Course Description

*Academic Affairs and Student Development in Postsecondary Education* focuses on colleges and universities as teaching-learning environments. Class sessions highlight critical issues and scholarship related to the academic aspects of college and university campuses. Key concepts and theories that frame higher education research are examined.

The course is divided into two sections, as follows:

1) *Teaching-Learning Environments (TLEs)*

This section is designed to familiarize students with TLEs, the forces that shape them, and how scholars frame answers to TLE-related questions. Consideration is given to three general sets of factors acting on TLEs: individual, organizational, societal factors.

2) *Critical Issues in TLEs*

The section explores several issues colleges and universities encounter as teaching-learning environments; these include defining and assessing the quality of higher education, enhancing diversity, and protecting academic freedom.

Course Learning Goals

By the conclusion of the course, students should:

- Be knowledgeable about and conversant with the research and scholarship that informs a thoughtful understanding of higher education institutions as complex and multi-layered teaching-learning environments;

- Be able to articulate your own understanding of and position on what teaching-learning environments are and the forces that shape them, as well as on several persistent professional and scholarly issues that are related to student learning and college teaching within the context of contemporary higher education practice; and

- Be knowledgeable about and conversant with major approaches to research and scholarship that comprises the CSHPE Academic Affairs and Student Development concentration.
Course Requirements

1) Class Participation (40% of final grade)
The primary course format will be discussion of the issues raised in the readings. My assumption is that each we are here to learn together and that each participant has important insights to share. Thus, each member's contribution to the overall group process is key to our collective success.

Making your best possible contribution will require completing all reading assignments in a thorough and critical manner. This means using strategies such as taking notes while reading, writing down questions and points of disagreement or affirmation, issues to be explored further, and coming to class prepared to be an active participant in the group learning process. It also requires the willingness to share your ideas and relevant experiences and to actively listen to others. Last, it requires that class members take responsibility for sharing their views as clearly and thoughtfully as possible, and for seeking understanding of points others make you don’t understand.

Written Assignments
Please deposit all course papers to our Canvas site.

All written assignments should conform to the **APA Publication Manual (6th Edition)**, be printed in 12-type font, and be double-spaced. **PLEASE NOTE:** This manual contains MUCH more than the format for referencing citations (e.g., the section on gendered language and using graphic elements in the text). Several websites exist that cover only APA referencing style; this will not be sufficient for developing your own understanding of and proficiency with the kinds of guidelines addressed in this manual. There is a copy behind Linda Rayle’s desk for you to use in the office; check it out! I strongly recommend purchasing a hard copy (with the spiral binder).

2) Reaction Paper(s) (10% of grade for each paper)
These short papers (2-3 pages, double spaced) are designed to help you prepare for class by providing an opportunity to reflect critically on a selected reading listed in the course syllabus. Briefly summarize the focus of the reading, comment on its contribution(s), and offer your critique of the argument the author(s) puts forward. Conclude with your observations about how the reading might be used as a guide for understanding the teaching/learning process in collegiate contexts. Be prepared to summarize and discuss your responses in class.

**Reaction Paper #1:** Select a reading from the Faculty unit (Week 5); this paper is **due October 10, 9AM**.

**Reaction Paper #2:** Select a reading from the Organizational Influences unit (Week 7); this paper is **due by Oct. 24, 9AM**.
3) **Analysis of “Designing the Future(s) of the University”** (25% of final grade)
In a paper of about ten pages (not counting the cover sheet or reference list), first summarize the major arguments offered President John DeGioia of Georgetown University in his address launching the “Designing the Future(s) of the University” initiative. The URL for the video of his address is available on Canvas (Week 9). Select four of his key points and explain how course readings and discussions to date support and/or raise questions about his assertions. Come prepared to discuss your responses in class. **Due: Monday, November 7, 9AM.**

4) **Take-Home Exam** (15% of final grade)
In this exam, you be asked to respond to one or two broad, integrative questions that have been raised through this course. In constructing your response, you will be asked to demonstrate your learning by applying your own thinking and reasoning skills and drawing on relevant course readings to frame and substantiate your answers. Your responses will be relatively short (less than 10 pages); the questions will be distributed near the last day of class. **Due: Thursday, Dec. 15, 11AM**

**Policies on Late Papers and Missed Classes**
If an extension of time is needed to complete an assignment, please notify me prior to the due date. Late papers are accepted up to a week late, with a penalty of half a grade, regardless of reason. The grade penalty is non-negotiable, but one late assignment does not generally hurt the final grade. Discussion of readings is a key element of this course. Consequently, missed classes will hurt the class participation grade, also regardless of reason.

**Readings**
The course readings are available electronically through Canvas, and are listed by topic each week. *Please bring a copy of the readings (either electronic or hard copy) with you each week.*

**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 content 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.umich.edu/StudentInfo/Publications](http://www.rackham.umich.edu/StudentInfo/Publications).)
**Accommodation for Students with Disabilities**

If you think you need an accommodation for a disability, please let me know at your earliest convenience. In light of this information, I may modify some aspects of this course, the assignments, the in-class activities, and the way I teach in order to facilitate your participation and progress. As soon as you make me aware of your needs, we can work with the office of Services for Students with Disabilities to help us determine appropriate accommodations. I will treat any information you provide as private and confidential. See [http://www.ssd.umich.edu](http://www.ssd.umich.edu) for more information about services for students with disabilities.

