

**POL730.01: Education Policy (3 credit hours)**

**Summer 2008** - On-line

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Office Hours: by appointment

**IMPORTANT NOTE TO STUDENTS:**

This course was designed in the on-line format because the instructor will be out of the country in Africa from May 17-June 18, 2008. I am not sure how often I will have internet access—it may not be available at all until I return. Hopefully I will be able to get in touch once in awhile. Continue all the activities as scheduled. If there is a problem I probably won't be able to work it out until I return. If you have pressing questions you can ask Jim Massey. Jim is an adjunct professor in the Department of Political Science but he is also taking this course. He may be able to trouble-shoot for you. E-mail your papers to me at my home e-mail address at [candglentz@earthlink.net](mailto:candglentz@earthlink.net) as they are scheduled. I will begin grading when I return home. If you forget and send them to my university account that is OK too. I will be in my office on and off all summer when I return.

There are more written activities in this course than usual because of the on-line format. The blog discussion groups are very important, because they replicate class discussion in the classroom format. The discussion grade counts a big chunk of your grade so be sure you participate often and make meaningful entries.

**REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS:**

Gamoran, Adam (ed.). 2007 *Standards Based Reforms and the Poverty Gap: Lessons for "No Child Left Behind."* The Brookings Institution Press.

Johnson, Tony W. 2002. *Historical Documents in American Education.* Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

**REQUIRED READINGS:**

Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.. n.d. *Closing the Gaps REVISED Goals and Targets for 2006-2015.* Available <http://theccb.state.tx.us/ClosingTheGaps>

Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.. n.d. *Closing the Gaps: The Texas Higher Education Plan.* Available <http://theccb.state.tx.us/ClosingTheGaps>

Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.. n.d. *Progress Reports on Closing the Gaps (2003-2007).* Available <http://theccb.state.tx.us/ClosingTheGaps>

Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.. n.d. *The Texas Higher Education Plan (with Goals and Targets for 2000-2005).* Available <http://theccb.state.tx.us/ClosingtheGaps>.

<http://theccb.state.tx.us/Closing>

**PURPOSE:**

This course describes some of the current "hot" policy issues in education. In order to understand how those policies have developed, we will take a cursory look at the history of education and its relevance to democratic theory and modern life. The issues will vary from year to year, but in 2008 No Child Left Behind (NCLB) (2001) is still the current topic of interest at the K-12 level because it is up for

reauthorization. Interesting, NCLB involves all level of government—federal, state, and local. The course will discuss how these various governments are intertwined.

In Texas, another salient issue involves Closing The Gaps Legislation. This legislation is geared to improve higher education participation in the state; thus, local schools must interface with community colleges and universities to coordinate a “seamless” K-16 education. Thus, Closing the Gaps is an intrigal part of the discussion.

The class grade will be a combination of **student** discussion of the readings in the blog on assigned topics, three short papers on the topics given, and one research paper.. Your blog discussions will relate to practice and democratic theory. Students are expected to read the assignments before the discussion period. Students are expected to actively participate in discussions of the assigned readings and to relate the readings to work experiences, Students will complete a research paper related to either NCLB or Closing the Gaps.

The instructor may use your papers as possible chapters of books she is considering writing on NCLB and Closing the Gaps. Thus, you **will submit two copies of the research paper**. I will keep one copy and return your course materials if you supply me with a postage paid manilla envelope.

### **GRADING:**

The final grade will be calculated with the following weights:

|                                            |           |     |
|--------------------------------------------|-----------|-----|
| Research paper.....                        | 300       |     |
| Blog participation                         |           |     |
| Your evaluation of students in Blog 1..... | 50        |     |
| Your evaluation of students in Blog 2..... | 50        |     |
| Your evaluation of students in Blog 3..... | 50        |     |
| Students evaluation of your blogs.....     | 50        |     |
| Short paper #1 .....                       | 50        |     |
| Short paper #2 .....                       | 100       |     |
| Short paper #3 .....                       | <u>50</u> |     |
|                                            |           | 700 |

A=630-700, B=560-629, C=490-559, F=below 489

If you have not read the assignments you cannot participate adequately. **Read the assignments before you participate in the discussions!**

