provided on Learn @UW. Minh is available to help with questions.

Assignments and Grading

Your grade for this class will depend on your participation and performance on several assignments, including:

- Weekly blogs on class readings (25%)
- 4 blogs on twitter topics (25%)
- Policy project: outline and update (10%)
- Policy project: final report (40%)

Weekly Blogs on Class Readings

I have assigned reading for each class. You are expected to read the required reading in advance and write a blog of approximately 250 words or more about those readings, to be posted no later than Monday morning at 9 am each week. In that blog, you should apply that week's readings to something you have read about or experienced in higher education, and explain how the reading contributes to your thinking on that issue. For example, does it raise questions about your perspective, or provide more supportive evidence for your thinking? Do you accept the evidence presented in the reading, or question it? Why or why not? It will be especially helpful if you use the blog to raise questions about issues you would like to discuss further in class. You will receive credit for posting this blog on time each week. (25% of final grade, 10 blogs, each graded pass/fail).

Blogs on Twitter Topics

You must identify four topics discussed on twitter at that hashtag during the semester and for each one write a blog of approximately 500 words or more that briefly describes the discussion, and then critically analyzes it in the context of our class readings and discussions. Take a stand on something you read and clearly explain your perspective on the issue. The best blogs will do more than express your opinion—they will also defend that opinion. These blogs must be posted by 11 pm on the following Mondays: September 29, October 6, October 20, and October 27. (25% of final grade, each graded on a scale of 0-10)

Policy Project and Report

This is the central task of the class. You must provide a 5-page update on your progress by November 10, and deliver your final report by December 19. The outline and update will comprise 10% of your final grade (graded on a scale of 0-20), and the final report will comprise 40% (graded on a scale of 0-100).

The purpose of the final class project and report is to give you the opportunity to engage more deeply in a higher education policy debate of your choosing. With your peers, you will dig into a specific issue, debate critical aspects of that issue, collect some additional data, and review empirical evidence. You will then independently summarize that work and produce a set of conclusions and recommendations in a final paper.

Sample Project Topics (additional topics may be generated on the first day of class)

1. What constitutes an affordable college education?
2. What should determine standards of admission at state flagship universities?
3. How should community colleges be held accountable for serving the needs of their state and localities?
4. What role(s) should minority-serving institutions play in American higher education?
5. What specific efforts should public colleges and universities invest in increase the college completion rates of low-income and minority students?

Steps in the Process

1. On Learn @ UW, sign up for your preferred topics by listing your top two choices no later than September 15.
2. I will use this information to assign you to a topic. Other students interested in your topic will constitute your team.
3. Independently, carefully consider the readings associated with your debate that I will place on Learn @ UW. Then schedule a meeting with your team to discuss these come together with your group to discuss them. Examine the debate from multiple sides. For each angle that you consider, ask: What are the political values represented by this position? What are the economic advantages/disadvantages of this position? Who benefits from this position? Who loses? Take careful notes on this conversation, as you will be required to summarize it in your final report. Hold this team meeting no later than October 6.
4. Following that meeting, decide which aspects of the debate you need more information about and how you would like to obtain that information. For example, you might decide that you want to learn more from a particular expert in the field, or review additional papers. I will provide ideas on Learn @ UW and will add to that as needed, and make introductions if you need them.
5. Submit a 5-page memo explaining the contours of the debate you are focused on, what you have learned so far, and what else you seek to learn to inform your final paper. Submit this by November 10.
6. Spend time developing a set of recommendations, clearly articulating each one and its rationale. You may discuss these with your team, but you are not required to do so.
7. Write the final paper. It should be 20-30 double-spaced pages, 12 point font, 1 inch-margins, Times New Roman, and include the following sections:
 - a. Introduction to the debate—what is it about and why do we care? (5-8 pages)
 - b. Dimensions of the debate—summarize each side as you see it, based on evidence obtained through primary or secondary sources. Wherever possible, include information you collected yourself that informed your thinking. (8-10 pages)
 - c. Recommendations for resolving the debate: a description of the recommendations you have developed (8-10 pages).
 - d. Reflections and conclusions: Write about how your understanding of the debate evolved during this project, what were the most important lessons you learned, and the implications for this new knowledge for your views on higher educational policy (2-3 pages)

OPPORTUNITY:

Participate in the Midwestern Higher Education Compact 10th Annual Policy Summit

This year, our class will have the unusual and generous opportunity to participate in a two-day higher education policy conference held in Milwaukee on Monday November 17 and Tuesday November 18.

