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. The first, Teaching-Learning Environments (TLE): What Are They and What Shapes Them, is designed to familiarize students with how scholars frame answers to the central question of the course, what do we mean when we speak of colleges and universities as TLEs? Consideration is also given to three general sets of factors acting on TLEs: societal, organizational and individual. The second section focuses on Critical Issues colleges and universities encounter as teaching-learning environments, for example defining and assessing the quality of higher education, enhancing diversity, and protecting academic freedom.

The over-all goals of the course are to:

- Refine course participants’ understanding of higher education institutions as complex multi-layered teaching-learning environments,
- Consider persistent professional and scholarly issues related to student learning and growth and college teaching within the context of contemporary higher education practice, and
- Orient students to graduate study in the CSHPE Academic Affairs and Student Development concentration.

Course Requirements

The course format is primarily lecture/discussion. Students are expected to actively engage in conversations about assigned readings and out of class activities that supplement the readings.

The writing assignments include: a critique (due October 23), a response paper (due November 13), and a project proposal or take home examination (due on December 18). All written assignments should conform to the APA Publication Manual (6th Edition), be printed in 12-type font, and be double-spaced.

Final grades are based on class participation and group assignments (50%); the two short papers and final project proposal or take home exam (50%).


Policies on Late Papers and Missed Classes

If an extension of time is needed to complete an assignment, please notify the faculty member 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. Missed classes will hurt the class participation grade, also regardless of reason. As you look through the syllabus, you will see several group assignments are to be completed prior to class and are used as a basis for class discussion.

Readings

The course readings are available electronically through CTools, provided in advance each week. Please download and print out these articles at your own convenience.

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.)

Accommodation for Students with Disabilities

If you think you need an accommodation for a disability, please let me know at your earliest convenience. Some aspects of this course, the assignments, the in-class activities, and the way I teach may be modified 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.umich.edu/~sswd/ 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 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.
ED 690 Schedule of Readings and Assignments

September 4 Introduction to Course

September 11 Universities and Colleges as Teaching-Learning Environments

Idea of the University


Goals and Outcomes


Recommended:

Team Project 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 TLE 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) In your groups, discuss your views and reach consensus about the distinguishing features of college and university TLEs. Use the following questions to structure your discussion:

   What is academic work? When you refer to colleges’ and universities’ teaching-learning environments (TLEs), what do you mean? What are the key features of these TLEs that come to mind? Within your TLE what is learning? What is teaching?

(2) Create a conceptualization of postsecondary institutions’ TLEs that captures the views of group members.

Be sure you can 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 discussion and summarize these for discussion in class.

(4) Make a “poster” that presents your group’s concept and underlying assumptions and key issues that emerged during discussion.

(5) Everyone should be prepared to explain their group’s ideas, and talk about issues arising during your discussion, information you drew on as you constructed your views, etc.

Groups will be created during the first class session.

September 18 Student Influences – Individual Level

Cognitive Development

Epistemological Development

Styles and Strategies

Motivation

Article to critique:

As you read the Lovitts piece, consider the assumptions she makes regarding academic learning and scholarly inquiry, how your readings support the argument she strives to make, and what questions they raise about the article.

September 25 Student Influences – Group Level

Social Change Mechanisms:

Generation Effects

Cohort Flow

Activism

Select one of the following sets of readings:

Effects of Student Disengagement

Brint, S. & Cantwell, A. (June 2012). Portrait of the disengaged. Downloaded from CSHE, UC Berkeley.

Peer Group Effects


Community Effects


Recommended:


**Assignment:** Groups should meet prior to class to discuss the set of readings they selected and to prepare a class presentation that (a) summarizes the key points and perspectives in the readings, concerns you have about their arguments/conclusions, and (b) fosters class discussion about the effects of student collectives/groups on TLE.

**October 2**  
**Faculty Influences**

*Reshaping Roles and Authority*


*Orientations to teaching*


In class a **case study** of Preparing Future Faculty will be presented for discussion.

**October 9**  
**Organizational Influences**

*Mission/Culture/Climate*


Structures/Processes


Issues for discussion:
(1) Please read Moore’s piece on branding and consider: what are possible impacts of marketing on university and college TLE?


(2) 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?

October 16 External Influences

Globalization


Markets, Consumerism and Competition


OR

**Social Movement**

**Issues for discussion:** What are the positive and negative effects of rankings on university and college TLE? What is a current higher education reform that you believe resulted from a social/intellectual movement?

