

Fall 2012

GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY  
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

Course Title: Education Policy: Comparative and International Perspectives  
EDUC 873

Class Date and Time: Mondays, 7:20-10:00 PM

Class Location: Thompson Hall, #2021

Instructor: Valerie O. Sutter

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**I. COURSE DESCRIPTION**

**873 Education Policy: Comparative and International Perspectives (3:3:0)** Prerequisites or corequisites: EDUC 870, and admission to Ph.D. program. Using interdisciplinary approach, addresses education policy issues that transcend national boundaries and have implications for educators in fostering social justice and global awareness.

**II. STUDENT OUTCOMES:** At the conclusion of the course, students should be able to:

1. Identify and analyze the salient social, political, cultural, economic, and other factors that affect education policies in selected countries.
2. Apply an interpretation of policy in other educational systems to a more enlightened understanding of American educational policy making.
3. Identify, distinguish, and apply differing theoretical and methodological approaches to the comparative study of national education policies.
4. Understand the formation of educational policies as an ingredient of the planning process consistent with a value system and a country's overall development.
5. Describe, interpret and analyze educational problems in cross-cultural perspective.
6. Appreciate the complexity of the issues which must be addressed in the promotion of social justice, human rights and the creation of a sustainable global community and the role of education policies in pursuit of these goals.

**III. Relationship to Program Goals and Professional Organizations:**

The conceptual framework for this course is linked to the goals of the Graduate School of Education and more specifically to the mission of the Center for Education Policy as outlined in its Charter: (1) Translate education research into policy options and recommendations for a variety of audiences (decision makers, practitioners, and the public); (2) Conduct timely, sound, evidence-based analysis; and (3) Develop interdisciplinary and cross-sector education policy networks. The student outcomes are linked to this mission, in particular to the importance of evidence-based analysis.

#### **IV. NATURE OF COURSE DELIVERY**

This course is taught using lectures, class discussions and student presentations.

#### **V. REQUIRED READING**

Fiske, E.B. & Ladd, H.F. (2004). *Elusive equity: Education reform in post-apartheid South Africa*. Washington, DC: Brookings.

Freire, P. (1986). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. New York: Continuum.

Postiglione, G. A. (Ed.) (2006). *Education and social change in China: Inequality in a market economy*. Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe.

Rotberg, I.C., (Ed.), Second Edition (2010). *Balancing change and tradition in global education reform*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

Sahlberg, P. (2011). *Finnish Lessons: What can the world learn from educational change in Finland?* New York: Teachers College Press.

#### **VI. RECOMMENDED READING**

Achebe, C. (1959). *Things fall apart*. New York: Anchor Books .

Arnove, R. F. & Torres, C.A. (1999). *Comparative education. The dialectic of the global and the local*. Baltimore: Rowman and Littlefield.

Bajaj, M. (2011). *Schooling for social change; the rise and impact of human rights education in India*. NY: Continuum.

Baker. D. P. and G. LeTendre (2005). *National differences, global similarities: World culture and the future of schooling*. Stanford: Stanford U. Press.

Beauchamp, E. R. (2001) *The comparative education reader*. New York: Falmer.

Brock, C. and Pe Symaco, L. (Eds.). (2011). *Education in Southeast Asia*. Oxford: Symposium.

Carnoy, M. (2006). *Education and social transition in the third world*. Princeton: Princeton U. Press.

Carnoy, M., Gove, A., & Marshall, J. (2007). *Cuba's academic advantage; why students in Cuba do better in school*. Stanford: Stanford U. Press.

Chubb, J. & Moe, T. (1992) *A lesson in school reform in Great Britain*. Washington: Brookings.

