

# **SOPP 5298 – HIGHER EDUCATION POLICY DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION**

**Fall 2021**

**Syllabus**

**Course instructors: Kata Orosz and Norbert Sabic**

## **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

The course provides an introduction to fundamental issues and topics in the contemporary higher education sector, with a special focus on the design and implementation of higher education policies.

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 production of knowledge as with broader political agendas, tensions and conflicts.

Using an interdisciplinary perspective, the course offers a systematic overview of the key actors, structures and dynamics in the field of higher education. Policy areas covered in the course include policies related to higher education provision and governance, higher education access policies, funding policies, and policies related to accreditation, quality assurance, and performance measurement.

The course combines theories of the policy process with relevant case studies, in order to bring both the theoretical and practical world of higher education policy closer to students. The course aims to equip students with knowledge and analytical skills that can help them better understand the issues and challenges of present-day higher education systems and how government policies seek to address those.

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 prepares students to pursue a professional career in the governmental or non-governmental sector dealing with educational matters.

### **Learning outcomes**

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

- Recognize the main actors and policy challenges in contemporary higher education settings;
- Understand and critically assess how specific higher education policies are designed and implemented; and
- Participate in work aiming at developing alternative solutions to specific problems or situations facing higher education.

## Assessment

Students will be assessed based on their performance on the following:

- Class participation (10%)
- Logic model of a higher education policy / program / intervention (20%)
- Recorded presentation of a higher education policy implementation (team-based) (30%)
- Final paper (40%)

Class participation: Students must attend all classes, read all required readings prior to the class for which the readings were assigned, and actively participate in all in-class discussions and activities.

Logic model: Students must submit a two-page (max. 1,000 words) description of the logic model of a higher education policy, program, or intervention of their choice.

Please note: Class 4 of the course will be dedicated to the discussion of logic models; guidelines for the logic model assignment will be explained during this session.

The deadline for submitting the logic model is **November 2, 2021**.

Recorded presentation: Students must identify and analyze a higher education policy, program, or intervention of their choice. (Note: This must be different from the higher education policy, program, or intervention the students chose for the logic model assignment). A brief presentation must be prepared to summarize the analysis and recorded in a video format. In the presentation, students must introduce the policy in terms of the actors involved in conceiving it, its characteristics and design, and the process of how it was implemented. Students must not only describe, but also critically assess the design and implementation of the policy that their presentation is focused on.

Please note: Class 10 of the course will be dedicated to the discussion of policy implementation theory; guidelines for the recorded presentation will be explained in more detail during this session.

The deadline for submitting a topic proposal for the student presentation is November 28. The recording of the presentations (video format to be agreed upon) must be uploaded to Moodle by **December 19, 2021**.

Final paper: Students must submit a four-page (max. 2,000 words) critical assessment of a higher education policy, program, or intervention of their choice. The final paper must combine a revised version of the logic model (the first assignment) with a discussion and critical assessment of the implementation of the same policy, program, or intervention. The deadline for submitting the final paper is **January 9, 2021**.

## Student hours and consultations

Kata Orosz's student hours in the fall term are held on **Tuesdays, 16:00-17:00**, in **Room B406**.

Course instructors are available for consultation in person or online, by appointment. Students should request appointments for consultation by emailing the instructors at [OroszK@ceu.edu](mailto:OroszK@ceu.edu) or [SabicN@ceu.edu](mailto:SabicN@ceu.edu) at least 24 hours in advance of the requested meeting.

### Policy on attendance

Regular class attendance is mandatory and recorded. We expect students to arrive punctually for all classes. Late arrivals are disruptive and faculty have the right to turn late students away from a class. Students must secure the approval of the course instructors in advance if they need to be absent from a class for any reason. If students need to be absent for short periods (up to a few days) during the academic year, they must secure advance approval from their Program Director. In case of absence for medical reasons, students should inform course instructors as well as the Student Affairs Coordinator as soon as possible. A medical opinion (doctor's note) must be submitted to the Student Affairs Coordinator who will keep it on file. Class absence(s) that have not been approved may result in a failing grade for the course.

