



HE 645: The Contemporary College Student

Course Syllabus Fall 2017

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Office Hours: By appointment
Class time: Thursdays 7:20-10:00pm
Location: Music Theater Building 1008

Course Description

Throughout this course we will explore the ways in which the higher education community has addressed three basic questions: Who goes to college? What experiences do students have in college? And, as a consequence of their experiences, who do students become by graduation?

Over the course of the semester, we will examine trends and changes in the characteristics of college students and institutions they attend. We will also explore the theoretical and research literature on college students in the U.S. from the perspectives of various student groups and sub-groups.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the semester, you will be able to:

- Compare major theories and conceptual models that attempt to explain college student experiences;
- Explain the demographic make-up of the college student population in the United States;
- Contrast the experiences and differences of various student populations;
- Propose institutional practices that support student learning, growth, and development;
- Apply theories and acquired knowledge to practice;
- Demonstrate the academic and professional skills of analysis, synthesis, and verbal and written communication.

Instructional Methods and Policies

This course will incorporate several different pedagogical approaches during the semester designed to achieve the above objectives. In order for this class to be successful, however, you are expected to share the responsibility for your learning as well as for the learning of your peers. You are expected to come to class ready to engage in the classroom dialogue, and with all reading and other assignments completed by the specified due date. (See below for limited exceptions.)

1. **Attendance:** You are expected to attend every class session, or notify me in advance that you will be absent along with the reason for the absence. You are also expected to arrive on time for class and remain for the duration of the class. You are asked to refrain from conducting private conversations in class, and are requested to use appropriate language and behavior that are not demeaning or disruptive to either the instructor or the other members of the class. *Regarding electronic devices (such as laptops, cell phones, etc.), please be respectful of your peers, your instructor, and guest speakers, and do not engage in activities that are unrelated to class.* Failure to consistently abide by these attendance policies will have an adverse impact on one's final grade. Students who miss more than two class sessions will be encouraged to drop the course.
2. **Assignments:** All assignments must be completed by the beginning of the class session on the due date unless prior arrangements are made well in advance of the deadline. All assignments should be uploaded to Blackboard.

All formal work (research, final projects, etc.) should utilize APA style (refer to the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, 6th edition). Papers should be typed using 12-point standard font (e.g., Times New Roman) with one-inch margins. Papers should include page numbers, headings (and sub-headings, if appropriate), properly formatted tables and figures if used, and properly formatted references.

This is a graduate-level course, and thus graduate-level writing is expected for all written work. This includes correct grammar, punctuation, spelling, and clarity of expression. Excessive errors in your work will result in a lower grade.

3. **Contact information:** Contact information is provided on the first page of this syllabus. Please email me to set up an appointment if you would like to meet with me outside of class.
4. **Blackboard website:** This course will utilize the online learning website called Blackboard. On this website, you will be able to access all scanned readings, PowerPoint presentations, and other class handouts. You are expected to use this website to access relevant readings and course materials as well as to submit completed assignments.
5. **Religious observances:** If you need to miss a class or make up an assignment due to an individual participation in a religious observance, please notify me within the first two weeks of the beginning of the semester. Students will not be penalized and will be given

a reasonable amount of time to make up any academic assignments that are missed due to participation in a religious observance.

GMU Policies and Resources for Students

1. Students must adhere to the guidelines of the George Mason University Honor Code (See <http://oai.gmu.edu/the-mason-honor-code-2/>).
2. Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing (See <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/responsible-use-of-computing/>).
3. Students are responsible for the content of university communications sent to their George Mason University email account and are required to activate their account and check it regularly. All communication from the university, college, school, and program will be sent to students solely through their Mason email account.
4. The [George Mason University Counseling and Psychological Services](http://caps.gmu.edu/) (CAPS) staff consists of professional counseling and clinical psychologists, social workers, and counselors who offer a wide range of services (e.g., individual and group counseling, workshops and outreach programs) to enhance students' personal experience and academic performance (See <http://caps.gmu.edu/>).
5. If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me at the beginning of the semester and contact the [Office of Disability Services](http://ods.gmu.edu/) (ODS) at 703-993-2474 or ods.gmu.edu. All academic accommodations must be arranged through ODS.
6. The [George Mason University Writing Center](http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/) staff provides a variety of resources and services (e.g., tutoring, workshops, writing guides, handbooks) intended to support students as they work to construct and share knowledge through writing (See <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/>).
7. Drop/Add Deadlines:
 - Last day to add class: September 5, 2017
 - Last day to drop class with no tuition penalty: September 5, 2017
 - For additional information, please refer to the Office of the University Registrar website: <https://registrar.gmu.edu/calendars/fall-2017/>