- DeCoker, G. (Ed.) (2002). *National standards and school reform in Japan and the United States*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Dhillon, N. & Yousef, T. (2009). *Generation in waiting: The unfulfilled promise of young people in the Middle East*. Washington: Brookings.
- Eggers, D. (2006). *What is the what*. New York: Vintage/Random H.
- E. B. Fiske & H. F. Ladd. (2000). *When schools compete; A cautionary tale*. Washington: Brookings.
- Friedman, T. L. (2005). *The world is flat; A brief history of the 21<sup>st</sup> century*. New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux.
- Hannum, E. and Park, A. (Eds.). (2007). *Education and reform in China*. London: Routledge.
- Hosseini, Khaled. (2003). *The kite runner*. New York: Riverhead.
- Jansen, J. D. (2009). *Knowledge in the blood: Confronting race and the apartheid past*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Kirkendall, A. J. (2010). *Paulo Freire and the cold war politics of literacy*. Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press.
- Klees, S. et al. (Eds.). (2012) *The World Bank and education; critiques and alternatives*. Rotterdam, Boston: Sense.
- Kristof, N.D. and WuDunn, S. (2009). *Half the sky; Turning oppression into opportunity for women worldwide*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.
- Levy, S. (2006). *Progress against poverty. Sustaining Mexico's Progres-Oportunidades Program*. Washington: Brookings.
- Lewis, C.C. (1995). *Educating hearts and minds. Reflections on Japanese preschool and elementary education*. Cambridge, UK and New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Lewis, M.A. & Lockheed, M. E. (2006). *Inexcusable absence; why 60 million girls still aren't in school and what to do about it*. Washington, DC: Center for Global Development.
- Lifelong learning in the global knowledge economy; challenges for developing countries*. (2003). Washington, DC: The World Bank.
- Mezlekia, N. (2000). *Notes from the hyena's belly*. New York: Picador/St. Martin's Press.
- Miller, D. C., et al (2011). *Comparative indicators of education in the United States and other G-8 countries: October, 2011*. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Dept. Of Education.

- Mundy, K. (Ed.). (2008). *Comparative and international education: Issues for teachers*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Mundy, K. and Dryden-Peterson (Eds.). (2011). *Educating children in conflict zones; research, policy, and practice for systemic change—a tribute to Jackie Kirk*. NY: Teachers' College Press.
- Nicholls, J. (2006). *Textbooks across cultures: International debates and perspectives*. Oxford: Symposium.
- Paton, A. (1940). *Cry, the beloved country*. New York: Scribner's.
- Postiglione, G. A., and Tan, J. (Eds.). (2007). *Going to school in East Asia*. Westport, CT.: Greenwood.
- Rao, N. and Smyth I. (Eds.). (2005). *Partnerships for girls' education*. Great Britain: Oxfam.
- Reimers, F. (Ed.) (2000). *Unequal schools, unequal chances: The challenges to equal opportunity in the Americas*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Rivoli, P. (2005). *The travels of a T-shirt in the global economy: An economist examines the markets, power, and politics of world trade*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley and Sons.
- Rohlen, T. P. & LeTendre, G.K. (Eds.) (1998). *Teaching and learning in Japan*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Sachs, J. (2005). *The end of poverty. Economic possibilities for our time*. New York: Penguin Press.
- Segall, W. E. (2006). *School reform in a global society*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield.
- Seth, M. J. (2002). *Education fever: Society, politics, and pursuit of schooling in South Korea*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.
- Singer, P.W. (2005). *Children at war*. New York: Pantheon.
- Stearns, K. (1996). *School reform: Lessons from England*. Princeton: Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.
- Stevenson, H.W. & Stigler, J.W. (1994). *The learning gap: What we can learn from Japanese and Chinese education*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Stigler, J. W. & Hiebert, J. (1999). *The teaching gap. Best ideas from the world's teachers for improving education in the classroom*. New York: Simon and Schuster.
- Stiglitz, J.E. (2003). *Globalization and its discontents*. New York: Norton.

