

EDA 391K / PA 388K (Spring 2015)

Legislative Issues in Higher Education

Instructor

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Meeting Times: Tuesdays, 9am-12pm in SZB 364: Other class activities TBD

Office Hours: Victor: Tuesdays 2-4pm (or by appointment)
Kye:

COURSE DESCRIPTION/OBJECTIVES

This course focuses on legislative and policy issues in Texas higher education. Offered concurrently with the 84th Texas Legislative Session, the course provides an overview of the state-level policymaking process and addresses various specific policy issues related to higher education finance, college access, equity, governance, diversity, and more. The policy issues that the state legislature considers related to public higher education have a significant impact on the lives of countless families, students, and staff across the state. These policy debates also shape educational opportunities for future generations, presenting yet another level of urgency and saliency to these discussions.

The 84th session of the Texas Legislature (which convenes January 13th, 2015 thru June 1st, 2015) provides an important opportunity to observe the forces (educational, political, social and economic) that are involved in shaping higher education policy in this state. This course is designed to be a practical, hands-on educational experience. We will attend legislative sessions and committee hearings that are relevant to higher education. Students will track, analyze, and summarize the activities of legislative committees and filed bills that focus on higher education issues. Several guest speakers will be invited to share their impressions, goals, and expertise concerning the session, politics, and policy as they relate to public higher education. Further, a variety of readings, including policy memos and reports, budget analyses, scholarly briefs, journal articles, and media articles, will be assigned throughout the semester to further inform and enhance our discussions.

This session promises to be both historic and dynamic with respect to higher education policy issues. Class discussions will be primarily focused on expanding on the specifics of these issues as well as exploring the impact of these policy debates on the system of higher education in

Texas as well as its institutions of higher learning. While some attention will be paid to the private sector, the vast majority of our discussion will focus on public sector institutions, including four-year colleges and universities as well as community colleges. Ultimately, each of you will contribute greatly to this co-construction of knowledge and debate through your reflections, insights, and analysis throughout the term.

Course Textbook, Readings, and Resources

No textbook is required for this course. There will be a large volume of readings via the **course Canvas website**. Also, please make certain you have access to *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, *Inside Higher Education*, *Texas Tribune*, *Austin American Statesman*, and various newspapers. If you are logged in with your UT EID, you can access the *Chronicle* website and its archives. *Inside Higher Education* is a free website, and news articles can be accessed through Lexis-Nexus, provided by The University of Texas Library.

It is strongly suggested that all students purchase a copy of the American Psychological Association's Publication Manual (now in its 6th edition). This is an essential reference for graduate students in education. There are numerous online sources for the APA stylebook as well. **All assignments submitted in this course should be written incorporating the APA Publication Manual, 6th Edition stylebook.**

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1 January 20th “First Class Day”
Review Syllabus, Course Expectations
Note: We may meet at the State Capitol building; stay tuned for more details.

Week 2 January 27th Primer on the Texas State Government & Budget Process

VISIT to the State Capitol, with Senator Kel Seliger (9am sharp!!)
Room: E1.012

READ:

- a. Guide to Texas Legislative Information, Texas Legislative Council
<http://www.tlc.state.tx.us/pubslegref/gtli.pdf>
- b. Reading Statutes and Bills (Texas Legislative Council) (2014)
<http://www.tlc.state.tx.us/pubslegref/readingabill.pdf>
- c. Senate Higher Education Committee Interim Report, Dec. 2014
<http://www.senate.state.tx.us/75r/Senate/commit/c560/c560.InterimReport84th.pdf>
- d. Interim House Charges for the 83rd Legislature (Jan. 2014)
<http://www.house.state.tx.us/media/pdf/interim-charges-83rd.pdf>

Additional Resources:

- “Texas Lege”, Texas Tribune “Wiki” page for the 84th Legislature
<http://txlege.texastribune.org/>
- Legislative Lexicon:
http://www.senate.state.tx.us/SRC/pdf/84th_Legislative_Lexicon.pdf
- Basic Steps in the Texas Legislative Process –
<http://www.senate.state.tx.us/CHBook/Chart.htm>
- “2/3rds rule could change in Texas Senate” (AAS, 1/06/15)
<http://www.statesman.com/news/news/kirk-watson-pro-gop-senate-rule-change-likely/njhSr/>
- Dan Patrick and the 2/3rds rule: A primer (Tx Tribune, 1/10/15)
<http://www.texastribune.org/2015/01/10/primer-endangered-two-thirds-rule/>

