661. History and Philosophy of Higher and Postsecondary Education

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I. Description

Formal education, including higher education, has been integral to the social and economic development of American society. After borrowing organizational forms and pedagogical methods from Britain during the colonial period, both K-12 education and higher education in the U.S. evolved through major transitions along with American society. U.S. education occasionally adapted pedagogies and organizational forms from European countries, but distinctive models of schools and universities also emerged in the 19th and 20th centuries. At times, the U.S. model for research universities has been adopted by other countries. Understanding this history from the vantages of different, and often competing, reformers in different historical periods is essential for gaining perspective on administrative practices and research in higher education.

The theoretical foundations for research on colleges and universities, faculty, and students have also evolved over time. Researchers who study higher education have adapted theories and models from other fields to study students, faculty, institutions, and policy in higher education. Professors and other professionals in higher education should aim to understand the foundational assumptions that underlie research in the field. In addition to providing an introduction to divergent perspectives on the history of higher education, this course introduces students to some of the ways theory and philosophy have been used in the study of colleges and their students.

A. Purpose

The purposes of this course are to enable students to: a) build an historical perspective on higher education in the United States; and b) frame research on higher education within an understanding of frequently adapted philosophical traditions.

The course provides students with the foundations for situating and interpreting research on colleges and universities as social institutions. It is organized to integrate two interrelated areas of content, one focusing on history and the other on philosophy and social foundations.
B. Objectives

Content Area 1: History. The learning objective guiding the history component of the course is to build an understanding of the ways histories of K-12 and higher education interrelate, as well as of the diverse vantages through which historical events and current issues can be viewed. John Thelin’s *A History of American Higher Education*, which provides a synthesis, will be used as a general text to provide a chronological time frame for the course. Additional historical readings for the course are provided at the CTools site.

Content Area 2: Philosophy and Social Foundations. The learning objective guiding the philosophy/social foundations segment of the course is to build an understanding of the ways philosophical reasoning is used within the framing of contemporary research on higher education. Diverse logics are used to study colleges and universities as organizations, their students and faculty, and their role in social and economic development. Marybeth Gasman’s edited volume, *The History of U. S. Higher Education*, provides background in methods for historical research. Additional readings on different theoretical and historical traditions are available on CTools.

Cross-Cutting Objective: The cross-cutting learning objective linking the two content areas is to build understanding of different vantages—historical and logical—on everyday problems confronting students, faculty, and colleges as well as the relationships between colleges and society. This course uses multiple methods of discourse—reading, writing, and oral communication—as means of enabling students to build understanding.

II. Readings

A. Required


Other Required readings available on CTools.

B. Primary Texts (sources for recommended readings)


III. Assignments and Grading

This course combines features of a survey course and an advanced seminar. The major assignment for the course—the history essay or theory paper—will count as 60% of the grade. For the survey portion of the course, students should read all required readings and engage vigorously and competently in discussions (10% of grade), and write an essay on the topic related to one of the course sessions (30% of the grade), due at the particular session the topic is discussed.

Late assignments—for the proposal or the draft paper—will receive a slight reduction in grade (one third of grade point) to compensate for the additional time gained from late submission (unless there are medical reasons for delay). Students with any special learning need that would affect the timing of completion of assignments should notify the professor after the first class.

A. Topical Essay

The course content is organized into a series of topics related to the history of higher education, philosophy as used in research in higher education, and the use of theory in research on higher education. Students should pick one topic for additional reading. For that topic, the student should read substantially beyond the required readings. If students have questions about what to read—or how to search the literature—they are encouraged to consult the professor.

Note: The essay is due at the class session of the topic the student chooses. The professor will review the draft paper within a week of initial submission and suggest changes necessary for an A grade on the essay. Students can choose to revise the essay at their own discretion. Students

Recommendations: 1) Students should review the syllabus and glance over CTools reading (i.e., as one would browse a book before reading it) to selection a topic for the topics and presentation;

1 This book was not ordered for the course but can be obtained through book stores.
and 2) Students should organize their time to get a review draft of the topical paper to the professor during the first half of the class, so they have feedback for revision.