Course Texts

Required Textbook:

Quaye, S. J. & Harper, S.R. (Eds.). (2015). *Student engagement in higher education: Theoretical perspectives and practical approaches for diverse populations* (2nd ed.). New York: Routledge.

Strongly Recommended:

American Psychological Association (2009). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th ed.). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Additional readings listed on the syllabus are available on our Blackboard course site.

Course Outline

Date	Topic
Class 1: Aug. 31	Outcomes of College: Educational Attainment, Quality of Life, Career, and Economic Impact
<p>READ: Corwin, Z.B., Tierney, W.G., Swensen, E., Bouchard, S., & Fullerton, T. (2012, July). <i>Gaming the system: Fostering college knowledge through play</i>. Retrieved from the Rossier School of Education website: http://www.uscrossier.org/pullias/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/Collegeology-Monograph-1-10_14.pdf (SKIM)</p> <p>Ma, J., Pender, M., & Welch, M. (2016). <i>Education pays 2016: The benefits of higher education for individuals and society</i>. Retrieved from https://trends.collegeboard.org/education-pays (SKIM)</p> <p>Renn, K.A. & Reason, R.D. (2013). <i>College students in the United States: Characteristics, experiences, and outcomes</i>. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, pp. ix-xvii; 197-228.</p>	
Class 2: Sept. 7	Introduction to Theoretical Frameworks & Characteristics of College Students
<p>READ: Eagan, K., Stolzenberg, E.B., Zimmerman, H.B., Aragon, M.C., Sayson, H.W., & Rios-Aguilar, C. (2014). <i>The American freshman: National norms fall 2016</i>. Retrieved from https://www.heri.ucla.edu/monographs/TheAmericanFreshman2016.pdf.</p> <p>Levine, A. & Dean, D.R. (2012). <i>Generation on a tightrope: A portrait of today's college student</i>. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.</p> <p>Pascarella, E. T. & Terenzini, P. T. (2005). <i>How college affects students: A third decade of research</i> (Vol. 2). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, pp. 52-61.</p>	
Class 3: Sept. 14	Measuring and Assessing the College Student Experience
<p>READ: Astin, A. & Antonio, A. L. (2012). <i>Assessment for excellence</i>. New York, NY: Rowan & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., pp. 41-55, 61-67, 69-85, 87-92 (optional: 55-60)</p> <p>Pascarella, E. T. & Blaich, C. (2013). Lessons from the Wabash National Study of Liberal Arts Education. <i>Change</i>, 45(2), 6-15.</p>	

Wabash Study website: <http://www.liberalarts.wabash.edu/wsic/> (SKIM)

Class 4: Sept. 21

Retention and Persistence

READ:

Crisp, G. & Mina, L. (2012). The community college: Retention trends and issues. In A. Seidman (Ed.), *College student retention (2nd ed.)* (pp. 147-165). Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

Stage, F.K. & Hossler, D. (2000). Where is the student? Linking student behaviors, college choice, and college persistence. In J.M. Braxton (Ed.), *Reworking the student departure puzzle* (pp. 170-195). Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University Press.

Tierney, W.G. (2000). Power, identity, and the dilemma of college student departure. In J.M. Braxton (Ed.), *Reworking the student departure puzzle* (pp. 213-234). Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University Press.

Class 5: Sept. 28

Pre-K – 16 Pipeline

READ:

Adelman, C. (2006). *The toolbox revisited: Paths to degree completion from high school through college*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Education. (Read: Executive Summary, pp. xv-xxvi)

Arnold, K. D., Lu, E. C., & Armstrong, K. J. (2012). Special issue: The ecology of college readiness. *ASHE Higher Education Report*, 38(5), 1-138. (Read: pp. 19-46)

Ewell, P. T., Jones, D. P., & Kelly, P. J. (2003). *Conceptualizing and researching the educational pipeline*. Boulder, CO: National Center for Higher Education Management Systems.