Week 3 February 3rd State & Federal Higher Education Policy Context

Guest Speaker (Skype): Dr. Michelle Chin, Policy Advisor to U.S. Senator John Cornyn (TX),
Guest Speaker: Gwen Grigsby & Carlos Martinez, Government Relations, UT-Austin

READ:

- a. Topics for the 84th Legislature (House Research Organization)
(*higher education topics on p.11*)
<http://www.hro.house.state.tx.us/pdf/focus/Topics84-1.pdf>
- b. Issues Facing the 84th Texas Legislature (Senate Research Center)
(*higher education topics begin on p.30*)
http://www.senate.state.tx.us/SRC/pdf/84th_Issues_Facing.pdf
- c. Closing the Gaps - THECB, 2000
- d. Closing the Gaps – 2014 Report
- e. Federal context:
 - White House, Higher Education agenda:
<http://www.whitehouse.gov/issues/education/higher-education>
 - Chronicle of HE: President proposes free community college for millions of students
<http://chronicle.com/article/Obama-Proposes-Free-Community/151097/>
 - Chronicle of HE: Players who influenced Obama’s free college plan
<http://chronicle.com/article/The-Players-Who-Influenced/151145/>
 - Houston Chron: Free community college proposal faces huge hurdles in Texas
<http://www.houstonchronicle.com/news/houston-texas/houston/article/Free-community-college-proposal-faces-big-hurdles-6005306.php>
 - Spellings Commission Report on Future of Higher Education (2006)
 - Comments on the Harkin Higher Education Act Reauthorization Discussion Draft
<http://www.acenet.edu/news-room/Pages/Letter-on-the-Harkin-Higher-Education-Act-Reauthorization-Discussion-Draft.aspx>

Additional Resources:

- Higher Education Reauthorization Act, 2008 (HR 4137, enrolled version);
<http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/z?c110:H.R.4137>;
- Higher Education Bills to Watch in 84th, Daily Texan
<http://www.dailytexanonline.com/2015/01/13/higher-education-related-bills-to-watch-in-the-84th-legislature>

Week 4 February 10th Understanding the Budget Process for Texas Higher Education
Guest Speaker: Mary E. Knight, UT-Austin (*invited*)

READ:

- Biennium Revenue Estimate (BRE), 2016-17, Texas Comptroller (2015)
http://www.texastransparency.org/State_Finance/Budget_Finance/Reports/Biennial_Revenue_Estimate/2016_17/pdf/BRE_2016-17.pdf
- Budget 101: Guide to the Texas Budget, Senate Research Center (SRC) (2013)
http://www.senate.state.tx.us/SRC/pdf/Budget101WebsiteSecured_2013.pdf

Resources

- Legislative Budget Estimates, LBB, 2016-17 Biennium (Jan. 2015)
http://www.lbb.state.tx.us/Documents/Publications/Bill_Summary/2043_Summary_LBE_House_2016-17.pdf
- LBB: Overview of TRBs (May 2012):
http://www.lbb.state.tx.us/Higher_Education/TRB%20Presentation.pdf
- THECB: What is a Tuition Revenue Bond?
<http://www.thecb.state.tx.us/reports/pdf/1965.PDF>
- THECB: Formula funding recs for 2016-17:
<http://www.thecb.state.tx.us/reports/pdf/3487.PDF>
- Tex Tribune: What is UTIMCO?
<http://www.texastribune.org/texas-education/utimco/video-explainer-what-is-utimco/>

Week 5 February 17th Legislative Agendas for **Public & Private** HE Institutions
Guest Speaker: Stanton Calvert & Ray Martinez (*invited*)

READ:

- LBB, List of Legislative Appropriations Requests (LARs)
<http://docs.lbb.state.tx.us/display.aspx?DocType=LAR&Year=2014>
 - THECB's LAR, sections 1A, 1B, 1C, & 2A
 - UT-Austin's LAR, sections 1A, 1B, & 2A
 - Texas State's LAR pps. 1-8
 - South Texas College's LAR, pps. 1-9

Week 6 **February 24th** CAPITOL WEEK #1: Attend Legislative mtg. or hearing

Week 7 **March 3rd** Internal Constituencies: State Agencies, Institutions,
Structures, & Systems

Guest Speaker: Linda Battles (THECB) (*invited*)

DUE: Summary Report #1

READ:

- THECB Legislative Recommendations (84th)
<http://preview.tinyurl.com/nnc6y4y>
- Legislative Study Group (LSG), Report on Higher Education (Part I), 2008

Additional Readings:

- Nicholson-Crotty, Jill & Meier, Kenneth J. (2003). Politics, structure, and public policy: The case of higher education. *Educational Policy*, vol. 17, no. 1 (January and March, 2003).
- TBD

Week 8 **March 10th** External Constituencies, Part I: Community & Business Groups
Guest Speaker: TBD

READ:

- Texas Business Association, 2015, Legislative Priorities
<http://www.txbiz.org/External/WCPages/WCWebContent/WebContentPage.aspx?ContentID=723>
- Report of the Select Commission on Higher Education and Global Competitiveness (2009) <http://tinyurl.com/mnkwxn>
- Texas Association of School Administrators (TASA) 84th Leg Agenda
<http://www.tasanet.org/cms/lib07/TX01923126/Centricity/Domain/25/priorities15.pdf>
- Dallas Regional Chamber, 84th Legislative Agenda:
https://www.dallaschamber.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/2015-Legislative-Agenda_V2.pdf
- Greater Houston Partnership, 84th Policy Agenda:
<http://www.houston.org/policy/>

Week 9 **March 17th** NO CLASS (Spring Break)

Week 10 **March 24th** External Constituencies, Part II: Advocacy Groups & Media

Guest Speaker: Reeve Hamilton (TX Tribune) (*invited*)

READ

- Texas Public Policy Foundation <http://www.texaspolicy.com/center/higher-education/opinions/one-more-reason-college-so-expensive>
- Center for Public Policy Priorities <http://forabettertexas.org/education.html>
- Young Conservatives of Texas, 2015 Legislative Agenda <http://www.yct.org/yct-releases-84th-session-legislative-agenda-and-priorities/>
- Equality Texas, 83rd Texas Leg. Agenda <http://www.equalitytexas.org/content.aspx>
- Texans Care for Children, 2015 Legislative Priorities: <http://texanscareforchildren.org/Priorities>
2013 Recap: http://texanscareforchildren.org/Images/Interior/reports/children_and_texas_legislature_2013.pdf

Week 11 **March 31st** Institution-Level Relationship with State Legislature (Part I)
Public 4-yr institutions & Private/Independent colleges
Guest Speaker: Rey Rodriguez (UNT System) (*invited*)

READ:

- U of Houston System, State Legislative Agenda & Federal Agenda <http://uhsystem.edu/chancellor/governmental-relations/tx-legislature/agenda/index.php>
- ICUT's Legislative Agenda: <http://www.icut.org/pages/legislative-agenda>
- ICUT's— Texas Tuition Equalization Grant (TEG) Program, 1971-2011 http://www.icut.org/tinybrowser/files/appropriations_history_of_teg_program_-_update_9-2015.pdf
- ICUT's 2011 Statistical Report

Week 12 **April 7th** Institution-Level Relationship with State Legislature (Part II)
Community Colleges
Guest Speaker: Rey Garcia (TACC) or William Serrata (EPCC) (*invited*)

READ:

- Texas Association of Community Colleges (TACC), 2015 Legislative Resources: <http://www.tacc.org/pages/advocacy/legislative-resources>
- Alamo Community College, 84th TX Leg. Agenda <http://www.alamo.edu/main.aspx?id=44119>
http://www.alamo.edu/uploadedFiles/District/Employees/Departments/Government_Relations/LegBrochurecombinedextra.pdf

**Week 13 April 14th Institution-Level Relationship with State Legislature (Part III)
For-profit/online institutions**

Guest Speaker: John Carroll (*invited*)

READ:

- ACC positioned well for tough economic times
- Privatization of Higher Education (Arthur Levine)
- Career Colleges & Schools of Texas, Directory (2012-2013)
- UPX, Annual Academic Report (2010)
- Chronicle of HE (Feb 2011): Fast Growing University of Phoenix Calculates a more careful course

Week 14 April 21st CAPITOL WEEK #2: Attend Legislative mtg.

