

# The Politics of Educational Policy

## POL 300-810

**Course Description:** This course is an introduction to the historical, social, cultural influences that have shaped political decisions affecting the national, state and local educational programs. It focuses upon the federal, state, and local educational policy as it pertains to the educator, parent, student and ultimately the participant in a democratic political process. Political groups, both formal and informal, are analyzed for their impact on teaching, learning, and education's role in society. Educational policy is placed within the context of the American political system, including federal and state constitutional frameworks, legislative, executive, and judicial decisions, the electoral process, public opinion, and the media. The analytical process utilizes a set of diverse, disciplined-based conceptual perspectives (or analytical frameworks) that can be used to analyze policy purposes, processes, contents and outcomes.

**Instructional Process:** Instruction employs a seminar format with the utilization of multiple print and media sources. Students are expected to participate in the class discussion and in a variety of educational tasks which reflect the varied skills and disciplines essential to policy analysis and learning in an age of diverse information and complex challenges.

**Professor:** Dr. Michael Ruddy      **Text:** *Studying Educational and Social Policy*, Ronald H. Heck.

**Secondary Texts:** *Conflicts of Interest* (Fourth Edition– 2001), by Joel Spring; *Political Agendas for Education* (Third Edition– 2005), by Joel Spring.

**Office Hours:** Tuesdays 5:30-5:50 pm (in office at 212 Mahar Hall), 8:45 pm - 9:00 pm in classroom; Tuesdays & Thursdays 2:45-3:45 pm; or by appointment.

**Office Location:** Room 212 Mahar Hall      **Mail:** Campus- Political Science Department, 435 Mahar

**E-Mail:** ruddy@oswego.edu

**Note:** Please list the course in the subject line.

**Important:** e-mail is the course's primary mode of communication

**Web site:** [www.oswego.edu/~ruddy](http://www.oswego.edu/~ruddy)

**Telephones:** Political Science Department: 312-2350

**Telephones:** During Office Hours Only: 312-3414      Home- 298-3634 (urgent messages only)

**Course Objectives:** Students will be able to:

- (1) Know the terminology, definitions, and basic functions of the political process as it pertains to the formulation of educational policy;
- (2) Know the elements of a system approach that utilizes analytical frameworks to the study of educational policy;

- (3) Know the major issues facing education in American society as it is reflected in the political system;
- (4) Know the basic challenges facing educators and parents in America in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century;
- (5) Recognize the influence of institutions outside education in the formulation of educational policy;
- (6) Appraise, on the basis of readings, discussions, and reflection, the strengths and weaknesses of the process which formulates educational policy within the American political system;
- (7) Demonstrate an understanding of the role of the individual, either as an educational or political professional, or as a citizen in the process of solving American educational problems;
- (8) Demonstrate the skills needed to collect and process information from diverse sources;
- (9) Demonstrate research skills necessary for the study of educational policy;
- (10) Demonstrate the skills needed to produce a policy analysis paper.

#### **EVALUATION:**

**Testing:** There are two regular exams, that is, a mid-term and a final. The exams cover the preceding lessons, including the primary text readings, class notes, lectures, secondary text readings, current events articles and videos. Questions are divided between essay and multiple choice. Absence from an exam requires either permission prior to the absence or an excuse from a medical professional, written on medical script. Exams missed must be made up during office hours within a week of return to class.

**Class Participation:** Each student is expected attend every class and to contribute to the discussions of the class in a constructive manner (see "Conduct" below). This means reading the required material before class and participating in any discussions, debates, or teacher inquiries.

**Written Projects:** All written assignments must be word processor printed on standard-sized white paper, double-spaced, and conform to either American Psychological Association Style or Chicago Manual of Style. Margins must be 1.25" on the top and left, and 1.00" on the bottom and right. Fonts must be 12 point with no use of script styles. Proper grammar and correct spelling are required; any paper not conforming will be returned for correction and re-submission with corrections made.

**Class On-line Forum:** Each student is expected to participate in Ceilidh (kay-lee), a threaded discussion tool. It is an on-line forum for the class where students are expected to share the insights of their research, debate issues discussed in class, and/or critique the materials assigned. Each student is expected to make a minimum of fifteen substantive contributions to this on-line forum.

**Current Issues Journal:** Each student is required to maintain a journal of articles on issues relevant to educational policy in a three-ring binder. Articles kept in the binder can be cut from newspapers or magazines owned by the student, photocopied, or printed from on-line sources. A minimum of ten articles/entries is required. At least two articles must be from *Education Week* and one from the *Chronicle of Higher Education*.

