Course Syllabus

Minority Serving Institutions
Fall 2015

Course Number: EDUC 771-001 Fall 2015
Instructor: Betty Overton-Adkins
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Class Schedule: Mondays 1pm – 4pm, September 14 thru December 14
Classroom: Room 2320 SOE

Course Overview

A Note on the Historical Context of this Course. This course is a graduate seminar designed to explore the relationship between Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs) and the many constituencies they serve. This course was originally developed by a group of CSHPE graduate students (Brighid Dwyer, Angela Locks, and Christopher Shults) in 2005 as part of an independent study. CSHPE students believed that a course on this topic should be available in the curriculum. While the center was interested and recognized the value of such an offering, it did not have the faculty at the time to implement the offering. The present version of the syllabus has been modified and updated by the instructor but uses much of the original focus and resources identified by the students. The instructor is grateful to these students for proposing the idea and developing the initial syllabus that allowed the course to be birthed.

The identification of Minority Serving Institutions as a unique group of institutions is a rather recent creation in higher education. Prior to the 1970’s few people thought in terms of Minority Serving Institutions. The general public may have heard of historically black colleges and universities, but few if any would have heard of or could have identified institutions that served
Latinos or Native Americans, even though these institutions did exist. Time will be spent in the course exploring the historical roots of these institutions. In this way the course serves as a history of higher education course. However, the historical study of Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs), Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), and Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs), Asian and Pacific Islander Institution (API) will be conducted such that students have an appreciation for the context in which these institutions have been formed, have operated, and will continue to evolve in the near and distant future. Further, the course will focus not only on the history of these specialized and mission-driven institutions, but also the students served by them, the governance structures, financial concerns, unique cultural aspects, intragroup diversity, leadership concerns, and politics associated with these institutions. The course will be focused not on separating these institutions from the broader discussion of the role of higher education in American society, but rather gaining an appreciation for the diverse nature of the American higher education “system” that includes these institutions. The goal of this course is to engage students in the variety of issues specific to MSIs and to prepare students with the contextual understanding of these unique institutions that will allow students to become accurate portrayers of these institution in future research and in perhaps in building institutional partnerships.

The course begins with a basic assumption about MSI institutions. It asserts that these institutions are a germane part of the American higher education system and provide value-added educational experiences for students in the same way as other institutions that make up the spectrum of American higher education. While starting with this assumption, the course will not ignore the sometimes inflammatory and culturally biased questions of whether these institutions remain credible or valid within higher education. The class can also question the assumption and suggest ways in which material we cover brings the assumption into question. To help address these issues, the initial portion of the course will deal with preparing students for the study of institutions which exist in stark contrast to the dominant view of higher education, a view that states that one type of institution and learning is not only appropriate, but necessary for the preparation of academic, community, and civic leaders.

MSIs operate on the principal of appreciating cultural differences and preparing a diverse population of students to become leaders within the greater society, while still being able to appreciate their unique place in the society. The course confronts the fact that the proportion of the total U.S. population comprised of people of color (including African Americans, Asian Americans, American Indians, and Hispanics) has been projected to grow from 28 percent in the year 2000 to nearly 50 percent in 2050. Currently, 84 percent of students in HBCUs are Black. 49 percent of students in HSIs are Hispanic, and 83 percent of students in TCU are American Indian. Additionally, these institutions were responsible for conferring 21 percent of the college degrees and certificates to Black, Hispanic, and Native American students and enrolling 11 percent of all students in higher education in 2000. Furthermore, nearly half of the teacher education degrees conferred to Black, Hispanic, and Native American Students were conferred by MSIs. Enrollments in these institutions increased by 22 percent from 1990 to 2000, compared...
to 9 percent for higher education overall. Graduation and persistence rates are higher for students from minority groups in these institutions than from Predominantly White Institutions (PWIs). These factoids highlight the important role these colleges and universities play in educating and preparing a diverse American population.

Course Philosophy

Course Format & Philosophy
This course is a discussion-based seminar. The expectation is that both students and faculty will work together in co-creating the learning environment as shared space for exchanging information, discussing and sometimes debating ideas, raising concerns and questioning concepts and assumptions. In order to begin to make sense of the broad, sweeping implications of studying MSIs, class participants will need to have clear ground rules and group norms for our interactions. As instructor and facilitator of the course, I will provide guidance with regard to the structure and content of the course materials and in-class discussions. Additionally, I will present conceptual approaches that will provide the basis for our discussions. We will co-construct and nurture a climate that allows freedom in discussions regardless of differences in experiences, values, or perspectives. It is very important that we are all cognizant of the fact that we each bring diverse backgrounds, belief systems, experiences, and perspectives to this seminar. Inasmuch as these differences impact our ideologies, politics, and the like, I would like to encourage us to use these divergent points of view to challenge our assumptions and expand our intellectual views. This can only be accomplished if we are civil and respectful of one another as we interact both inside and outside the classroom. I expect that we will successfully co-construct an environment in this seminar that can be viewed as the most democratic form of dialogue possible.

