

History of Higher Education in the U.S.
EDUC 265/165/ History 158C/AmStud 165
Winter 2023
Stanford Graduate School of Education
Tuesdays, 9am-11:50am
Building 200, Room 107
4 to 5 units

Professor

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Course Description

Higher education was central to the emergence of modern societies, cities, and nation states. The premise of this course is that institutions of higher learning have long emerged from contracts in which they receive autonomy and patronage in exchange for services to society. A series of different contracts iterated by academic founders in the United States from the early Republic through the last quarter of the twentieth century became the basis of different institutional designs.

We will use the modern research university as the primary example of this process of institutional change against which we will view the broader currents of higher education, including the liberal arts college, historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs), and professional schools. Modern research universities, like their nation state hosts, developed in a globalizing world. Our assumptions about credentials, funding, and the organization of knowledge are tested when viewed from a wider lens. Topics include the competitive dynamics among cities, cultural transfer, global competition, and selective admissions policies.

Questions that we will take up include: What makes the US model distinctive? How does the university enrich our understanding of the emergence of urbanization, nationalization, and globalization? And what does history reveal about the university's capacity to evolve? We will consider what sources and methods are available for the study of the university and how these accounts might inform the public conversation today.

Course Objectives

By the end of the course students will:

- Appreciate the role universities play in urban, national, and international development.
- Understand the methods and sources used to study the history of education.
- Use historical insight to inform current policy debates about the cost, value, purposes, and appropriate patronage of higher education.

Course Requirements

Students will submit weekly online written responses to the readings and participate actively in discussion. The instructor will provide a brief overview at the beginning of class and the bulk of class will be devoted to the discussion of secondary and primary texts. The instructor will also tap students to recap the previous week's discussion.

At the end of the quarter, students will submit a final project which adheres to one of the following criteria. You will check in during week 3 to discuss your project ideas.

Option 1 (3 or 4 credits): Compose a book review essay which discusses 2-3 books on a topic in the history of education of your choice. Students will write an essay which synthesizes the books' arguments and makes an original argument concerning the books' contributions, strengths, and weaknesses. Examples of scholarly review essays will be provided.

Option 2 (4 or 5 credits): Write a paper that aligns with your current scholarly and professional needs, such as a literature review, conference paper, or original research paper relating to/about an aspect of the history of higher education.

Evaluation and Attendance

Attendance is mandatory and students are permitted only one missed class without penalty. After that, the attendance grade will be reduced by the proportion of classes missed. Grades will be based on the thorough completion of weekly readings and seminar participation as well as the final project.

Additionally, all students are expected to consult with the professor at least once during the quarter.

Grade Breakdown:

Attendance = 10%

Participation = 10%

Peer Review = 10%

Discussion Board = 30%

Final Paper (Option 1 or 2) = 40%

Academic Integrity

Please familiarize yourself with the Stanford University Honor Code, itself an artifact of university history [here](#). Students will be expected to abide by the code. Violations to it will lead to no credit and possible further disciplinary action.

Academic Accommodations

Students who require academic accommodation based on disability should initiate a request with the Office of Accessible Education (OAE) [here](#). Please reach out if an aspect of the course or assignments pose a challenge to your learning.

Secondary sources:

Nearly all of the secondary sources assigned are available online (the others are available in hardcopy on Reserve). The selection focuses on books that make arguments about specific periods and reflect a particular methodological approach. While there is no required textbook, it is recommended that those students who are not familiar with the history of American higher education consult as an overview, Roger Geiger's *The History of American Higher Education: Learning and Culture from the Founding to World War II* (Princeton University Press, 2015) or John R. Thelin, *A History of American Higher Education* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2019). These sources are especially helpful for those who are unsure what they want to focus on for their final projects.

Education and Humanities Workshop:

[The Education and Humanities Workshop](#), convened by Professors Emily J. Levine and Mitchell L. Stevens at the Stanford Humanities Center, invites scholars both internal and external to Stanford University to present cutting-edge scholarship 2-3 times each quarter. The goal of the workshop is to create a long-term network and interdisciplinary space on campus that serves a previously untapped group: humanists who are interested in the rigorous study of educational ideas and institutions.