**Journal Article Reviews:** Each student is required to write 2-5 page reviews of at least four journal articles from a peer-reviewed periodical or journal, or a source pre-approved by the instructor.

**Congressional Research Service Reports:** Each student is required to write 2-5 page reviews of at least four Congressional Service Research Reports.

**Oral Report:** Each student is required to make a 8-10 minute-long PowerPoint presentation on a topic of educational policy approved by the instructor.

**Policy Analysis Paper:** Each student is required to develop a written analysis of an educational policy case. The paper must be a minimum of twenty pages (excluding notes and bibliography) and no more than twenty-five pages and conform to the standards discussed under "Written Projects." Students are encouraged to select, in consultation with the instructor, an educational policy which interests them and about which the student can readily find valid information. Students are permitted to incorporate other assignments into furthering the research for this paper.

**Policy Paper Proposal:** Each student is required to submit a proposal 3-5 page proposal detailing the topic of their policy analysis paper and why that topic is relevant to the study of educational policy. The student must provide in specific detail what sources they will use, and what analytical model they will employ to analyze the case. The topic must be approved by the instructor to proceed.

**Policy Paper Outline:** Each student is required to submit a 4-7 page outline of the policy analysis paper. The outline form required is either that describe by American Psychological Association or Chicago Manual of Style.

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**Point Values:**

Participation	= 30 points	Class On-line Forum	= 30 points
Journal Article Reviews	= 20 points	CRS Report Reviews	= 20 points
Current Issues Journal	= 30 points	Oral Report	= 20 points
Policy Paper Proposal	= 05 points	Policy Paper Outline	= 05 points
Policy Analysis Paper	= 40 points	Mid-Term Exam	= 50 points
Final Exam	= 50 points	<b>Total</b>	<b>= 300 points.</b>

**Grades:**

280-300 = <b>A</b>		270-279= <b>A-</b>	
260-269= <b>B+</b>	250-259= <b>B</b>	240-249 = <b>B-</b>	
230-239= <b>C+</b>	220-229= <b>C</b>	210-219 = <b>C-</b>	
200-209= <b>D+</b>	190-199= <b>D</b>	180-189 = <b>D-</b>	0-179 = <b>E</b>

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**Student Requirements and Standards:**

1) Attendance: Each class is the equivalent of one week of classes in a standard schedule. Subsequently, each class is divided into three 55-minute sessions reflective of that fact. Attendance is taken in

every session. Each student is expected to attend every session. Three missed sessions are to equal one missed class. Students are allowed one whole-class absence (i.e. three sessions) before five points for each absence are deducted from the attendance point total. Students experiencing attendance problems must consult with the instructor. Acquiring information or fulfilling work missed by the student due to absences is the sole responsibility of the student. Any assistance from the instructor regarding such materials, information, or exercises (including missed tests) is to be dealt with during office hours.

(2) Tardiness: Students are expected to be on time for class. Students arriving late for a session are charged proportionate to the amount of class/session missed. Remember, three missed sessions are to equal one missed class.

(3) Early Departure: If a student departs early, that is, misses one of the later sessions of a class, they will be charged proportionately. Again, three missed sessions are to equal one missed class.

(4) Conduct: Despite the tendency on television and radio to foster confrontational and rude behavior during discussions and debates, our class discussions will require that all students be treated and will respond with the respect and courteous conduct essential to the practice of democracy.

(5) Attentiveness: Students must be fully attentive at all times. Inattentive students will be encouraged publicly to conform to class norms; i.e., no personal conversations, no use of cell phones, audio devices, and no sleeping. There will be two warnings; a third violation the student will be asked to leave class.

(6) Plagiarism: No form of plagiarism is to be tolerated. Students plagiarizing material will be reported to the academic dean for discipline. Any student found to have plagiarized material is to receive no credit for the assignment involved, regardless of the proportion of the plagiarized material to the overall work. Additionally, all subsequent materials submitted by the student are presumed to be similarly plagiarized and evidence of original research must be submitted to receive credit for those assignments.

(7) Cheating: No form of cheating will be tolerated. Students involved as either the initiator or the accomplice are to receive no credit for the exam involved.

**Disabilities**: Any student diagnosed during elementary or secondary school as having a disability, a learning disability, or if you have not been diagnosed but you believe you are experiencing inexplicable or inordinate difficulty, you should refer to the *Disability Services* website.

### **Important Notice**

**Website Notes**: There will be an effort to post the basic outline of the class notes on this course's section of the website:

**[www.oswego.edu/~ruddy](http://www.oswego.edu/~ruddy)**

However; this accommodation should not be seen as a substitute for taking notes during class. In the event that the notes are not placed on the website or if there is a technology failure which prohibits access to the website edition of the notes, no steps will be taken to either offer an alternative source of the notes, to alter or postpone testing. In short, attend class, take notes, and use the website notes as merely a check on your own note taking or for emergencies.