Goals & Outcomes

Goals
• The primary goal of this course is to provide an intellectual dialogue and analytical engagement with subject matter related to MSIs. Understanding MSIs has implications for the broader society; with the impact that MSIs currently have (data cited earlier) and may have in the future on educational and societal trends and developments, being familiar with MSIs, their constituents and participants, their education outcomes, and their community and political impact is a key piece of understanding higher education as a system and a public good in the twenty-first century.
• A secondary goal of the class is that we will begin to add to the body of scholarship and writing about these institutions through seeking out new areas of exploration and opportunity to develop fresh perspectives on the changing MSI environment. It is important that higher education scholars continue to expand the knowledge base about these institutions and integrate that knowledge into mainstream scholarship within the academy.

Learning Outcomes

At the end of this course students will have:
1) knowledge of the historical background of MSIs and the communities they serve.

2) ability to articulate an understanding of MSIs within the broader social contexts in which they are embedded, particularly along geographic, demographic, political, economic, and broader higher education community dimensions.

3) acquired conceptual tools and skills that enhance understanding of various features of MSIs’ social structures and the processes that shape, organize, and impact their constituents, critics, and others with whom they have relationships.

4) familiarity with the scholarship and research related to minority serving institutions and involvement in the development of their own scholarship regarding these institutions.

4) engagement with the various challenges and opportunities for MSIs, in terms of their role in providing access, opportunities for social mobility, and contributions to cultural preservation.

Textbook and Other Readings

The course will use the following resource as our primary text. This text will serve to assist in creating an organizational flow for the class and as a general introduction to various topics.


In addition to the textbook, there are a number of readings associated with each topic and class meeting. Students are responsible for all readings. Readings and assignments have been chosen to provide exposure to professional practice and scholarship in this field. Unlike many 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 goals. Nonetheless, readings will be integrated into most class sessions. In addition to the readings that are listed as part of this course syllabus, students are encouraged to seek out and bring to the attention of the class other materials that are related to our discussions. A fairly extensive bibliography is provided in the resource materials. The instructor will add to this bibliography during the semester and encourages students to also help grow this bibliographic resource.

Expectations


Pedagogical Strategies
• Engage students in learner-centered activities, supported by examination of relevant research using primary and secondary sources
• Create an accepting and inclusive classroom environment
• 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

**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. Please double-space all assignments and use 12-point font with a one-inch margin on all sides of the paper.

**Attendance Policy**

This is a seminar course. Reading the material in preparation 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 devices or note-taking by a peer cannot take the place of being in class. The instructor does give a grade for class participation.

**50 points**--regular attendance (no more than one absence) and active participation in class. Active participation is defined as alertness, evidence of having read the assigned readings, contribution of additional materials and sharing of insights.

**40 points or less** regular class attendance but minimum engagement in discussions

**No points** for simply being present but not participating

**Academic Honesty Policy**

Each student is responsible for knowing and complying with the academic honesty policy for the University. This instructor will approach each person’s submitted work as the originator’s declaration of original efforts.

**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. Avoid side conversations that may be distracting to others or hamper others from hearing or concentrating on classroom activities. Please turn off all cell phones, beepers, and other devices that might make noise or distract others.

Change 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.

University Adherence to Federal Policy

The University complies with The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). This federal statute provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. The legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a supportive learning environment and requires reasonable accommodations for their disabilities. If you require any accommodations, please contact the instructor for information about university procedures.

Written Assignments

During the course of the semester, students will have a total of six (6) submitted writing assignments to complete. They will consist of two short papers on the primary MSI-types covered in this course (Tribal Colleges and Universities, Hispanic Serving Institutions, Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Predominately Black Institutions, Asian American Native Alaskan Pacific Islander Institutions), a reflection paper on the visit to an MSI (if this materializes), a literature review of a selected topic, a final paper also focused on the topic, and a group/individual institutional project. In addition to the written assignments, each student will present a 10-15 minute oral presentation based on the final paper. These assignments are detailed below.

MSI specific papers

Students will write two (2) mini papers (5 pages in length, not counting reference pages) focusing on two of the types of MSIs we are studying. Each of these mini papers will be a reflection on what we have discussed about the particular type of institution and will reflect on the following questions:

- How does the mission and history of this type of institution create a unique space for it within the higher education enterprise?
- What two major challenges face this type of institution today?
What evidence have you been able to discover that suggests the MSI type is effectively (or not) addressing the challenges?
While this is a reflection paper, you must base your responses on documented sources that are cited in your paper. You may use a particular article or source materials around which you build your reflection.