The essay and presentation count as 30% of the course grade. An essay of 10-20 pages, plus front matter and reference, would be appropriate. The essay and major paper can be on related topics, making it possible to begin the literature review for the major paper as part of the topical paper.

B Major Paper: History Essay or Theory Paper

1. Option 1 History Essay:

A history essay should include an extensive review of research (from higher education and related fields) on early American history, historical documents, and/or articles in journals published on higher education (for the modern period). The topic of the essay is of the student’s choosing. It can be:

- A comparison of perspectives on an historical development or event (e.g., land grant acts, Higher Education Act of 1965 [entirely overlooked by Thelin], World War II, etc.).

- An examination of historical events from the perspective of (or on) an historically excluded group (women, people of color, etc.).

- An analysis of how the use of theory to study a topic—e.g., college choice, student development, faculty governance—has changed over time.

- An examination of the emergence or development of a type of institution (historically black colleges, women’s colleges, Catholic colleges, community colleges, normal schools/comprehensive universities, etc.).

- An essay on any other topic of student interest.

Marybeth Gasman’s edited volume provides numerous readings on methods for historical research. Students choosing an historical paper are encouraged to review this book in advance of framing their history papers. Students are also strongly encouraged to use library resources to read publications from the period studied to discern how issues were viewed at the time as a point of comparison to the ways historians treat the topic. The essay should use one or more of the course histories and should also draw from the ASHE reader and other supplemental historical texts.

2. Option 2: Theory/Problem Paper

Students will develop a topical paper examining one or more theories or philosophical traditions. Students are encouraged to select a specific problem area or topic to examine in relation to the chosen theories/traditions. Using the critical method, students should consider different theories
and/or research traditions as they relate to the specific problem being considered. This can be a review paper that builds a framework to guide future research.

3. Specific Requirements or history and theory/problem papers

Students are strongly encouraged to discuss topics and literature with the instructor prior to submission of the paper (the course schedule is structured to allow time for in-class discussion of topics). There are several required submissions related to the paper, and students are encouraged to share the development of their thoughts on the paper during the term. This paper must draw from course readings, but also use other literature in the field. Students can reference readings from other courses or their own individual research for this assignment.

Students are expected to make three brief presentations on their topic. The first should be related to exploring their ideas for a paper. It should take no more than 15 minutes and the student should schedule their presentation/discussion with the professor. The final two course sessions will be for discussion of students’ academic work.

The essay should be a major paper (at least 20 pages, not including title page, abstract, references and so forth) and must use APA guidelines for all references (supplemented by footnotes as appropriate). Students should browse ahead in the readings to pick a topic or problem for study.

- The problem statement is due at the 3rd class session (September 26).
- A methods proposal is due at the October 17th class session.
- The draft paper is due at the 11th class session. In the draft, it is crucial that students demonstrate how they are approaching the analysis of prior evidence (historical evidence or prior research). This is necessary to receive feedback from the professor that could improve the quality of the paper.
- Students will present their paper in one of the final two sessions. They should hand out the paper and/or some summative material. PowerPoint is discouraged for these sessions because the intent is to encourage exchange about written text.
- The revised paper will be due at the final class or during finals week.

Students will receive written feedback in the form of an email (possibly with attached comments) after each submission. The aim is to write a well-crafted paper that is of publishable quality.

The grade on the proposal will be based on the submissions and presentations completed by November 14th.

C. Criteria for Grading Written Assignments (Grading Rubric)

Grading of written assignments will be based on:
1) Critical-analytic thought (discern claims in literature and examine evidence in relation to claims);

2) Use of course literature (and research evidence discussed by authors);

3) Use of supplemental reading (including independent reading with analysis of research papers such as histories and/or journal articles);

4) Quality of writing (i.e., well written according to generally accepted standards);

5) Logical development (i.e., integration of themes, analysis, and argument); and

6) Demonstrated ability to revise and refine arguments based on feedback.

