

TPS3029 – Winter 2012
Governing Education: A Seminar on Politics
Course Outline

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Classes: Thursdays 5-8.
Room 12-105

Welcome to this course. This outline expresses my hopes for our work together. These will change as we discuss them so as to take into account your interests and wishes. Acting according to one's beliefs is much harder than expressing them on paper, so if the course is falling short of your hopes, or if there is anything I can do to make the course more educational and more interesting for you, please let me know.

I am most available via e-mail and almost always respond within 48 hours. If something is urgent, say so in your message. If you want time to meet, please ask and we will set something up.

Schedule

As I am already scheduled to be out of town on a couple of class days (Thursdays), I am hoping to replace either 2 or 4 evenings with 1 or 2 full day Saturdays. We will work this out jointly at our first couple of classes.

Calendar Description: Concepts, perspectives, and methods of political science are used to deal with educational issues in structured ways, while educational issues are used to exemplify and assess the relevance of

political science concepts for understanding education.

Text:

Tinder, Glenn. Political thinking. 6th edition. Available at Bob Miller Book Room. (You can also get used copies online.)

Course Purpose and Objectives:

This is a course about the politics of education. We will examine both basic ideas in political theory and important issues in the politics of education to increase your understanding of how education politics operate. Many educators do not like politics, and regard them as an interference with the real business of schooling. My view is that politics are an essential and unavoidable part of the way we live, and that educators benefit from understanding politics dynamics and processes.

We will use as a text Glenn Tinder's book, Political Thinking. In each class we will take up some of the theoretical or conceptual issues Tinder raises, and will also discuss specific issues in education politics. I have suggested specific issues for the first half of the course; we will jointly agree on the specific issues for the 2nd half.

As the course develops you will apply these ideas to your own experiences and research interests. The goal is for you to be able to articulate your own assumptions about how educational politics do work, can work, and should work while linking these to the larger literature in the field.

Beyond the assigned reading, students should try to read and consider work from a variety of perspectives – traditional or conservative, liberal, radical or critical;

empirical and conceptual; and so on. Each perspective has its own integrity based on a set of ideas that are important to understand.

Course atmosphere:

I regard every graduate course as a "community of inquiry" in which all of us are learning together, and I regard all graduate students as self-directed learners, who can and should take responsibility for their own learning, with the professor helping if and as appropriate. The more ownership students take, the better the course will be.

I expect all students to be prepared for classes. This means doing the reading and thinking about the issues we will be discussing.

I do not take attendance; I do not confuse sitting in the class with learning. However it would be courteous to notify me in advance if possible if you are going to be absent.

I do not give lectures in my courses. Most of our class time will be discussion. I hope for discussions in class that are lively and stimulating. This depends on people being prepared for class. Students should feel free to disagree, even strongly, as long as this is done in a way that is respectful of others' views. I will try to promote debate and also to encourage active listening to each other. I will be looking for ways to have everyone contribute while recognizing people's different ways of participating and learning. Diverse backgrounds and points of views are assets to learning.

There will be ongoing opportunities to discuss issues regarding the organization of the course, assignments, readings, or other matters. You are encouraged to keep each other informed of any matters of interest in relation to the course.

Reading: Reading is fundamental to graduate work. I expect you to read widely during the course. For each class I will assign a part of the text and, usually, 1 or 2 readings for the

specific issue to be discussed. Nor should you limit yourself to readings provided by instructors; a wide range of material could turn out to be relevant to you, and one of the best things about graduate work is finding paths that work for you, whether others have followed them or not. Familiarity with basic reference sources and tools, including use of the internet and online library searching, are essential in graduate education. Feel free to consult me for ideas about additional readings.

Grades and Assignments:

Grades are not the point of this course; learning is. As graduate students you have already demonstrated your capacity to do well in university studies. I hope to reduce any anxieties about grades so that they do not stand in the way of doing interesting and challenging work. I try to practice principles of formative assessment.

OISE uses 3 grades for graduate courses:

A: original work, very well organized and expressed, sound critical evaluation, clear command of techniques and principles of the discipline, etc.

B: good grasp of the topics, accurate knowledge, some evidence of critical evaluation, ability to synthesize and to discriminate relevant issues, etc. .

FZ: glaring inaccuracy and confusion, little or no grasp of techniques and principles, trivial and irrelevant treatment of topics; in general, a failure to demonstrate the minimal knowledge and skills for effective work in the discipline.

