

**17.S919 Education, Inequality, and Politics**Spring 2020  
56-167Professor Ben Ross Schneider  
Tuesday 1-3pm  
Recitation tbd

Office hours by appointment

This course offers an in depth analysis of a small but growing subfield of education and politics. Economists and sociologists have long-standing scholarship on education, but political science is only recently starting to catch up. Education and politics intersect in a number of ways. For some, education is the only way to build the informed citizenry that democracies depend on. For others, education is the core of a strategy for economic development, or a system for maintaining inequality. Education systems also create interests that contend for influence or control — different levels of government, business, teacher unions, parents, and politicians. The question of who controls education is usually complex and often changeable. Why do education systems, and performance, vary so widely across countries? What politics and policies can best promote greater equity and efficiency in education? Which groups favor or oppose these policies, and why?

The course uses a comparative perspective to get at these questions at the k-12 or primary and secondary levels. The course focuses mostly on the United States, Europe, and Latin America to allow for comparisons across richer countries and between rich and developing countries.

Class sessions will have a mix of seminar discussions and other collective exercises. Students are expected to do all the assigned readings, carefully, and come prepared to discuss them and use what they learned. Classes will also include occasional lectures, films, and visiting speakers.

Class participation, both quality and quantity, including online posts on the readings, accounts for 35 percent of the final grade. The main written assignment is a 15-20 page research paper on a topic chosen by the student, in consultation with the instructor. This paper assignment has several intermediate steps and grades: 2 two-page book reviews (10 percent), a five page research design (10 percent), a full outline for the paper (5%), in class presentation (10%), and a final paper (30 percent).

Students should buy: Peterson, Paul. 2010. *Saving Schools: From Horace Mann to Virtual Learning*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. Other class readings will be posted to Stellar/LM, unless otherwise noted.

## **Week 1 (4 February). Introduction and Organization**

## **Week 2 (11 February) . Education for What?**

Hanushek, Eric, and Ludger Woessmann. 2015. *The Knowledge Capital of Nations: Education and the Economics of Growth*. Cambridge: MIT Press. Chapters 1, pp. 1-8

Wagner, Daniel. 2017. *Learning as development: Rethinking international education in a changing world*. Routledge. Chapter 3. “Learning as development.” pp. 54-79.

Ansell, Ben. 2010. *From the Ballot to the Blackboard: The Redistributive Political Economy of Education*. New York: Cambridge University Press, chapter 1, “The Redistributive Political Economy of Education,” pp. 1-19.

### Further reading

Doner, Richard, and Ben Ross Schneider. 2016. “The Middle-Income Trap: More Politics than Economics.” *World Politics* 68 (4): 608–44.

Pritchett, Lant, and Martina Viarengo. "The state, socialisation, and private schooling: When will governments support alternative producers?." *Journal of Development Studies* 51.7 (2015): 784-807. (assigned for penultimate week).

Recitation: meeting with Jennifer Greenleaf, social science librarian (or second half of class)

**No class 18 February**, MIT holiday. Break for research.

## **Week 3 (25 February). Some History**

Peterson, Paul. 2010. *Saving Schools: From Horace Mann to Virtual Learning*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. Part I, pp. 1-75

Ansell, Ben. 2010. *From the Ballot to the Blackboard: The Redistributive Political Economy of Education*. New York: Cambridge University Press, chapter 3, “The Expansion of Education: Historical Evidence,” pp. 72-118.

Ansell, Ben, and Johannes Lindvall. 2013. “The Political Origins of Primary Education Systems: Ideology, Institutions, and Interdenominational Conflict in an Era of Nation-Building.” *American Political Science Review* 107 (3): 505–22.  
<https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055413000257>. Skim statistics.

### Further reading

Goldin, Claudia, and Lawrence Katz. 2009. *The Race between Education and Technology*. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press. Chapter 1, “The Human Capital Century,” pp. 11-41.

Recitation: 1 page bibliography due

## **Week 4 (3 March). Education, Inequality, and Sociology**

Ballantine, Jeanne, Floyd Hammack, and Jenny Stuber. 2017. *The Sociology of Education: A Systematic Analysis*. Routledge, Chapter 3, “Equality of Educational Opportunity? A Look at Social Class Differences and Inequalities,” pp. 91-114 (not whole chapter).

