

TE 982/EAD 947.

**Advanced seminar in comparative education: International education policy.
Fall 2016.**

Instructor: Lynn Paine.

Class meetings: Mondays, 4:10-7, 113 EH

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And if thou appearest to be entirely lost, Compare thyself. Know what thou art.

--Goethe, Torquato Tasso, v. 5.

I would like to suggest that, whenever there is a change in policy, we should assume that a reference to “globalization” or “international standards” was made. Somewhere along the way to a decision, policy actors most likely resorted to either one or both of these references to accelerate change. Very often, this has helped appease opponents and mobilize resources. Both globalization and international standards are empty shells that may be filled with whatever is needed to promote controversial reforms. We may therefore conclude that “globalization” is not an external force but rather internally induced and reflects, more than anything else, the domestic policy context.

--Steiner-Khamsi, 2010, p. 332.

Comparative research begins, in my view, with a destabilization of self--with a felt need for encounters with difference that invite one to imagine alternatives. While we would not want to abandon the efforts to generate theories and concepts that transcend cultures, we also want theories that address real human experiences. Culture nearly always entails encounter with the unexpected....To imagine culture, then, and at the same time to culture the imagination, is the task of comparative education in the next century.

--Hoffman, 1999.

This course begins with two different assumptions. First, comparison is valuable in our making sense of education. Many have long argued that comparative perspectives are vital ways to “make the familiar strange.” Today, in a globalizing world, the relevance of comparison is even greater. Second, education today is profoundly affected by global flows and transnational forces. While educational institutions, actors and practices are of course locally instantiated and typically serve important roles for a local and/or national community, at this moment in time they are increasingly shaped by “global governance” (Robertson 2012) and by discourses that draw on external reference. Understanding international educational policy thus is important both for those interested in educational policy in general as well as those interested in educational practice in one or more contexts. Our class is focused both on international education policy and what it means to think about education comparatively.

This course provides an introduction to international and comparative education policy debates and offers an introduction to the range of key actors, including policymakers as well as multinational agents and philanthropic foundations, and corporate actors. Our course is designed to an opportunity to examine in greater depth a particular area of comparative and international education that is the subject both of recent policy energy and scholarly debate: improving teaching quality; girls' education; accountability; notions of and ways to develop or support the "good teacher." Over the course of the term, our class will ask questions about why and how international policy matters, who actors are in international education and how they connect (or are connected), how policy travels and how the global nature of education today affects educational research, policy and practice, especially in terms of these three areas: teachers, girls' education, and accountability.

Our seminar offers students with a strong interest or background in international or comparative education an opportunity to bring a comparative perspective to the study of teaching and learning, teacher education, and educational policy. While we will examine cases of teaching and teacher learning as contextualized practice, we will also explore global and international influences on teaching as practice and teachers (and teaching) as a focus of policy. We will consider as well the role of international research in shaping how we conceptualize teaching and its reform.

This course is designed to support the work of students interested in conducting research that is international, comparative, or takes a cultural perspective on schooling. Our seminar offers a shared space to develop deeper knowledge of the field and consider current debates in areas related to international educational policy, globalization, and postcolonial and critical theories as they have a bearing on our research. My hope is that this course provides you an opportunity to introduce you to key issues in the field, extend your understanding of theoretical work, explore its implications for your inquiry, and strengthen your familiarity with and creativity in thinking through methodological issues of comparison in education.

I assume that each of us brings some prior knowledge of the field, as well as a project or an area of interest we will want to work on during the course. The course will, as a result, necessarily involve individual tailoring to make sure each of us gets the opportunities to be challenged and encouraged in ways that are productive.

I see this course as something that we will develop together. Hence, what follows should NOT be read as a syllabus. Rather, by the end of the term, we should each have developed in effect three syllabi—one that is a collective record of what we did together as a whole class, one that reflects small working groups in their shared reading on a topic of common interest (i.e., teachers, girls' education, accountability), and one that documents your individual efforts to develop your own line of inquiry and research.

We will work through the term in overlapping groups: one as a whole group to explore large topics in comparative education and international education policy and another, in smaller groups that reflect our topical and conceptual interests in teachers, girls'

education and accountability. In your groups, in addition to core readings I will recommend, you will develop some shared reading lists, teach each other from these and teach the rest of us some selective pieces from them, as well as share writing and analytical work you are engaged in.

Expectations for the Course.