Week 15 April 28th Understanding Politics in State Government “All Politics is Local”

DUE: Summary Report #2

READ:

- Gittell, Marilyn & Kleiman, Neil Scott. (2000). The political context of higher education. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 43(7): 1058-1091.
- Tandberg, David A. (2008). The politics of higher education funding. *Higher Education in Review*, 5, 1-36.
- Senator Jeff Wentworth’s letter to TSU Board of Regents (2010).
- Mckinney’s letter to AAU (and Berdahl response) (ADD THESE)
- Chron of HE, Jan 2011, Higher Education Faces Deep Cuts Where New Governors Pledge No New Taxes
- Chron of HE, Results of Statewide Referenda related to HE (Nov., 2010)
- How Intermediaries Impact Policy Connections (Erik Ness, Oct. 2011)

Week 16 May 5th Final Panel Presentations (in class)

Finals Week Tuesday, May 12th, 5pm FINAL PAPER DUE

ASSIGNMENTS & GRADING

1.) Final Policy Analysis Paper & Presentation (40% of final grade)

The goal of this assignment is to conduct a thorough policy analysis of a state higher education policy issue which transpires during the 84th Legislative Session. Each student will choose a specific policy issue. The selected issue can be a broad topic area such as financial aid, college access and readiness, faculty tenure, diversity issues, expanding tier I institutions, formula funding, a new medical school, tuition deregulation, adult literacy and education, or a whole host of other topic areas that can be addressed throughout the session.

This assignment will be a semester long activity, with final presentations (worth 5% of total class grade) to be done the last day of class (May 5th), and a final paper (worth 35% of class grade) due on Tuesday, May 12th, at 5pm. Students will give progress reports on the issue they are researching at designated times during the semester.

The final paper should: offer an explanation of the policy context and background/history of your policy issue at the beginning of the 84th session. Based on your research of the issue as it progresses through the legislative process, you should comment on how the issue was presented and advanced during the session. Your analysis should include identification of relevant bills/amendments; address the perceived prospects for passage; assess the political issues surrounding the issue; assess the political strategy (if any) that was employed to usher this policy issue throughout the session (e.g., bill sponsors, coalitions and advocacy, role of lobbyists, role of higher education institutions and state agencies); and finally, your paper should discuss the policy impact of a bill's passage on state higher education institutions. If your chosen policy issue affected primarily one campus or system (e.g., Top Ten Percent law), then your impact analysis should be tailored appropriately. The paper should be no less than twelve (12) pages, double-spaced (12 pt. font).

2.) TWO Summary Reports for Legislative & Other Committee Meetings (40% of final grade, 20% for each summary)

Students are required to attend at least **two** separate legislative committee hearings or governance board meetings (Week 6 & 14) and then prepare a 3-4 page summary of each visit. This summary will be due at the class meeting immediately after these weeks. You will be required to attend at least **one** session of a House or Senate committee hearing and **one** for a governing board committee. Here is a list of potential committees/meetings (not exhaustive):

- Senate Education Committee (interim hearings)
- Senate Higher Education Committee (interim hearings)
- House Appropriations Committee
- Senate Finance Committee (or Senate HE Finance Subcommittee)
- House Higher Education Committee (interim hearings)
- Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board
- ACC Board of Trustees
- UT System Board of Regents
- Texas State University System Board of Regents

Please note that some of these sessions/meetings are broadcast through online streaming audio/video, but we strongly encourage you to attend each of these sessions/meetings in person. These media options do not adequately substitute for the robust experience available if you personally attend, where you can witness the many interactions and get a sense of the climate/environment within the room. Use the streaming audio/video only as a back-up or to review parts of the meeting after attending. Also, please plan carefully when deciding on which sessions/meetings to attend. You can do this by reviewing the pre-meeting agenda, checking the meeting schedule often for changes, or developing relationships with committee or member staff who can keep you up to date on specific pieces of legislation or policy issues. Bottom line...**please plan ahead**, as this will save you unwanted headaches and wasted time.

