Overview of the Course
This course is designed to provide students who are new to the study of higher education an overview of the field, its challenges, and opportunities. For those persons who have worked in university settings, hopefully it is an opportunity to engage in an examination of structures and fields within higher education yet outside of the university. Our focus is primarily the higher education system in the United States; however, we welcome those in the class who come from outside the U.S. to share the variations from these other systems as options for new ways of thinking about the work of the academy. While the course introduces some of the historical background of higher education, its ultimate aim is to be contemporary in coverage and future focused. Because this is a survey of the field, no single topic can be covered with the depth that it deserves, but the course attempts to ensure students have a working knowledge of the structures, functions, major issues, and concerns within higher education, and opportunities to address these issues through readings, discussion, research, and projects.

The course is structured to present the world of higher education by posing overarching questions that allow us to explore enduring issues throughout its history: What is the purpose of higher education? Who is college for? How do people access and succeed in college? How do we structure the Academy to allow it to do its best work? What do we teach and how do we teach to achieve our missions? How do we ensure the ongoing quality of the Academy?

Using a popular higher education text, *American Higher Education in the Twenty-First Century* (Altbach, Gumport, & Berdahl, 2011), we frame the course with a brief historical overview of higher education in the United States, as it is important to understand the antecedents of our current system and to mark the evolution of our institutions overtime. How has higher education changed as it addresses the questions mentioned above? What phenomena in the society spur change and how does the system react, resist, or absorb these changes across various aspects of higher education (student populations, curriculum and pedagogy, faculty and staff, and interactions with community and the larger society)? When does higher education lead and when does it follow society?

The course spends some time looking at the impact of diversity on higher education, an important issue for all members of the higher education community and one that requires openness to a critical examination of our system as it responds to the complexity of contemporary society. Through a number of readings, activities, and class discussions, the course will consider the current status of race, gender,
class, and other types of diversity at colleges and universities, and how these issues impact campus climate and learning.

Additionally, understanding the U.S. higher education system requires understanding the various people who serve the system and how they have come to organize themselves to carry out the functions of our industry. Therefore, we spend some time reading about, discussing, and thinking about the roles of faculty, staff, and administrators within higher education. What are the roles and responsibilities assigned and how do people function in those roles? What is the nature of leadership within higher education? How do the various leadership roles ensure the accomplishment of institutional mission and ultimately the ends higher education purports to accomplish for our society?

We bring our course to an end by asking an important question: What is the future of higher education? We join in projecting our own assumptions on what may be in store for our field. While, none of us will have an absolute answer to this question, we can leverage our current knowledge to consider issues that are currently being addressed, and we can anticipate issues and concerns that are already emerging within the field. It will be important to think about the future because those of you in the class who will be working in higher education will be operating in the forward movement of our profession, hopefully armed with a strong sense of the issues and even possible solutions that grow out of your time of study at the University of Michigan.

Course Objectives
This course is designed to help participants accomplish the following objectives:

- To understand the Big Picture of higher education and situate that picture within both the historic and contemporary realities of higher education.
- To explore the organizational structures and goals of higher education and its role within our society
- To think critically about current issues in U.S. higher education (primarily) and their connection to other higher education systems
- To anticipate the future of higher education and the levers available to shape or change that future
- To explore a topic of professional interest through the study of a college or university program or intervention

Texts and Required Readings
Required:

Other Class Readings and Suggested Bibliography:
In addition to the required textbooks, the instructors will provide other readings through the Canvas site. Readings will be assigned for each class and can be found on the Course Schedule.

Students should become familiar with important higher education journals and publications. There are several higher education news publications that are readily available and many national newspapers (New York Times, Huffington Post, etc.) carry important higher education stories. Students should make it a practice to consult some of these on a weekly basis. All of these publications have online formats.

Chronicle of Higher Education
Learning Outcomes
The learning goals for the course are framed as outcomes the instructor hopes every student will achieve and for which learning activities have been designed to achieve.

