Course Structure and Objectives: This course is designed to introduce students to the debates, research, and frameworks that shape public policy in higher education. EDUC 764 is divided into three areas. First, we will examine factors that influence access to higher education and the various stakeholders who finance it – both from an historical and contemporary perspective. We will then review the contemporary practices, procedures, and protocols used to evaluate the effectiveness of higher education policies. This will be followed by an examination of the policy levers that hold institutions accountable, provide transparency, and evaluate policy objectives. We then situate the public policy process in the higher education context and explore the conceptual and theoretical frameworks used to understand it.

This course is crafted to provide students with foundational tools to study or work in higher education public policy through the combination of the assigned readings, lectures, classroom discussion, and writing assignments. Students will increase their understanding of the various tensions and tradeoffs made in order to craft policy; use the models that describe those processes; and examine the various structures and actors. Moreover, students will gain an understanding of the historical underpinnings of some of the most important higher education policies. In addition, they will be able to clearly articulate current policy challenges and proposed solutions from a variety of perspectives. Students will also become aware of the variety of sources used to discuss, debate, evaluate, and influence higher education policy. Finally, students will be able to succinctly discuss a variety of pressing higher education issues and gain experience presenting and defending their ideas.

The readings for EDUC 764 are in a variety of formats (e.g., scholarly journal articles, book chapters, policy reports) designed to cover an array of interests. As the field of public policy lends itself to debate, the readings and in-class discussions are intended to represent a variety of viewpoints and interests. The resources provided alongside the weekly readings (demarcated “[Resource]”) as well as in the classroom allow students to further probe particular interests.

Policy on Accommodating Students with Special Needs: 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 the course is usually taught may be modified to facilitate your participation and

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1 Segments of this syllabus are modified from Stephen DesJardin's Winter 2013 EDUC 764 syllabus.
As soon as you make me aware of your needs, we can work with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) to help us determine appropriate academic accommodations. SSD (734-763-3000; ssd.umich.edu) typically recommends accommodation through a Verified Individualized Services and Accommodations (VISA) form. Any information you provide is private and confidential and will be treated as such.

Policy on Diversity: The materials and activities presented throughout the course intended to be respectful of our diverse world. I encourage you to provide suggestions and feedback on how we can incorporate new materials to improve the course for all students. The University of Michigan has a number of affirmative action policies and these policies can be found at: http://www.umich.edu/~hraa/oie/

Religious Observation: This class observes University defined holidays (such as Spring 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.

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.)

Course Conduct: The format of this course is designed to leverage the opinions, experiences, and knowledge of classroom participants in order to produce and safe and robust learning environment. In other words, we will all learn from each other. Therefore, students are expected to adhere to the following guidelines for classroom participation:

1. Confidentiality. We want to create an atmosphere for open, honest exchange. (No live tweeting!)
2. Respect others’ rights to hold opinions and beliefs that differ from your own.
3. Challenge the idea and not the person. If we wish to challenge something that has been said, we will challenge the idea or the practice referred to, not the individual sharing this idea or practice.
4. Be courteous. Don’t interrupt or engage in private conversations while others are speaking.
5. Support your statements. Use evidence and provide a rationale for your points.
6. Tone of voice and body language can be intimidating, can silence others, provoke others, or hurt others. (No eye rolling permitted.)

Evaluation: Students will be evaluated on three different components – classroom participation, a policy report, and a presentation, described below. Final grades will be on an A-F scale.

Classroom Participation (25%): Class attendance is required. Frequent tardiness and/or absences will negatively affect your grade.

- Canvas Postings (15 points): Each week, by 8:00pm on the night before class, you will submit your answer to a question related to the week’s readings through the

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2 Source: UM Center for Research on Learning and Teaching (CRLT)
Assignments tab. Your paragraph-length response should include a combination of in-depth analysis across and cite specific evidence from the readings. Some weeks I may ask that your contribution take another format.

- **Engagement (10 points):** Students are expected to come prepared to class by critically reading the indicated material in the course schedule, reflecting on the material using the guided questions, and having comments or questions prepared for class. While in class, students are expected to engage in classroom discussion and be respectful of presenters. Cell phones and other noise-making devices should be silenced and stored during class time.

