

EDHI 9020
Critical Issues in Higher Education
Emerging Trends, Reforms, and Innovation in Postsecondary Policy
3 credits
Summer 2018

James Hearn
Institute of Higher Education
University of Georgia

I. Course Description and Objectives

Postsecondary-education policy is in a period of dramatic reform. Several states are launching “free college” initiatives. Performance or outcomes-based funding of institutions is now in place in a majority of states and others are moving toward its adoption. A number of states are aggressively moving to merge (“consolidate”) public colleges and universities, and others are exploring such moves. Some states are experimenting with decentralizing governance and control of their institutions, even to the point of allowing greater tuition control at the campus level. States are increasingly using financial incentives to engage universities in jumpstarting stalled economic development. Nationally, major foundations are pressing states and systems to ramp up college-completion initiatives to improve the nation’s international competitiveness. Meanwhile, the federal government is loosening its oversight of for-profit education providers, thus likely exacerbating significant problems in student loan indebtedness and default. In short, a lot is happening in this policy arena.

This course will critically examine these and other postsecondary reforms and innovations, with the goal of engaging students in dialogues around policy goals, implementation, and outcomes. Early sessions will set the stage by considering the postsecondary policy context historically and in various levels and sectors. Subsequent sessions will address in sequence selected reforms, such as institutional performance, institutional governance/management, affordability, and institutional roles in economic and social development. Later sessions will provide students opportunities to present their own examinations of particular policy issues and their evaluations of prospective reforms. After presenting, students will lead class discussion on their projects. The closing session of the course will examine other policy moves on the horizon and the implications of the changing postsecondary policy environment for the larger public good.

II. Course Conduct

The class will meet on Thursdays from 9:00 a.m. to 12:35 p.m. in 218 Meigs Hall. There will be eleven class sessions this term. Please bear in mind that this course syllabus is a general plan for the course - deviations may be necessary and will be announced to the class by the instructor.

III. Instructor

James Hearn is the instructor for the class. His campus office is in 214 Meigs Hall. His e-mail address is jhearn@uga.edu. His resource website is at <http://www.hearnsite.org>. Because his

available times for appointments tend to change from week to week, it's best to e-mail in advance to schedule a meeting.

IV. Evaluation

There are two major requirements to be met for successful completion of the course: a special project and associated class presentation, and satisfactory participation in the class.

Special Project: The special project entails a class presentation and a final paper on the same topic. The presentation is to be an introduction to, and overview of, the written final paper due later in the semester. The presentation and paper will be on a topic of the student's choosing (with the advice and consent of the instructor).

The most typical choice for a potential project might be a critical analysis of a current federal or state postsecondary policy issue (e.g., affirmative action in college admissions). Such a paper should provide background on the policy issue, explain how and why the issue has come to have current importance in the policy-making scene, analyze various and competing perspectives on the nature of the problem, analyze conceivable/potential solutions, and provide the author's own point of view as to the optimal and probable outcomes relating to the issue.

Efforts requiring analysis of data are acceptable, pending instructor approval (e.g., a study using a national dataset to examine student loan default, or a document- and interview-based analysis of a state's recent legislation in higher education). Joint projects among students are also acceptable, pending instructor approval.

The primary criteria for successful presentations and papers are that they be well organized, well reasoned, well expressed, critical, connected to the relevant literature, and reflective of the course readings and lectures. Presentations may take different forms, but must include distribution of a summary and outline of the presentation. Students using electronic technology should arrive in the classroom a few minutes early on their presentation day to ensure that their materials will be immediately available electronically when they step "on stage."

Papers must include an abstract summarizing the entire paper in 100 words or less. Formatting and references should be in a consistent style of the kind used in the social sciences and education. Notably, there should be identifying information associated with all quotations (i.e., author, date, page numbers) and there should be a concordance between references and citations (that is, all citations appear in the references and all references are cited). For appropriate formatting and referencing, most students choose to use the style of the American Psychological Association (see the *Publications Manual of the APA* or review journals using this style, such as *Research in Higher Education*). As to the length of the paper, consider the following rough guideline: approximately 25-40 double-spaced, numbered pages of text in a medium-sized font.

Guidelines for successful class project presentations and papers are available on the instructor's website at <http://www.hearnsite.org>. In addition, that site provides some examples of successful project papers.

The student's special topic should be chosen and finalized with instructor approval by session 3 (May 31). Presentations will be made late in the term, and final papers must be turned in on or before the final day of the class for the term (July 26).

Class Participation: Each student is expected to participate energetically and productively in class assignments, activities, and discussions. The commitment of each student to doing so contributes significantly to the success of class. Included in participation expectations will be active student engagement in occasional ungraded assignments, such as preparing class discussions on particular topics, participating in in-class exercises and case analyses, and reviewing and critiquing relevant publications individually and in teams.

Because evaluation in this course is focused mainly on writing assignments, a word about good writing may be useful. Writing well not only allows students to show what they know and understand about a subject, but also may be virtually congruent with that knowledge and comprehension. For this reason, the instructor pays close attention to the quality of writing in class assignments. Students should outline their papers in advance, take them through several drafts to ensure quality, and proof-edit their papers carefully before submitting them.

Grading for the course will be weighted as follows:

Special Project (Paper and Presentation)	70%
Class Participation	<u>30%</u>
	100%

Written assignments may be submitted electronically or in hardcopy form but, in either case, these assignments should be submitted by the stated deadline to avoid late penalties. Incomplete grades (I's) for the term are strongly discouraged. Those seeking an "I" in the course must be in touch with the instructor before the end of the term to agree upon plans for resolving the incomplete.

V. Academic Integrity

Submitted written work must be a product solely of the student's own thought and study. When other sources are employed in written assignments, those sources should be fully acknowledged in references or footnotes. Submitting work produced in part for other purposes is discouraged, and students seeking to do so must obtain advance approval from the instructor.

As a University of Georgia student, you have agreed to abide by the University's academic honesty policy, "A Culture of Honesty," and the Student Honor Code. All academic work must meet the standards described in "A Culture of Honesty" found at: <https://ovpi.uga.edu/academic-honesty/academic-honesty-policy>. Lack of knowledge of the academic honesty policy is not a reasonable explanation for a violation. Questions related to course assignments and the academic honesty policy should be directed to the instructor.

VI. Resources

Electronic copies of course materials, including this syllabus, are available on the instructor's website at <http://www.hearnsite.org> and through other online sites, including the UGa library. Additional class resources will be distributed in class as hand-outs or electronically via e-mail or the web.

VII. Course Schedule

The course is divided into three parts, as follows:

- 1) Introduction to Postsecondary Education Policy History, Concepts, and Issues (sessions 1-3)
- 2) Domains of Policy Change and Student Presentations (sessions 4-6)
- 3) Emerging Policy Developments (session 7)

Session 1 (May 17): Introduction to Postsecondary Policy History and Key Concepts: Part 1

Session 2 (May 24): Introduction to Postsecondary Policy History and Key Concepts: Part 2

Session 3 (May 31): Critical Policy Concerns

Session 4 (June 14): Stephen and Sean - Alternative Revenue Streams

Session 5 (June 21): Justin - Governance Centralization and Mergers

Session 6 (June 28): Adrianna - College Costs Transparency and Financial Literacy

Session 7 (July 12): Implications of Current and Emerging Policy Developments