Students completing this course will

• Be able to provide a contextual history of major events impacting higher education in the United States
• Be able to discuss in written and oral formats the basic structural components of higher education and how these components contribute to educational goals of institutions
• Know the various types of higher education institutions and their roles within the larger system
• Be able to discuss major issues in higher education and the backgrounds and implications of those issues
• Be able to access basic information about higher education institutions and systems.
• Be able to produce a piece of research related to an identified issue or program in higher education

General Assumptions:
Teaching about higher education carries with it certain assumptions that should be articulated to ensure that the underlying premises from which the course has been developed are explicit, even if members of the class may not agree with some of them.

Assumptions:
• Higher education is both a personal benefit and a public good. We frequently hear questions about whether higher education is more a personal benefit or a social or public good. This course assumes that it has been and will continue to be both. The issue is how we act on both. Our economic argument (you’ll more readily get a job and earn more money) for higher education point to its personal benefit. We often lead with this position in attracting potential students to our institutions. Our arguments for the public benefit (you’ll be a better citizen) seem to have less weight and more questions about their measureable outcomes.
• Higher education has an obligation to use its resources to address societal needs.
• Higher education in the United States should be open to all capable students.
• The study of higher education does not fit neatly into a specific disciplinary frame but draws on a wide variety of formal research-based practices and informal observations about institutional and system behaviors. Therefore, we learn about higher education from a variety of sources and subject fields.
• Higher Education has multiple goals and intended outcomes, but a primary one is the transmission of the knowledge and skills needed for work, economic viability and civic life in a democratic society.
• Individuals practicing leadership within the higher education profession have a privileged position and thus a responsibility to influence their individual institutions, the larger system of higher education, and the larger society toward those goals that promote and support equity and social justice within the society.
Course Format:
This is a seminar course and is designed to have faculty and students share in the joint process of constructing an environment of participatory learning through reading, research, discussion, and activities that stimulate shared experiences. We will use one common text to help organize and frame our discussions, supplemented by various articles and readings that will be available on Cools.

This three-hour class incorporates a variety of activities in order to cover the content and engage students in the learning process. These activities include student discussions and presentations based on the readings, faculty-led mini lectures, informal debates, group projects, and written papers. To function well, a seminar course relies heavily on the regular and vigorous participation of all class members.

Readings and assignments have been chosen to provide exposure to professional practice and scholarship in this subject area. Unlike other courses, we won’t always come to class with the sole purpose of discussing the readings, but understanding their content will be very important in interacting with guest presenters and in accomplishing the course projects. Nonetheless, it will be important to keep up with the readings for each session, and there will also be opportunities throughout the term to demonstrate mastery of what has been read and to interrelate it with course activities and assignments.

Teaching Philosophies
Our approach to the course and the underlying teaching strategy reflect conceptual understandings held by the instructional team:

Students bring different experiences, motivations and learning styles to the classroom. The implications of this observation not only include the challenge to bring a wide range of ideas forward through readings and discussion, but also the need to recognize that some students might be taking the class as a basis for further research, others to broaden their career opportunities and some out of a general interest in higher education. All students have something to contribute but not all students will contribute in the same way.

The subject matter can be approached in a variety of ways. As we will discover, much of what is written about higher education as a general field of study is derived from the work of sociologists, psychologists, economists and educators. Recently, professionals in the field have pointed to an emerging “science” to complement the “art” that has long dominated professional practice in education.

The teaching-learning processes in higher education are inherently transformational processes hidden in transactional exchanges. This principle is central to the seminar. It brings implications for the ways in which learning goes beyond a redistribution of information or resources between individuals and points to higher education’s ability to reshape identities and transform lives.

Learning should be fun and satisfying but not entertainment. This subject matter deserves serious consideration. Open discussions and debate are encouraged. We learn through our differences of opinions and approaches, but we can also take pleasure in vigorous exchanges wherein our minds are presented with opportunities to re-think old concepts and perspectives and learn new ones. Laughter is encouraged.

