

Education Policy
Fridays 10-12 am, at UCCS

Instructor: Thomas Timar
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Office Hours: Friday by appointment (email me)

Readings:

Readings will be assigned for each week of the course. They will be available at Canvas, listed by the author's last name. Students may download or print the articles. All of the assigned reading for a given week, plus associated discussion questions, should be completed before coming to class.

Course Objectives:

This course in education policy has two objectives. One is to examine the landscape of education policy and governance in the United States with a particular focus on California. This will examine the role government--federal, state, and local--the courts, media, constituency and special interest groups in shaping education policy. We will examine the aims of federal and state policy intervention and its impact on students, teachers, and schools. The second objective is to provide students with an understanding of the major education policy issues that have been at the center of policy debates in CA over the past 40 years. They include the following.

- Education finance policy. How schools are funded. The underlying theories of school finance models.
- Accountability. Who is to be held accountable and for what. Strategies for school improvement.
- Reconsidering educational policy in CA: alternative approaches to policy including school choice and education vouchers.
- Policies related to equity, access, and adequacy
- Issues related to the teaching profession including tenure, preparation, salary structure.
- Higher education in California: Efforts to create a rational and efficient higher education system in California.
- Academic preparation and access to higher education. The role of the higher education system with regard to K-12.

An over-riding theme of our examination is to assess the impact of the past 40 years of policy intervention. Have they achieved their objectives? Are students, teachers, communities better off? A constant theme of education policy since the Brown v. Board decision has been the equality of educational opportunity. Another has been to increase the educational achievement of American students. Have these goals been realized? Many policy researchers contend that we have made little progress. Is this so? If yes, why? Have the huge investments over the past 40 years in educational improvement been worth the cost?

Course Outline

Session Number	Date	Lead Instructor*	Topic	Readings to be completed by the beginning of class	Assignments due at beginning of class
1	Friday, 4/6	Timar	Introduction to education policy. What is the policy landscape in the US? Who are the major players?		
2	Friday, 4/13	Timar	Governance and control of education in CA. Who is in control?		
3	Friday, 4/20	Timar	Ways of thinking about policy: models, concepts, outcomes. Theories of decision making.	Kagan	Brief paper #1
4	Friday, 4/27	Timar	The search for educational equity and adequacy: federal and state policy and the role of the courts.		Draft of policy research proposal
5	Friday, 5/4	Timar	School finance: does money matter? Centralization v. decentralization		
6	Friday, 5/11	Timar/ Murdoch	Assessment and accountability. What are we measuring? How does policy connect to assessment? LCFF and LCAP		Brief paper #2
7	Friday, 5/18	Timar	The Master Plan for Higher Education; the Master Plan and K-12;		
8	Friday, 5/25	Timar	Access to higher education: academic preparedness, disparities in access, finance;		Brief paper #3

9	Friday, 6/1	Timar	Re-conceptualizing education policy in CA. Is policy planning possible? Long-term policy planning vs. whack-a-mole decision making		
10	Wednesday, 6/6	Timar	Student poster presentations.		
	Wednesday, 6/13	Timar			Final policy paper due

*There will be guest seminar presenters: to be determined

Grading

All assignments should be turned in via Canvas as Adobe.pdf files.

The course grade will be based on the following components.

Attendance and participation

Three brief question sets

Three short (2-3 pages) paper based on students-selected readings

Policy research proposal and poster presentation

Final paper

Attendance and participation: Students are expected to attend all class sessions (Fridays, 10 am-12 noon), 12-1pm). Students should come to class having read the assigned readings and with all assignments completed. Written work should be turned in via Canvas by 8am the morning of class, with students retaining a photocopy (or readily accessible electronic copy) for their own in-class notes and reflections. If you need to miss a class session, please email the instructor (tbtimar@ucdavis.edu) at least 24 hours in advance (except in exceptional circumstances).

Brief question sets: Most class sessions will require some reading in advance. Because these readings are essential to understanding the course material, you will be asked to complete a brief question set in advance of several class sessions. Students will be required to upload the assignments before the beginning of class (i.e. by 8am) and to retain a photocopy to use for class

discussion. Questions sets are designed to consolidate your understanding of the readings and prepare you for the class discussion. Answers should be succinct and to the point; long essays are neither required nor desired.

Policy research proposal and poster presentation:, This course requires a policy research project in two parts: a policy research *proposal* (2-3 pages) and a *poster presentation* including Background, Objectives, Methods, Results, and Discussion/Implications. This assignment is designed to provide students with a critical learning experience as well as an opportunity to engage in education policy research. The policy research project will require students to gather, analyze, and report on an important education policy issue relevant to California.

The research proposal (2-3 double-spaced pages) will state the nature of the education policy problem, why the problem is important to address, it's relevance to CA's education system, what background information is needed to understand the problem, the policy research questions to be addressed, options for policy. For the final paper, students will develop policy options and evaluate them in terms of equity, feasibility, efficiency, possible unintended consequences, costs, political feasibility.

All work must be in line with the UC Davis Code of Academic Conduct.

Academic Integrity

As a student enrolled at the University of California, Davis, you have agreed to abide by the University's Code of Academic Conduct (see <http://sja.ucdavis.edu/cac.html>) A version of this code of conduct applies at every UC campus. Cheating and other violations of academic honesty are serious offenses. Students are expected to work independently on all graded assignments except the group debate scheduled for Session 5.

Plagiarism deserves special attention in the age of the internet and the ease with which content can be "cut and pasted." Specifically, passing off another's words or ideas as one's own, or using those words or ideas without proper acknowledgement or citation, is considered plagiarism. Plagiarism is a serious form of academic misconduct. Students interested in learning more should consult references such as this:

<http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/02602930301677>

Students who engage in cheating will receive a grade of "F" for the course and may be subject to proceedings of the UC Davis Office of Student Support and Judicial Affairs.

August 31, 2017

Students with Disabilities

Any student who, because of a disability, may require some special arrangements in order to meet course requirements, should contact the instructor as soon as possible to make necessary accommodations. It is the responsibility of the student to request accommodation for individual learning needs. UCCS (under the auspices of UC Davis) will make every attempt to accommodate all qualifying disabilities.