D. Student Reading and Class Participation

To function well, a good survey course depends on the vigorous and competent participation of all members. It is important to be familiar with the readings to understand both the different points of view in texts and the embedded arguments. Students should be prepared to debate issues and take their own points of view based on the readings. A silent student will receive a B for discussion, a student who talks with little evidence of reading will receive a C, and a student who generally contributes and demonstrates understanding of the readings will receive an A for this portion of the grade.

V. Weekly Topics and Reading Assignments

At the first class session, it will be necessary to form groups for the first half of the class. Students should glance through their books before the second class so they will be prepared to discuss how they will fit their group presentations into the overall course structure (e.g., decide collectively when they might present to the class as a whole).

September 12: Introduction

- Introduction to the course on history and philosophy, including: review of readings and assignments, discussion of historiography as method, and course objectives and organization.


- Panel discussion by former students (2:45-4:00)

September 19: Colonial America and Early American Colleges

Required:
• Thelin (2004), Chapters 1 & 2

• Chapter 1 (Peterkin) and Chapter 3 (Chaddock) in Gasman (2010)

*Recommended:*

• Reese, selected chapters (CTools)

• Marsden, selected chapter (CTools)


**September 26: Social Integration**

*Required reading:*


*Strongly Recommended:*

  o Book I, Chapter 1, “Suicide and psychopathic states” (57-81)
  o Book II, Chapter 2, “Egoistic suicide” (145-151)


**October 3: Emergence of American Universities**

*Recommended:*

• Thelin, Chapters 3 & 4.
- Gasman, Chapter 3 (Urban) and Chapter 4 (Humphery)

**Recommended Readings:**


- Palmieri, P. A. “From Republican motherhood to race suicide: Arguments on higher education of women in the United States” In *ASHE Reader*, 173-182.


**October 7, Special (Optional) Session**

"The Ethics of Higher Education Access--Normative and Comparative Perspectives."
Lecture and Brown Bag Lunch with Heinz-Deiter Meyer
Associate Professor, SUNY-Albany

**October 10: Industrial Age, Economic Development, and Modern Universities**

**Required Reading:**

- Thelin, Chapters 5 & 6

- Gasman, Chapter 5 (Eisenmann)

**Recommended:**

- Selected Chapters from Fogel (CTools)

- Selected Chapters from Friedman (CTools)

**October 17: Paradigms and the Study of Higher Education**

**Required Reading:**

  - Introduction: A role for history (pp. 1-9)
  - Chapter 3: The priority of paradigms (pp. 43-51).


Recommended (if you have not previously read):


October 24: Modernization & Expansion

Required:

• Thelin, Chapters 7 & 8
• Gasman Chapter 7 (Thelin), Chapter 8 (Birze), ad Chapter 9 (Robbins)

Recommended Reading:


October 31: Social Justice

Required Reading:

  o Part I. “Fundamental ideas” (1-32)
  o Part II. “Principles of justice” (39-79)
- Gasman (2010), Chapter 9 (Tierney), Chapter 10 (Nidiffer),

**Recommended:**


**November 7: Postmodernism**

**Required Reading:**

- Gasman (2010), Chapter 11 (Lee) and Chapter 12 (Tudico)


  - Introduction
  - Chapter on patents and royalties

**Recommended:**


  - Introduction (pp. 3-17)
  - Chapter 3: Discursive Formations (pp. 31-39)

**November 14: Critical Theory**

**Required Reading:**
- Gasman (2010), Chapter 13 (Hutcheson) and Chapter 14 (Wells-Dolan)


**Recommended:**

  - “The rationalization of law: Weber’s diagnosis of the times” (243-272)
  - “Intermediate reflections: Social action, purposive action, and communication” (pp. 273-338)

  - “The foundations of social science in the theory of communication” (pp. 3-42)
  - “The tasks of critical theory of society” (pp. 374-404)

**November 21: Cultural Capital and Social Reproduction**

**Required Reading:**


**Recommended:**
  
  o Book I, Chapter 3: “Structure, habitus, practices” (52-55)
  
  o Book II, Chapter 3: “Irresistible Analogy” (200-270)

*November 28 & December 5 & 12: Presentation and discussion of student work*

*Final Papers Due December 12*