Lucas, Samuel and Veronique Irwin. 2018. “Race, Class, and Theories of Inequality in the Sociology of Education.” In Barbara Schneider, ed., *Handbook of the Sociology of Education in the 21st Century*. Routledge, pp. 73-108. Skip section 4.3 (pp. 79-84).

Larrañaga, Osvaldo, and María Eugenia Rodríguez. 2016. “Middle Classes and Education in Latin America.” In *Innovation and Inclusion in Latin America*, edited by Alejandro Foxley and Barbara Stallings, pp. 205–28. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.  
[https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-59682-6\\_8](https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-59682-6_8).

### Further reading

Farkas, George. 2018. “Family, Schooling, and Cultural Capital.” In Barbara Schneider, ed., *Handbook of the Sociology of Education in the 21st Century*. Routledge, pp. 3-38.

Henig, Jeffrey R., et al. *The color of school reform: Race, politics, and the challenge of urban education*. Princeton University Press, 2001.

Gamboa, Luis Fernando, and Fábio D. Waltenberg. 2012. “Inequality of Opportunity for Educational Achievement in Latin America: Evidence from PISA 2006-2009.” *Economics of Education Review* 31 (5): 694–708. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.econedurev.2012.05.002>.

Bowles, Samuel., and Herbert. Gintis. 2011 [1976]. *Schooling in Capitalist America : Educational Reform and the Contradictions of Economic Life*. Haymarket Books.

Recitation: individual meetings on paper proposals. First book report due 5 March.

## **Week 5 (10 March). Teacher Unions: Reform Partners or Self-Interested Opponents**

Peterson, Paul. 2010. *Saving Schools*, Chapter 5, “The Rights Movement Diversifies,” & Chapter 6, “Albert Shanker and Collective Bargaining,” pp. 79-131.

Moe, Terry, and Susanne Wiborg, eds.. 2017. *The Comparative Politics of Education: Teachers Unions and Education Systems across the World*. New York: Cambridge University Press, Chapter 1, "Introduction," pp. 1-20.

Grindle, Merilee. 2004. *Despite the Odds: The Contentious Politics of Education Reform*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, chapter 5, "Contesting Education: Teachers' Unions and the State," pp. 119-139.

### Further reading

OECD. 2015. *Education Policy Outlook 2015 - Making Reforms Happen*. Paris: OECD.

Uetricht, Micah. *Strike for America: Chicago teachers against austerity*. Verso Trade, 2014.

Moe, Terry. 2011. *Special Interest: Teachers Unions and America's Public Schools*. Washington DC: Brookings Institution.

### Recitation:

## **Week 6 (17 March). The Politics of Choice and Charter Schools**

Peterson. *Saving Schools*, Chapter 9, "James Coleman and Choice Theory," and Chapter 10, "The Practice of Choice," pp. 183-228.

Moe, Terry. 2019. *The Politics of Institutional Reform: Katrina, Education, and the Second Face of Power*. New York: Cambridge University Press, "Introduction" and Chapter 1, "Power, Vested Interests, and the Politics of Institutional Reform," pp. 1-40.

Ravitch, Diane. 2020. *Slaying Goliath : The Passionate Resistance to Privatization and the Fight to Save America's Public Schools*. New York: Knopf. Chapter 13, "The Miracles that Weren't: New Orleans," pp. 218-222, just beginning of chapter.

\*Zimmer, Ron, Richard Buddin, Sarah Ausmus Smith, Danielle Duffy. (2019). "Nearly three decades into the charter school movement, what has research told us about charter schools?" (EdWorkingPaper: 19-156), Annenberg Institute at Brown University.  
<http://www.edworkingpapers.com/ai19-156>. pp. 1-39

### Further reading

Oberfield, Zachary. 2017. *Are Charters Different? Public Education, Teachers, and the Charter School Debate*. Harvard Education Press. Cambridge, MA

Recitation: movie "Waiting for Superman." Second book report due 19 March.

**Spring break** (24 March).

## **Week 7 (31 March). Philanthropy and Donor Politics**

Reckhow, Sarah, and Megan Tompkins-Stange. 2015. "‘Singing from the Same Hymnbook’: Education Policy Advocacy at Gates and Broad." In *The New Education Philanthropy*, Frederick Hess and Jeffrey Henig, eds., pp. 55-77.

