

SEHD 8200:

FOUNDATIONS OF EDUCATION

Fall 2022, Semester 1, 3 credits

Professor:

Dr. Iris C. Rotberg

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Class Schedule:

Thursdays, 4:00 PM - 6:00 PM

Class Location:

By Zoom

Overview:

The Foundations of Education course is structured around a set of key education issues that are central to education decision making: integration and segregation, school choice, school finance, testing, and access to higher education. Government and private decisions about these issues have been debated for decades and have had a major impact on equity in the United States and internationally. The course will consider how the decisions on these issues have played out and the role of the broader social, economic, and international context in influencing the outcomes.

Education research builds on a range of social science fields, which vary depending on the topic studied. The research in this course has particularly strong links to economics, sociology, and psychology. In addition, court decisions play a major role in equity and, therefore, will be central to the discussion.

The course takes an empirical approach to the issues and draws on the large body of research that has been conducted. The following are examples of key analytic skills the course will emphasize:

- Reviewing research thoughtfully and “critically,” seeking evidence, testing assumptions, questioning conclusions and interpretations, and distinguishing between facts and value judgments.
- Building on critiques to strengthen research and develop more informed education policies.
- Understanding how the choice of research methodology and the context in which the research is conducted affect research findings.
- Understanding arguments on both sides of an issue.
- Writing effective analyses that are supported by research evidence.
- Formulating alternative approaches to education issues and understanding the tradeoffs.
- Gaining a perspective on education choices by understanding the broader social, economic, and international context.

Course Activities:

Students will be responsible for the following activities:

1. Participate in class discussions, presentations, and debates and prepare written analyses. It is particularly important that you have read the material and thought through the issues. The point is not the “right” answer but rather the ability to analyze issues based on evidence, assess tradeoffs, build on ideas, distinguish facts from value judgments, make connections between different research issues, draw implications based on evidence, offer constructive criticism, and stay on point. Class discussions are an integral part of the course and it is important to attend each of the class sessions. If you are unable to attend a particular class please let me know in advance. Students who miss a class will be asked to prepare short analyses that address the issues described that week, in addition to the work that was assigned in preparation for the class. Students will also be asked some weeks to prepare a 2-3 page analysis of a key issue relevant to the class discussion. Guidelines for class discussions, including readings and discussion questions for oral and written analysis, are described in Appendices 1-5: 40% of grade.
2. Participate in a group project that focuses on one of two “case studies”—one on integration and segregation in elementary and secondary education and a second on access to higher education. Participants in each project are asked to draw on research evidence to propose policies that might be useful in addressing the problem posed in the case study. Oral presentations of findings and recommendations are scheduled for November 10th and November 17th. Please submit the final written reports by December 8th. The guidelines for the group projects are described in Appendices 6-7: 40% of grade.
3. A 10-page paper that analyzes the sampling of schools and students in PISA 2018 and draws implications for comparing academic achievement across countries. The paper is due on October 20th. The guidelines and examples of sources of information for the paper are described in Appendix 8: 20% of grade.

In addition to these activities, several guest speakers will be invited during the semester.

Meetings:

I plan to hold meetings by phone or Zoom with each student individually over the semester. The meetings are intended to provide feedback to students on their work in the course and to encourage feedback and suggestions from students based on their experience in the course. Please feel free to request additional meetings at any time.

General Policies:

Religious Holidays:

Students should notify the instructor at the beginning of the semester of their intention to be absent from class on the day(s) of religious observance to enable advance planning of schedule changes.

Disability Support Services:

Any student who may need an accommodation based on the potential impact of a disability should contact the Disability Support System office at 202-994-8250 in Rome Hall, Suite 102, to establish eligibility and to coordinate accommodations. For additional information please refer to:

gwired.gwu.edu/dss/

Mental Health Services:

The University's Mental Health Services (202-994-5300) offers 24/7 assistance and referral to address students' personal, social, career, and study skill problems. Services for students include: crisis and emergency mental health consultations, confidential assessment, counseling services (individual and small group), and referrals.

counselingcenter.gwu.edu

Academic Integrity Code:

Academic dishonesty is defined as cheating of any kind, including misrepresenting one's own work, taking credit for the work of others without crediting them and without appropriate authorization, and the fabrication of information. For the remainder of the code, see: studentconduct.gwu.edu/code-academicintegrity

Class Schedule:

The course draws on a variety of activities, including class discussions, presentations, debates, group projects, and guest lectures. The topics for each class are listed below.

September 1: Setting the Context.