As students of the history of education, you are strongly encouraged to attend these workshops. This winter quarter, we have two guests:

January 27: [Jennifer Morton](#) (University of Pennsylvania, Philosophy), author of *The Ethical Costs of Upward Mobility* (Princeton, 2019). Location TBD.

February 24: [Ian McNeely](#) (University of Oregon, History), author of *Reinventing Knowledge: From Alexandria to the Internet* (Norton, 2008). Location: Stanford Humanities Center.

These workshops serve as valuable enrichment opportunities for students in this course. Additionally, these events can also serve as make-up opportunities. Students can attend one workshop event to make up one missed class period. If a student misses a discussion post, a one-page written reflection of the event can serve to make up the assignment.

Tentative Course Outline

* Designates reading is available as a PDF in the files folder in Canvas.

Tuesday, 1/10

Week 1. Introductions, Approaches, Definitions – The University between Nations and the World

Read: Emily J. Levine and Mitchell L. Stevens, “Negotiating the Academic Social Contract,” *Change: The Magazine of Higher Learning*, Vol. 54 (January 2002) [\[link\]](#).

Read: Davarian L. Baldwin. “When Universities Swallow Cities,” *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, July 30, 2017 [\[link\]](#).

Read: Ernst Kantorowicz, “The Fundamental Issue: Documents and Marginal Notes on the University of California Loyalty Oath,” Statement Read Before the Academic Senate, June 14, 1949 [\[link\]](#).

Tuesday, 1/17

Week 2. Roots of Higher Education in Europe

Read: Andreas W. Daum, “Wissenschaft and Knowledge” in Jonathan Sperber, ed. *Germany, 1800-1870* (Oxford, 2004), 137–161.*

Read: Wilhelm von Humboldt, “On the Spirit and the Organisational Framework of Intellectual Institutions in Berlin,” *Minerva* 8 (1970): 242–250.*

Read: Robert Anderson, “Before and After Humboldt: European Universities Between the Eighteenth and the Nineteenth Centuries,” *History of Higher Education Annual* (2000): 5–14.*

Read: John R. Davis, “Higher Education Reform and the German Model: A Victorian Discourse,” (Leiden: Brill, 2014): 39–62 [\[link\]](#).

Tuesday, 1/24

Week 3. Roots of American Higher Education

Read: Craig Steven Wilder, Prologue, Chapter 4, and Chapter 6, *Ebony & Ivy: Race, Slavery, and the Troubled History of America’s Universities* (Bloomsbury, 2013).*

Read: Ruth Simmons, “Slavery and Justice at Brown: A Personal Reflection,” from *Slavery and the University: Histories and Legacies*, ed. Leslie M. Harris, James T. Campbell, Alfred L. Brophy. (University of Georgia Press, 2019). *

Read: David F. Labaree, Chapter 1, “A System Without a Plan: Elements of the American model of higher education,” in *A Perfect Mess: The Unlikely Ascendancy of American Higher Education* (University of Chicago Press, 2017), 1–24.*

Read: Brown University Steering Committee on Slavery and Justice. “Slavery and Justice.” (Brown University: 2006), 3–31 [\[link\]](#).

Sign up for individual meetings

Tuesday, 1/31

Week 4. Cooperation, Competition, and Knowledge Exchange

Read: Emily J. Levine, Introduction and Chapters 1–3, in *Allies and Rivals German-American Exchange and the Rise of the Modern Research University* (University of Chicago Press, 2021).*

Read: The Morrill Act (July 2, 1862), “An Act Donating Public Lands to the Several States and Territories which may provide Colleges for the Benefit of Agriculture and the Mechanic Arts,” [\[link\]](#).

Read: Robert Lee and Tristan Ahtone, “Land Grab Universities,” *High Country News*, March 30, 2020 [\[link\]](#).