SPP MAPP & MPA Student Handbook

### Responsibilities of the instructors

- Come to class on time, prepared;
- Create a safe and inspiring learning environment for students;
- Communicate course-related expectations to students clearly and in a timely manner;
- Use consistent and clearly stated evaluation criteria to grade student assignments;
- Submit assignment grades within two weeks of the assignment deadline;
- Provide reasonably detailed, written feedback to students on their assignments;
- Respond to student emails within 24 hours, with the exception of weekends and holidays;
- Be available for consultation;
- Be responsive to student feedback.

### Classroom information & following classes online

This course is delivered **on site, in person**. The classes will be held in Room **XXX** of the Quellenstrasse building. Classes will meet on **Wednesdays** at **8:50-10:30 am**. Please note that the course can be followed online *only* if the student has a valid reason (approved by the program director) for not being able to show up for class. If classroom teaching is allowed, the student is expected to make every effort show up in the classroom.

The classes of this course can be followed online by using the following **Zoom link** throughout the semester: **XXX**

Meeting ID: **XXX**

Passcode: **XXX**

In case classroom teaching is suspended for any reason (e.g., because the course instructors need to quarantine, or the Austrian government mandates universities to suspend on-site teaching), the Zoom link above will be used for holding classes online. Please note that the classes will be streamed online real-time (i.e., during the time when the classes are scheduled: Wednesdays, 8:50-

10:30 am.) If you have an issue following the online classes real-time (for example, because you have not arrived in Austria yet and are in a different time zone), please let us - the course instructors - know as soon as possible, so we can make arrangements for recording the sessions until such time that you can join the classes in person.

## COURSE SCHEDULE

### **Class 1: Introduction to the course**

Date & time: September 22, 2021, 8:50-10:30 am

Location: TBD

As the number of students pursuing undergraduate and graduate degrees increases steadily and the idea of a knowledge society gains popularity among developed countries, the field of higher education policy is becoming a central concern for governments. During the introductory session students will explore the core policy functions of higher education and how it can be instrumental in furthering other policy goals, such as economic development, innovation, or social equity. In addition, students will be presented with the course's content and the assessment criteria in more detail.

#### Required readings:

Shils, E. (1989). The modern university and liberal democracy. *Minerva*, 27(4), 425-460.

Smolentseva, A. (2017). Where Soviet and neoliberal discourses meet: The transformation of the purposes of higher education in Soviet and post-Soviet Russia. *Higher Education*, 74(6), 1091-1108.

### **Class 2: Access and equity policies**

Date & time: September 29, 2021, 8:50-10:30 am

Location: TBD

In Class 2, we will discuss theoretical and practical concepts related to the issue of higher education access and inventory policies that have been designed and implemented in various contexts to promote access to higher education. In the first half of the class, we will focus on "merit-based" policies for admission, i.e., state and institutional policies that regulate admission to higher education based on various forms of academic achievement. In the second half of the class, we will focus on equity of access. We will discuss affirmative action policies and quota-based admissions policies, and the political and policy challenges associated with implementing such policies.

#### Required readings:

McCowan, T. (2016). Three dimensions of equity of access to higher education. *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education*, 46(4), 645-665.

Antwi-Boasiako, K. B. (2017). The affirmative action policy: A tale of two nations and the implementation conundrum. *Journal of Comparative Politics*, 10(2), 70-87.

#### Recommended reading:

Drummond, T. W., & Gabrscek, S. (2012). Understanding higher education admissions reforms in the Eurasian context. *European Education*, 44(1), 7-26.

### **Class 3: Student funding policies**

Date & time: October 6, 2021, 8:50-10:30 am

Location: TBD

In Class 3, we will focus on higher education systems that charge tuition to some or all university students. We will examine the interaction between tuition fees and higher education access and will discuss policies related to the provision of financial aid to students. We will talk about different forms of financial aid (scholarships and grants, loans, student discounts and other benefits), and the advantages and drawbacks of designing and implementing different types of financial aid programs (e.g., merit-based vs. need-based financial aid programs).

#### Required readings:

Scott-Clayton, J. (2015). The role of financial aid in promoting college access and success: Research evidence and proposals for reform. *Journal of Student Financial Aid*, 45(3), 7-22.

Czarnecki, K., Korpi, T., & Nelson, K. (2020). Student support and tuition fee systems in comparative perspective. *Studies in Higher Education*, [Online first](#), 1-15.