Your written summaries (3-4 pages) should include the following information:

- Names of committee members present (or approx. # of members for a floor session)
- Listing of any people who testified, including who they represented and what their major arguments were (for/against a bill, expert testimony, etc.)
- What questions/comments did legislators have regarding the bills? Was consensus established? Why or why not?
- Decisions on bills (approved, tabled, voted down, sent to subcommittee, etc.)
- Environment of committee room and participants...were participants cordial or hostile, etc., were member engaged or talking to staff?
- To finalize each summary, offer your own critical reflection of what you observed

3.) Real-time Discussion Board (weekly “blog” entries) (10% of total grade)

- Students have to submit at least one “blog” entry per assigned week on Canvas
- For up to 10 weeks throughout the semester, a new discussion thread will be added to the Discussion Board based on assigned readings, emerging issues, or to extend discussion
- Your “blog” entries should be a minimum of 150 words
- Your “blog” entries can be reflective, they can respond to an existing thread, they can respond to someone else’s entry, etc.
- Do not miss any Discussion Board “blog” entries, as they are each worth 1 to 2 points
- Discussion Board will be moderated by the TA

4.) Instructor Grade/Class Participation (10% of total grade)

Class participation will be worth a total of ten (10) points. It is imperative that you complete the readings and not get behind in your assignments. These points will be partly at instructor’s discretion and will be based on the amount of commitment, engagement, and self-directedness you demonstrate throughout the course. It is expected that you contribute to the discussion in **every class session**. This will factor greatly into your final grade.

Grading Summary

1.) Final Policy Analysis Paper & Presentation	40%
2.) Two Summary Reports for Legislative Sessions/Meetings (20% each)	40%
3.) Real-time Discussion Board	10%
4.) Instructor Grade/Class Participation	10%
	= 100%

The final grades will be given as follows: The cutoffs between grades are fixed and not negotiable. Sorry, but I have to draw the line somewhere.

A	95+	C+	77-79.4
A-	90-94.5	C	73-76.4
B+	87-89.4	C-	70-72.4
B	83-86.4	Less	???
B-	80-82.4		

COURSE POLICIES

Incomplete & Late Policy

I will not grant incompletes as a matter of course; they will be discussed only in extenuating circumstances. If you anticipate difficulty in completing the course requirements in time, you should reconsider taking this course. Late assignments **will not be accepted**.

Attendance

Please make every effort to be in class on time. The interactive nature of the course means that arriving late will be disruptive to other participants. Please be mindful and observe etiquette (it's never appropriate to answer a call in class; in case of an emergency you should leave the room and answer). Computer and smartphone use is permissible in this course if being used for note-taking and supplemental purposes **only**. Excessive misuse of technology (checking e-mail, Facebooking during class, etc.) may result in a deduction of class participation points. **Please silence phones before the start of class.**

University of Texas Honor Code

The core values of The University of Texas at Austin are learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, individual opportunity, and responsibility. Each member of the university is expected to uphold these values through integrity, honesty, trust, fairness, and respect toward peers and community.

Documented Disability Statement

The University of Texas at Austin provides upon request appropriate academic accommodations for qualified students with disabilities.

For more information, contact Services for Students with Disabilities at 471-6259 (voice) or 232-2937 (video phone) or <http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd>

Use of E-Mail for Official Correspondence to Students

E-mail is recognized as an official mode of university correspondence; therefore, you are responsible for reading your e-mail for university and course-related information and announcements. You are responsible to keep the university informed about changes to your e-mail address. You should check your e-mail regularly and frequently—I recommend daily, but at

minimum twice a week—to stay current with university-related communications, some of which may be time-critical. You can find UT Austin’s policies and instructions for updating your e-mail address at <http://www.utexas.edu/its/policies/emailnotify.php>.