Cuban, Larry. 2015. "A Critique of Contemporary Edu-Giving," in Hess, Frederick, and Jeffrey Henig, eds. *The New Education Philanthropy*. Harvard Education Press. Cambridge, MA, 2015, pp. 143-62

Conn, Katharine, Virginia Lovison, and Cecilia Hyunjung Mo. 2020. "How Teach for America Affects Beliefs About Education." *Education Next*, Winter, pp. 1-9.

Mundy, Karen, and Antoni Verger. "The World Bank and the global governance of education in a changing world order." In Mundy, Karen, Andy Green, Bob Lingard, and Antoni Verger, eds. *Handbook of global education policy*. John Wiley & Sons, 2016, pp. 335-56.

### Further reading

Leslie Finger and Carlos Lastra-Anadon. 2019. "Social Movements For Hire: How Government Contracting Shapes Politics." Working paper, Harvard University.

Reckhow, Sarah, Jeffrey Henig, Rebecca Jacobsen, and Jamie Alter Litt. 2017. "‘Outsiders with Deep Pockets’: The Nationalization of Local School Board Elections." *Urban Affairs Review* 53 (5): 783–811. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1078087416663004>.

Reckhow, Sarah. *Follow the Money: How Foundation Dollars Change Public School Politics*. Oxford University Press, 2012.

Finger, Leslie. 2018. "Vested Interests and the Diffusion of Education Reform across the States." *Policy Studies Journal* 46 (2): 378–401. <https://doi.org/10.1111/psj.12238>.

Reckhow, Sarah, and Megan Tompkins-Stange. 2018. "Financing the Education Policy Discourse: Philanthropic Funders as Entrepreneurs in Policy Networks." *Interest Groups and Advocacy* 7 (3): 258–88. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41309-018-0043-3>.

Recitation: Research design due 2 April

## **Week 8 (7 April). Testing and Accountability Revolution**

Peterson. 2010. *Saving Schools*, Chapter 7 "Money and the Adequacy Lawsuit," and chapter 8 "Bennet and the Demand for Accountability," pp. 131-180.

Winig, Laura. 2012. "Michelle Rhee and the Washington D.C. Public Schools." Harvard Kenney School Case Number 1957.0. Cambridge, MA.

Niemann, Dennis, Kerstin Martens, and Janna Teltemann. 2017. "PISA and Its Consequences: Shaping Education Policies through International Comparisons." *European Journal of Education* 52 (2): 175–83. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ejed.12220>.

#### Further reading

Rhodes, Jesse. 2012. *An Education in Politics: The Origins and Evolution of No Child Left Behind*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press. Overview (pp. 1-26) and chapter 5 (pp. 126-158).

Meyer, Heinz-Deiter, and Aaron Benavot. 2013. *PISA, Power, and Policy: The Emergence of Global Educational Governance*. Symposium Books.

Pons, Xavier. 2017. "Fifteen Years of Research on PISA Effects on Education Governance: A Critical Review." *European Journal of Education* 52 (2): 131–44. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ejed.12213>.

#### Recitation:

### **Week 9 (14 April). The Politics of Education Reform in Latin America**

Grindle, Merilee. 2004. *Despite the Odds*. Chapter 8, pp. 189-206.

Bruns, Barbara, and Javier Luque. 2015. *Great Teachers: How to Raise Student Learning in Latin America and the Caribbean*. Washington DC: World Bank. "Overview" and chapter 6, "Managing the Politics of Teacher Reform," pp. 1-22, 287-325.

Verger, Antoni, Mauro Moschetti, and Clara Fontdevila. "The Expansion of Private Schooling in Latin America." *Wiley Handbook of Global Educational Reform* (2018): 131.

#### Further reading

Kosack, Stephen. 2012. *The Education of Nations: How the Political Organization of the Poor, Not Democracy, Led Governments to Invest in Mass Education*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Schneider, Ben Ross, Pablo Cevallos Estarellas, and Barbara Bruns. 2019. "The Politics of Transforming Education in Ecuador: Confrontation and Continuity, 2006–2017." *Comparative Education Review* 63 (2): 259–80. <https://doi.org/10.1086/702609>.

Carlos Ornelas. 2019. *Politics of Education in Latin America: Reforms, Resistance and Persistence*. Brill.

Mizala, Alejandra, and Ben Ross Schneider. 2019. "Promoting Quality Education in Chile: The Politics of Reforming Teacher Careers." *Journal of Education Policy*, March, 1–27. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02680939.2019.1585577>.