Attending this conference is your choice, but it is *highly recommended*. Class will not be held on Monday November 17 and if cannot attend in person then you will attend virtually.

If you join us in Milwaukee, here are the details of your participation:

- You will carpool there with members of class and the Wisconsin HOPE Lab. We will leave on Monday November 17 at 10 am and return on Tuesday November 18 by 3 pm. You may choose to travel on your own to return earlier.
- You will receive a free night's stay at the Pfister hotel in a shared room with one other student and the costs of your meals will be covered.
- On Monday you will attend several sessions on higher education finance, and together with your classmates help to lead discussions at your assigned tables. Please note that this role appears on the conference agenda, which is provided on Learn @UW.
- Following a Monday afternoon plenary talk that I will deliver, you will have the opportunity to join the summit attendees at the Milwaukee Art Museum for a reception and dinner.
- Tuesday morning you will attend two more sessions from 8 am- 12 pm and then return home with the group.

You will need to decide by September 22 if you will be coming to this event, and required to respond to a survey about your transportation and hotel needs on that date.

Schedule and Readings

****Please read in the order listed****

September 15: Inequality & Policymaking in the United States

Note: Bring laptops to class; we will be holding class using Google Hangout.

Reading blog due

Submit policy project topic preferences on Learn @ UW

Reading:

1. [The Rise of Extreme Poverty in the United States](#). Schaefer & Edin, 2014
2. [Expanding Opportunity in America](#), Paul Ryan, 2014 (skim)
3. [The Widening Achievement Gap](#) Reardon, 2011
4. [Testimony to U.S. Senate Finance Committee](#) on “Drivers of Intergenerational Mobility and the Tax Code.” Newman, 2012
5. [The War on Poverty 50 Years Later](#), White House, 2014 (skim)
6. [How America Abandoned Its Undeserving Poor](#), Katz, 2013
7. [Lecture Notes](#) Public Policymaking in an Uncertain World, Manski 2012
8. [Saving Horatio Alger: Equality, Opportunity, and the American Dream](#), Reeves 2014

September 22: Trends in Higher Education and Inequality

Reading blog due by 9 am

Readings:

1. Degrees of Inequality, Mettler, 2014, Intro and Ch 1
2. [Gains & Gaps](#), Bailey & Dynarski 2011
3. [Making College Worth It](#), Oreopoulos & Petronjevic, 2013
4. [Public Policy, Higher Education, and Income Inequality in the U.S: Have We Reached Diminishing Returns?](#) Bennet & Vedder, 2014
5. [Some College, No Degree](#), NSC 2014 (skim)
6. [How College Access is Increasing Inequality & What To Do About It](#) Carnevale & Strohl

September 29: Debates about the Allocation of Opportunities to Learn

Reading blog due by 9 am

Twitter blog due by 11 pm

Readings:

1. [Should Everyone Go to College?](#) Owen & Sawhill, 2013
2. [Unmarried Parents in College](#), Goldrick-Rab & Sorensen, 2010
3. [Student Supports](#), Bettinger, Long & Boatman, 2013
4. [The Missing One-Offs](#), Hoxby & Avery, 2013
5. [Beyond One-Size-Fits-All College Dreams](#), Rosenbaum, 2010
6. Passing the Torch, Lavin & Attewell 2009, pp. 1-56, 154-184.

October 6: Debates about Institutional Accountability

Note: Professor Nick Hillman will guest lecture during part of this class.

