Prof. Keiser    POSC 218    Spring 2015

Schools, Scholarship and Policy is a Political Science course that will focus on public policy making and the relationship between social science scholarship on schooling and policy outcomes, including court decisions.

How important are the findings of scholars for influencing policy outcomes? Which principles of the American creed are most significant in Education Policy? What are the most significant court decisions governing education and what explains the divergent directions the courts have taken school policy? How have institutions (federalism), endogenous factors (interest groups), and exogenous factors (international competition, free trade) affected school policy?

This is a 200-level course. This means that a primary goal is to introduce students to a breadth of topics and whet appetites for follow-up research in 300-level seminars or independent studies. At this level, familiarization with the literature and the debates among scholars is our goal, rather than conducting original research that seeks to advance the field. Development of oral skills and the writing of succinct summaries and analyses will be emphasized rather than the techniques for writing a research paper. With this in mind, the pedagogical approach of the course will emphasize and require that students are able to summarize the major points of readings for each class session. Expectations include student leadership of class discussions and independent student initiative in pursuing footnote materials, web sites and think tanks that are mentioned in readings. Intellectual curiosity is expected and discussions on Fridays will be your best opportunity to demonstrate this!

Grading and student evaluation in this course will have four components. Required assignments, class participation, attentiveness, and attendance will be evaluated at the midterm and end of the term (30%), a take-home midterm exam of approximately ten pages (30%), and EITHER a final examination of approximately 10 pages (40%) or a Literature Review of at least 15 pages that must be initiated with a consultative meeting with the instructor, a one page topic explanation, and a preliminary bibliography (5 of the minimum 10 citations). When a reading is not from a course text and not in the Moodle, your first option to be to use the Carleton Library database to find, download and read the article.

All assignments, essays, and exams must be done on your own. Note that academic dishonesty includes, not only cheating, fabrication, and plagiarism, but also helping other students commit acts of academic dishonesty by allowing them to obtain copies of your work. Cases of academic dishonesty will be dealt with strictly. Each such case will be referred to the Academic Standing Committee via the Associate Dean of Students or the Associate Dean of the College. A formal finding of responsibility can result in disciplinary sanctions ranging from a censure and a warning to permanent dismissal in the case of repeated and serious offenses. The academic penalty for a finding of responsibility can range from a grade of zero in the specific assignment to an F in this course.

WEEK 1

Class One: One could plausibly claim that the formation of lily white suburbs was the product of thousands of individuals making choices in a free market of housing, with those who could afford picket fences and front lawns choosing the suburbs and those with fewer resources staying in the city. One might see an invisible hand, sorting people by preferences and incomes. What alternative causal variables are posited, perhaps even culpable, in these chapters?

- K. Jackson, CRABGRASS FRONTIER, chs. 11-12.

Class Two: We want to get a handle on the difference between a poverty area and a high poverty or concentrated poverty area. In many cities in the US today, the proportion of residents living below the poverty line is declining. Not surprising. Yet at the same time, the proportion of residents living in extreme poverty, far below the poverty line, is increasing.
• P. Irons, "Two Cities -- One White, the Other Black." JIM CROW'S CHILDREN: THE BROKEN PROMISE OF THE BROWN DECISION. [This is taking us back before the Crabgrass Frontier chapters. Also, this is discussing two cities, not city and suburb. Yet …]

Class Three: We are going to take a break from the methodical march of the syllabus and read some informative, thought provoking pieces to pique your interest and expose you to some sources that will repay periodic visits.

• D. Denby, “Public Defender,” New Yorker 11/19/12. Find it!

WEEK 2

WEEK 3
Recommended (= not required):


Class 1:

• Wells and Crain, Stepping Over the Color Line, chs. 7-9 and Concluding Remarks.

Class 2:


Class 3:

• S. and A. Thernstrom, America in Black and White, ch. 13 (pdf includes 14 as well, not required).