Students should save all graded items until the final grade is posted.. If there is a problem with your final grade it cannot be resolved if you do not have original copies of the paper and examinations. The grade in my record will stand unless you can provide documentation that I have made an error; so, **save everything!**

### **THE BLOGS:**

BlackBoard discussion groups will be open on three separate weeks. You will discuss among yourselves the topic for the week. Grading will be based on peer review. Your peers will evaluation your “performance” in the discussion groups and you will evaluate theirs. You will read the entries for each student for each of the three discussion periods and assign a grade to each. You may use A, B, C, or F only and can use +’s or -’s. Try to be fair. Remember, some students will do a much better job than others and should get A’s or A+’s. Other students should get B’s. I will also be looking at the postings to

see if your grading is fair and balanced (oops–isn't that FOX news!)

You will get two grades. The first, worth 50 points for each blog, is based on your evaluation of your peers. If I agree with your grades you will get a higher grade. The second grade will be the grade given by your peers, if I agree with them. This will be an aggregate of all the students peer evaluations combined. You will not know how individuals in the group evaluate you. I reserve the right to adjust the peer grades up or down as needed. All three of these grades will total 50 points.

### **RESEARCH ASSIGNMENT:**

First Paper Commandment: All papers shall have a cover sheet. Papers without cover sheets will be docked 10 percentage points of the total assignment.

Your major course requirement is to write a research paper on a contemporary education issue related to NCLB or Closing the Gaps that is suitable for inclusion in an edited book on the topic; thus, topics must be cleared with the instructor. **All papers should be e-mailed to me at either my campus or home e-mail.**

### TOPICS ON NCLB:

Write your paper with the approach of “lessons from the field.” or administrative decision-making. Those of you working in public schools probably have numerous tales to tell of problems stemming from NCLB compliance or funding. Think about these as you choose a topic. Was there a stumbling block to NCLB compliance? How did you overcome it? What did you learn from dealing with the problem?

### TOPICS ON CLOSING THE GAPS:

Write a paper that covers the problem from the legislative decision that initiated Closing the Gap. Focus on the push for citizen (primarily Hispanic) participation in higher education to innovative programs at community colleges. Let me know what kind of ideas you have.

### SHORT PAPERS:

You will write three short papers on the following assigned topic. These papers should be about 6 pages each, not counting the cover sheet or works cited. The short papers should use 5-6 professional sources (do not use Wikipedia, popular magazines or journals, or local newspapers).

SP #1: Write an essay that explores whether there are linkages between democracy and the common school movement of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. What do the early documents tell us about the topic? **Due June 16, 2008 @ 6 p.m.** This essay is worth 50 points

SP #2: This paper involves your interpretation of the policy making process in Congress. NCLB is up for reauthorization by the U.S. Congress. Do a little digging around the internet to find out what recommendations, if any, the administration has made for changes in the act. Does Congress concur with the administration? What changes do the interest groups recommend? This is a *fantasy essay* topic. Write an essay that explains **changes you would make to NCLB if you were in charge**. What are the political realities of how likely the bill would pass both Houses of Congress with your recommendations included? Would President Bush sign it into law with your recommendations in it? **Due June 30, 2008 @ 6 p.m.** This essay is worth 100 points..

SP #3: You should notice revisions in the documents for “Closing the Gaps.” In other words, the targets and goals have changed since the legislation was originally written. Write an essay that explains **why** the

revisions are made. What **political actions** occurred that require revisions? What do the revisions mean?  
**Due July 14, 2008.** This essay is worth 50 points.

### *THE RESEARCH PAPER:*

Write the paper with the idea that we could submit it to a journal for publication. **You must submit two copies of the research paper. One is for me to grade and return to you and the second is for my to keep for my files.**

This should be a full library research report with bibliographic citation on all material that you cite in the paper. Plan to use books, journal articles, newspapers, and web-based journals or papers. This project may require you to look at the federal budget and other recent publications like the *National Journal* or the *Congressional Quarterly Weekly*. Plan to spend a lot of time looking for materials. Political Science students should use the Turabian (Chicago) style. I will accept APA or MLA from the education students. You must cite web sources in an appropriate fashion. **The Writing Center has online tips for using these styles. Your paper grade will be seriously harmed by a poorly construction works cited page.**

Your paper should be approximately 20 pages of text using 12 point and New Times Roman font, not counting works cited and any appendices you may include. **Papers exceeding 25 pages will not qualify for an “A” grade!** You must learn to write concisely.

