EDUCATION 864: American College Students

University of Michigan School of Education
Winter 2016
Wednesdays, 4:00 pm to 7:00 pm
SEB 2320

Instructor:
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Summary:
College students are more diverse than in any other time in our country’s history. This course examines
the various populations of American college students and their diverse characteristics, experiences in
various institutional types, and outcomes. The course surveys theory and research about how college
affects undergraduates, including empirical research, current events, and classic perspectives from the
higher education literature. We will discuss the college choice process, the transition to college, student
life, persistence, and college outcomes. Appropriate for masters or doctoral students, this course is
intended to provide an overview that will complement coursework in student development, educational
policy, and organizational behavior.

Learning outcomes:
1. Knowledge:
   a. How do colleges (in their accessibility, provision of academic and social programs, and
      facilitation of developmental outcomes) affect students? How do different student populations
      experience college and how does the college experience vary by institutional types?
   b. What have I learned about the access, experiences, and outcomes of a specific group of
      college students?
   c. How do various environmental and social factors influence students’ enrollment decisions,
      learning, development, and outcomes?
2. Application:
   a. How will learning in this course make me a better professional?
   b. What can I do as a professional to improve the education of a specific group of college
      students?
3. Integration:
   a. How can I link my own learning about a specific group with the group’s collective learning
      through our readings, discussions, and activities?
   b. What are the connections between my learning about college students in this class, and
      my learning from other courses and experiences?
4. Interaction:
   a. What does the diversity in college student access, experiences, and outcomes mean for
      my engagement with college students and higher education professionals?
   b. How do my identities shape my assumptions about various college student populations?
      How can I develop more nuanced understanding of the myriad of college affects
      experienced by today’s college students?

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

1 This course was originally designed by Julie Posselt, PhD.
make adjustments. Many anticipated changes will be discussed with the class for input and as part of the decision making process; however, final decisions about changes are the responsibility of the instructor.

**Required course texts:**

**Grading:**
Grades will be calculated based on the following requirements:

1. **Attendance & Engagement (20%)**
   - **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.
   - **Engagement:** 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.
     - i. Each week, by 10:00pm on the night before class, you will submit three possible discussion questions through a CTools 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.
     - ii. Engagement also means turning OFF your phone altogether during class (unless you have caregiving responsibilities) and refraining from email or social media.

2. **Discussion Leading (15%)** Each student is expected to write a four page analysis of the issues raised by the chapter in *Contested Issues in Student Affairs* about which you are leading discussion. The first two pages should review the major questions raised and the arguments & evidence for multiple sides of the issue at hand. The second two pages should articulate the position on this issue that you currently hold and what the case for that position is. You are welcome to utilize additional scholarly source material, as well as personal reflection. You will also be responsible for leading a balanced discussion on your Contested Issues chapter with another member of the class. There will be a sign-up for the articles/chapters early in the semester.

3. **Course project:** Inputs-Environment-Outcomes analysis (65%). *Developed with a partner, unless preference for individual project is expressed within the first weeks of the course.*
   You will write three papers during the semester following Astin’s Inputs-Environments-Outcomes (IEO model) which will combine into your final paper and presentation for the class. Specifically, you will work individually or with a partner to develop expertise about a particular group of college students of your choosing (e.g., veteran students, rural students, commuter students, undocumented students, African American males, international students). Each paper should also include what scholars call a search for “disconfirming evidence”—evidence that does not support the general trend—such as by identifying within-group diversity.
   - **Paper 1: INPUTS (Feb 3rd, 2016)**
     The first paper will focus on trends about your selected group’s college choices, access, and enrollment, and be grounded in a review the current literature on this topic. You
should also identify and discuss at least one major issue of policy or institutional practice that is affecting this group's access and enrollment. This paper should be 5-10 pages long, double spaced, not including tables, figures, or references.

b. **Paper 2: ENVIRONMENTS (March 23rd, 2016)**

The second paper will focus on college environments (i.e., experiences) of your selected group. Using additional research literature, you will document and critically discuss experiences that are common for students from this group, while also analyzing within-group diversity in experiences. This paper should be 5-10 pages long, double spaced, not including tables, figures, images, or references.