**Policy Report (75%):** Policy reports are an important communication tool for examining policy problems and solutions. Throughout the course, students will work in research teams to address four different policy problems in college access, affordability, and success. The goal of this assignment is to produce a policy report of publishable quality that addresses one of the 4 topic areas discussed in class.

**Team Assignments:** Students will rank order their preferences on the first week of class, and will be assigned to teams accordingly. The instructor will craft teams based on student preferences and skill sets; students are not guaranteed their top choices. Assignments are final. This course relies heavily on teamwork. Students are expected to actively participate in all aspects of the report and will be asked to grade their teammates’ contributions at the end of the term.

**Schedule of policy report assignments:**

**Step 1: Understand the context.** (Due February 2nd, 5 pages, at least 12 sources) [5 pts]

The purpose of this assignment is to understand the policy/problem to be examined. This will be achieved by accessing the original legislation, reports, scholarly work, and media coverage surrounding the policy.

**Step 2: Understand the data.** (Due February 16th, 4-5 pages + table[s]). [10 pts]

The purpose of this assignment is for your team to demonstrate an understanding of the available data and the operationalization of measures. Much of this will become your Methodology section or appendix. While the suggested pagination is short, this assignment will take a lot of time. Students are urged to start as soon as possible.

**Step 3: Analyze data + present findings.** (Due March 9th, 5 pages + tables/figures) [15 pts]

Once your data is clean, you are ready to answer your research questions. In this section you will include a description of your analytical approach to answering your research questions and a presentation of your findings. Teams are expected to include at least one infographic and are strongly encouraged to utilize visual software such as: Tableau (free full student version); Raw; infogr.am.

**Step 4: Report Draft.** (Due March 30th, 15-20 pages + tables/figures + methodology appendix) [20 pts]

This draft will combine edited versions of all of the steps above and add an implications/discussion section. This section should include a discussion on the implications for policy and recommendations for policymakers that should be grounded in extant literature or best practices (and cited appropriately).
Step 5: Policy Report Presentations. (on March 30th) [10 pts]
Students will have an opportunity to present their projects (in PowerPoint or similar software) to their peers and receive feedback.

Step 6: Final Draft (Due April 13th, 15-20 pages + tables/figures + methodology appendix) [10 pts]
Teams will turn in a final draft, with incorporated feedback.

Peer Grade [5 pts]: Because this assignment relies heavily on teamwork, students will be asked to score their teammates’ involvement in the project.

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 make adjustments.
Course Schedule & Weekly Assignments

Introduction

Week 1  January 5th

An introduction to the course: This class will serve as an introduction to the course, expectations, and classroom participants.

No readings assigned.

I. Access and Affordability

Week 2  January 12th

The postsecondary pipeline: The demand side of access


Week 3  January 19th

Building the system: The supply side of access

institutions-accreditors.html


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**Week 4**

**January 26th**

**College Affordability: Tuition**


College Affordability: Financial Aid


Higher Education Finance


[RESOURCES]


II. Outcomes and Accountability

Week 7

Student Outcomes: Retention, Completion, and Learning


Week 8

Accountability & Consumer Information

☐ Dougherty, K., Natow, R.S., Bork, R.H., Jones, S.M., Vega, B.E. (2013). Accounting for Higher Education Accountability: Political origins of State Performance Funding for Higher Education. Teacher’s College Record, 115(January), pp 1-50


☐ Introduction & Part IV: Quality and Accountability in Immerwahr, J., Johnson, J., Gasbarra, P.


Week 9  Spring Break – No Class

Week 10  March 9th

III. Public Policy Process and Theory

Through the lens of public policy theory


Week 11  March 16th

Influencing Postsecondary Public Policy

Week 12  Evaluation of Postsecondary Policies
March 23rd


Week 13  Class Presentations
March 30th

Week 14  Contemporary Issues in Postsecondary Education
April 6th

TBA

Week 14  Wrapping it up / papers due at 5pm
April 13th