Evaluation

Although I propose specific assignments, I also encourage you to think about forms of evaluation that will be most meaningful to you. You are welcome to propose alterations in your evaluation including:

- proposing assignments different than those described here (such as fiction, case studies, analysis of secondary data, original research, or simulations);
- assigning different weightings to the various assignments;

- suggesting marking schemes which you feel would be more reflective of your approach to learning;

- making any other suggestions which you feel would be improvements.

In short, I hope evaluation can be a meaningful part of your learning rather than a chore to be completed.

Criteria for assignments

Unless otherwise agreed between us, I judge assignments based on:

- the degree to which you have developed and supported a point of view;

- knowledge of previous research;

- effective use of primary and secondary sources (i.e. data you collect directly and material drawn from the literature);

- the level of sophistication of your work (does it go beyond simply repeating what is already well known; does it address important questions, and with some subtlety).

- for written work, the clarity and quality of the writing.

Your work should draw on your reading for the course as well as on your own thinking and other sources such as popular media.

Writing

Writing, like any skill, improves with practice and effort. We will discuss writing issues in class as required.

As a writer, I always rewrite my work several times before I regard it as ready. I encourage students to submit outlines or drafts for formative evaluation. **You are free to rewrite and resubmit work after I have marked it if you wish to do so; rewritten work will be remarked, and your mark will be based on the final product.**

For all written assignments, you should also observe academic conventions about references (i.e. make sure your reference list is accurate and complete), and use a standard

style for referencing; I do not care which style, as long as you use one consistently.

A variety of writing styles can be appropriate, depending on the subject matter, so please ask if you have any questions about writing style. There is no reason that scholarly writing should be verbose or obscure: I encourage you to write in plain, straightforward language and avoid jargon. Length of assignments depends on how many you are doing, and on what is required to treat the topic appropriately, but I always encourage papers that are concise. Longer is not necessarily better.

I invite you to give me any suggestions you have as to how my feedback on your work can be most useful to you. If you have particular concerns about your work, please discuss them with me so that I can try to assist you. If you feel that my evaluation is unfair, please do let me know

Suggested assignments

The purpose of the assignments is to increase your familiarity with and understanding of important scholarly work related to educational administration. Keep that purpose in mind as you do the work.

Although I suggest 2 assignments, you may choose to do more or fewer if you wish. You may also choose to build one assignment on another – for example by extending the same topic in different ways.

Assignment 1 is due by Feb 20 and would be 35%.

Assignment 2 is due by April 30 and would be 65%.

1. Write a brief (5 pages) analysis of a current political issue in education – any issue at any level of education. Your analysis should define the issue, discuss its origins, show why it is a political issue, describe the various interests or positions, and suggest how the issue might develop. Alternatively, you could

choose a past issue in which case you would discuss why it developed as it did.

OR

In about 5 pages discuss one of the following issues, giving and justifying a point of view and citing any relevant evidence.

- Public education would benefit if there were less politics involved.
- The job of the Minister of Education is to articulate public desires and opinions about education.
- The Ministry of Education should 'take over' school boards that are seen to be failing in their duties.
- Schools would be better if each school were run locally by parents and teachers.

2. A fuller analysis of a political issue or process in education.

You can choose any education issue that has a political dimension, or you can focus on a process issue such as participation or governance. The intent of this assignment is to develop and present your thinking on this issue in some depth. What is the issue? What makes it political? What are the main considerations in understanding its dynamics?

You may choose to develop the same topic as in assignment 1 in more depth.

Late Assignments: I expect work to be handed in when due unless other arrangements are made in advance or last-minute sickness or an emergency prevented completion. If you think you may not be able to complete work on time, please let me know as early as possible.

The success of this course is a shared responsibility. If you are unhappy at any time with the way the course is progressing, please talk to me about it.

Students should be aware of the University's policy on plagiarism which is in the Calendar and on the website.

Reading list

(I do not expect anyone to read everything or even a lot of what is on this list. However it provides you with a range of work all of which is worth reading, depending on your time and interest.)