September 8: Integration and Segregation, class discussion. Please e-mail your policy brief to me by Wednesday, September 7.

September 15: School Choice, class debate on charter schools. Please e-mail the outline of your main debate arguments to me by Wednesday, September 14.

September 22: Guest speaker; work on group projects.

September 29: School Finance, class discussion. Please e-mail your policy brief to me by Wednesday, September 28.

October 6: Guest speaker; work on group projects.

October 13: Testing, class debate. Please e-mail the outline of your main debate arguments to me by Wednesday, October 12.

October 20: Guest speaker, work on group projects. PISA paper due.

October 27: Access to Higher Education. Please e-mail your policy brief to me by Wednesday, October 26.

November 3: Guest speaker; work on group projects.

November 10: Presentation of group project on integration and segregation.

November 17: Presentation of group project on access to higher education.

November 24: Thanksgiving, no class.

December 1: Guest speaker; work on group project.

December 8: Wrap-up and discussion of issues related to education research. Written reports on group projects due.

Appendices:

1. Discussion Issues: School Integration and Segregation
2. Debate: Charter Schools
3. Discussion Issues: School Finance
4. Debate: Testing
5. Discussion Issues: Access to Higher Education
6. Group Project: Integration and Segregation
7. Group Project: Access to Higher Education
8. Analysis: PISA 2018

HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

Iris

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APPENDIX 1

SCHOOL INTEGRATION AND SEGREGATION

Discussion Topics

Readings:

Court Decisions:

- *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1898): Oyez site for overview and then focus on Justice Harlan’s dissent.
- *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954): Oyez site for overview and then focus on the (unanimous) opinion.
- *Milliken v. Bradley* (1974): Oyez site for overview and then focus on Justice Marshall’s dissent.

Research/Analysis:

- “60 Years After Brown: Trends and Consequences of School Segregation,” by Sean F. Reardon and Ann Owens, November 8, 2013, pages 1-15 and 27-29.
- “Income Segregation between Schools and School Districts,” by Ann Owens, Sean F. Reardon, and Christopher Jencks, *American Educational Research Journal*, August 1, 2016.
- “School Integration and Segregation: How We Got Where We Are,” by Iris C. Rotberg, *Teachers College Record*, December 1, 2020.
- Kelly A. Tianga, “The Not-So Hidden Truths About the Segregation of America’s Housing,” interview with Richard Rothstein, May 22, 2018.
- Maurice Crul and Jens Schneider, “Children of Turkish Immigrants in Germany and the Netherlands: The Impact of Differences in Vocational and Academic Tracking Systems,” *Teachers College Record*, 2009.

Discussion Questions:

1. Justice Harlan’s dissent in *Plessy v. Ferguson* has been used in arguments against the use of race as a criterion in school assignments and affirmative action plans. Please explain.
2. The *Brown v. Board of Education* decision concluded: “Separate educational facilities are inherently unequal.” Although there is no longer debate about the merits of the decision, the debate continues about whether separate educational facilities can be equal when the segregation is “de facto” (resulting from residential patterns, for example) rather than “de jure” (resulting from legal requirements). Please draw on evidence from the readings and from other social science research to discuss your views on this conclusion.
3. Justice Marshall’s dissent in *Milliken v. Bradley* makes a number of arguments about the negative effects of limiting desegregation plans to the city of Detroit. His dissent concludes with this prediction: “In the short run it may seem to be the easier course to allow our great metropolitan areas to be divided up each into two cities—one white and the other black—but it is a course, I predict, our people will ultimately regret.” In your view, are Justice Marshall’s concerns and predictions supported by research evidence? Please explain. Have societal changes occurred since the dissent that might have modified any aspects of Justice Marshall’s argument? Examples? What are the policy implications of your conclusions?

Policy Brief:

Please write a 2- to 3-page, double-spaced policy brief responding to either the second or third discussion question. The brief should be based on research evidence, and well-organized and edited, with citations, using APA style.

Policy brief due Wednesday, September 7.

APPENDIX 2

SCHOOL CHOICE

Debate

Resolved: Charter schools do more good than harm.

One debater on each side will cover each of the following topics:

1. Achievement
2. Integration and segregation
3. Resources
4. Innovation

We will discuss in more detail in class the structure of the debate and the countries on which it will focus.

The pro side should argue that charter schools do more good than harm; the con side should argue the opposite. Please use research evidence to support your arguments. It is fine to make nuanced arguments acknowledging evidence on the other side as you present your case.

Each debater should plan to speak for five minutes, with debaters alternating between pro and con sides for each topic. Each side will then have 10 minutes to question the other side.