DUE:

Population Experience Paper

Class 6: Oct. 5

College Choice and Access, Pt. 1

READ:

Perna, L. W. (2006). Studying college choice: A proposed conceptual model. In J. C. Smart (Ed.), *Higher education: Handbook of Theory and research* (Vol. XXI, pp. 99-157).

Winkle-Wagner, R. & Locks, A.M. (2014). *Diversity and inclusion on campus: Supporting racially and ethnically underrepresented students*. New York: Routledge. (Ch. 2)

Class 7: Oct. 12	First-Generation Student Success
Guest instructor: Sarah Whitley, Ph.D., Senior Director, NASPA Center for First-Generation Student Success	
WATCH (before class): “First Generation” (documentary film; 1 hour, 34 minutes long; available to view for free online: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pfDx4duheHk)	
Class 8: Oct. 19	College Choice and Access, Pt. 2
READ: Hoxby, C. M. & Turner, S. (2013). <i>Informing students about their college options: A proposal for broadening the expanding college opportunities project</i> (Discussion Paper 2013-03). Retrieved from The Hamilton Project website: http://www.hamiltonproject.org/files/downloads_and_links/THP_HoxbyTurner_FINAL.pdf . Radford, A.W. (2013). <i>Top student, top school? How social class shapes where top valedictorians go to college</i> . Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press (Read: pp. 1-22, 95-113). Smith, J. Howell, J., Pender, M., & Hurwitz, M. (2012). <i>A review of the causes and consequences of students' postsecondary choices</i> (Literature Brief). Retrieved from College Board Advocacy & Policy Center website: http://advocacy.collegeboard.org/sites/default/files/literature-causes-consequences-students-postsecondary-choices.pdf	
Class 9: Oct. 26	College Environment and Ecology
READ: Arnold, K. D., Lu, E. C., & Armstrong, K. J. (2012). Special issue: The ecology of college readiness. <i>ASHE Higher Education Report</i> , 38(5), 1-138. (Read: pp. 11-18) Strange, C.C. & Banning, J.H. (2001). <i>Educating by design: Creating campus learning environments that work</i> . San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.	
Class 10: Nov. 3	Transition and Transfer
READ: Keup, J. R. (2007). Great expectations and the ultimate reality check: Voices of students during the transition from high school to college. <i>Journal of Student Affairs Research and Practice</i> , 44(1), 3-31. Quaye & Harper: Ch. 17 Winkle-Wagner, R. & Locks, A.M. (2014). <i>Diversity and inclusion on campus: Supporting racially and ethnically underrepresented students</i> . New York: Routledge. (Ch. 4) DUE: Intervention/Program Memo	

Class 11: Nov. 9	Gender & LGBTQ
READ: Padawer, R. (2014, October 15). <i>When women become men at Wellesley</i> . Retrieved from <i>The New York Times Magazine</i> website: http://www.nytimes.com/2014/10/19/magazine/when-women-become-men-at-wellesley-college.html	
Quaye & Harper: Chs. 8, 9 & 10	
Class 12: Nov. 16	Religion & Disability
READ: Astin, A.W., Astin, H.S., & Lindholm, J.A. (2011). <i>Cultivating the spirit: How college can enhance students' inner lives</i> . San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.	
Belch, H. A. (2011). Understanding the experiences of students with psychiatric disabilities: A foundation for creating conditions of support and success. <i>New Directions for Student Services</i> , 2011(134), 73-94.	
Quaye & Harper: Chs. 11 & 12	
Nov. 23	No class meeting - Thanksgiving
Class 13: Nov. 30	Up Heartbreak Hill
READ: Engle, J. & Tinto, V. (2008). <i>Moving beyond access: College success for low-income, first-generation students</i> . Retrieved from ERIC website: http://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED504448	
Jones Brayboy, B. M. (2004). Hiding in the ivy: American Indian students and visibility in elite educational settings. <i>Harvard Educational Review</i> , 74(2), 125-152.	
Quaye & Harper: Ch. 13	
Class 14: Dec. 7	Game day!

Grading

You are expected to complete all assignments and will be graded according to the following scale:

Class Participation	10%
Population Experience Paper	30%
Intervention/Program Memo	30%
Final Project	30%

Your final grade is based on the weighted average of grades received on individual and group

assignments and your contributions to in-class activities and discussion. Please see Blackboard for a sample grade calculation.