- Stromquist, N. and Monkman, K. (Eds.) (2000). *Globalization and education: Integration and contestation across cultures*. Lanham, MD: Rowan & Littlefield.
- Suarez-Orozco, M. M. & Qin-Hillard, D.B. (Eds.) (2004). *Globalization: Culture and education in the new millennium*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Tobin, J. J., Yeh Hsueh, M. Karasawa (2009). *Preschool in three cultures revisited; Japan, China and the U.S.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Tomasevski, K. (2003). *Education denied: Costs and remedies*. London & New York: Zed.
- Tucker, M. S. (2011). *Surpassing Shanghai: An agenda for American education built on the world's leading systems*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press.
- Weber, E. (2006). *Teaching in the new South Africa at Merrydale High School*. Lanham, MD: University Press of America.
- Weiner, M. (1991). *The child and the state in India*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Wolf, P. J. & Macedo, S. (Eds.) (2004). *Educating citizens: International perspectives on civic values and school choice*. Washington, DC: Brookings.
- Wolff, L., Navarro, J.C. and Gonzalez (Eds.). (2005). *Private education and public policy in Latin America*. Washington: PREAL.
- Wright, D. B. (2003). *The promise of the revolution: Stories of fulfillment and struggles in China's hinterland*. Lanham, Boulder and New York: Roman & Littlefield.
- Zhao, Y. (2009). *Catching up or leading the way; American education in the age of globalization*. Alexandria, VA.: ASCD.

Journals: (some examples)

*Comparative Education Review*, \*journal of the Comparative & Internat'l Ed.Society  
*Current Issues in Comparative Education* (tc.edu/cice).  
*International Journal of Educational Development*  
*International Journal of Educational Research*  
*International Review of Education* (UNESCO)  
*Journal of Education for International Development* (USAID)  
*Compare*  
*Oxford Studies in Comparative Education*  
*Comparative Education*

**VII. COURSE CONTENT**

**Class 1** (8/27) COURSE INTRODUCTION

Review content, assignments, etc.; introductions: your experiences and interests

Comparative and international education approaches and perspectives (as a field of inquiry; purposes; resources)

Current global trends and themes in education policy

We begin with ourselves: characteristics of American education; identify current policy issues; educational borrowing: what has American education borrowed from other countries? What might we learn from other nations?

**Class 2** (9/10) ERA OF REFORM: MARKET FORCES

What drives policy and why? What can we learn from other countries?

Reforms in British education: policy lessons from England (school choice, national standards, testing, etc.)?

New Zealand (*Tomorrow's Schools*)

Australia (challenges to change)

\*Read for discussion: Rotberg: preface, 13, 14 and 15.

**Class 3** (9/17) ACADEMIC OLYMPICS: "Who's on first?"

Global competitiveness and academic olympics: comparative perspectives (TIMSS, PISA, etc.)

What can we learn from educational change in Finland?

\*In preparation for this class; peruse and note any comparisons with other countries: <http://nces.ed.gov/timss> AND <http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/pisa>

\*\*Read for discussion: Sahlberg, *Finnish Lessons*; in class activity/assignment; no paper due

**Class 4** (9/24) FOCUS ON ASIA: TRADITION AND CHANGE

Singapore: more on market forces and investing in human capital; what are the challenges to education policy changes?

Japan: educational policy, current issues and reforms

South Korea: economic and education "miracle"?

How does culture influence education?

\*Read: Rotberg, Chap.10 & 11.

**Class 5** (10/1) ASIA: TRADITION AND CHANGE (continued)

Education and the rise of China: identify accomplishments, problems and policy changes

Comparisons with India: is education a change agent? does it reinforce the status quo? Popular education alternatives (“Deepalaya”)

\*Read for discussion: Postiglione, *Education and social change in China*  
Paper due. Also, Rotberg, 1.

**Class 6** (\*Tuesday 10/9) EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT

India (continued)

Is education a human right?

Poverty, educational policy and the developing world (Millennium Goals); where are we (2012)? Making progress?

Education for All: Focus on the education of girls

Child labor: going to work vs. going to school

\*Final paper proposals due

**Class 7** (10/15) EDUCATION AND CONFLICT

“A Generation in Waiting”: youth in the Middle East; identify characteristics and trends

Education efforts in the midst of war: projects in Afghanistan and Iraq

Peace Education: possibilities and limitations? (South Sudan, Rwanda, more)

\*Assignment: do some searching and see if you can find an example (or two) of peace education initiatives you find interesting and sustainable.