Please prepare a 1-page summary of your arguments in the form of a Power Point outline to e-mail to the class one day in advance of the debate.

Suggested reference material to begin:

- Grover J. "Russ" Whitehead et al, "Segregation, Race, and Charter Schools: What Do We Know?" Center for Children and Families at Brookings, October, 2016.
- Thomas Monarrez, et al, "Do Charter Schools Increase Segregation?" Education Next.
- Kevin G. Welner, "The Dirty Dozen: How Charter Schools Influence Student Enrollment," National Education Policy Center, University of Colorado.
- Kevin G. Welner, Janelle Scott, Tina Trujillo, "Charter Schools and Competition-Based Reform: Lessons and Recommendations for LAUSD," 2018.
- Jenn Ayscue, et al, "Charters as a Driver of Resegregation," The Civil Rights Project, January 30, 2018.

- Edward B. Fiske and Helen F. Ladd, “Lessons for US Charter Schools from the Growth of Academies in England,” Brookings, November 3, 2016.
- Anders Trumberg & Susanne Urban, “School Choice and Its Long-Term Impact on Social Mobility in Sweden,” Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research,” 2021.
- Iris C. Rotberg and Joshua L. Glazer, Editors, “Choosing Charters: Better Schools or More Segregation?” Teachers College Press, 2018. (This book covers a wide range of topics and can be accessed through The George Washington University library.)

These are two additional readings on the recent Supreme Court decision on separation of church and state (for discussion after the debate):

- Carson v. Makin (2022): overview of the case (Oyez site).
- The New York Times, “Supreme Court Rejects Maine’s Ban on Aid to Religious Schools, June 21, 2022.

Outline of main debate arguments due Wednesday, September 14.

APPENDIX 3

SCHOOL FINANCE

Discussion Issues

Readings:

1. San Antonio Independent School District v. Rodriguez (1973), Opinion, as summarized in the Oyez site, and dissent by Justice Thurgood Marshall.
2. Bruce D. Baker, "Does Money Matter in Education?" New Second Edition, Albert Shanker Institute, 2016 (updated April, 2019).

Discussion Questions:

1. Justice Marshall's dissent states: "We sit ... not to resolve disputes over educational theory but to enforce our Constitution. ... I believe the question of education quality must be deemed to be an objective one that looks at what the state provides its children, not what the children are able to do with what they receive." Given this statement, what measure do you think Justice Marshall would have selected to assess educational equity?
2. Please be prepared to explain and comment on the arguments made in Bruce D. Baker's report, "Does Money Matter?", to support its conclusion that money does make a difference. These arguments are organized in three categories: (1) Does money matter? (2) Do school resources that cost money matter? and (3) Do school finance reforms matter? Why is it so difficult to assess the impact of expenditures? Of school finance reforms? What outcome measures should be used in making these assessments? Test scores? Equitable distribution of resources? Definition of equitable distribution? Link to Justice Marshall's quote in question 1? Please explain.

Policy Brief:

Please write a 2- 3-page policy brief that responds to discussion question 2. The brief should be supported by research evidence, well-organized and edited, with citations, using APA style.

Policy brief due Wednesday, September 28.

APPENDIX 4

TESTING

Debate

Resolved: Students' standardized test scores are the best indicator for assessing:

1. Teachers' effectiveness
2. Students' potential success in higher education
3. The effectiveness of education programs
4. Whether money matters

We will discuss in more detail in class the structure of the debate and the countries on which it will focus.

One debater on each side will cover each of the topics. The pro side should argue in each case that test scores are the best indicator; the con side should argue the opposite.

Please use research evidence to support your arguments. It is fine to make nuanced arguments acknowledging evidence on the other side as you make your case.

Each debater should plan to speak for five minutes, with debaters alternating between pro and con sides for each topic. Each side will then have 10 minutes to question the other side.

Please prepare a 1-page summary of your arguments and presentations in the form of a Power Point outline to e-mail to the class one day in advance of the debate.

Suggested reference material to begin:

- Daniel M. Koretz, "Limitations in the Use of Achievement Tests as Measures of Educators' Productivity," *The Journal of Human Resources*, Autumn, 2002 (no cost if read online).
- Dan Goldhaber, "A Gloomy Perspective on High-Stakes Testing," Review of "The Testing Charade: Pretending to Make Schools Better," by Daniel Koretz, *Education Next*, Spring, 2018.
- Daniel Koretz, "A Realistic Perspective on High-Stakes Testing," Response to Dan Goldhaber's review, *Education Next*, Spring, 2018.
- Etai Mizrav, "Segregate, Discriminate, Signal: A Model for Understanding Drivers of Educational Inequality," *Educational Policy*, July 23, 2021.
- James H. Williams and Laura C. Engel, "How Do Other Countries Evaluate Teachers?" *Phi Delta Kappan*, December, 2012/January, 2013.