About grading:

- An “A” paper/project/presentation is excellent – very strong in every sense. It represents a solid job in addressing all aspects of the assignment, shows complex thinking and insight, reflects graduate-level writing (including introductory and concluding comments and appropriate transitions linking various sections), and is free of errors (e.g., APA style, grammar, spelling, syntax, logic, organization, clarity, style, and appropriate citation usage).
- A “B” paper/project/presentation is good. It has some weaknesses in one or more of these areas but captures the essential elements of the assignment.
- Lower grades are assigned to papers/projects/presentations with more significant weaknesses in the areas noted above and do not reflect the quality expected in graduate-level studies.

Grade scale:

A+	100*
A	93-99
A-	90-92
B+	87-89
B	83-86
B-	80-82
C+	77-79

*includes scores that round up to 100 (e.g., 99.5 and above)

Assessments

Class Participation, 10%

Class participation is an essential part of this course. Criteria for this include regular attendance in class, preparation to participate in the day’s discussion, focused participation that goes beyond a regurgitation of the information, and respectful engagement with classmates during discussion.

Population Experience Paper, 30% (Due: Sept. 28)

In this 5-7 page scholarly paper, you will focus on ONE student population and discuss the characteristics of that population, what matters for their success, and how the educational community can help them succeed.

You should use the following headings to guide your paper:

- Characteristics of the student population (access, rates of attendance, where they attend, retention, persistence, etc.)
- Barriers or challenges to success
- Support structures

- Conclusion

Be sure to use APA format – you should have a title page, running head, page numbers, one-inch margins, a standard 12-point font, and correctly formatted in-text citations and reference page. Please see sample “A” paper and rubric on Blackboard.

Intervention/Program Memo, 30% (Due: November 2)

This assignment focuses on an intervention related to a particular issue faced by a specific population of college students. You may choose to continue to use the population from your first paper or pick a new population. This 1,000 word administrative memo should contain the following headings (in some form):

- Student population and the issue to be addressed
- Description of the intervention/program
- Desired and/or probable outcomes
- Challenges to implementation
- Conclusion

The context of the institution is important. Include the name of the institution and any relevant information that will help frame the student experience and the intervention/program (e.g., “Fort Peck Community College is a tribal college located on the Fort Peck Indian Reservation, serving both the Fort Peck Assiniboine and Sioux Tribes”).

Be sure to format your paper as a memo (include “To,” “From,” “RE:” “Date” at the top of your first page). Include the word count at the end of the body of your memo. Include a properly formatted reference page. There is no need to include a title page for this paper. Please see sample “A” paper and rubric on Blackboard.

Final Project, 30% (Due: December 7)

In assigned teams, you will develop an educational game for middle, high school, or adult students about the college student experience.

Required elements:

- Games may be of any type (board, card, computer, etc.)
- Should be for 2+ players (except in the case of a computer game)
- Must include factual information (e.g., admission requirements, cost, financial aid, standardized testing, persistence/graduation rates)
- Should be fun!
- Should take 10-15 minutes to play
- Name and catchphrase (e.g., *Trivial Pursuit: Reveal Your Inner Genius*; *Candy Land: The Game of Sweet Adventure*)
- Should be of a storable size (storage size should be no larger than a standard board game)
- Clear set of instructions
- Each game must come with a two-page write-up about college preparedness/access/outcomes/benefits that students could take away as a reference. This may take the form of a back-to-back handout, trifold brochure, etc.

Examples of past projects will be shared in class.

Final Project Grading Criteria

I will ask myself the following questions when grading:

- Is the game easy to understand? Is it too complex/simple? Are the instructions clear and well written?
- Is the game thorough? Do I come away with an understanding of the college student experience from preparation through outcomes?
- Is the game fun? Does it take a good length of time?
- Is the game factually accurate? Are there statistics/numbers/concepts represented throughout the game?
- Is this educational? What have I learned about the college student experience?
- What is the takeaway? Does the write-up follow the same concept as the game? Is it something that a student would refer to as they prepare for college?

Syllabus and assignments designed by Dr. Christian Steinmetz at the University of Virginia; adapted with permission.