- Anyon, J. (1997). *Ghetto schooling*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Apple, M. (1996). *Cultural politics and education*. New York: Teachers' College Press.
- Apple, M. (2004). *Ideology and curriculum*, 34d edn. London: RoutledgeFalmer.
- Aristotle. *The politics*. Any edition.
- Berger, P. & Luckmann, T. (1967). *The social construction of reality*. New York: Anchor.
- Berger, P. (1976). *Pyramids of sacrifice*. New York: Vintage.
- Bernstein, R. (1976). *The restructuring of social and political theory*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Bok, S. (1979). *Lying: Moral choice in public and private life*. New York: Vintage.
- Bottery, M. (1998). *Professionals and policy: Management strategy in a competitive world*. London: Cassell.
- Bowles S. and Gintis. H. (1976). *Schooling in Capitalist America: Educational Reform and the Contradictions of Economic Life*. London: Routledge.
- Bryk, A.S., Sebring, P.B., Allensworth, E., Luppescu, S., & Easton, J. Q. (2010). *Organizing schools for improvement: Lessons from Chicago*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

- Burns, J. M. (1978). *Leadership*. New York: Harper & Row.
- Callahan, R. (1962). *Education and the cult of efficiency: A study of the social forces that have shaped the administration of the public schools*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Chubb, J. E., & Moe, T. M. (1990). *Politics, markets, and America's schools*. Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution.
- Cohen, March, J. & Olsen (1972). A garbage can model of organizational choice. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 17 (1) 1-25.
- Connell, R. W. (1982). *Making the difference*. Sydney, AU: George Allen & Unwin.
- Dahl, R.. *Modern political analysis*. Any edition.
- DiMaggio P. & Powell, W. (1983). The iron cage revisited: Institutional isomorphism and collective rationality in organizational fields. *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 48, No.2, pp. 147-160.
- Dror, Y. (1986). *Policy-making under adversity*. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction.
- Edelman, M. (1988). *Constructing the political spectacle*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Elmore, R. (2004). *School reform from the inside out: Policy, practice, and performance*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press.
- Fullan, M. (2007). *The New Meaning of Educational Change*. 3rd edition. New York: Teachers College.
- Giddens, A. (1994). *Beyond left and right*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.
- Gidney, R. (1999). *From Hope to Harris: The reshaping of Ontario's schools*. University of Toronto Press.

- Grubb, N. (2009). *The money myth*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Gutmann, A. (1987). *Democratic education*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Hargreaves, A. & Fullan, M. (eds.) (2009). *Change wars*. Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree.
- Heath, J. (2001). *The efficient society: Why Canada is as good as it gets*. Toronto: Viking.
- Held, V. (1984). *Rights and goods*. New York: Free Press.
- Hirschman, A. (1970). *Exit, voice, and loyalty*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Howlett, M. & Ramesh, M. (2003). *Studying public policy: policy cycles and policy subsystems*. Toronto: Oxford University Press.
- Khaneman, D., Slovik, P. and Tversky, A (1982). *Judgment under uncertainty: Heuristics and biases*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Kingdon, J. (1994). *Agendas, alternatives and public policies*, 2nd edition. New York: HarperCollins.
- Lakoff, G. (2002). *Moral politics: How liberals and conservatives think*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Lasswell, H. (1958). *Politics: Who gets what, when, how*. Cleveland: Meridian.
- Lindblom, C. & Cohen, D. (1979). *Usable knowledge*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Lindblom, C. (1990). *Inquiry and Change*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Machiavelli. *The prince*. Any edition.
- Manzer, R. (1994). *Public schools and political ideas*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- March, J. & Olsen, J. (1989) *Rediscovering institutions: The organizational basis of politics*. New York: Free Press.
- McLaughlin M (1990). *The Rand Change Agent Study revisited: macro perspectives, micro realities*. *Educational Researcher*, 19(9) 11-16
- McLaughlin, M. (1987). *Learning from experience: Lessons from policy implementation*. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 9(2), 171-178.
- Meyer, J. W., & Rowan, B. (1977). *Institutionalized organizations: Formal structures as myth and ceremony*. *American Journal of Sociology*, 83, 340–363.
- Oakes, J. (2005). *Keeping track: How Schools Structure Inequality* (2nd ed.). New Haven & London: Yale University Press.
- Pfeffer, J. and Sutton, R. (2006) *Hard facts, dangerous half-truths and total nonsense: Profiting from evidence-based management*, Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press
- Plank, D. & Boyd, W. L. (1994). *Antipolitics, education, and institutional choice: The flight from democracy*. *American Educational Research Journal*, 31(2), 263-281.
- Rogers, E. (1995). *Diffusion of innovations*. 3rd edition. New York: Free Press.
- Stanovich, K. (2005). *The Robot's Rebellion*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Stone, D. (1988). *Policy paradox and political reason*. New York: HarperCollins.
- Tavris, C., & Aronson, E. (2008). *Mistakes were made... but not by me*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Tinder, Glenn. Political Thinking. 5th edn. New York: HarperCollins, 1991. 6th edition 2004.