- Malcolm Gladwell, "The Order of Things," *The New Yorker*, February 14 & 21, 2011.
- Yong Zhao, "What Works May Hurt: Side Effects in Education," *Journal of Educational Change*, 2017.
- The Washington Post, "Education professor: My students asked who I would vote for. Here's what I told them," October 22, 2018.

Outline of main debate arguments due Wednesday, October 12.

APPENDIX 5

ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION

Discussion Issues

Cases:

1. *Grutter v. Bollinger* (2003): overview of the case (Oyez site).
2. *Students for Fair Admissions, Inc. v. President and Fellows of Harvard College and University of North Carolina*, SCOTUS Blog, Supreme Court brief for Petitioner, 2022; briefs for Respondents: Harvard College and University of North Carolina, 2022.

Research/Policy Analysis:

1. Adam Liptak and Anemona Hartocollis, *The New York Times*, "Supreme Court Will Hear Challenge to Affirmative Action at Harvard and U.N.C.," January 24, 2022.
2. "Low-Income Students at Selective Colleges: Disappearing or Holding Steady?" by Jason D. Delisle and Preston Cooper, *American Enterprise Institute*, July, 2018.
3. National Bureau of Economic Research, Working Paper, "Legacy and Athlete Preferences at Harvard," September, 2019.
4. Anthony P. Carnevale, Peter Schmidt, and Jeff Stohl, "The Merit Myth: How Our Colleges Favor the Rich and Divide America," *The New Press*, 2020.
5. Yanqing Ding, Yinduo Yu, and Xiaoyang Ye, "The elite exclusion: stratified access and production during the Chinese education expansion, *Higher Education*," April 6, 2021.

Discussion Questions:

1. The *Grutter* case has guided court decisions on affirmative action since 2003. *Students for Fair Admissions, Inc.* argues that *Grutter* should be overruled and race should not be considered in determining admissions. After reading the Supreme Court arguments described above, what points would you make in an amicus brief before the Supreme Court?
2. A wide range of social and educational factors contribute to inequities in access to higher education. In some cases, the inequities arise from policies of higher education institutions and can be best addressed by those institutions. In other cases, federal, state, or local governments play the largest role. Which policies do you believe have been particularly important in strengthening, or constraining, access to higher education? What policy changes would you recommend?
3. While access to higher education has continued to grow, the gap between attendance at selective and non-selective institutions has also grown. How might government programs (for example, Pell Grants or free community college) have influenced that trend? Are the trends similar in other countries? Examples?

Policy Brief:

Please write a 2- to 3-page policy brief that responds to one of the three discussion questions. The brief should be supported by research evidence, well-organized and edited, with citations, using APA style.

Policy brief due Wednesday, October 26.

APPENDIX 6

GROUP PROJECT ON INTEGRATION AND SEGREGATION IN ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS

The purpose of the project is to propose policies that can strengthen equity, defined here as the opportunity for low-income students to attend schools and education programs that are integrated by income, race, and ethnicity.

The cases are two Maryland school districts—Montgomery County Public Schools and Howard County Public Schools. These districts are currently considering policies to reduce concentrations of poverty and strengthen diversity of schools in lower-income neighborhoods.

Please begin by describing the current situation in each school district, including the distribution of students among high- and low-poverty schools, and then consider potential changes in the education system and in broader social policies that might strengthen opportunities for low-income students.

The oral and written reports describing the plan should include the following information:

- A description of the problem and an overview of the proposed plan to address it.
- Research evidence that serves as a rationale for the plan.
- A detailed description of the plan, including the current situation (with data) and proposed changes (with data).
- An analysis of considerations, such as feasibility and potential unintended consequences (for example, losing broad support for public education).
- Measures of success and considerations in interpreting the findings.

Although each member of the group will be responsible for writing a different section of the report, the group as a whole should take responsibility for developing the plan and then combining the individual sections into a coherent presentation. Please note in the report who had primary responsibility for each of the sections.