Individual meetings about final project ideas

Tuesday, 2/7

Week 5. Group Dynamics and Meritocracy

Read: Harold Wechsler and Steven Diner, Chapters 1–4 on “African Americans,” “Ethnic Minorities,” “Streetcar Colleges” and “Minority Student Experiences,” in *Unwelcome Guests: A History of Access to American Higher Education*, (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2021).*

Read: Gordon, Lynn D, “From Seminary to University: An Overview of Women’s Higher Education, 1870–1920,” in *ASHE reader on the history of higher education*, 2nd ed., eds. Lester F. Goodchild and Harold S. Wechsler, 473–498.*

Turn in 1-2 page plan for final project

Tuesday, 2/14

Week 6. Credentialing and Professionalization

Read: Randall Collins, “Functional and Conflict Theories of Educational Stratification,” *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 36, No. 6 (1971): 1002–1019.*

Read: David F. Labaree, Chapter 8, “The Rise of the Community College: Markets and the Limits of Educational Opportunity,” in *How to Succeed in School Without Really Learning: The Credentials Race in American Education* (Yale University Press, 1999), 190–222.*

Read: Henry Pritchett, Introduction to Abraham Flexner, *Medical Education in the United States and Canada: A Report to the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching* (aka “The Flexner Report”), *Bulletin Number Four*, 1910.*

Tuesday, 2/21

Week 7. Selective Admissions and Affirmative Action

Read: Marcia Graham Synnott, Introduction and Chapters 3–4, in *The Half Opened Door: Discrimination and Admissions at Harvard, Yale, and Princeton, 1900–1970* (Transaction Publishers, 2010).

Read: Mitchell L. Stevens, Introduction and Chapter 5, “Race,” in *Creating a Class: College Admissions and the Education of Elites* (Harvard University Press, 2009).*

Read: Amy Howe. “In cases challenging affirmative action, court will confront wide-ranging arguments on history, diversity, and the role of race in America.” *SCOTUSblog*. October 26, 2022 [[link](#)].

T, 2/28

Week 8. World War II and Cold War Science

Read: Introduction, Chapter 1. Margaret O’Mara, *Cities of Knowledge: Cold War Science and the Search for Silicon Valley* (Princeton University Press, 2015).*

Read: Zachery R. Williams, Chapter 2, “Messiah and Leader: Mordecai Johnson and the Making of the Howard University Intellectual Community, 1926-1960,” in *In Search of the Talented Tenth: Howard University Public Intellectuals and the Dilemmas of Race, 1926-1970* (University of Missouri, 2009).*

Read: A Report to the President by Vannevar Bush, Director of the Office of Scientific Research and Development, July 1945 [[link](#)].

Read: George Zook, Excerpts from *The President's Commission on Higher Education*, 1947 [[link](#)].

Tuesday, 3/7

Week 9. From the Multiversity to the Civil Rights University

Read: Eddie Cole, Introduction and Chapters 1–3, in *The Campus Color Line: College Presidents and the Struggle for Black Freedom* (Princeton University Press, 2020).*

Read: Clark Kerr, “The Idea of a Multiversity,” and “Reconsiderations after the Revolts of the 1960s,” in *The Uses of the University* (Harvard University Press, 1963).*

Tuesday, 3/14

Week 10. The Present and Future of Higher Education

Read: William Kirby, “The Rise of China’s Universities” in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, November 15, 2022 [[link](#)].

Read: James Nguyen H. Spencer. “Higher Ed is a Public Good. Let’s Fund it Like One,” in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, December 8, 2022 [[link](#)].

Read: Ronald J. Daniels, “What Universities Owe Democracy,” in *Democracy*, Spring 2022 [[link](#)].

Read: Tom Bartlett, “A Controversial College Takes Shape,” *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, November 2, 2022 [[link](#)].

Listen: Tressie McMillan Cottom Interviews Louise Seamster for the “Ezra Klein Show” November 2, 2021 [[link](#)].

Due: Submit draft of final project for peer review before class

In class: Peer review

Final paper due on Canvas by 5 PM on Tuesday, March 21.