Religious Holy Days

By UT Austin policy, you must notify me of your pending absence at least fourteen days prior to the date of observance of a religious holy day. If you must miss a class, an examination, a work assignment, or a project in order to observe a religious holy day, I will give you an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence.

Behavior Concerns Advice Line (BCAL)

If you are worried about someone who is acting differently, you may use the Behavior Concerns Advice Line to discuss by phone your concerns about another individual’s behavior. This service is provided through a partnership among the Office of the Dean of Students, the Counseling and Mental Health Center (CMHC), the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), and The University of Texas Police Department (UTPD). Call 512-232-5050 or visit <http://www.utexas.edu/safety/bcal>

Use of Blackboard in Class

In this class I use Blackboard—a Web-based course management system with password-protected access at <http://courses.utexas.edu>—to distribute course materials, to communicate and collaborate online, to post grades, and to submit assignments. You can find support in using Blackboard at the ITS Help Desk at 475-9400, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., so plan accordingly.

Feedback Statement

During this course I will be asking you to give me feedback on your learning in informal as well as formal ways, including through anonymous surveys about how my teaching strategies are helping or hindering your learning. It’s very important for me to know your reaction to what we’re doing in class, so I encourage you to respond to these surveys, ensuring that together we can create an environment effective for teaching and learning.

Emergency Evacuation Policy

Occupants of buildings on the UT Austin campus are required to evacuate and assemble outside when a fire alarm is activated or an announcement is made. Please be aware of the following policies regarding evacuation: Familiarize yourself with all exit doors of the classroom and the building. Remember that the nearest exit door may not be the one you used when you entered the building. If you require assistance to evacuate, inform me in writing during the first week of class. In the event of an evacuation, follow my instructions or those of class instructors. Do not re-enter a building unless you’re given instructions by the Austin Fire Department, the UT Austin Police Department, or the Fire Prevention Services office.

Course Resources & Websites of Interest

Texas Legislature Online, TLO

<http://www.capitol.state.tx.us/MnuMyTLO.aspx>

Texas Senate Research Center (SRC) – Publications

<http://www.senate.state.tx.us/SRC/Pub.htm>

Closing the Gaps Website (THECB)

<http://www.thecb.state.tx.us/ClosingTheGaps/default.cfm>

Texas Tribune online

<http://www.texastribune.org/>

Chronicle of Higher Education, Tuition web page

<http://chronicle.com/stats/tuition/>

Inside Higher Education

<http://www.insidehighered.com/>

Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board

<http://www.thecb.state.tx.us>

Kiplinger's Best College Values

<http://www.kiplinger.com/money/collegevalues/>

Quorum Report

<http://www.quorumreport.com/>

Paul Burka Blog, Texas Monthly

<http://www.texasmonthly.com/blogs/burkablog/>

COURSE TOPICS/ISSUES (not an exhaustive list)

- Financing HE
 - PUF funding
 - Expansion of Flagship/Research Institutions
 - Next medical school; next law school
 - Performance-based funding
 - Formula funding
- Financial Aid
 - Texas Grant Program
 - Fellowship funding for grad students
 - Tuition Deregulation or Tuition Freeze
 - Textbook Help
- College Pipeline & College Access Issues / K-16 Issues
 - Top Ten Percent Law
 - Uniform GPA legislation
 - Go Centers
 - College Readiness Standards
 - HB 5 issues
- Stakeholder Groups:
 - Students, Faculty, Media
- State & Federal Policy Regimes and/or Reports
 - Closing the Gaps report
 - Spellings Commission report
 - Next HE Act Reauthorization
- Governance Issues
 - Constitutional Autonomy
 - Regents, Board of Governors.
- Understanding a Legislative Agenda for a HE Institution (Government Relations)
 - Flagship Institutions
 - State Colleges (not UT or A&M)
 - Community Colleges
 - Private & Independent Colleges
- Institution-Level Relationship with State Legislature (Part I & II)
 - Public 4-yr institutions
 - Private/Independent colleges
 - Community Colleges
 - For Profit/Online Institutions
- Politics in HE policy in Texas
 - Regional issues & Advocacy (e.g., med school in RGV)