# Schedule of Classes

## Part 1

### Week One

#### **Tuesday– January 31– Introduction/Background**

(1) Administrative Tasks

(2) Lecture Topic: Course Introduction

(3) Lecture Topic: A Brief history of educational policy

(4) Lecture Topic: Differing Educational Traditions

(5) Reading assignments:

(I) *Studying Educational and Social Policy*, Ronald Heck, Introduction, pp. xv-xxv; {15p.}

(II) *Conflicts of Interest* (Fourth Edition– 2001), by Joel Spring, Chapter 1, pp. 1-27. {27p}

(III) *An Administrative History of the Creation of the U.S. Department of Education*, pp. 10-20 [PDF File located in “Selected Readings” on course website]. {10p}

and

(IV) Hulsizer, Donna. “Public Education on Trial.” *Educational Leadership*, v44 n8 p12-16 May 1987, [ERIC #: EJ 353878] {4p}

or

(V) Carpenter, James J., “Jefferson's Views on Education: Implications for Today's Social Studies,” *Social Studies*, v95 n4 p140 Jul-Aug 2004 [ERIC #:EJ706062] {7p}

### Week Two

#### **Tuesday– February 7– The Federal Role in Education**

(1) Assignment Due: Journal Article Review #1

(2) Lecture Topic: The U.S. Department of Education

(3) Lecture Topic: No Child Left Behind

(4) Lecture Topic: Disabilities Act of 1990

(5) Reading assignments:

(I) *Studying Educational and Social Policy*, Ronald Heck, Chapter 1, pp. 1-22 {21p}

(II) *Conflicts of Interest* (Fourth Edition– 2001), by Joel Spring, Chapter 6, pp. 115-131. {21p}

and select from the following in consultation with the instructor:

(III) *An Administrative History of the Creation of the U.S. Department of Education*, pp. 20-40 [PDF File located in “Selected Readings” on course website]. {20p}

(III) Wenning, Richard; Herdman, Paul A.; Smith, Nelson; McMahon, Neal; Washington, Kadesha. “No Child Left Behind: Testing, Reporting, and Accountability.” *ERIC Digest*, 2003-08-00. [ERIC #:ED480994] {4p}

(IV) Kalivoda, Karen S.; Higbee, Jeanne L. “Implementing the Americans with Disabilities Act.” *Journal of Humanistic Education and Development*, v32 n3 p133-37 Mar 1994. [ERIC #:EJ486139] {4p}

### Week Three

#### **Tuesday–February 14– Policy Analysis / Federal Programs**

(1) Assignment Due: CRS Report Review #1

(2) Lecture Topic: Policy Analysis skills / Conceptual Models

(3) Lecture Topic: Federal Programs (Title 1)

(4) Lecture Topic: Special Education

(5) Reading assignments:

(I) *Studying Educational and Social Policy*, Ronald Heck, Chapter 1, pp. 22-34. {12p}

(II) *Conflicts of Interest* (Fourth Edition– 2001), by Joel Spring, Chapter 10, pp. 206-221. {15p}

and select from the following in consultation with the instructor:

(III) Pechman, Ellen M.; Fiester, Leila. Creating Good Schools for Children in Poverty through Title I Schoolwide Programs. *Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk* (JESPAR), v1 n2 p171-92 1996 [ERIC #:EJ531795] {21p}

(V) Allbritten, Drew; Mainzer, Richard; Ziegler, Deborah. "Will Students with Disabilities Be Scapegoats for School Failures?" *Educational Horizons*, v82 n2 p153-160 Win 2004. [ERIC #:EJ684754] {7p}

## Week Four

### Tuesday– February 21– The Federal-State Interface

(1) Assignment Due: Policy Paper Proposal

(2) Lecture Topic: Head Start

(3) Lecture Topic: The State Function in Education

(4) Lecture Topic: Unfunded Federal Mandates

(5) Reading assignments:

(I) *Studying Educational and Social Policy*, Ronald Heck, Chapter 2, pp. 35-54. {19p}

(II) *Conflicts of Interest* (Fourth Edition– 2001), by Joel Spring, Chapter 3, pp. 71-93. {22p}

and select from the following in consultation with the instructor:

(III) U.S. Conference of Mayors Report– *The Impact of Unfunded Federal Mandates upon Cities* [PDF File located in "Selected Readings" on course website]. {18p}