c. **Paper 3: OUTPUTS (April 20th, 2016)**

The third paper will bring together the first two papers with a new, third section focused on the college outcomes of your selected group. Attention should be paid to how colleges could better serve your selected group of students, given the common inputs and experiences you identified in Papers 1 and 2. This paper, which will include revised versions of Paper 1 & 2, should be no longer than 25 pages long, double spaced, not including tables, figures, images, or references.

d. **Class presentation (April 6th or 13th, 2016)**

You will present the results of your I-E-O analysis in a 15 minute presentation during one of the final weeks of the semester. Please create a one-page handout summarizing the important points, statistics, and areas of intervention needed.

**GRADING:**

- **Attendance & Engagement** 20%
- **Discussion leading** 15%
- **Course project** 65%
  - Inputs paper (15%)
  - Environments paper (15%)
  - Final paper (20%)
  - Final presentation (15%)

Grading will be on the A-F scale for three (3) semester credits.

- 93% and up A
- 90%-92% A-
- 87%-89% B+
- 83%-86% B
- 80%-82% B-
- 77%-79% C+ and so on.

Incomplete grades are strongly discouraged, and must be arranged with the instructor before the end of the last regular class meeting (does not include the session(s) for final paper presentations). Please note that, per Rackham and CSHPE policy, courses with grades below B- do not count toward graduation.

**Course Expectations**

**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 CTools.

**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.umich.edu/StudentInfo/Publications)

**Religious Observation:** This class observes University defined holidays (such as Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, spring break). Because other days may be of more significance to you 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. 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 talk—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:

**Weekly schedule:**
As noted above, we may make mid-course adjustments depending on the needs and pace of the group. However, as you consider the schedule of readings tentative, please note that assignment deadlines are firm.

**Key to regularly assigned readings:**
- R & R = Renn and Reason
- M & BM = Magolda and Baxter Magolda
- * = available for discussion leading

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**Week 1 | January 6th**
**American College Students: Beyond the Stereotypes**

*The purpose of this class is to not only serve as an introduction to the content and participants of the course, but also to introduce the concept of and confronting our own stereotypes about the “prototypical” college student in the U.S.*

**Readings**
- R & R, Character 1, Characteristics of College Students in the United States

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**Week 2 | January 13th**
**21st Century College Students & College Impact**

*The readings for and discussion in this class lay the groundwork for our understanding of the composition of college students in the U.S.; their representation as well as their attitudes and beliefs.*

**Readings**
- R & R, Chapter 2, *The College Choice Process*
- Guest Speaker
  - Kevin Hudson, Assistant Director for College Opportunity
  - Office of the Provost, Princeton University

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**Week 3 | January 20th**
**Student College Choice**

*How and why students decide on applying to and enrolling in a particular college are well-studied research areas. This week we delve into the various facets of the college choice process – from individual factors to external influences.*

**Readings**
- R & R, Chapter 2, *The College Choice Process*
### Week 4  
**January 27**

**Dynamic College Enrollment Patterns**

This week we leverage our readings and class time to understand the evolving patterns of college enrollment across different student groups as well as institutional types. We also consider how these are non-neutral; as both students and institutions exercise their preferences to actively shape these patterns.

**Readings**

- R & R, Chapter 3, Student Enrollment Patterns
- *M & B M, Chapter 5, In this Age of Consumerism, What are the Implications of Giving Students What They Want?* By Tracy Davis; Response by Lisa Boes

**Recommended**


### Week 5  
**February 3**

**Contexts of College Student Learning**

After all, college is about learning, right? This week we think about where learning takes place and how it is delivered in the context of serving more and increasingly diverse set of students. How and for whom does learning take place beyond the traditional classroom?

**Readings**

- *M & B M, Chapter 2, How Does the Perception that Learning Takes Place Exclusively in Classrooms Persist?* By Mimi Benjamin & Florence Hamrick; Response by Laura Blake Jones
- *M & B M, Chapter 7, Does Social Networking Enhance or Impede Student Learning?* By Mark Connolly; Response by Ana Martinez Aleman

**Recommended**

Read reactions to the Greenhow, et al. article at [http://edr.sagepub.com/content/38/4.toc](http://edr.sagepub.com/content/38/4.toc)

**Due**

Paper 1 uploaded to CTools by 11:59 PM

### Week 6  
**February 10**

**Perspectives on the Transition to College**

The transition to college, whether from high school, unemployment, or full-time employment can be challenging. This week’s readings and lecture address the myriad challenges students face in their first year as college students.