I list below the expectations with which I am starting the term. Over the course of the semester we will want to clarify our individual and collective expectations. Consider the following as starting points:

1. I assume that our class is a seminar. For us to learn together, we each need to contribute, and that will require that each of us has prepared thoughtfully in advance and comes prepared with the readings and whatever writing or experience that we will need for our discussion. I assume each of us brings unique and relevant experience and questions to this course and hence I assume we each come prepared to discuss. I also assume that participation involves discussion that is thoughtful, responsible and constructive. As a group we will want to talk explicitly about what we expect from participation.
2. I assume that we all learn by making an effort to articulate ideas and that writing provides valuable opportunities for that. My goal is to provide a range of opportunities for writing, with enough diversity to allow each of us to feel really engaged with the work. My hope is that the writing we do is connected meaningfully to our learning goals for the term and for our longer term scholarly goals. Since our class will include people with very different goals, different substantive interests, and at different stages of their doctoral program, my assumption is that writing assignments will need some tailoring to individual needs. We need to discuss how we might approach this and how we will evaluate our learning. I also assume that writing should be interactive, that it should be offered as part of a conversation (even if one takes place in print), and that we will therefore want to talk about who our audience is as we write and how we think about sharing our writing.

I propose below a generic model of work that might be required for the course. We will want to discuss this as a class and individuals may want to meet with me to explore ways to adjust these general possibilities to their particular interests. Consider this only as a starting proposal. I urge you to find a way to construct learning opportunities in this class that will connect with other learning you are engaged in and which are rewarding for you.

1. a) *Participation.* As a seminar, this course relies heavily on the participation of students. The course format will most often be group discussion. I see my role as one who can give background to and facilitate discussion. I will occasionally give mini-lectures, but most often we will work as a group (or in small groups) to analyze readings and the issues they raise, analyze videotapes of classroom

practice or other data, or discuss our research. We will occasionally have guests, virtually or face to face, share their work in this area with us. Only take this course if you are prepared to (1) prepare for each class by reading carefully, taking notes and thinking about the material before class and (2) participate actively, thoughtfully and constructively.

You will work with a partner or a small group of classmates to take responsibility for helping me lead one class during the term. This will entail preparing an outline of the readings and questions raised by them, possibly making some brief remarks regarding a particular reading or readings, and then helping to lead a critical discussion of the readings for that week. You will also be expected to provide feedback to classmates on their written commentaries (see explanation below) as part of your responsibility for supporting our learning on this topic/set of readings. You and your partner/group will need to meet together in advance to consider what approach you would like to take to help us grapple with the week's readings and you should meet with me by (at the latest) Thursday before the Monday you are responsible so that we can talk together about how best to organize that day's class. We can use a range of formats to stimulate discussion, and I hope this shared responsibility for class increases the many ways we can come to understand and inquire about the issues in this course. In addition, each of you will have one other time during the term when you have formal responsibilities to present in and help lead part of class, this time as part of your working group. The schedule for these will be worked out in class.

b) *Focusing on individual readings/weeks.* To help move forward our thinking and discussions, and to allow more chance for voices to be heard in a class that is rather large, you are asked to write short (1-2 pages) commentaries on the readings at least 3 times during the term, choosing from weeks noted as one with commentaries. (There are a few "exceptional" weeks when we won't count on commentaries.) These short pieces will consist of thoughtful responses to the week's reading assignment. You need not tell me what the articles said, but you will need to raise questions about the readings, draw comparisons or contrasts, take issue with arguments, vent about things that annoyed or puzzled you in the material, or otherwise demonstrate a comprehension of the authors' positions and some thoughtful reaction to these. You can use these as a great way to help frame our class discussion and, of course, they are helpful ways of letting me (and others) know how you are making sense of the readings and the course. Your weekly commentaries should be posted on our class D2L site by Sunday noon on the day before class. You will get feedback from me and from classmates taking leadership responsibility for particular weeks. You must complete 2 such commentaries by Oct. 31 and the remaining one by Nov. 28.

c) *Looking across weeks and examining a topic.* Our course is organized around a few large topics. We will have two moments in the term when assignments allow you to work across weeks, synthesizing and applying ideas as you examine a particular topic. These will result in papers of 5-7 pages (or

potentially, one paper and one poster session, to be decided as a class). The first such assignment will be due no later than Oct. 24. I will provide more details later, but this will be an assignment in which you can choose to develop an investigation of an actor or a mapping of a network of actors involved in an issue or topic of interest to you. The second assignment, due no later than Nov. 21, will use a range of analytic approaches to explain the development or mobility of an educational policy you are interested in.

d) The *final project* for the term will be one that focuses on the topic you have identified and worked on individually and with your group. Part of your final assignment involves your leading class discussion on this topic, while another part—in a format you and I will want to agree on—will allow you to go more deeply into your individual understandings of the topic. This might take the form of a research proposal, a literature review, an annotated bibliography, an analytic essay, or multiple blog posts. As our course develops, we will agree on a timeline for your developing your proposal for your final assignment.