Pedagogical Strategies
• Engage students in learner-centered activities, supported by examination of relevant research using primary and secondary sources
• Provide a balance of structured class activities and opportunities for students to think creatively about their learning process
• Acquaint students with resources they can use for extended study in particular areas
• Call upon students to use multiple intelligences and intellectual skills
• Expect the faculty to act as a facilitator of the learning process

Course Expectations for Participants
All members of the course are expected to participate and be engaged in completing the assignments for the class meetings--reading the required texts and other assigned readings; participating in class exercises and discussions, completing written assignments, developing oral presentation, and participating in a group project.

Course Requirements
Writing Style: All written assignments must be typed, spell-checked, proofread for grammar and usage, and should conform to the style and reference notation format outlined by the 6th edition of the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association or other writing style as may be specified in this syllabus. Please double-space all assignments and use 12-point font with a one-inch margin on all sides of the paper. Unless otherwise noted, all papers will be submitted through Canvas.
Attendance Policy: Class attendance is required, and participation is expected. This is a seminar/lecture course. Reading the material for class is important, but equally important is the conversation that takes place in the classroom. The sharing of ideas, active listening, and many questions form the basis of the learning process. This process assumes that students are in class regularly and engaged with the subject matter and each other. Electronic recordings or note-taking by a peer cannot take the place of being in class. Frequent tardiness and/or absences will negatively affect your grade.
Academic Integrity: Operating under the highest standards of academic integrity is implied and assumed. Academic integrity includes issues of content and process. Treating the course and class participants with respect, honoring class expectations and assignments, and seeking to derive maximum learning from the experience reflect some of the process aspects of academic integrity. Claiming ownership only of your own unique work and ideas, providing appropriate attribution of others’ material and quotes, clearly indicating all paraphrasing, and providing the trail to the original source of any idea are key components to the concept of academic integrity. Aspire to the spirit and highest representation of academic integrity. I would also encourage you to read the University’s General Catalogue, especially the sections that detail your rights as a student and the section that discusses the University’s expectations of you as a student. (See http://www.rackham.umiich.edu/StudentInfo/Publications)
Religious Observation: This class observes University defined holidays (such as Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, Fall break). Because other days may be of more significance than a University-designated holiday, please inform me as soon as possible if a class day or due date for a class assignment conflicts with your observance of a holiday important to you. I will work with you to accommodate your needs.
Late Assignments: Students are expected to submit assignments on the announced dates. Assignments submitted after the announced due date will receive point reductions—the later the submission, the more the point reduction. Students with any special learning needs or accommodations that would affect the timing of completion of assignments should notify the instructor after the first class.
Classroom Civility: This course, to a great extent, is based on the give and take of discussion. Students are expected at all times to conduct themselves in a manner that supports the teaching-learning process. The expectations below will be discussed at the beginning of our course and monitored throughout the class:
Community Expectations

- Be on time (Michigan time)
- Know when to step up and step back in discussions
- Express disagreement with respect
- Assume that others have positive motives and are doing the best they can to learn from and engage with the material.
- Challenge the idea and not the person. If you wish to challenge something that has been said, you will challenge the idea or the practice referred to, not the individual sharing this idea or practice.
- Support your statements. Use evidence and provide a rationale for your points.
- We want to create an atmosphere for open, honest exchange. (No live tweeting!)
- Keep side conversations to a minimum
- Use technology in class respectfully, using laptops and mobile devices for course work only

Course Changes Policy: The instructor reserves the right to alter information in this syllabus as needed to accurately reflect the course coverage and to enhance the learning outcomes of the course. When or if changes are necessary, they will be announced in advance and students will have appropriate time to make adjustments.

Course Philosophy on the Assigning of Grades

Students stress over grades, even in graduate school. While grades are a necessary tool given the educational models we have adopted, they are not the end goals of a class. They are at best a representation of attempts to codify for our systems of accountability that some level of learning has taken place. The instructor for this class starts with the assumption that all students in the class are capable of earning and plan to earn the highest grade for the course to mirror the level of their work and involvement with the subject matter. Therefore, the expectation is that students will/should earn an “A” grade. However, in the event that students do not fully meet this expectation, other grades will be assigned in accord with the scale given below. The course will use the following assignments for awarding points for the various course activities.