Thrupp, M. (1999). Schools making a difference: Let's be realistic! Buckingham: Open University Press.

Wilkinson, R. & Pickett, K. (2008). The spirit level. London: Penguin.

Weick, K. (1976). Educational organizations as loosely coupled systems. Administrative Science Quarterly, 21(1). 1-19.

Willis, P. (1977). Learning to Labour: How Working Class Kids Get Working Class Jobs.

Westmead: Saxton House.

Wilson, J. (1989). Bureacracy: what government agencies do and why they do it. New York: Basic Books.

Ungerleider, C. (2003). Failing our kids: How we are ruining our public schools. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart.

Wildavsky, A. (1979). Speaking truth to power. Boston: Little Brown.

You can find my work on my home page – webspaces.oise.utoronto.ca/~levinben/

Some of my work related to the politics of education:

Books

- 2001 *International Education Reform: From Origins to Outcomes*. London: Falmer/Routledge.
2005 *Governing Education*. University of Toronto Press.
2008 *How to Change 5000 Schools*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press.
2012 *More High School Graduates*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.

Book chapters

- 1997 (with J.A. Riffel) "School system responses to external change: Implications for school choice", in R. Glatter, P. Woods & C. Bagley (eds.), Choice and Diversity in Schooling. London: Routledge. 44-58.
- 2000 (with J Young) "Education in transition: Canada. In D Coulby, R. Cowen and C Jones (eds), *Education in Times of Transition: The World Yearbook of Education, 2000*. London: Kogan Page. 50-62.
- 2000 (with J.A. Riffel) "Changing schools in a changing world" in N Bascia and A Hargreaves (eds), The Sharp Edge of Educational Change. London/New York: RoutledgeFalmer. 178-194.
- 2003 "Conceptualizing educational reform". In M. Preedy, R. Glatter and C. Wise (eds.), Strategic Leadership and Educational Improvement. London: Paul Chapman. 33-43.
- 2003 "Educational policy: Commonalities and differences" In B Davies and J. West-Burnham (Ed.) *Handbook of Educational Leadership and Management*. London: Pearson. 165-177.
- 2005 "Improving Research-Policy Relationships: The Case of Literacy" in N. Bascia, A. Cumming, A. Datnow, K. Leithwood and D. Livingstone (Eds.) International Handbook of Educational Policy. Dordrecht: Kluwer. 613-628.
- 2007 "Inevitable tensions in managing large-scale public service reform". In M Wallace, M Fertig and E Schneller (Eds.) *Managing Change in the Public Services*. Oxford: Blackwell. 136-150.
- 2007 Ungerleider, C. and Levin, B. "Accountability, funding and school improvement in Canada" In T. Townsend, ed., *International Handbook of School Effectiveness and Improvement*. NL: Springer. 411-424.
- 2007 Levin, B. and Naylor, N. "Using resources effectively in education" in J Burger, P. Klinck, and C. Webber (eds.). *Intelligent leadership*. Dordrecht, NL: Springer. 143-158.
2007. Curriculum policy and the politics of what should be learned in schools. In M Connelly, M He and J Phillipon (eds). *Handbook of Curriculum and Instruction*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. 7-24.

2008 "These may be good times: An argument that things are getting better". In C. Sugrue (Ed.). *The Future of Educational Change: International Perspectives*. 34-37. RoutledgeFalmer.

2008 "Reform without (much) rancor". In M Fullan and A Hargreaves (eds). *Change Wars*. 259-272. Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree.

2009 "The politics of diversity". In J Lupart (ed), *Diversity in Canadian Education*, 105-127. Toronto: Fitzhenry & Whiteside

2009. How governments decide: The role of research. In Desjardins, R., & Rubenson, K. (eds). *Research of vs research for education policy in an era of transnational policy-making*. 44-57. Saarbrucken: VDM Dr. Müller.

Articles

1975 "A case study of a Canadian school board" and "Disillusion revisited". *Interchange* 6/2, 23-31, 39-40.

1982 "Public involvement in public education in Canada". *Canadian Journal of Education* 7/4, 1-13.

1991 (with T. Sale) "Problems in the reform of education finance: A case study". *Canadian Journal of Education*, 16/1, 32/46.

1992 "Dealing with dropouts in Canadian education". *Curriculum Inquiry*, 22/3, 257-270.

1993 "School response to a changing world". *Journal of Educational Administration*. 31/2, 4-21.