#### Recommended reading:

Johnston, A., & Barr, N. (2013). Student loan reform, interest subsidies and costly technicalities: Lessons from the UK experience. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*, 35(2), 167-178.

### **Class 4: Understanding why policy design matters**

Date & time: October 13, 2021, 8:50-10:30 am

Location: TBD

In the first half of Class 4, we will take a momentary step back from the discussion of specific higher education policies to consider the process of policy design in more general terms and to reflect on why policy design matters. We will review components commonly used in policy scholarship to characterize policy design: the target group of a policy; the goals it is intended to achieve or the problems it is intended to solve; the tools that are intended to change behavior in the target group; the rules for inclusion and exclusion; and rationales that legitimate the policy. We will consider the implications of the process of social construction of target groups for policy design through a discussion of target groups of higher education policies. In the second half of the class, we will identify components of a logic model – a heuristic that can be used to describe policy design – and will explore the utility of applying this heuristic to higher education policies and interventions.

#### Required readings:

Besharov, D. J. & Call, D. M. (2017). Using logic models to strengthen performance measurement. In: Besharov, D. J., Baehler, K. J., & Klerman, J. A., *Improving public services: International experiences in using evaluation tools to measure program performance* (pp. 303-324). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Ingram, H., Schneider, A. L., & Deleon, P. (2007). Social construction and policy design. In P. A. Sabatier (Ed.), *Theories of the policy process* (pp. 93-126). Cambridge, MA: Westview Press.

Recommended reading:

Copeland, K. D., & Mamiseishvili, K. (2017). The Arkansas lottery scholarship act: An examination of the policy design process. *Educational Policy*, 31(1), 108-136.

**Class 5: Higher education and the state**

Date & time: October 20, 2021, 8:50-10:30 am

Location: TBD

In recent years many countries have experimented with changing the governance model of their higher education system, often by loosening control over these institutions, setting clear performance targets, and giving more authority to underrepresented groups in the governance of higher education (e.g., students, industry representatives). Drawing upon European developments, as well as trends in other parts of the world, in Class 5 we will look at various governance models in higher education and also encourage a discussion on institutional autonomy, accountability, and control.

Required readings:

Sultana, R. G. (2012). Higher education governance: A critical mapping of key themes and issues. *European Journal of Higher Education*, 2(4), 345-369.

Donina, D., Meoli, M. & Paleari, S. (2015). Higher education reform in Italy: Tightening regulation instead of steering at a distance. *Higher Education Policy*, 28(2), 215-234.

**Class 6: Higher education and the market**

Date & time: October 27, 2021, 8:50-10:30 am

Location: TBD

New Public Management has been one of the core principles driving governance change around the world. It follows the policy conviction that introducing market mechanisms into the sector of higher education will result in more responsive and efficient higher education provision. During Class 6, students will explore in more detail the role of the market and how it can bridge the gap between university-industry relations.

Required readings:

Schulze-Cleven, T. & Olson, J.R. (2017). Worlds of higher education transformed: Toward varieties of academic capitalism. *Higher Education*, 73(6), 813-831.

Amaral, A., Tavares, O. & Santos, C. (2013). Higher education reform in Portugal: A historical and comparative perspective of the new legal framework for public universities. *Higher Education Policy*, 26(1), 5-24.

**Class 7: Accountability and performance measurement**

Date & time: November 3, 2021, 8:50-10:30 am

Location: TBD

Accreditation and quality assurance mechanisms are used to ensure a minimum level of quality, which is why these instruments are often limited in promoting quality improvements in higher education. Consequently, several governments started to experiment with setting performance targets or using rankings and classifications as a way to improve their higher education system. In Class 7, we will take a critical look at these emerging policy tools.

Required readings:

Hazelkorn, E. (2014). Reflections on a decade of global rankings: What we've learned and outstanding issues. *European Journal of Education*, 49, 12-28.

Ciolan L., Păunescu M., Fartușnic C., Iucu R., & Hinteă, C. (2015). *The role of impact evaluation in evidence-based HE policy making: The contribution of transparency tools*. In: Curaj A., Deca L., Egron-Polak E., & Salmi J. (Eds). Higher education reforms in Romania: Between the Bologna Process and national challenges (pp. 25-42). Dordrecht: Springer.

