**DOPP 5298 – Higher Education POLICY DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION**

**Fall 2023**

**MA course**

**2 credits (4 ECTS)**

**Syllabus**

**Course instructors: Pușa Năstase and Norbert Sabic**

# COURSE DESCRIPTION

The course provides an introduction to fundamental issues in the contemporary higher education sector, with a special focus on the design and implementation of higher education policies. It invites students to explore and debate some of the most contested questions in the field: *Who should pay for higher education? Is an university education a right or a privilege? Is online education a quality alternative? Who does internationalisationalization of higher education benefit and why? Is university research a public good?*

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. It 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. Policy areas covered in the course include policies related to governance, access, funding, and policies related to accreditation, quality assurance, and performance measurement.

The course will 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. It is intended to provide a platform on which further, more specialized, studies in the domain of higher education policy can be built and prepare 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;
* analyze and explain the dynamics shaping current higher education policies in various contexts;
* 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 and pre-session assignments                                                            (20%)
* Midterm paper (20%)
* Class presentation (20%)
* Final paper (40%)

**Workload**

* Class participation 20 hours
* Pre-session assignments (including readings)                                                      18 hours
* Group activity 4 hours
* Midterm paper 20 hours
* Class presentation 12 hours
* Final paper 32 hours

Class participation and pre-session assignments: Students are expected to attend all classes and fulfill pre-session assignments as listed in the course schedule. The pre-session assignments include the requirement to read the mandatory readings and be ready to discuss them during the sessions (graduate seminar style).

Midterm paper: Students must submit a 1,500 words description of a higher education policy, program, or intervention of their choice. The midterm paper should include a review of relevant scholarly or policy literature (based on 5-6 research articles, studies or reports). Students can propose their own topics in discussion with the instructors.

The deadline for submitting the midterm paper is **October 25, 2023**.

Class presentation: A brief presentation must be prepared to summarize the analysis of the chosen higher education policy, program, or intervention. 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.

Final paper: Students must submit a 2,500 words critical assessment of a higher education policy, program, or intervention of their choice. The final paper must combine a revised version of the midterm paper (the first assignment) with a discussion and critical assessment of the implementation of the same policy, program, or intervention. Students also need to incorporate the feedback they got during their class presentation. The deadline for submitting the final paper is **January 7, 2024**.

**Student hours and consultations**

Pușa Năstase’s student hours are held after class on Room C316.

Norbert Sabic’s student hours are held after each session in the classroom.

Course instructors are available for consultation in person or online, by appointment. Students should request appointments for consultation by emailing the instructors at [nastasep@ceu.edu](mailto:nastasep@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 instructors 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 C201, Thursdays 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. Instructors should be informed in advance in case a student needs to attend the class remotely.*

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), classes will be held online.  Please note that the classes will be streamed online real-time (i.e., during the time when the classes are scheduled: Thursdays, 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 plan for recording the sessions until such time that you can join the classes in person.

# COURSE SCHEDULE

**Class 1: Contemporary challenges in higher education (N/P)**  
Date & time: September 21, 8:50-10:30 am  
Location: C201

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. 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 and democratic ideas.

In addition, students will be presented with the course’s content and the assessment criteria in more detail.

Class exercise:

A concept mapping exercise will be conducted with the students to identify the key policy challenges in higher education. For this reason, students need to find a recent (not older than 3 months) news article that discusses a concern regarding the development of higher education. The identified material can be from the student’s own country or emphasize a global challenge in higher education. Students should be prepared to present their material to the class and explain why they find this topic relevant from a public policy perspective.

Required reading:

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

Recommended reading:

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 (P)**  
Date & time: September 28, 8:50-10:30 am  
Location: C201

Higher education is an unattainable goal for many, regardless of how driven and hardworking they may be. In Class 2, we will discuss theoretical and practical concepts related to access to higher education and policies designed and implemented in various contexts to promote access. 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.

Garaz, S., & Torotcoi, S. (2017). Increasing access to higher education and the reproduction of social inequalities: the case of Roma university students in Eastern and Southeastern Europe. European Education, 49(1), 10-35.

Recommended reading:

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.

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 (P)**  
Date & time: October 5, 8:50-10:30 am  
Location: C201

Who should pay for university education? Is it the direct beneficiaries (students and their parents), the taxpayers or the employers? In Class 3, we will focus on higher education systems that charge tuition to some or all university students and the relation between tuition fees and higher education access. We will discuss policies related to the provision of financial aid to students, the 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.

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.