Reading blog due by 9 am

Twitter blog due by 11 pm

Hold team meeting no later than today

Readings:

1. Public Goods, Private Goods: The American Struggle Over Educational Goals. Labaree, 1997
2. Institutional Autonomy and State-Level Accountability, Dee, 2006
3. The "New" Performance Funding in Higher Education. McKeown-Moak, 2013
4. [Rankings, Institutional Behavior, and College and University Choice](#). ACE, 2014
5. [President Obama Grades Colleges](#), Bloomberg, 2014

October 13: Debates about College Affordability

Reading blog due by 9 am

Readings:

1. [College Affordability: What Is It and How Can We Measure It?](#) Baum & Ma, 2014
2. [Piecing Together the College Affordability Puzzle](#), MDRC, 2014
3. *Soldiers to Citizens*, Mettler, Intro, Ch 1 and 7
3. [States in the Driver's Seat](#), WICHE, 2014
4. *Making College Affordable*, Goldrick-Rab, Schudde & Stampen 2014
5. Also [watch this Senate hearing](#) in its entirety.

October 20: Debates about College Affordability

Note: The first half of class you will attend a talk by Dr. Goldrick-Rab in the Education Sciences Building, Room TBA.

Reading blog due by 9 am

Twitter blog due by 11 pm

Readings:

1. *Degrees of Inequality*, Mettler, Ch 2
2. [Expanding College Opportunities](#), Hoxby and Turner 2013
3. [Staying on Target for College](#), Kelly et al. 2014
4. [Rebalancing Resources and Incentives](#), Burd et al. 2013
5. [Doing Away with Debt](#), Dannenberg 2013
6. [Redefining College Affordability](#), Goldrick-Rab & Kendall 2014

October 27: Debates about College Admissions

Reading blog due by 9 am

Twitter blog due by 11 pm

Readings:

1. [The Future of Affirmative Action](#), Century Foundation, 2014 (must be read online with hyperlinks)
2. [Why We're Wrong about Affirmative Action](#), Darity et al 2014
3. Unleashing Latent Ability, Logel et al. 2012
4. [Defining Promise](#), Hiss & Franks 2014
5. [The Test-Optional Movement at America's Selective Liberal Arts Colleges: A Boon for Equity or Something Else?](#), Belasco, Rosinger, and Hearn, 2014

November 3: Debates about Costs and Quality

Reading blog due by 9 am

Readings:

1. [Access & Success with Less](#), Jenkins 2013
2. Challenges & Opportunities for Improving Community College Outcomes, Goldrick-Rab 2010
3. [25 Ways to Reduce the Cost of College](#), CCAP, 2010
4. [Putting Colleges on Notice](#), Hicklin & Carlson, 2014
5. Paying for the Party, Armstrong & Hamilton, Preface, Intro, Chapters 5-7

November 10: Debates about Student Debt

Reading blog due by 9 am

Policy project outline due

Readings:

1. [Is a Student Loan Crisis on the Horizon?](#) Akers & Chingos, 2014
2. [For-Profit Colleges](#), Deming & Goldin 2014
3. Degrees of Inequality, Mettler, 2014 Ch 6
4. [At What Cost?](#) TICAS 2014
5. Student Debt is Not Color Blind, Goldrick-Rab and Kelchen 2014
6. [Should All Student Loan Payments Be Income Driven?](#) TICAS 2014

November 17: MHEC Conference

Note: You will attend in person or virtually.

December 1: Debates about Innovation and Disruption

Reading blog due by 9 am

Readings:

1. [Next Generation University](#), Carey, Fishman, et al 2013
2. [Disrupter, distractor or what? A policymaker's guide to MOOCs](#), Kelly, 2014
3. [Moocagogy](#), Morris & Stommel, 2013
4. [The MOOC Moment and the End of Reform](#), Bady 2013
5. [The Disruption Machine](#), Lepore, 2014
6. Watch segments of various "point of view" videos here, especially Michael Crow
<http://www.futureofstateuniversities.com/video/>

December 8: Office Hours

This class time will be reserved for students to have short Google Hangouts with Dr. Goldrick-Rab to discuss policy papers.

December 19:

Final paper due by 5 pm