ED 384: Advanced Topics in Higher Education
Course Credit: 3-5 units

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Office Hours: By Appointment

Class Schedule

Tuesdays -- 4:15-7:05 pm in 508 CERAS.

Overview of Course

This course provides an in-depth analysis of selected advanced topics in higher education. The topics for this quarter focus on the academic domain of universities and colleges to examine several questions: What is the nature of contemporary change in academic organizations? What are the management challenges that are entailed? What are some directions for further research in this domain?

The academic organization of universities and colleges in the United States suggests a long history of continuity and change. Much of that change has had expansion as a common denominator. Yet, for the contemporary era, selective consolidation and reinvestment have become both mandates and responses. As a complex arena in which these dynamics are evident, academic restructuring of the curriculum reflects ongoing institutional and individual choices about knowledge (selected content), educational purposes (desired outcomes), and resources (priorities for allocation). Academic change and its management pose formidable challenges that warrant inquiry and reflection. For example: What are the environmental demands for change, and how should campuses respond? What are the internal tensions on campuses, and how are they reconciled? What are the resource requirements of academic programs, and how should they be factored into academic planning? As knowledge grows, is comprehensive field coverage feasible? We will spend the quarter considering these among other questions that pertain to undergraduate education, graduate education, and the transformation of academic workplaces.

To shed light on contemporary trends in higher education, we will also draw upon several conceptual distinctions offered by social science researchers. While some conceptual frameworks are useful for examining the relationship between a campus and its many environments and stakeholders, others facilitate the study of the internal dynamics of campuses. Still others may suggest what is missing in higher education research.
The seminar is appropriate for advanced doctoral students with research interests in higher education. Prerequisite is Education 346 or permission of the instructor. Master’s students are welcome as space allows. The maximum enrollment for the seminar is 12 students.

Weekly Topics and Readings

The weekly topics cover a range of analytical perspectives. Students should review functionalist conceptions of change that were covered in Education 346, including selections from Burton Clark’s The Higher Education System (UC Press, 1983). From that common foundation, we will explore and apply additional conceptual frameworks to see how researchers study academic change and its management within higher education.

Required readings are drawn from selected books and journal articles. They will be available for purchase as a Course Reader at the Stanford Bookstore. Additional readings are suggested throughout and marked with an asterisk. Where you would like further depth on a topic, we will suggest relevant books and article.

Nature of Assignments

In addition to becoming familiar with the content of the readings, this course aims to enhance your analytical skills of reading, writing, speaking, listening, and working together in a small group. To that end, the assignments are as follows:

1. Required Readings and Weekly Memo: You are asked to complete the weekly readings prior to each class meeting as well as to reflect on what you have read. Write a brief memo (not more than two pages) in which you identify three questions, puzzles, or concepts from the readings that captured your attention. We will often use the contents of the memo as a springboard for discussion. Please send the memo via email to Patti and Mike by Monday at 8pm, the night before each class.

2. Facilitated Discussion: You will be asked to select one week’s topic on the syllabus and guide a portion of the discussion for that class meeting. We will work with you in advance to help you prepare your selected topic.

3. Paper: There will be one paper (not more than 20 pages in length), due at the end of the quarter. The paper is an opportunity to delve more deeply into a topic that is suitable for analysis, typically critiques of published research, possibly augmented by the analysis of national data. The paper topic should relate to the content of this course, should be meaningful to you, and agreed upon by the instructor. Please select your topic, describe how you will approach it, and why you selected it by October 30th; a couple of paragraphs should be sufficient. A draft outline is due by November 20th. The paper is due by Monday, December 10th at 5pm. We are available for consultation with you throughout the quarter.
4. End-of-Quarter Evaluations: Students in this seminar have the option of Letter Grade or Satisfactory/No Credit, depending upon your preference. Please let the instructor know what you decide, as I will give the appropriate feedback throughout the quarter. An additional evaluation mechanism is that you will be asked to write two brief assessments. These are to be handed in with your final paper on December 10th. One assessment should address your role as learner and contributor to the seminar. The other is to evaluate our role and the course content. Even though these are due at the end of the quarter, we hope you will make suggestions from week to week, so that we can improve the course’s quality.

Weekly Schedule

Week 1: Tuesday October 2nd

**Introduction to Course Objectives & Content, Research Approaches & Available Data**

*Please read these before class.*


Questions to consider: How do we make sense of academic change from different paradigms? What are the indicators of academic change? Of continuity?

Week 2: Tuesday October 9th

**Imperatives for Academic Change: Forces That Re-shape University Purposes**


Week 3: Tuesday October 16th

Organizational Dynamics: Additional Forces That Facilitate and Constrain Change


Week 4: Tuesday October 23rd

Undergraduate Education: Growth, Change and Controversy


Week 5: Tuesday October 30th

Reminder: Paper topic description is due.

Academic Profession: Professionalization and Socialization


**Week 6: Tuesday November 6th**

**Academic Restructuring on Campus**


**Week 7: Tuesday November 13th**
State Coordination and System Design


Week 8: Tuesday November 20th

Reminder: Draft Outline of Paper is due.

Campus Governance: Who Governs and How


Week 9: Tuesday November 27th

**Technology: Implications for Academic Change**


Week 10: Tuesday December 4th

**Reminder: Paper and assessments due by Dec. 10th at 5pm.**

**Revisiting Imperatives for Academic Change: Forces That Re-shape University Purposes**