**October 23 National Debates and TLEs**


**First Written Assignment:** Blue Ribbon Commissions are convened periodically in the U.S. (Hutcheson, 2007) and the reports spark debates and about the purposes of higher education. How should campuses receive and respond to recommendations?

The readings include the original report released by the Task Force as well as a response from a faculty member who offers a critique that exemplifies the thinking of many who oppose the ideas expressed in the Report. Based on the *assigned readings thus far in class*, your task is to critique the positions taken in the two documents (Ten pages, double spaced, 12 point font). Please organize your paper so that you answer the following questions: What assumptions about higher education TLE do the authors of the Report and article *share*? What assumptions about higher education TLE are fundamentally *different*? What are the *positions* taken in the two pieces? In what ways do your *readings support* the authors’ arguments? What *questions do your readings raise* about the different positions?

Supplemental:

**Issue for Discussion:** We will discuss your critiques in class but in addition, please assume that you were appointed to an ad hoc committee created by the chief academic officer on your campus to respond to *A Crucible Moment*. The governing board wants to take up the matter of how the campus will respond and the academic officer believes the views of board members will be quite polarized. What will you recommend?
October 30  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


(Select instruments mentioned in this article will be circulated and discussed in class.)

Learning Analytics


In Class Discussion: 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?

November 6  Assessments and TLE

Please select one of the following sets of readings for close reading this week:

Admissions


Grading


Student Evaluations of Teachers


Accreditation


Assignment: Prior to class, meet with others who read the same set of readings. Please come to class prepared to summarize the readings and facilitate discussion of key issues that they highlighted for you. Consider what individual, organizational and societal influences may shape the debates and the nature of research that you read.

November 13 Academic Freedom – Rights and Responsibilities


Recommended:


Second Written Assignment: Drawing on your readings to date, please respond to the following question (5-8 pages): How have factors within and outside the academy shaped conceptualizations of academic freedom within TLE? How are these reflected in the two statements from the AAUP and from Horowitz?
Please choose one of the following issues and with others who read the same readings, complete the associated task before class. Come to class prepared to discuss your response to the task.

Rights of Free Speech

**Issue (1)  Residence Life and Freedom of Speech**


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

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?

**Issue (2)  Faculty Freedom of Speech**


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?

**Issue (3)  Academic Dishonesty**


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 and to deal with alleged cases of plagiarism. What will you recommend?
November 20  

**Impact and Potential of Technology**

**Big Picture**

Koller, Daphne (2012). TED Talk: What we are learning from online education. [http://www.ted.com/talks/daphne_koller_what_we_re_learning_from_online_education.html](http://www.ted.com/talks/daphne_koller_what_we_re_learning_from_online_education.html)

**Institutional Level**


**Course Level**


**Issues for Discussion:** Do the authors convince you that wider use of technologically facilitated learning is inevitable and desirable? Are there certain inconvenient facts/situations that the authors choose to ignore? What do you think are the key characteristics of academically sound online instruction? If you were a department chair or dean, what steps would you take to encourage faculty members to “migrate” portions of their classes or create whole new classes to online formats?

November 27  

**Diversifying TLE**

**Societal Level**

**Institutional Level - Structural Diversity**

Institutional Level - Curricular Diversity


Individual Level


Policy


**Assignment:** The readings include a piece by Gurin summarizing research included as part of the University of Michigan’s case heard by the Supreme Court. The Rothman article reports findings from a study undertaken in response to the Gurin et. al. work. On November 20, you will be randomly assigned to either the “Gurin Group” or the “Rothman Group”. Groups should meet prior to class and prepare a summary of the findings of “their research” (studies supporting their stance) and then: (a) identify the weaknesses of the “other’s research” that the lawyers for “their” side should challenge; (b) suggest questions for further research in this area of inquiry; and (c) use the findings of both “their” own and the “other’s” research (studies supporting their “opponents”’ stance) to frame a position regarding the extent to which social science evidence supports the claim that a diverse student body and faculty is essential to effective campus TLE.

Questions to consider in your discussion: 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 in support of 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 TLE?
December 4  Internationalization


Cases will be posted for discussion in class.

In class discussion: What contemporary factors do you think contribute most to internationalization efforts of U.S. universities and colleges? What are the pros and cons of expanding study abroad by U.S. colleges and universities? Would you require an international experience for undergraduates? How about graduate students? What aspects of “global understanding” do you believe can be achieved only by having students go overseas? How would you structure an entry program for international students? What language requirements would you have for US staff working with international students?

December 11  Open for selected topic

December 18  Final Exam and Final Proposal Due