**Class 8** (10/22) EDUCATION AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

Sub-Saharan Africa: overview (colonial legacies and recent education trends)

South Africa: education policies' role in pursuit of social justice in the post-apartheid era

Policy comparisons with the U.S.: segregation and beyond

Read for discussion: Fiske and Ladd, *Elusive equity* (paper due); also, Rotberg, chap. 3

**Class 9** (10/29) LATIN AMERICA & CARIBBEAN

Latin America: an overview of achievements, challenges and current trends

Cuba: academic achievement and education equity in the context of international isolation; why do students do so well?

Challenges in Haiti: is education a solution?

Chile: school voucher policy and results; what are the lessons?

\*Read Rotberg, chapter 4.

**Class 10** (11/5) LATIN AMERICA & CARIBBEAN (cont.)

Discussion: Freire's *Pedagogy of the oppressed* (paper due); does education oppress? liberate?

Policy choices, public-private partnerships, and popular education models: "Fe y Alegria" (Bolivia; Nicaragua); "Escuela Nueva" (Guatemala and Colombia); "Progresos Oportunidades" (Mexico); what works (or doesn't)? why?

**Class 11** (11/12) TRADITION AND CHANGE

Post-Soviet era: Russia; how has education policy changed? remained the same?

Turkey: does education policy reinforce tradition? promote change?

TECHNOLOGY & EDUCATION

What are the promises and challenges of educational technology: *One Laptop per Child*, other examples. ?

\*Read in Rotberg: 2 and 7; also, explore and see if you can find an example (or two) of noteworthy technology and education projects around the world.

**Class 12** (11/19) CHANGING DEMOGRAPHICS

France, Canada and Germany: do education policies and traditions address growing diversity

“The World in a Zip Code”: Diversity in American schools and policy implications

\*Read Rotberg, 5, 6 & 12.

**Class 13** (11/26) COMING HOME/WORLD VIEWS: policy implications

Global interdependence (economic and otherwise), human rights and social justice: a role for education policy? Global trends and local impact for education policy

Final papers/projects: student presentations

**Class 14** (12/3) FINAL CLASS: ANSWERS? QUESTIONS?

Continuing: final papers/projects: student presentations

\*Read for discussion: Rotberg, 16 and conclusion

Course summary and conclusions; lessons learned? remaining questions? How can we apply what we've learned to U.S. policy initiatives?

**VIII. PERFORMANCE BASED EVALUATION**

A detailed rubric for evaluation of student performance is included on the last page of this syllabus. The following components will be evaluated using that rubric.

1. Class participation, including in-class assignments.
2. Completion and discussion of required readings.
3. Three (3) short written assignments (3-4 pages) related to (3) of the required books (Postiglione, Fiske & Ladd, Freire). These papers are due on the day the book is discussed in class. Guidelines for these assignments will be explained the first day of the course.
4. Select, read and review (1) one comparative education research article of interest to you and relating to educational policy in another country. In a brief oral presentation (about 5-10 minutes) summarize and your article. During each class session, usually at the beginning, one (or two students) will present; be prepared to state the author's thesis or main point; 2 or 3 key findings; your insights/reflections.

5. A paper or project about a specific education policy (ies) in another country or countries and related to a theme, issue, or idea included in the course content and/or objectives. This paper should pose a question, show evidence of scholarly research, and include critical-interpretive assessments and conclusions. This paper must be prepared in APA style and be approximately 15 pages in length. Papers will be presented to the class (10-15-minute presentations) at the last 2 class sessions. A proposal (written) for the final paper is due at Class 6 (10/9). The final paper is due at the last class (12/3).

Grades: Participation and class discussion: 10%  
Short written assignments on (4) required readings: 30%  
Oral presentation of journal article 10%  
Final paper: 50%

## EVALUATION

### Grading Scale:

A =	96-100	A- =	92-95	
B+ =	89-91	B =	85-88	B- = 80-84
C+ =	76-79	C =	73-75	
F =	72 and below	-- A grading rubric is attached.		

## IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR ALL GSE STUDENTS

### COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT STATEMENT OF EXPECTATIONS:

#### *Student Expectations*

- Students must adhere to the guidelines of the George Mason University Honor Code [See <http://academicintegrity.gmu.edu/honorcode/>].

