SCHOOL OF PUBLIC POLICY

**Higher Education and Public Policy**

Winter 2019

Instructors: Kata Orosz and Norbert Sabic

**Course description**

This graduate-level course proposes a comprehensive introduction into fundamental issues and topics in contemporary higher education policy. Higher education is seen as a particularly contested area of public policy, which has important connections with, and impact on, other fields or policy areas. Higher education policies can foster social integration and economic development, but also reproduce inequalities; help the creation of shared identities, but also contribute to societal divisions; and have as much to do with the “simple” production of knowledge as with broader political agendas, tensions and conflicts. In the contemporary mass higher education systems, more and more people spend some part of their lives within universities and other institutions of higher education. But how does it function? What are the issues surrounding it? How to think about and research higher education as a policy field?

Using an interdisciplinary perspective, the course offers a systematic overview of the key actors, structures and dynamics in the field of higher education, aiming to address both global trends and specific policy developments in certain parts of the world (EU, Central and Eastern Europe, US, South-East Asia, Southern Africa). The course combines a generic, theoretical level of analysis with relevant case studies, in order to bring the practical world of higher education policy and research closer to students. It aims to address student interests in both the domain of research and the domain of application, and thus provide grounds for a reflexive and theoretically-informed engagement in further higher education policy research, policy making or implementation.

The course aims to equip students with knowledge and analytical skills that can help them better understand the complex world of present-day higher education policy. The course is intended to provide a platform on which further, more specialized, studies in the domain of higher education policy can be built. It also empowers students to pursue a professional career, either as policy analyst, commentators in the area of higher education, or as high-level administrators or managers in higher education institutions.

**Learning outcomes**

After the successful completion of the course, the students shall be able to:

* Recognize the main actors and policy challenges in contemporary higher education policies;
* Analyze and explain the dynamics shaping current higher education policies in various contexts;
* Understand and critically assess how specific higher education policies are set and implemented;
* Develop, or participate in work aiming at developing alternative solutions to specific problems or situations facing higher education.

**Assessment**

The students will be assessed according to the combination of the following criteria:

* Class participation and pre-session assignments: 40%

Students will be expected to fulfill pre-session assignments as listed in the course schedule. The pre-session assignments can include the requirement to read the mandatory readings and be ready to discuss them during the sessions (graduate seminar style), identify specific materials or develop short presentations on a topic relevant for the session, and also review, comment, or participate in online discussion posted to the course’s e-learning site. Student presentations of the final project also count toward the class participation grade.

* Midterm paper: 20%

Each student will need to prepare and present a short research paper, including a related literature review. This could be about an organization/institution, a specific policy area or situation, an emerging trend. The research paper should include a review of relevant scholarly literature (based on at least 5-7 research articles or studies). Students can propose their own topics in discussion with the instructors. The papers are expected to be about 2000 words long and need to be handed in by **February 10, 2019**.

* Final project: 40%

Students, either individually or in a group, will choose a policy topic which will be presented orally during the sessions 19 and 20 and as a final written report (3500-4000 words) that is to be handed in by **March 24, 2019**. It will involve approaching a real-life situation and must include elements of a policy proposal. That is, it should contain a clear problem(s) definition, should be based on secondary data (i.e., published literature) and/or primary data drawn from sources or interviews for example. Ideally, the topic of the final project builds on the literature reviewed in the midterm paper(s) of the student(s). Based on the problem(s) definition, several policy solutions should be formulated and assessed according to different criteria. After identifying the best policy solution, the paper should elaborate on the mechanisms/instruments by which it could be implemented.

**Policy on absences**

All absences must be excused. Students are expected to communicate absences via email and produce a doctor’s note at the earliest possible opportunity and give it to the Student Affairs Coordinator. Missing more than 2 classes without an immediate valid excuse and a written note to the course instructors may result in a failing or a reduced final grade. Missed classes, even if excused, will have to be made up by extra assignments, except in the case of an absence due to medical reason provided a doctor’s note is presented.

**Prerequisites**

There are no prerequisites for this course.

**Course schedule**

**Session 1: Introductory session**

Date and time: January 7, 3:30 - 5:10 p.m.

Room*: TBD*

During the introductory session students will be presented with the course’s content and the assessment criteria in more detail. We will also explore the motivations of the enrolled students for taking the course and their level of familiarity with topics in higher education.

Class exercise: We will conduct a concept mapping exercise with the students. The aim of the exercise will be to identify the key policy challenges in higher education.