**Class 8: Accreditation and quality assurance**

Date & time: November 10, 2021, 8:50-10:30 am

Location: TBD

Almost without an exception, countries across the world have instituted various accreditation and quality assurance measures in higher education. These practices seek to guarantee the quality of higher education by imposing strict rules and standards for the operation of higher education institutions. In Class 8, we will discuss in detail the differences between accreditation and internal and external quality assurance and explore the key standards that states seek to enforce in higher education.

Required readings:

Alzafari, K. & Ursin, J. (2019). Implementation of quality assurance standards in European higher education: Does context matter? *Quality in Higher Education*, 25(1), 58-75.

Salto, D. J. (2018). Attractive carrots, bland sticks: Organizational responses to regulatory policy in Argentine graduate education. *Studies in Higher Education*, 43(11), 2020-2032.

**Class 9: Institutional funding policies**

Date & time: November 17, 2021, 8:50-10:30 am

Location: TBD

In Class 9, we will continue the discussion of theoretical and practical concepts related to the issue of higher education funding, but now focusing on institutions rather than on students. In the first half of the class, we will inventory different approaches to higher education funding directed to institutions (block grants vs. targeted funding; formula-based vs. performance-based funding). In the second half of

the class, we will discuss the characteristics of various funding policies that were specifically designed to fund the teaching and/or research missions of universities.

Required readings:

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

Jongbloed, B., & Lepori, B. (2015). The funding of research in higher education: Mixed models and mixed results. In J. Huisman, H. de Boer, D. D. Dill & M. Souto-Otero (Eds.), *The Palgrave international handbook of higher education policy and governance* (pp. 439-462). London: Palgrave Macmillan UK.

Recommended reading:

Fussy, D. S. (2018). Policy directions for promoting university research in Tanzania. *Studies in Higher Education*, 43(9), 1573-1585.

**Class 10: Understanding policy implementation in higher education**

Date & time: November 24, 2021, 8:50-10:30 am

Location: **TBD**

In Class 10, we will yet again take a momentary step back from the discussion of specific higher education policies to consider key theories and concepts commonly used in policy scholarship to analyze policy implementation. We will discuss how game theory, principal-agent theory, and instrument choice theory can be used to conceptualize policy implementation and identify the drawbacks of using these theories for analyzing the implementation process. We will explore the utility of Howlett's multiple streams/critical juncture framework for critically assessing policy implementation in the field of higher education. The readings and discussion activities in this class are designed to help student teams prepare for the end-of-course presentation and for the final paper.

Required readings:

Howlett, M. (2019). Moving policy implementation theory forward: A multiple streams/critical juncture approach. *Public Policy and Administration*, 34(4), 405-430.

Khelifi, S., & Triki, M. (2020). Use of discretion on the front line of higher education policy reform: The case of quality assurance reforms in Tunisia. *Higher Education*, 80(3), 531-548.

Recommended reading:

Dougherty, K. J., & Natow, R. S. (2020). Performance-based funding for higher education: How well does neoliberal theory capture neoliberal practice? *Higher Education*, 80(3), 457-478.



**Class 11: Policies related to online provision of higher education**

Date & time: December 1, 8:50-10:30 am

Location: TBD

In the last thematic session of the course, we will discuss how higher education institutions and governments have adapted to the technological context of the 21<sup>st</sup> century as a response to the challenges posed by COVID-19. We will study emerging forms of higher education provision and discuss to what extent could the “forced” transition to online education be considered a success or a failure. The session will conclude with an overview of key concepts, themes and lessons learned in the course.

Required readings:

<https://www.tcrecord.org/books/exec.asp?ContentID=23025>

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0747563221001126>

**Class 12: Student presentations**

Date & time: December 8, 2021, 8:50-10:30 am

Location: off campus

**Note: The last day of the course (December 8, 2021) is a national holiday in Austria and the Vienna campus will be closed. No class will be held on this day – but we encourage student teams to use the regularly scheduled class time to record & upload their presentations to Moodle.**

In the final class of the course, student teams deliver their presentation of a higher education policy, program, or intervention of their choice.