Please note that:

Plagiarism encompasses the following:

1. Presenting as one's own the words, the work, or the opinions of someone else without proper acknowledgment.

2. Borrowing the sequence of ideas, the arrangement of material, or the pattern of thought of someone else without proper acknowledgment.

(from Mason Honor Code online at <http://mason.gmu.edu/~montecin/plagiarism.htm>)

o Paraphrasing involves taking someone else's ideas and putting them in your own words.

When you paraphrase, you need to cite the source.

o When material is copied word for word from a source, it is a direct quotation. You must use quotation marks (or block indent the text) and cite the source.

o Electronic tools (e.g., SafeAssign) may be used to detect plagiarism if necessary.

o Plagiarism and other forms of academic misconduct are treated seriously and may result in disciplinary actions.

- Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with the George Mason University Office of Disability Services (ODS) and inform their instructor, in writing, at the beginning of the semester [See <http://ods.gmu.edu/>].

- Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing [See <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/1301gen.html>].

- Students are responsible for the content of university communications sent to their George Mason University email account and are required to activate their account and check it regularly. All communication from the university, college, school, and program will be sent to students solely through their Mason email account.

- Students must follow the university policy stating that all sound emitting devices shall be turned off during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.

- Students are expected to exhibit professional behaviors and dispositions at all times.

## **Campus Resources**

- The George Mason University Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) staff consists of professional counseling and clinical psychologists, social workers, and counselors who offer a wide range of services (e.g., individual and group counseling, workshops and outreach programs) to enhance students' personal experience and academic performance [See <http://caps.gmu.edu/>].
- The George Mason University Writing Center staff provides a variety of resources and services (e.g., tutoring, workshops, writing guides, handbooks) intended to support students as they work to construct and share knowledge through writing [See <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/>].
- For additional information on the College of Education and Human Development, Graduate School of Education, please visit our website [See <http://gse.gmu.edu/>].

Grade/Points	Quality of Written Work	Completeness of Work	Timeliness	Class Participation
A 96 – 100  A- 92 – 95	Exceptional quality and insight; a rare & valuable contribution to the field.  Convincingly on target; demonstrates evidence of understanding and application; clear and concise writing; the reader is not distracted by grammar and/or spelling and citation errors.	100% complete  Accurate & seamless writing; virtually a complete product	100% on time  Almost always on time; rare but forgivable tardiness (such as serious personal or family illness). Instructor is notified in advance that a paper may be late.	Outstanding; facilitates and promotes conversation focused on the topic; questions & comments reveal thoughtful reaction. Good team participant  Well above average doctoral student; actively helps move group toward goal.
B+ 89 – 91  B 85 – 88  B- 80 – 84	Competent; provides credible evidence of understanding and application; some lapses in organization, citations and/or writing clarity.  Evidence of understanding presented but incomplete; writing indicates gaps in logic; grammar and/or spelling errors distract the reader. Weak or insufficient citations.  Barely passable for graduate credit; only enough to get by; little evidence of understanding; assignments lack clarity and organization; little evidence of proof reading. Citations absent or inaccurate.	Moderate shortcomings; minor elements missing that distract the instructor's ability to see the product as a whole.  Evidence of effort but one or more significant and important points are missed or not addressed.  Barely sufficient; work is the least that could be done to justify graduate credit.	Assignments late more than once or without prior conversation with instructor; not necessarily chronic.  More than half the assignments are late, but none are excessively late.  Excessively or repeatedly late.	Reliable and steady worker; questions and comments reveal some thought and reflection.  Doesn't contribute often, but generally reveals some thought and reflection. Follows rather than leads group activities.  Few meaningful contributions to class discussions. Little evidence of participation.
C 79 and below	Undergraduate level and quality; unsophisticated; assignments show little or not connection to course content or concepts.	Insufficient evidence of understanding and application; important elements missing or difficult to find.	Excessively or repeatedly late.	Weak or minimal participation; passive; often sidetracks group.
F	Unacceptable	Difficult to recognize as the assigned task.	Missed or not submitted. Incompletes not made up.	No constructive participation; destructive; demeaning toward other points of view.