**Session 2: Contemporary issues in higher education**

Date and time: January 7, 5:20 - 7:00 p.m.

Room*: TBD*

The session will focus on media presentations of events related to higher education across the world. We will analyze a number of news reports and discuss the issues involved and the policy challenges that arise from them.

Pre-session assignment: Students need to find a recent (not older than 3 months) news article, blog post, or video that discusses a concern regarding the development of higher education. The identified material can be from the student’s own country of origin (preferably in English) or emphasize a global challenge in higher education. Students should share the link to the material on the course’s e-learning site and be prepared to discuss and explain why they find this topic relevant from a public policy perspective.

**Session 3: Access to higher education**

Date and time: January 8, 9:00 - 10:40 a.m.

Room*: TBD*

In this session we will explore how participation in higher education has changed over the years across the word. Particular attention will be paid at the representation of various student groups in higher education and how national policies sought to achieve equality of opportunities by targeting underrepresented students. During the session, we will discuss these policies and study how enrollment rates changed in higher education, how national systems and institutions cope with those changes, and how those affected specific groups of students.

Required reading:

Marginson, S. (2016). The worldwide trend to high participation higher education. *Higher Education,* 72(4), 413-434.

Optional readings (a case study of Taiwan):

Pinheiro, R. & Antonowicz, D. (2015). Opening the gates or coping with the flow? Governing access to higher education in Northern and Central Europe. *Higher Education, 70(3),* 299-313.

Chou, P. & Wang, L.-T. (2012). Who benefits from the massification of higher education in Taiwan? *Chinese Education and Society,* 45(5-6), 8-20.

**Session 4: Stakeholders in higher education policies**

Date and time: January 14, 3:30 - 5:10 p.m.

Room*: TBD*

In this session we will explore who the key stakeholders are in higher education policy making, what they are looking for in relationship to higher education, and how they ensure their interests are met. A particularly important element of the session will be to study the way institutions are held accountable towards these stakeholders. The session will include a class exercise through which students will be able to develop a stakeholder map in higher education.

Pre-session assignment: Students will map out the various stakeholders in their own countries using the areas below as guidelines:

* Identify relevant groups and organizations participating in the development of higher education policy in your country;
* Analyze the roles and interests of the involved stakeholders;
* Prioritize stakeholders according to their relative importance in the policy making process.

Required reading:

Alves, H., et al. (2010). A relationship approach to higher education institution stakeholder management. *Tertiary Education and Management*, 16 (3), 159-181

Optional readings:

Musial, K. (2010). Redefining external stakeholders in Nordic higher education. *Tertiary Education and Management*, 16(1), 45-60.

**Session 5: Higher education through students’ eyes**

Date and time: January 14, 5:20 - 7:00 p.m.

Room*: TBD*

In this session we will focus on how students view specific higher education policy issues and how they participate (or not) in those discussions. During the session we will also explore various ways in which students can be conceptualized, including among others as being consumers, donors, life-long learners, future employees or employers, and citizens.

Required reading:

Tight, M. (2013) Students: Customers, clients or pawns? *Higher Education Policy,* 26(3), 291-307.

Optional reading:

Bellei, C., Cabalin, C. and Orellana, V. (2014). The 2011 Chilean student movement against neoliberal educational policies. *Studies in Higher Education*, 39(3), 426-440.

**Session 6: Academic freedom**

Date and time: January 15, 9:00 - 10:40 a.m.

Room*: TBD*

Academics possess a great degree of autonomy in pursuing their own research interest and designing courses and programs as they see fit. Academic freedom captures this notion of independence from state or other authorities. However, this principle is increasingly being challenged, and many policy makers raise the question why universities should be granted such freedom.

Required readings:

Karran, T., Beiter, K., & Appiagyei-Atua, K. (2017). Measuring academic freedom in Europe: A criterion referenced approach. Policy Reviews in Higher Education, 1(2), 209-239.

Optional readings:

Öztürk, A. E. (2018). Lack of self‑confidence of the authoritarian regimes and academic freedom: The case of İştar Gözaydın from Turkey. *European Political Science*, in press.

Bárd, P. (2018). The rule of law and academic freedom or the lack of it in Hungary. *European Political Science*, in press.

**Sessions 7 and 8: Governance and autonomy of higher education institutions**

Date and time: January 21, 3:30 - 7:00 p.m.