1995 "Reforming secondary education". *Canadian Journal of Educational Administration and Policy* [Http://www.umanitoba.ca/publications/cjeap](http://www.umanitoba.ca/publications/cjeap) (refereed electronic journal) 1/1, issue.

1995 "Education and poverty". *Canadian Journal of Education*, 20/2, 211-224.

1996 Riffel, J., Young, J. and Levin, B. "Diversity in Canadian education". *Journal of Education Policy*, 11(1), 113-123.

1997 "The lessons of international educational reform". *Journal of Education Policy*, 12/4, 253-266.

1998 Levin, B. and Riffel, J. "Conceptualizing school change" *Cambridge Journal of Education*., 28/1, 113-127.

1998 "The educational requirement for democracy. *Curriculum Inquiry*, 28/1, 57-79.

- 1998 "An epidemic of education policy: (What) can we learn from each other?" Comparative Education, 34(2), 131-141.
- 1998 "Criticizing the schools: 1957 and 1997". Educational Policy Analysis Archives. 16/6, Aug 20. [Http://eepaa.asu.edu/epaa](http://eepaa.asu.edu/epaa).
- 1999 Levin, B. and Young, J. "The origins of international education reform". Canadian Journal of Educational Administration and Policy, [Http://www.umanitoba.ca/publications/cjeap](http://www.umanitoba.ca/publications/cjeap). Issue 12, Jan 19, 1999.
- 2000 Levin, B. and Hopkins, D. "Government policy and school improvement". School Leadership and Management 20(1), 15-30.
- 2000 Levin, B. and Young, J. "The rhetoric of educational reform". International Journal of Comparative Policy Analysis 2/2, 189-209.
- 2000 "Putting students at the centre of education reform". Journal of Educational Change. 1(2), 155-172.
- 2001 "Conceptualizing the process of education reform from an international perspective". Education Policy Analysis Archives 9(14), April 24. epaa.asu.edu/epaa/v9n14.html.
- 2001 "Governments and school improvement". International Electronic Journal for Leadership in Learning. 5(9), May 26. www.ucalgary.ca/~iejll/volume5/levin.html
- 2005 "Leadership implications of some positive developments in education policy" New Zealand Journal of Education, 20(2) 5-14.
- 2008 "Sustainable, large scale education renewal". Journal of Educational Change 8(4), 323-336.
- 2008 Levin, B. and Fullan, M. "Learning about system renewal" Journal of Educational Management, Administration and Leadership 36(2), 289-303.
- 2008 Does politics help or hinder education change? Journal of Educational Change, 10(1) 69-70.
2009. "Enduring issues in urban education" Journal of Comparative Policy Analysis 11(2), 181-195
- 2009 Cooper, A., Levin, B. and Campbell, C.. The growing (but still limited) importance of evidence in education policy and practice. Journal of Educational Change. 10(2), 159-171.
- 2010 "Governments and education reform: Some lessons from the last fifty years." Journal of Education Policy 25(6) 739-747.

Topical outline

Strand 1. Main ideas in/about politics

– Introduction – discussion of some of the basic issues in the politics of education. Students' perspectives on politics and its place in education. Students' level of knowledge about and experience with politics in various forms.

- What do we mean by politics? By the politics of education? What makes something political? 'official' and 'unofficial' politics.

- Key concepts in politics – interests, decisions, issues, positions, public opinion, conflict, ideology, bargaining, outcomes – what do these mean?

- What historical, social, cultural and other factors affect education politics in Ontario and Canada?

- How do political decisions get made? Who participates and how? What factors affect these decisions? What is the role of research and evidence in the political process?

- People are often cynical about politics. Are they justified in this? Where does idealism fit into politics?

Strand 2 – Application of ideas to main questions

How do politics of education play out at various levels: The school, the district, the province, the country, internationally.

How do politics play out in particular issues in education. Many issues might be considered, but some examples include:

- The organization, role and function of school boards, including relations between boards and the provinces.

- Teachers, unions and collective bargaining (2012 is a bargaining year in Ontario education).

- The parent role in education at the school and district level.

- The politics of diversity and inclusion; race and gender.

- Politics of funding in education – overall, across districts, within districts.

- Program diversity – IB, streaming, vocational, French Immersion.

- The role of the media in shaping education politics.

- Testing and accountability.

- Curriculum and teaching – what is taught and how

- Teachers – recruitment, certification, retention, development, pay, evaluation

- Equality and inequality - in conditions, outcomes

- The schools' relation to the larger society