Czarnecki, K., Korpi, T., & Nelson, K. (2020). Student support and tuition fee systems in comparative perspective.*Studies in Higher Education,*[*Online first*](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/03075079.2020.1716316), 1-15.

**Class 4: (students will vote which topic is most relevant)**

Date & time: October 12, 8:50-10:30 am   
Location: C201

**a) Understanding why policy design matters (P)**

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.

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.

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.

**b) Financing of higher education (P)**

Even in universities where students pay hefty fees, these are usually insufficient to cover all activities. In this class we will look at how do universities get funded, who pays for facilities, faculty salaries and research? We will discuss the most common funding models (block and competitive grants, per student capita funding, performance-based funding) and discuss their advantages and limitations. Students will research the funding systems in their own country and bring to class their findings.

Recommended reading:

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

**Class 5: University research (N)**  
Date & time: October 19, 8:50-10:30 am  
Location: C201

Conducting research is one of the primary activities of universities and their faculty which has gained even more significance with the rise of the “knowledge society” discourse around the globe. Scientific inquiry is not just driven by the sheer curiosity of faculty members, but is increasingly managed and directed by national and international organizations and coordinated in transnational networks. In this class, students will explore the contemporary challenges of research systems and how governments and other stakeholders seek to influence the path it is developing.

Required readings:

Bonaccorsi, A., & Daraio, C. (2007). Universities as strategic knowledge creators: some preliminary evidence. Universities and strategic knowledge creation. Specialization and performance in Europe, 31-81.

Edgar, F., Geare, A. (2013) Factors influencing university research performance, *Studies in Higher Education,* 38 (5), pp. 774-792.

**Class 6: Site visit**  
Date & time: TBC  
Location: TBC

**Class 7:** **Higher education and the state (N)**  
Date & time: November 2, 8:50-10:30 am  
Location: C201

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.

Pre-session assignment:

Students should list 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;
* reflect on the roles and interests of the involved stakeholders;
* prioritize stakeholders according to their relative importance in the policy making process.

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 8: Higher education and the market (N)**  
Date & time: November 9, 8:50-10:30 am  
Location: C201

New Public Management has been one of the core principles driving governance change around the word. 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 9: Accountability and performance measurement** **(N)**

Date & time: November 16, 8:50-10:30 am  
Location: C201  
  
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.

Pre-session assignment:

Students should prepare a brief summary 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:

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., Fartuşnic C., Iucu R., & Hintea, 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 10: Class presentations (N/P)**

Date & time: November 23, 8:50-10:30 am  
Location: C201

During this session students will present their research ideas for their final paper. The exact outline of the class will be decided together with the students.

**Class 11: Internationalization of higher education (P)**

Date & time: November 30, 8:50-10:30 am  
Location: C201

The steady process of internationalization experienced by higher education institutions in many countries in Europe, North America, Asia and Australia is relevant not only within those countries but has global implications. In Class 9 we will look at changes in the field of higher education brought on by internationalization processes: international rankings, global student mobility, the expansion of branch campuses, franchised and joint degrees, the use of English as a language for teaching and research worldwide, and many others.

By the end of the class students will be able to understand the effect of internationalization and to reflect on how it affects their own countries and university as well as them personally.

Required reading:

Tight, M. (2022). Internationalisation of higher education beyond the West: challenges and opportunities–the research evidence. Educational Research and Evaluation, 27(3-4), 239-259.

Recommended reading:

Nastase, P. (2020). Drivers for Internationalization in Georgian Higher Education. In European Higher Education Area: Challenges for a New Decade (pp. 91-104). Springer, Cham.

**Class 12: Online higher education (N)**  
Date & time: December 7, 8:50-10:30 am  
Location: C201

In the last thematic session of the course, we will discuss how higher education institutions and governments have adopted to the technological context of the 21st 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.

Pre-session assignment:

Students should provide a policy suggestion (maximum 300 words) for the implementation of technology assisted learning techniques in higher education. Your suggestion should include a formulation of the issue, an appropriate policy solution(s), the possible target audience(s), and the description/specification of the policy measure(s) you would like to see implemented.

Required readings:

Landa, N., Zhou, S., & Marongwe, N. (2021). Education in emergencies: Lessons from COVID-19 in South Africa. International Review of Education, 67(1), 167-183.

Ayllón, S. (2022). Online teaching and gender bias. Economics of Education Review, 89, 102280.

**Optional group activity:** visit to the University of Vienna followed by class wrap up in a café

Date & time: Saturday, December 9