**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 University-designated holidays, please inform me as soon as possible if a class day or due date for a class assignment conflicts with your observance of a religious holiday that is important to you. I will work with you to accommodate your needs.
Schedule of Readings and Assignments

1-September 12  Introduction to the Course and Each Other

Discuss the purpose and structure of the course and its central question: *What do we mean when we speak of colleges and universities as TLEs?*

Create teams for next week’s reading assignment.


Unit 1: PERSPECTIVES ON ACADEMIC AFFAIRS AND STUDENT DEVELOPMENT

2-September 19  Universities and Colleges as Teaching-Learning Environments

Idea of the University


Goals and Outcomes


Supplemental


To Be Completed Prior to Class: In the higher education literature, universities and colleges are conceptualized in many ways - as complex organizations, political systems, fiscal agencies, management systems, etc. It’s assumed, of course, that universities and colleges are (or should be) teaching learning environments. *But what does this mean?*
The goals of this assignment are to: (a) explore your conceptions of postsecondary institutions as teaching-learning environments (TLEs); and (b) construct definitions of TLES that we will use to frame our class discussions throughout the semester. Drawing on the readings and your experiences as students and practitioners, please complete the following tasks:

1. With your partner, discuss your views and reach consensus about the distinguishing features of college and university TLEs. Use the following questions to structure your conversations:
   a) Within your TLE, what is learning? What is teaching?
   b) When you refer to colleges’ and universities’ teaching-learning environments (TLEs), what do you mean?
   c) What are the key features of these TLEs that come to mind?

2. Create a conceptualization of postsecondary institutions’ TLEs that captures your views. To do this, please finish the following sentence: When we speak about college teaching-learning environment(s), we mean…

3. Identify areas of consensus and difference that emerged during your conversation and summarize these for discussion in class. Be prepared to talk about issues arising during your conversation, information you drew on as you constructed your views, and other relevant factors.

3-September 26        Student Influences – Individual Level

As you read each article, ask yourself the following questions:
1) What are the theoretical assumptions the authors make regarding why students succeed and fail (i.e., how does she explain success and failure)?
2) Did the authors ground these assumptions theoretically, basing them on relevant research? If not, on what do you think they based?
3) Do the study findings support the authors’ conclusion(s)?
4) How might the method(s) of inquiry selected by the authors have shaped the results?
5) What questions for further research emerge for you after reading this article?
6) Overall, what do you think are the strengths and limitations of this piece?

Learning and Motivation

Cognitive Development and Learning


Article to Critique as a Class

In addition to the six questions above, please also list the insights into graduate student success and failure that you gained after reading Lovitt’s study.

For next week: Assign teams

4-October 3 Student Influences – Group Level

Select two of the following sets of readings:

Generation Effects


Effects of Student Disengagement/Engagement


Peer Group Effects

Inkelas, K. K., Johnson, D., Lee, Z., Daver, Z., Longerbeam, S. D., Vogt, K. & Brown Leonard, J. (2006). The role of living-learning programs in students’ perceptions of intellectual growth at three large universities. *NASPA Journal, 43*(1), 115-143. doi.org/10.2202/1949-6605.1574
Community Effects


Assignment: Teams will select one of the four sets of readings for which they will be primarily responsible. Teams should meet prior to class to discuss the set of readings selected and to prepare a class presentation that (a) explains the authors’ theoretical perspectives and arguments and summarizes the key findings; (b) highlights concerns about their arguments, methods, conclusions, and (c) fosters class discussion about the effects of student collectives/groups on TLEs.

5-October 10 Faculty Influences

DUE: Reaction Paper #1

Reshaping Roles and Authority


Orientations to Teaching


**Questions to Consider:** The writers consider faculty roles and work from multiple theoretical perspectives. Come to class ready to discuss the grounding (or lack of) in the articles, the methodological strengths and limitations, and the implications for further research and practice.

6- October 17 UM Fall Break – NO CLASS

7-October 24 Organizational Influences

*TUE: Reaction Paper #2*

**Mission/Culture/Climate**


**Structures/Processes**


**Questions to Consider:**

As you read the selections for this week, think about what you believe the mission of a college or university should be and what organizational structures (e.g., academic calendars, degree programs) and processes (e.g., admissions, instructional) you would put
in place to accomplish these goals? Also consider what you think the impact of these practices, policies, etc., might be on a university’s TLE. Given the contemporary emphasis on “branding” and your readings so far, what do you think are some potential positive and negative impacts this practice might have on a campus’ TLES? Come prepared to discuss the authors’ theoretical lens and arguments as well as methods of inquiry and results.