References to get started:

- WXY Architecture + Urban Design, Public Engagement Associates, “Montgomery County Public Schools: Districtwide Boundary Analysis Final Report,” May, 2021.
- Bethesda Beat, “It Won’t Change until We Address It,” May 16, 2019.
- Bethesda Beat, “A Look Back at the MCPS Countywide Analysis,” May 17, 2021.
- The Century Foundation, “Howard County’s Bold Plan to Tackle School Desegregation,” October 29, 2019.
- AP News, “Parent Resistance Thwarts Local School Desegregation Efforts,” January 29, 2020.
- The New York Times, “Where Civility is a Motto, a School Desegregation Fight Turns Bitter,” November 12, 2019.

- HCPSS, "Planning the HCPSS School Attendance Areas: Redistricting Process for the 2023 - 2024 School Year."
- Readings listed under School Integration and Segregation: Discussion Topics

The oral presentation is scheduled for: November 10th. Please e-mail the written report to me by December 8th.

40% of grade

APPENDIX 7

GROUP PROJECT ON ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION

The purpose of the project is to assess the impact of current institutional policies on the access of low-income students to selective colleges and universities and propose policies that might strengthen future access. You might choose to focus on a set of higher education institutions that are specifically working to increase the enrollment of low-income students—or a set that has done little—or both. The project should consider the impact of these institutional choices both on the enrollment and retention of low-income students and on the racial and ethnic diversity of the student body.

The oral and written reports describing the proposed policies should include the following information:

- A description of the problem and an overview of the proposed plan to address it.
- Research evidence that serves as a rationale for the plan.
- A detailed description of the plan, including the current situation (with data) and proposed changes (with data).
- An analysis of considerations such as potential unintended consequences and feasibility.
- Measures of success and considerations in interpreting the findings.

Although each member of the group will be responsible for writing different sections of the report, the group as a whole should take responsibility for developing the plan and then combining the individual sections into a coherent presentation. Please note in the report who had primary responsibility for each of the sections.

References to get started:

- Rachel Baker, Daniel Klasik, and Sean F. Reardon, AERA Open, “Race and Stratification in College Enrollment over Time,” January 18, 2018.
- Nick Anderson, The Washington Post, “Pell Grant Shares at Top-Ranked Colleges: A Sortable Chart,” October 31, 2017.
- U.S. News & World Report, “Economic Diversity Among the Top 25.”
- Slate, “The Real College Admissions Scandal,” June 14, 2021.
- Brookings, “The Missing ‘One-Offs’: The Hidden Supply of High-Achieving, Low-Income Students,” Spring, 2013.
- The Washington Post, “Dozens more selective colleges join pledge to add lower-income students,” December 23, 2017.
- The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education, “Disappointing Progress in Enrollment of Low-Income Students: America’s Most Selective Colleges and Universities,” 2009.
- Readings listed under Access to Higher Education.

The oral presentation is scheduled for November 17th. Please e-mail the written report to me by December 8th.

40% of grade

APPENDIX 8

PISA 2018

A 10-page paper that analyzes the sampling of schools and students in PISA 2018 and draws implications for comparing academic achievement across countries. The paper should include the following information:

1. A brief overview of the countries included in the comparisons, their rankings in reading, mathematics, and science, and their equity ranking.
2. The comparability of countries based on school enrollment: (1) the proportion of 15-year-olds who are enrolled in school; (2) the proportion of specific population groups (for example, students who don't speak the main language of the country or students in special education) who are enrolled in school at age 15.
3. The comparability of the samples as defined by both exclusion and participation rates.
4. Other factors, such as poverty rates and immigrant or migrant status, which are relevant to interpreting the comparisons. (Please use tables, where possible, when responding to questions 1-4, and draw on examples from both industrialized and developing countries.)
5. Your conclusion about the validity of the test-score rankings generally, based on available information. Please also note pertinent information that is missing.
6. Your conclusion about the extent to which the rankings reflect the quality of education in each country.
7. Your conclusion about whether the test-score comparisons serve a useful purpose.
8. Your recommendations, based on research evidence, for revising or replacing PISA.

Examples of relevant references:

- PISA 2018 Results (Volume 1). "What Students Know and Can Do," OECD, 2019.
- Westat, Core C Contractor. "Sampling in PISA, OECD: First Meeting of the PISA National Project Managers," March 14-18, 2016.
- UNHCR, UNICEF, IOM. "Access to Education for Refugee and Migrant Children in Europe," September, 2019.
- Tom Loveless, Brookings. "The Children PISA Ignores in China," December 19, 2019.
- Tom Loveless, Brookings. "PISA's China Problem." October 9, 2013.

The paper should be double spaced, well-organized and edited, with citations using APA style. Please e-mail the paper to me by October 20th.

20% of grade