**Readings**

- R & R, Chapter 4, Transition to College
- M & B M, Chapter 15, Girl or Woman? Dorm or Residence Hall? What’s the Big Deal about Language? By Stephen John Quaye; Response by Ebelia Hernandez

### Week 7  
**February 17**

**Student Life & Social Inequality**

Our class this week examines the following questions: How do campus environments shape students’ college experiences? How does this vary by student demographic groups?

**Readings**

- R & R, Chapter 5, College Environments
Week 8: February 24th  
**Student Life & Social Inequality, continued**  
*For many, the social aspects of college life (including Greek life and socializing) are integral parts of the residential college experience. This week we examine these experiences, how they are experienced by different groups, and institutional responses.*  
**Readings**  
- "M & B M, Chapter 9, "If Curbing Alcohol on College Campuses Is an Impossible Dream, Why Bother with Interventions Aimed at Curbing Abuse?" By James Barber; Response by Heidi Levine

Week 9: March 2nd  
**Spring Break – No Class**

Week 10: March 9th  
**Linking Equity, Diversity, & Student Life**  
*What does equity in higher education look like in practice? We consider this week the institutional practices such as hiring, admission, and student supports that attempt to link equity, diversity, and student life.*  
**Readings**  
- "M & B M, Chapter 14, What Does it Mean to Act Affirmatively in Hiring Processes? By Karen Miller & Doug Toma; Response by Patricia King  
- "M & BM, Chapter 19, "How Do Student Affairs Educators Protect Freedom of Speech while Ensuring Civil Discourse?" by Tobias Uecker; Response by Katie Sardelli

Week 11: March 16th  
**Linking Equity, Diversity, & Student Life, continued**  
*This week addresses the myriad challenges of tending to the multiple and intersecting dimensions of identity that undergird equity, diversity, and student life.*  
**Readings**  
- "M & B M, Chapter 18, "What Roles Should Student Affairs Educators Play in Attending to Students’ Religious and Spiritual Needs?" By Alyssa Bryant; Response by Michelle Murray & Robert Nash

Week 12: March 23rd  
**Factors Affecting Student Outcomes**  
*How and do colleges shape student outcomes? In the following two weeks we examine how the college campus, its resources and personnel are related to outcomes such as inclusion and persistence.*  
**Readings**  
- Winkle Wagner, R., & Locks, A. (2013). The Campus Climate: Diversity on Campus Makes All the Difference (pp. 97-114). Ch.6 in *Diversity & Inclusion on Campus*. New York: Routledge  
- "M & B M, Chapter 21, "What Would Student Affairs Organizational Structures Look Like if they Supported Inclusive, Learning-Centered Practices?"  

**Recommended**  
### Week 13
**March 30th**  
**Factors Affecting Student Outcomes (cont.)**  

**Readings**  
- R & R, Chapter 8, Retention and Persistence  
- *M & B M, Chapter 12, “The Elephant in the Room: Why is it so Challenging for Collegians and Student Affairs Educators to Talk about Race?”* By Julie Park  

### Week 14
**April 6th**  
**Conceptualizing College Outcomes**  

*This week, we consider the current state of college student outcomes. Which outcomes are commonly used? How are they measured? How have outcomes changed over time?*

**Readings**  

**Activity**  
- 3 final presentations

### Week 15
**April 13th**  
**Synthesizing our Knowledge of College Impact**  

*This summative class session brings together what we know about how colleges shape students and is forward-looking to how colleges can better serve students.*

**Readings**  
- R & R, Chapter 10, Serving College Students in the United States, Today and Tomorrow  

**Recommended**  

**Activity**  
- 3 final presentations

### Week 16
**April 20th**  
**Paper #3 due at 11:59 PM on CTools**