Assignment 1 Due Today at Start of Class (late penalty one-third grade per increment of 24 hr.):

WEEK 4
Recommended (if you think money can make separate into equal):


Class 1:


  o Who are the competing factions in school politics, according to this article?
  o What is the author's evaluation of programs in Cleveland, Milwaukee, Florida and even voucher battles for parochial schools (which have proven effective at what)?
  o Why is the Nixon Presidency a turning point?
  o Footnotes 49-50, slow down
  o What evidence do we have about the impact of more money? Which groups advocate for this and which do not?
  o To all those who begin a conversation about Minnesota schooling by proudly stating that we have "an open enrollment policy" which negates segregation, your response is ...?
  o What does the magnet school experience teach us?
  o Take a look at Wikipedia or some source that explains the concept of bread and circuses. Then answer, how are charter schools a policy that could be seen as bread and circuses?
  o What often discussed panaceas are "much ado about nothing?"
  o Why are ballot initiatives for voucher plans defeated?
  o Pages 2081-82 explain why school choice is a wedge issue for both Republicans and Democrats. Be sure you understand.

Class 2:


Class 3:

- “Smaller Classes Aid Test Scores, Results Show,” Los Angeles Times (Dec. 29, 1998).
- “Poorest Schools Get Least Qualified Teachers,” Star Telegram (Oct. 18, 2010).
- Laczko-Kerr and D. Berliner, “The Effectiveness of Teach for America … on Student Academic Achievement,” (Sept. 6, 2002), Education Policy Analysis Archives, 10(37).

WEEK 5

Class 1:
• J. Shulman and W. Bowen, "The Admissions Game," THE GAME OF LIFE, ch. 2, 3, 6, 7. 
Q (Be ready to discuss): What is the difference between admissions preferences for athletes, 
musicians, and legacies vs. racial preferences?

Class 2:

• R. Kahlenberg, "Still Forgotten: Low Income Students at Selective Colleges." 
http://www.mindingthecampus.com/originals/2008/05/still_forgotten_low_income_stu.html

Class 3: MIDTERM EXAM DUE this coming Tuesday at noon.

• J. Harvie Wilkinson III, "The Bakke Decision."
  o Why the emphasis on elite professions what is so salient about access to them?
  o Whose liberty is being infringed upon to promote what equality for whom?
  o Is diversity achieved when middle class minorities advance but the lower class remains behind?
  o What is Justice Douglas saying (and omitting) when he says the goal should be "good lawyers for Americans" (285)?

WEEK 6

Recommended (further research on Charter Schools):

• Jesse Rothstein, “Does Competition Among Public Schools Benefit Students and Taxpayers? 

Class 2:

• "Charter Schools Trail in Results."
• "A Better Charter School Debate."
• J. Henig, "Research Outside the Spotlight," Spin Cycle.
• R. Rothstein, "Grading the Education Reformers."

Class 3:

• Daily Kos and Project Censored, "Bush Profiteers Collect Billions From No Child Left Behind." 
  March 30, 2007, search online.
• S. Metcalf, "Reading Between the Lines." THE NATION (1/10/02), available online at
  <thenation.com> and be sure to read beyond page 1.
Q: If you follow the money, where does it lead and what does it suggest?
• S. Dewan, “Scandal Haunts Atlanta School Chief.”
• D. Ravitch, “Shame on Michele Rhee.”
• Koyama, MAKING FAILURE PAY, ch. 3
• P. Dreier, “Why are Walmart Billionaires Bankrolling Phony School “Reform” in LA?” (find on web, Moyers and Company or Truthout sites).

**WEEK 7**

Class 1:


Class 2:


Class 3:


**WEEK 8**

Recommended only:

• J. Fleishman, "The Real Against the Ideal -- Making the Solution Fit the Problem: The Atlanta Public School Agreement of 1973." Does the Fleishman article offer support for the claim (a) that the rich use politics to protect their riches and power, or (b) that getting a larger share of the spoils/benefits for leaders of a group is tantamount to gaining benefits for all including the least advantaged of the group?

Class 1:

• P. Tough, *Whatever It Takes*, chs. 1-5. Course Textbook

Class 2:

• P. Tough, *Whatever It Takes*, chs. 6-11 and afterword.
• G. Whitehurst and M. Croft, "The Harlem Children's Zone … " Brown Center on Education Policy, Brookings (2010).

Class 3:

• “Negative Implications of No Child Left Behind,” *Science Daily*. www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2008/02/080214080530.htm

**Assignment 2 Due at Start of Class** (late penalty):

**WEEK 9**

Class 1:
• Speech Bishop Anthony M. Pilla, Bishop of Cleveland, Ohio. [Website Link]

Class 2:


Class 3: TBA

WEEK 10

Class 1:

• K. Welner and E. Spindler, "The Post-PICS Picture." In From the Courtroom to the Classroom, C. Smrekar and E. Goldring, eds.

Class 2:

• TBA