(IV) Kassebaum, Nancy Landon (U.S. Senator). "Only the Best for America's Children." *American Psychologist*, v49 n2 p123-26 Feb 1994. [ERIC #:EJ485805] {3 p}

(V) Government Publication. "Head Start: A Comprehensive Child Development Program for Children Birth to Age Five." [ERIC #:ED456929] {19 p}

(VI) Tyree, Alexander K., Jr. "Examining the Evidence: Have States Reduced Local Control of Curriculum?" *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, v15 n1 p34-50 Spr 1993 [ERIC #:EJ463415] {16p}

## Week Five

### Tuesday– February 28– State Issues in Education

(1) Assignment Due: Journal Article Review #2

(23) Lecture Topic: State innovations and successes in educational programs.

(4) Lecture Topic: Property Tax funding of Education

(5) Lecture Topic: Charter Schools & School Vouchers, also Freedom to change schools

(6) Reading assignments:

(I) *Studying Educational and Social Policy*, Ronald Heck, Chapter 3, pp. 55-76. {21p}

(II) *Conflicts of Interest* (Fourth Edition– 2001), by Joel Spring, Chapter 7, pp. 135-156. {21p}

and select from the following in consultation with the instructor:

(II) Walker, Elaine M.. “The Impact of State Policies and Actions on Local Implementation Efforts: A Study of Whole School Reform in New Jersey.” *Educational Policy*, 2004 18: 338-363. {25p}

(III) Wilson, Jonathan C. “Urban Education: A Board Member's Perspective.” *Phi Delta Kappan*, v75 n5 p382-86 Jan 1994. [ERIC #:EJ47581] {4p}

(IV) Baker, Beth. “The School Tax Squeeze.” *Rural Electrification Magazine*, v51 n11 p22-25 Aug 1993. [ERIC #:EJ474841] {3 p}

(V) Archbald, Douglas A. “School Choice and School Stratification: Shortcomings of the Stratification Critique and Recommendations for Theory and Research.” *Educational Policy*, 2000 14: 214-240. {26p}

(VI) Lopez, M. Elena; Schultz, Tom. “Young Children: Strategies for Success.” *Principal*, v75 n5 p21-24 May 1996. [ERIC #:EJ524381] {3p}

(VII) Schirmer, Barbara R.; et al. “Innovative Literacy Practices for ESL Learners (Diverse Learners in the Classroom).” *Reading Teacher*, v49 n5 p412-14 Feb 1996. [ERIC #:EJ521300] {2p}

(VII) Schwartz, Wendy. “How Well Are Charter Schools Serving Urban and Minority Students?” ERIC/CUE Digest, Number 119. (1996-11-00) ERIC Publications; ERIC Digests in Full Text [ERIC #:ED410322] {6p}

## Week Six

**Tuesday– March 7–**

- (1) Assignment Due: CRS Report Review #2
- (2) Lecture Topic: Campaign for Fiscal Equity
- (3) Lecture Topic: The local school district in New York State– urban
- (4) Lecture Topic: The local school district in New York State– rural / suburban
- (5) Reading assignments for next class:

(I) *Studying Educational and Social Policy*, Ronald Heck, Chapter 4, pp. 81-100. {19p}

(II) *Conflicts of Interest* (Fourth Edition– 2001), by Joel Spring, Chapter 8, pp. 157-185. {28p}

and select from the following in consultation with the instructor:

(III) Belfield, Clive R.; Levin, Henry M.. “The Economics of Education on Judgment Day.” *Journal of Education Finance*, v28 n2 p183-205 Fall 2002. [ERIC #:EJ659233] {22p}

(IV) Duncombe, W.; Yinger, J. “How Much More Does a Disadvantaged Student Cost?” *Economics of Education Review*, v24 n5 p513-532 Oct 2005. [ERIC #:EJ697565] {19p}

(V) Galvin, Patrick F. “The Physical Structure of Regional Educational Service Agencies: Implications for Service and Equity Goals.” *Journal of Research in Rural Education*, v11 n2 p105-13 Fall 1995. [ERIC #:EJ520525] {8p} [PDF File located in “Selected Readings” on course website].

(VI) Lyson, Thomas A. “What Does a School Mean to a Community? Assessing the Social and Economic Benefits of Schools to Rural Villages in New York.” *Journal of Research in Rural Education*, v17 n3 p131-37 Win 2002. [ERIC #:EJ661668] {6p} [PDF File located in “Selected Readings” on course website].

## Week Seven

**Tuesday– March 14**

*No Class– Spring Break*

**Thursday– March 16**

*No Class– Spring Break*