Weighting the different tasks:

Because I want the work we do in and out of class to be meaningful, it is essential that you be involved in thinking through both the process and substance of assessment of your work. I propose that you think about how you would like to approach each of these tasks (as well as defining each), and then meet with me to discuss how you want to approach assessment. You must schedule a meeting, in which you will talk about your goals for the course and your plan for assessment, to meet me by Oct. 10. (I will set up a google doc on the D2L site for you to find a meeting time.) I suggest you think about the following range of weightings for assignments:

participation.	15-30%.
commentary writing and responses.	20-30%.
actor/network analysis.	15-30%.
policy mobility paper or poster.	15-30%.
individual final project.	20-30%.

Readings.

What follows is a proposal for what and when we will read together as a class. I want us to be able to amend this as we proceed in the term, in particular making adjustments that allow our reading to be more directly responsive to your individual and collective interests.

As a class, we will read several books and you will likely choose at least one book from a set of recommended ones that you will read with your working group. You can purchase your books online and several are available as online resources through MSU library. The two required books not available through MSU online resources will also be available from Collegeville Bookstore (922-0013, 321 East Grand River, EL). The

journal articles, book chapters, and reports we read will be available through D2L or are ones you can access through MSU Library's electronic resources.

The required texts we will read are:

- Motoko Akiba (2013). *Teacher reforms around the world: Implementations and outcomes*. Bradford: Emerald Group Publishing [available as MSU online resource].
- Stephen Ball (2012). *Global education inc.: New policy networks and the neoliberal imaginary*. NY: Routledge.
- Richard Tabulawa. (2013). *Teaching and learning in context: Why pedagogical reforms fail in sub-Saharan Africa*. Dakar, Senegal: CODESRIA. [available as MSU online resource].
- F. Vavrus. (2003). *Desire and Decline: Schooling and Crisis in Tanzania*. NY: Peter Lang.

Tentative ideas for whole and working group readings.

I. Introduction to comparative and international perspectives in education

Week 1. 8/31: Introductions to course, ourselves and our research interests.

Note: There is no class meeting on 9/5 since it is Labor Day.

Week 2. 9/12: Getting started: International education policy, practice, and the many meanings of context.

- Read: F. Vavrus. (2003). *Desire and Decline: Schooling and Crisis in Tanzania*. NY: Peter Lang.
- C. Chabbott and E. Elliot (Eds.). (2003). *Understanding Others, Educating Ourselves: Getting More from International Comparative Studies in Education*. Board on International Comparative Studies in Education, National Research Council. Washington, DC: National Academies Press, pp. 12-28 ("Range), with other chapters optional. <http://www.nap.edu/catalog/10622/understanding-others-educating-ourselves-getting-more-from-international-comparative-studies>.
- Write commentaries.

II. Actors in international educational policy.

Week 3. 9/19: Who is involved in educational policy?

- Read: Mundy, K. with M. Ghali. (2009) International and transnational policy actors in education: A review of the research. In *Handbook of Education Policy Research* (pp.717-734). Gary Sykes, Barbara Schneider, and David Plank, eds. Florence, US: Routledge.
- Samoff, J. (2012). Institutionalizing International Influence. In *Comparative Education: The Dialectic of the Global and the Local* (pp.55-85). R. F. Arnove and C. A. Torres, Eds (4th edition). Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.
- Akiba, M. (Ed.). (2013). *Teacher reforms around the world: Implementations and outcomes* (Vol. 19). Emerald Group Publishing. (read Introduction, pp. xix-xlii). <http://site.ebrary.com.proxy1.cl.msu.edu/lib/michstate/detail.action?docID=10687769>.
- Write commentaries.

Week 4. 9/26. The role of international organizations.

- Read: Robertson, S. L. (2012). Placing teachers in global governance agendas. *Comparative Education Review*, 56(4), 584-607.
- Shahjahan, R. (2012). The roles of international organizations (IOs) in globalizing higher education policy. In *Higher Education: Handbook of Theory and Research* (pp. 369-407), Smart, J.C. & Paulsen, M.B. (eds). Springer. http://link.springer.com.proxy1.cl.msu.edu/chapter/10.1007/978-94-007-2950-6_8.
- Morgan, C., & Shahjahan, R. A. (2014). The legitimation of OECD's global educational governance: examining PISA and AHELO test production. *Comparative Education*, 50(2), 192-205.
- Write commentaries.

Videoconference with Shirley Miske, Miske Witt Associates.

Week 5. 10/3: Donors and aid.

- Read: Chapman, D. W., & J. J. Quijada (2009). An analysis of USAID assistance to basic education in the developing world, 1990–2005. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 29(3), 268-280. <http://www.sciencedirect.com.proxy1.cl.msu.edu/science/article/pii/S0738059308000898>.