Recitation: "De Panzazo" movie on Mexico

----- No class 21 April -----

## **Week 10 (28 April). Vocational and Technical Education**

Doner, Richard, and Ben Ross Schneider. 2019. "Technical Education in the Middle Income Trap: Missing Coalitions for Skill Formation." *Journal of Development Studies*.

Busemeyer, Marius. 2015. *Skills and Inequality: Partisan Politics and the Political Economy of Education Reforms in Western Welfare States*. New York: Cambridge University Press. Introduction and Chapter 4, "Educational Institutions and Socioeconomic Inequality," pp. 1-28, 177- 214.

Sancak, Merve, and Isik D. Özel. "When politics gets in the way: domestic coalitions and the making of skill systems." *Review of International Political Economy* 25.3 (2018): 340-363.

### Further reading

Busemeyer, Marius, Julian Garritzmann, Erik Neimanns, and Roula Nezi. "Investing in education in Europe: Evidence from a new survey of public opinion." *Journal of European Social Policy* 28, no. 1 (2018): 34-54.

Martin, Cathie Jo. 2012. "Political Institutions and the Origins of Collective Skill Formation Systems." In *The Political Economy of Collective Skill Formation*, edited by Marius Busemeyer and Christine Trampusch. New York: Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199599431.003.0002>.

Martin, Cathie Jo. *Stuck in neutral: Business and the politics of human capital investment policy*. Princeton University Press, 1999.

Estevez-Abe, Margarita, Torben Iversen, and David Soskice. 2001. "Social protection and the formation of skills: A reinterpretation of the welfare state." *Varieties of capitalism* pp. 145-183.

Recitation: student presentations

Full outline due 30 April

## **Week 11 (5 May). Privatization and Battles over Public versus Private Education**

Review Larrañaga from week 4

Emma Duncan. “A class apart. Private education is booming in new markets and new forms: Governments should support, not suppress it.” *Economist* -- Special report, Apr 11th 2019 edition.

Ravitch, Diane. 2020. *Slaying Goliath : The Passionate Resistance to Privatization and the Fight to Save America’s Public Schools*. New York: Knopf. Chapters 1, 2, and 16, pps. 3-26, 268-284.

Busemeyer, Marius, and Torben Iversen. 2014. “The Politics of Opting out: Explaining Educational Financing and Popular Support for Public Spending.” *Socio-Economic Review* 12 (2). <https://doi.org/10.1093/ser/mwu005>.

Lant Pritchett & Martina Viarengo (2015). “The State, Socialisation, and Private Schooling: When Will Governments Support Alternative Producers?,” *Journal of Development Studies*, 51:7, 784-807, DOI: 10.1080/00220388.2015.1034109. Skip mathematical models.

### Further reading

Bulkley, Katrina, Jeffrey Henig, and Henry Levin. 2010. *Between Public and Private : Politics, Governance, and the New Portfolio Models for Urban School Reform*. Cambridge MA: Harvard Education Press.

Elacqua, Gregory, Maria Luisa Iribarren, and Humberto Santos. 2018. “Private Schooling in Latin America: Trends and Public Policies.” IDB-TN-01555. Washington DC.

Shippo, Dorothy. 2006. *School Reform, Corporate Style: Chicago, 1880-2000*. Lawrence, KS: University of Kansas Press.

Pritchett, Lant. *The rebirth of education: Schooling ain't learning*. CGD Books, 2013.

Last Recitation: student presentations

## **Week 12 (12 May). Work of the Future and the Future of Education**

Peterson. 2010. *Saving Schools*, “Julie Young and the Promise of Technology,” pp. 229-63.

Hanushek, Eric, and Ludger Woessmann. 2015. *The Knowledge Capital of Nations: Education and the Economics of Growth*. Cambridge: MIT Press. Chapter 8, “Policies to Improve Knowledge Capital,” pp. 185-203.



MIT taskforce on Work of the Future, Fall 2019 report, especially pp. 35-40 on education

Further reading

Iversen, Torben, and David Soskice. *Democracy and Prosperity: Reinventing Capitalism Through a Turbulent Century*. Princeton University Press, 2019.

Henig, Jeffrey, Rebecca Jacobsen, and Sarah Reckhow. 2019. *Outside Money in School Board Elections : The Nationalization of Education Politics*. Harvard Education Press. Cambridge MA: Harvard Ed

No recitation

Papers due 14 May