8-October 31  

External Influences: National Debates and TLEs


Civic Engagement Debate


Questions to Guide Class Discussion

National Commissions addressing select aspects of higher education are convened periodically in the U.S.; some of these spark debates about the purposes of higher education. *How should campuses receive and respond to the recommendations from the reports they offer?*

Today’s readings include background readings on the mission of higher education and national reports, an original report released by a national task force, a response from a faculty member to this report, and empirical research on students’ responses to campus climates around social responsibility. Specifically, Downs (2012) offers a critique that exemplifies the thinking of many who oppose the ideas expressed in *A Crucible Moment*; by contrast, Barnhardt, et. al. (2015) consider how campuses shape students’ understanding of their social responsibilities and their civic skills. *Based on the assigned course readings thus far*, please come ready to discuss your answers to the following questions:
What are the positions taken by the authors of *A Crucible Moment* and by Downs (2012)? What are their general arguments?

What assumptions about higher education TLEs do the authors of both the Report and articles share?

What assumptions about higher education TLEs are fundamentally different?

In what ways do our class readings support the authors’ arguments?

What questions do class readings raise about the different positions?

Assume that you are appointed to an ad hoc committee created by the Provost (the chief academic officer) on your campus and charged with responding to *A Crucible Moment*. The governing board wants to take up the matter of how the campus will react. In light of her belief that board members hold a variety of points of view, the Provost seeks to emphasize the underlying assumptions and has made it clear that she expects that all recommendations be well reasoned and evidence-based whenever possible. What will you recommend and why?

9-November 7  Discussion of President DeGioia’s Address (2014)

“Designing the Future(s) of the University” --Discussion of the main points of this address as interpreted in your papers. (For details and the URL for the video of this address are posted on Canvas, Week 9.)

*DUE: Analysis Paper*

November 9-12  Annual Meeting of the Association for the Study of Higher Education (ASHE), Columbus, Ohio.

**Unit 2: CRITICAL ISSUES IN TLEs**

10-November 14  Assessment and TLE Quality

Ewell, P. (2008). Assessment and accountability in America today: Background and context. *New Directions for Institutional Research, Assessment Supplement* (pp. 7-17). Downloaded from [www.interscience.wiley.com](http://www.interscience.wiley.com).

Student Outcomes


**Learning Analytics**


Baer, L. and Campbell, J. (2012). From metrics to analytics, reporting to action: Analytics’ role in changing the learning environment. In D. G. Oblinger (Ed.), *Game changers: Education and information technologies* (pp. 53-65). EDUCAUSE.

**Questions to Consider:** Think about the student outcomes that you would include in a summative assessment of undergraduate learning at the conclusion of the baccalaureate degree. What are they? How would you assess them within an entire graduating class? In class, we will examine several of the key assessment tools mentioned in these articles.

**11-November 21 Diversifying TLEs**

**Structural Diversity**


**Institutional Level – Climate & Curricular Diversity**


Questions to Consider: “Diversity” is a complex concept used in reference to curriculum, teaching, learning, students, teachers and many other aspects of higher education. What is a diverse TLE? What effects does a diverse TLE have on learners and on faculty? In making a compelling argument to support affirmative action, colleges and universities (as well as businesses) talk of the need to prepare students to live in a diverse democracy and to work in diverse settings. What do you see as the challenges these expectations present to postsecondary TLEs?

12-November 28 Academic Freedom – Rights and Responsibilities-1: Freedom of Speech

Conceptions of Academic Freedom


Class Discussion: What key differences do you see between the AAUP perspective and Horowitz’ perspective?

“Academic Freedom” – Freedom of Speech

Freedom of Speech among Students


Applebaum, B. (February 2009). Is teaching for social justice a “liberal bias”? Teachers College Record, 111(2), 376-408.

Class Discussion: You are the associate vice-president for student affairs at a public research university and have been asked to offer recommendations on how to respond to parental concerns arising from the publicity around this issue. What will you say?
Freedom of Speech among Faculty


Class Discussion: You have been invited to participate in a public debate about faculty rights and responsibilities around freedom of speech. The organizers have decided to use the Ward Churchill case to focus the debate. What will you say?

Questions to Consider: Each set of readings listed above concludes with an anchoring discussion question at the end. Please come prepared to critique the readings and to answer the question posed there.

13-December 5 Academic Freedom – Rights and Responsibilities-2: Academic Dishonesty

Academic Dishonesty among Students


Class Discussion: The academic associate dean of your college has asked you, as the dean of student affairs, to work with him on the development of guidelines and practices to foster academic honesty among undergraduate students. Plagiarism is the first issue he wants to tackle. What will you recommend?

Academic Dishonesty – Faculty


Class Discussion: The student and faculty governments on your campus are at odds over a proposal to implement a student honor code. The sticking points are primarily around who is responsible for policing and enforcement, the students or the faculty member teaching a particular class. What will you do?
Questions to Consider: Each set of readings listed above concludes with an anchoring discussion question at the end. Please come prepared to critique the readings and to answer the question posed there.

For next week: See question posted on Canvas.

14-December 12  Looking Back, Looking Forward
[Last Day of Class]

The focus of our last class will be to reconsider the major questions of this course, your stance on them, and the kinds of questions you now seek to explore.

Be sure to complete your Course Evaluation (available through Canvas)!

December 15  Final Paper/Take Home Exam Due
Thursday, 11AM