**Major Research Paper**
You will be required to write a major (minimum of 10 pages and not to exceed 15 pages, not including references) research paper as part of this class. The paper will be done in three stages.

Stage 1 Select and have instructor approve a topic (no grade)
Stage 2 Complete a literature review for the paper (graded—see class schedule for due date)
Stage 3 Prepare a proposed outline (sentence) for the paper (no grade but classroom group discussion of the outline)
Stage 4 Write and submit the paper (see class schedule for due date)
Stage 5 Mini Presentations (10-12 minute presentations) based on the paper

All of the papers should challenge students to create a thesis, take a position, and provide appropriate documentation of their arguments and assertions. The literature review should help identify source materials and develop a clear picture of the issues to be discussed and a perspective from which to frame your thesis. The final paper may incorporate the in-class reading assignments, but should also utilize sources external to this course. In addition, information gathered from the site visit may prove relevant. The purpose of this assignment is to allow students to grapple with a particular issue or idea in some depth. To the extent possible, the paper should be considered a professional presentation that could be presented or published.

More specific information about paper topics and preparation of the papers will be given in class. Additionally, the instructor will provide students a writing rubric to be used in looking at grading standards for all writing assignments.

Due dates for papers and other assignments are listed in the weekly class schedule.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Possible Paper Options</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) Select a topic that is specific to one institutional type (desegregation at HBCUs, preservation of culture at TCUs, the role of language at HSIs, the role of culture at AAPI-serving institutions)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Discuss homogeneity and heterogeneity with one institutional type (i.e. compare or contrast two HBCUs, two Tribal Colleges, two HSIs, or two AAPIs)</td>
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<td>3) Discuss the transformational issues of an institution related to an HBCU that has become an HSI, or a PWI that has become a PBI or HSI</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
3) Draw comparisons and differences across institutional types (i.e. discuss accreditation, or transfer, or student experiences at all MSI types)

4) Discuss the role of a national association in relation to the institutional type(s) (NAFEO, HACU, AIHEC, the Alliance, United Negro College Fund, National Community College Hispanic Council, and National Indian Education Association)

5) Focus on student issues and/or experiences at HBCUs, TCUs, or HSIs (this could include interviewing current MSI students or alumni)

6) Complete a case study of one institution. If this final option is selected, there must be adequate contact with the institution interviews, surveys or other means of collecting first-hand data. This option is also subject to the hosting institution’s willingness to participate in a study. Additionally, IRB approval will be needed if the student plans to use the information gathered for any reason beyond completing a course assignment.

7) The changing demographics at selected HBCUs and their implications for historic mission.

If there were other options students would like to investigate for their final paper they will need to be discussed it with the course instructor by the third week of class. An extended list of topics will be given in class.

**Site Visit**
In order to learn more about Minority Serving Institutions first hand, students will be asked to visit one Minority Serving Institution during the term. The class has a small amount of funds which can be used for mileage and other travel expenses; however, this assignment will require a significant amount of time outside the regularly scheduled class meeting times.

The trip is tentatively being planned for over the Fall Break. However, we will be discussing this visit on the first day of class to see if this or other arrangements are feasible.

Within a week of returning to Ann Arbor, you will be expected to submit a reflective essay (2-3 pages) on your field experience. The purpose of this assignment is to provide students an opportunity to process the experience. Some initial questions for students to consider: What did you gain from this trip? What was surprising? What did you learn? How was it different being on the campus of an MSI than reading about it? How was it different than a PWI? How did this experience shape your understanding of higher education and of MSIs?

**Institutional Group Project**
With the support of the instructor, students will identify a project at an MSI. The intent of this assignment is to have students move beyond a textbook view of MSIs but to involve themselves
with an institution so that they can learn about specific issues and gain connections at the institutions.

**Grading Format and Assignment of Grades**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignments</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mini-papers (3 required)</td>
<td>100 (50 points each)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literature Review</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Paper</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oral Presentation</td>
<td>50</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site visit reflection</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group/Institution Project</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Points</strong></td>
<td><strong>600</strong></td>
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**Grading Scale**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Points Range</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>600-570</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>569-539</td>
<td>A-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>538-508</td>
<td>B+</td>
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<tr>
<td>507-477</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>476-446</td>
<td>B-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>445-415</td>
<td>C+</td>
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<tr>
<td>414-384</td>
<td>C</td>
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<tr>
<td>383 below</td>
<td>Fail</td>
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