Room*: TBD*

Drawing upon European developments, as well as trends in other parts of the world, this session we will look at changes to higher education governance. Besides exploring a number of models of governance of higher education, we will also discuss in detail how institutional autonomy, accountability, and control are redefined when one model comes to be replaced by another. The session will also touch upon the characteristics of New Public Management reforms in higher education.

Required reading:

Capano, G. (2011). Government continues to do its job. A comparative study of governance shifts in the higher education sector. *Public Administration, 89*(4), 1622-1642.

Optional readings:

Gryaznova, A. (2018). Supervisory boards in Russian universities: a development instrument or another tool of state control. *Higher Education,* 76(1), 35-50.

**Session 9: Accreditation, quality assurance and performance measurements in HE**

Date and time: January 22, 9:00 - 10:40 a.m.

Room*: TBD*

The recent trend in many developed countries to increase institutional autonomy, has been accompanied with instituting various accreditation and quality assurance measures, developing performance-based funding policies, as well as other mechanisms that seek to hold institutions accountable for quality and performance. In this session we will discuss some of these measures in more detail.

Pre-session assignment: Students should prepare a summary (maximum 500 words) presenting their approach to measuring quality in higher education. Students should reflect upon: how does one know that a higher education system is of a high quality? What information would governments need to determine the quality of higher education institutions? What are the challenges involved in obtaining these information?

Required readings:

Blanco-Ramírez, G. & Berger, J.B. (2014). Rankings, accreditation, and the international quest for quality: Organizing an approach to value in higher education. *Quality Assurance in Education, 22*(1), 88-104.

Optional readings:

Matei, L. & Iwinska, J. (2016). *Quality assurance in higher education: A practical handbook.* Yehuda Elkana Center for Higher Education, Budapest. (read Part I)

**Sessions 10 and 11: Teaching and learning from the practitioner’s perspective (guest lecture TBA)**

Date and time: January 28, 3:30 - 7:00 p.m.

Room: *TBD*

In this session we will explore policies that relate to the teaching function of higher education institutions. More precisely, we will cover topics on lifelong learning, employability of graduates, vocational education, qualification frameworks, learning outcomes, and student-centered learning.

Required reading:

Caspersen, J., Frølich, N. & Muller, J. (2017) Higher education learning outcomes: Ambiguity and change in higher education. *European Journal of Education*, 52(1), 8-19.

Optional reading:

Powell, J.J.W., Bernhard, N. & Graf, L. (2012). The emergent European model in skill formation: Comparing higher education and vocational training in the Bologna and Copenhagen processes. *Sociology of Education,* 85(3), 240-258.

**Session 12: Digitalisation and its consequences for higher education**

Date and time: January 29, 9:00 - 10:40 a.m.

Room: *TBD*

Technology-assisted teaching and learning has the potential to significantly alter much of what traditionally has been taken for granted by universities. In this session students will learn about the transformative effect of new technologies on higher education provision. The topics of MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses), blended and online programs, technology enhanced learning will be discussed from a public policy perspective.

Pre-session assignment: Please provide a policy suggestion (maximum 500 words) for the implementation of technology assisted learning techniques in higher education. Your suggestion should include a formulation of the appropriate policy objective(s), the possible target audience(s), and the description/specification of the policy measure(s) you would like to see implemented.

Required reading:

Ng'ambi, D. et al. (2016). Technology enhanced teaching and learning in South African higher education: A rearview of a 20-year journey. *British Journal of Educational Technology*, 47(5), 843–858.

Optional readings:

Joksimović, S., Poquet, O., Kovanović, V., Dowell, N., Mills, C., Gašević, D., et al. (2018). How do we model learning at scale? A systematic review of research on MOOCs. *Review of Educational Research, 88*(1), 43-86.

**Sessions 13 and 14: Higher education internationalization**

Date and time: February 4, 3:30 - 7:00 p.m.

Room: *TBD*

In this session we will look at the process of internationalization and how it is transforming higher education across the world. Moreover, it is our ambition is to help students develop a refined understanding of how internationalization has been translated into policy practice, and a tool set for modernizing higher education.

Required reading:

Knight, J. (2015). International universities: Misunderstandings and emerging models. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 19(2), 107–121.

Optional readings:

Craciun, D., & Orosz, K. (2018). *Benefits and costs of transnational collaborative partnerships in higher education*. EENEE Analytical Report No. 36. Brussels: European Expert Network on Economics of Education.