- Steiner-Khamsi, G. (2008). Donor Logic in the Era of Gates, Buffett, and Soros. *Current Issues in Comparative Education*, 10, 10-15. http://www.tc.columbia.edu/cice/pdf/25621_10_Steiner-Khamsi.pdf.
- Tabulawa, R. (2003). International aid agencies, learner-centred pedagogy and political democratisation: A critique. *Comparative education*, 39(1), 7-26. <http://www.tandfonline.com.proxy2.cl.msu.edu/doi/abs/10.1080/03050060302559>.
- Discussion with Sakil Malik, URC.

Week 6. 10/10. The rise and role of non-state actors.

- Read: Ball, S. J. (2016). Following policy: networks, network ethnography and education policy mobilities. *Journal of Education Policy*, 31(5), 1–18. <http://www.tandfonline.com.proxy2.cl.msu.edu/doi/full/10.1080/02680939.2015.1122232>.
- Menashy, F. (2016). Understanding the roles of non-state actors in global governance: Evidence from the Global Partnership for Education. *The Journal of Education Policy*. 31(1), 98-118. <http://dx.doi.org.proxy1.cl.msu.edu/10.1080/02680939.2015.1093176>.
- Write commentaries.

Week 7. 10/17. Policy tools: resources, data and windows into policy and practice.

- Read: Selection of international education websites [TBD].
- Popkewitz, T. S. (2012). Numbers in grids of intelligibility: Making sense of how educational truth is told, 169-191. In H. Lauder, M. Young, H. Daniels, M. Balarin, and J. Lowe (Eds.), *Educating for the knowledge economy? Critical perspectives*. London: Routledge.

III. *Connections and networks of education policy and practice.*

Week 8. 10/24. Networks and implications for education.

- Read: Stephen Ball (2012). *Global Education Inc.: New policy networks and the neoliberal imaginary*. NY: Routledge.
- Write commentaries.
- Introduce working groups.

Week 9 10/31. Implications of globalization for policy and practice.

- Read: Lingard, B., & Rawolle, S. (2011). New scalar politics: implications for education policy. *Comparative Education*, 47(4), 489–502.
”<http://www.tandfonline.com.proxy1.cl.msu.edu/doi/full/10.1080/03050068.2011.555941>.
- Appadurai, A. (1996). *Modernity at large: Cultural dimensions of globalization*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
- Working group readings:
 - (teachers) selections from Akiba, M. (Ed.). (2013). *Teacher reforms around the world: Implementations and outcomes* (Vol. 19). Emerald Group Publishing. (read Introduction, pp. xix-xlii). <http://site.ebrary.com.proxy1.cl.msu.edu/lib/michstate/detail.action?docID=10687769>.
 - (girls’ education) Moeller, K. (2013). Proving “The Girl Effect”: Corporate knowledge production and educational intervention. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 33(6), 612-621. <http://www.sciencedirect.com.proxy2.cl.msu.edu/science/article/pii/S0738059313000709>.
 - (accountability) Lawn, M., & Lingard, B. (2002). Constructing a European Policy Space in Educational Governance: the role of transnational policy actors. *European Educational Research Journal*, 1(2), 290-307. <http://ezproxy.msu.edu:2047/login?url=http://eer.sagepub.com/content/1/2/290.abstract>.
- Write commentaries.

IV. How global education affects policy, practice and research.

Week 10. 11/7. The global and the local in educational reform.

- Read: Richard Tabulawa. (2013). *Teaching and learning in context: Why pedagogical reforms fail in sub-Saharan Africa*. Dakar, Senegal: CODESRIA. [available as MSU online resource].
- Work in groups.

Week 11. 11/14. Learning from comparisons: educational borrowing, transfer, and the role of external reference in shaping practice.

- Read: Steiner&Khamisi, G. (2010). The politics and economics of comparison. *Comparative Education Review*, 54(3), 323-342. <http://ezproxy.msu.edu:2047/login?url=http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/653047>.

- Takayama, K. (2010). Politics of externalization in reflexive times: reinventing Japanese education reform discourses through “Finnish PISA success”. *Comparative Education Review*, 54(1), 51-75. <http://ezproxy.msu.edu:2047/login?url=http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/644838>.
- Jurgen Schriewer and Carlos Martinez. (2004). “Constructions of Internationality in Education,” pp. 29-53. In G. Steiner-Khamsi (ed.) *The Global Politics of Educational Borrowing and Lending*. New York: Teachers College Press, 2004.
- Reading for groups.

Week 12. 11/21. Circulating ideas as they affect practice.

- Read: Sahlberg, P. (2010). Rethinking accountability in a knowledge society. *Journal of Educational Change* 11:45-61.
- Work in groups.

Week 13. 11/28. Work in groups, groups leading discussion.

Week 14. 12/5. Work in groups, groups leading discussion.

Week 15. 12/15 (5:45-7:45). Final course synthesis.

Note: this final class will be held at my house, 415 Orchard St., East Lansing.