You should reference at least 12 items in your works cited. In other words, you must cite every source you use in your works cited list. Of the 12 required works, at least 6 must be from professional sources. These include government documents, papers presented at professional meetings, and journals published by professional societies.

### **ATTENDANCE/PARTICIPATION**

Participation will be evaluated through the blogs. The more quality comments you make, the higher your participation grade..

### **ACADEMIC DISHONESTY:**

Cheating on the exams or the paper will result in administrative sanctions including being reported to the Dean of Students, failing the course, or academic expulsion..

This instructor takes academic dishonesty very seriously and will penalize students who engage in it. SHSU defines “cheating” as

- “1) copying from another student’s test paper, laboratory report, other report, or computer files, data listings, and/or programs.
  - 2) Using, during a test, materials not authorized by the person giving the test.
  - 3) collaborating, without authorization, with another student during an examination or in preparing academic work.
  - 4) knowingly, and without authorization, using, buying, selling, stealing, transporting, soliciting, copying, or possessing, in whole or in part, the contents of an unadminstered test....
  - 7) Purchasing, or otherwise acquiring and submitting as one’s own work any research paper or other writing assignment prepared by an individual or firm.
- 5.312 “Plagiarism” means the appropriation of another’s work or idea and the unacknowledged incorporation of that work or idea into one’s own work offered for credit.”

[Http://www.shsu.edu/administrative/faculty/sectionb.html#dishonesty](http://www.shsu.edu/administrative/faculty/sectionb.html#dishonesty)

### **Americans with Disabilities:**

Requests for disability accommodations must be initiated by the student. A student seeking accommodations should go to the Counseling Center and Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) in a timely manner. This instructor requires documentation from the Counseling Center in order to provide accommodations. Once documented, discuss with the instructor the best ways that she can accommodate your needs.

### **Classroom Visitors:**

This isn't applicable since we are not meeting in a classroom. Visitors are allowed on an occasional basis as long as there is a seat in the room for the visitor. Visitors must abide by the same rules of classroom decorum as students.

## **COURSE OUTLINE OF DISCUSSION TOPICS AND RELATED READINGS**

| DATE                                                      | TOPIC                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Week 1, June 2                                            | Introduction to Democratic Foundations<br>READ Historical Documents, intro and chs.1-3, 6-8, 11-19                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Week 2, June 9<br><b>Blog #1 open<br/>June 9-15</b>       | Democratic Foundations<br>Blog topic: Are today's schools agents that promote democracy?<br>How does the current public school structure reflect the democracy of the common school? Was the common school a democratic structure? Does the current system reflect democratic values?<br>READ: Standards, intro and chs. 1-2 |
| Week 3 June 16                                            | No Child Left Behind<br><b>Short Paper #1 due at 6:00p.m.</b><br>Read: Standards, chs. 3-6                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Week 4, June 23                                           | No Child Left Behind<br><b>Blog #1 Peer Evaluations due at 6:00 p.m.</b><br>Read: Standards, chs. 7-10                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Week 5, June 30<br><b>Blog #2 open<br/>June 30-July 7</b> | No Child Left Behind<br><b>Short paper #2 due at 6:00 p.m.</b><br>Blog topic: Problems with NCLB. Do you see any changes coming with the NCLB reauthorization? Can NCLB be fixed?                                                                                                                                            |
| Week 6, July 7                                            | Closing the Gaps-Read all the Closing the Gaps documents                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Week 7, July 14<br><b>Blog #3 open<br/>July 14-21</b>     | Closing the Gaps<br><b>Short Paper #3 due at 6:00 p.m.</b><br><b>Blog #2 Peer Evaluations due at 6:00 p.m.</b><br>Blog topic: Does the Closing the Gap initiative reflect democratic values?                                                                                                                                 |

Week 8, July 21

Closing the Gaps

**RESEARCH PAPERS DUE at 6:00 p.m.**

July 23

**Blog #3 Peer evaluation due at 6:00 p.m.**

Week 9, July 28

Monday: Meet to Eat at Willies in College Park Walmart parking lot 6:00. I will return your papers at this time.