**Session 15: Higher education internationalization from the practitioner’s perspective (guest lecture TBA)**

Date and time: February 5, 9:00 - 10:40 a.m.

Room: *TBD*

**February 11-15: READING WEEK**

No classes are scheduled for this week. Instructors, in consultation with students will identify a number of relevant readings for the final project, which should be studies during the week. Instructors will be available for consultation about the final project upon request.

**Session 16: Marketization and privatization of higher education**

Date and time: February 18, 3:30 - 5:10 p.m.

Room*: TBD*

Market-type mechanisms for coordinating higher education are increasingly prioritized by national policy makers. In this session, we will explore what deregulation and liberalization of higher education means both from the perspective of the student, as a consumer, and the higher education institution, as a provider.

Required reading:

Marginson, S. (2013). The impossibility of capitalist markets in higher education. *Journal of Education Policy, 28*(3), 353-370.

Optional readings:

Jungblut, J. & Vukasovic, M. (2018). Not all markets are created equal: re-conceptualizing market elements in higher education. *Higher Education,* 75(5), 855-870.

Ball, S. J. (2012). Performativity, commodification and commitment. An I-Spy guide to the neoliberal university. *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 60(1), 17-28.

**Session 17: Challenges of higher education financing**

Date and time: February 18, 5:20 - 7:00 p.m.

Room: *TBD*

No policy issue has captured as much attention in the last decades as the question of financing of higher education. The dramatic expansion of student numbers, often referred to as massification, increased costs, stimulating discussions about whether higher education is a public responsibility or a private good and whether students should pay tuition and other fees or not. This has led to a wide range of policy proposals, including new ways to shift costs to students and families, encouraging institutions to raise external funds, and searching for technological solutions to administration, teaching, and learning that could reduce expenditures.

Required reading:

Jongbloed, B. & Vossensteyn, H. (2016). University funding and student funding: International comparisons. *Oxford Review of Economic Policy*, 32(4), 576–595.

Optional reading:

Garritzmann, J. L. (2016). The politics of higher education tuition fees and subsidies. In: *The Political economy of higher education finance*. (A copy of the chapter is available on the course’s e-learning site.)

**Session 18: Research into higher education**

Date and time: February 19, 9:00 - 10:40 a.m.

Room: *TBD*

In this session we will explore a number of theoretical frameworks most commonly used in higher education research (e.g. organizational theory, new institutionalism, policy transfer, implementation studies). In addition to helping students understand these frameworks, we will explore how and in what circumstances they are most appropriately used.

Pre-session assignment: Students will need to read the required readings and be ready to discuss them during the session.

Required readings:

Dobbins, M., Knill, C. & Vögtle, E.M. (2011). An analytical framework for the cross-country comparison of higher education governance. *Higher Education, 62*(5), 665-683.

Triventi, M. (2014). Higher education regimes: An empirical classification of higher education systems and its relationship with student accessibility. Quality and Quantity, 48(3), 1685-1703.

Optional readings:  
Jarvis, D.S.L. (2014) Policy transfer, neo-liberalism or coercive institutional isomorphism? Explaining the emergence of a regulatory regime for quality assurance in the Hong Kong higher education sector. *Policy and Society*, 33(3), 237-252.

Frølich, N., Huisman, J., Slipersæter, S., Stensaker & B., Bótas, P.C.P. (2013). A reinterpretation of institutional transformations in European higher education: Strategising pluralistic organisations in multiplex environments. *Higher Education*, 65(1), 79-93.

**Sessions 19-21: Mandatory consultation about final project**

Date and time: February 25, 3:30 - 7:00 p.m. and

Date and time: February 26, 9:00 - 10:40 a.m.

Room: *TBD*

**Session 22-23: Student presentations of final projects**

Date and time: March 4, 3:30 - 7:00 p.m.

Room: *TBD*

During this session students will present their final projects. The exact time and methodology of the presentation will be discussed beforehand with the instructors.

**Session 24: Concluding session**

Date and time: March 5, 9:00 - 10:40 a.m.

Room: *TBD*

The concluding session will be devoted to an overview of research areas, topics, and policy issues covered in the course. The overview will help students identify and place their own research project into the broader context of higher education research and policy-making. During the concluding section, students will also have the opportunity to evaluate the course, highlight session or activities they found the most useful and revisit topics that were particularly challenging.

Deadline for final paper submission: **March 24, 2019.**