Course Assignments and Activities

Class Participation (30 Points)

This course is a discussion course, not a lecture. While the instructors will provide some lecture sections, the expectation is that students will read the assigned material and come prepared for the reciprocal learning that takes place from the shared discussions and other activities that will happen in class.

- **Discussion Leading (10 points)**: Class participation also means that students will be present for class and will join in the various class-related activities that help introduce them to the field of higher education. One expectation is that all students will volunteer for or be assigned to facilitate a discussion based on the readings from the text and/or other sources. Use of PowerPoint or other visuals is encouraged; however, students may use other presentation formats to engage the class and stimulate discussion. Leading the class discussion around the readings means being prepared to summarize the content of the material, raise questions about the material and suggest how it helps us understand the content focus for that class session. It is important to look at what authors have said but perhaps have not said in their material and to suggest other perspectives or points of view, where appropriate.
• **Canvas Postings (10 points):** Each week, by 8:00pm on the night before class, you will submit three possible discussion questions through a Canvas forum. Your questions should include a combination of in-depth analysis of individual articles and questions that require cross reading analysis or synthesis. Some weeks I may ask that your Forum contribution take another format.

• **Engagement (10 points):** All members of the course are expected to participate and be engaged in completing the assignments for the class meetings--reading the required texts and other assigned readings; participating in class exercises and discussions, completing written assignments and developing oral presentation.

### Institutional Type Analysis (25 Points)

Select an institutional type (i.e. community college, research institution, for-profit, tribal colleges). Based on an analysis of historical and current material related to the institutional type, develop and write a paper focused on a particular issue or concern related to this type of institution. The paper should be approximately 8 content pages in length; must include at least ten resources; and present a thesis or research question that can be addressed in the paper. The paper will use American Psychological Association (APA) formatting. Students should include the following information:

- Discussion of why you selected this type of institution
- Some historical information about the institution type
- A discussion that situates the institutional type within the framework of higher education (mission, structure, governance, funding)
- Define one or two specific issues or concerns for you related to this type

**Due October 21st at 11:59 PM on Canvas.**

### Group Project (Model Higher Education Institution or System, 25 Points; Presentation 10 Points)

This course is designed as an introduction to higher education. As such it seeks to have students think about the purposes, structures, and make-up of institutions, but it also seeks to have students anticipate and plan for the future. Work groups for this assignment will be organized during the second week of class. Groups will be asked to work together over the course of the semester to design an ideal new institution (private or public) or higher education system for a state. The goal is to use what you know about higher to develop new models or to improve on our current models. Students should write a paper that identifies existing challenges or opportunities to improve higher education and how they may be addressed in the future. In this paper students should:

- Identify existing challenge(s) that is/are substantiated with previous research/data;
- Identify of structures or characteristics that would be introduced or changed to address these, with accompanying rationale based in the literature;
- Address how you expect these changes to address future higher education needs.

The paper should be approximately 12 content pages in length; must include at least 15 resources; and use APA formatting. The presentation of this project will involve both a written presentation (PowerPoint) and oral presentation/poster session as scheduled in the Course Schedule. The same grade for the project will be given to all members of the group. Groups will be assigned by the instructors. Criteria for grading the written and oral presentations will be posted on Canvas. **Paper, poster and presentation due on December 9th at the end of class.**

### Issues in Higher Education Group Discussions (10 Points)

The world of higher education is complex and dynamic, and while we often joke about the slow movement of higher education (decisions and outcomes), we understand that our industry is constantly changing, and that change often brings controversy. Higher education practitioners should be aware of these
complexities and changes and able to understand and discuss the implications of them for the various constituencies. In this class, two assignments will take on a number of these important and sometimes controversial issues to examine them from various perspectives. In a “quasi-debate” format, student groups will tackle important issues, gather background information, and present their arguments for the issues in class. The important work is being able to see multiple sides to the issues and have a sense of the many factors that could enter into decision-making processes. (October 21st and November 4th).

TOTAL POINTS POSSIBLE 100

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