

# Education A826: The Politics of Education in the Developing World

---

Emmerich Davies

Office: Gutman 412

Email: [emmerich\\_davies\\_escobar@gse.harvard.edu](mailto:emmerich_davies_escobar@gse.harvard.edu)

Please contact Wendy Angus for office hours appointments. Any other questions, either contact Emmerich or the TF directly.

Class: MW 4-5:30PM

Class Room: Larsen G06

Office Hours: W 1:30-3:30PM

Teaching Fellow: Andrew Westover

Faculty Assistant: Wendy Angus

Email: [awestover@g.harvard.edu](mailto:awestover@g.harvard.edu)

Email: [wendy\\_angus@gse.harvard.edu](mailto:wendy_angus@gse.harvard.edu)

Canvas Site: <https://canvas.harvard.edu/courses/33539>

Have globalization and market-oriented reforms constrained or empowered domestic government efforts to provide broad-based education? How should developing country governments engage the private sector in the provision of education? What is the effect of political and administrative decentralization on parental participation and educational outcomes? This course will explore these and other questions as we try to understand the role that political institutions, elected leaders, civil society, and bureaucrats play in the provision of education across the developing world. We will ask who the key actors, interests, and incentives are in education politics through individual case studies, political science theory, and empirical examples.

The course this year will take a deep dive into Latin America and India, with reference to other countries and regions of the world. By the end of the course we will have learned to identify power relations, the incentives of actors, their options, and how to best engage them in education policy making. The emphasis will be on real world examples and policies from the two regions, and we will leave with a broader understanding of the incentives and constraints political actors face in the developing world.

## Students with Disabilities

We encourage students needing accommodations in instruction or evaluation to notify us early in the semester. If you have a disability or health concern that may have some impact on your work in this class and for which you may require adjustments or accommodations, please contact Eileen Berger [bergerei@gse.harvard.edu](mailto:bergerei@gse.harvard.edu), Access and Disability Services (ADS) administrator in Gutman 124. No accommodations can be given without authorization from ADS, or without advance notice. If you already have a Faculty Contact Form for this course from ADS, please provide us with that information privately in our offices so that we can make those adjustments in a timely manner. All inquiries and discussions about accommodations will remain confidential.

# Assignments and Evaluation

1. Class Participation: 25%
2. Midterm: 35%
3. Term Paper: 40%
  - Problem Statement: 5%
  - Final Paper: 35%

## Class Participation: 25% of Grade

You are expected to come to class prepared to discuss the readings in detail. For classes in which cases are assigned, you should read and prepare the case, ready to engage in the case discussion. Participation in class provides the opportunity to develop the ability to present ideas effectively as well as the ability to listen to others and identify the main direction of a conversation and contribute in ways that advance it in constructive ways in contrast to the common — and less productive — experience of team members talking past each other or to themselves.

The primary readings for this class will be cases that may be supplemented with additional readings. Each case should be read several times, carefully studied, and then discussed with classmates before arriving in class. The different perspectives of students in the class will enhance each individual's understanding of each case study. As such, you are encouraged to form teams to discuss the cases and readings together before class and come prepared to discuss the context, actors, and actions taken by all players, as well as potential solutions. I will not formally assign these groups.

Readings are accessible three different ways - via the iPa©page, web links, and via HOLLIS+. The syllabus indicates where to locate each reading. For the readings available in HOLLIS+, we have embedded persistent links (all you need to do is click on the word “link”) that should take you directly to the articles via HarvardKey log-in. If a link does not work, which is always a possibility, then you will need to use HOLLIS+ to locate the reading yourself.

If you know you will be absent, please inform me by the end of the first full week of class (Friday, September 8). Beyond that date, all absences will be considered unexcused except for those due to serious illness or death in the family. More than one unexcused absence will negatively affect your grade.

## Midterm: 35% of Grade

We will have a take-home, open book midterm after Part 2 of the class. On **Wednesday, October 4**, we will distribute eight prompts and you are expected to outline potential answers to these prompts. On **Wednesday, October 11**, we will email you two of the eight prompts. You will have 48 hours to answer both.

Your answers should make reference to theories and readings from class, conversations and issues raised in class, and your own experiences in the education sector. You may reference lecture slides, class discussions, and readings in your answers.

Your response to each prompt should be *no longer* than 1,500 words. Your submission should include a title page that includes a title, a separate word count for each prompt, and your Harvard ID number. *Do not* include your name on your submission. Failure to follow these instructions will result in the deduction of a grade (i.e. a midterm that would have otherwise received an A will receive an A-).

Midterms will be uploaded on canvas. Every 24 hour delay in submission will result in the deduction of a grade (i.e. An A will receive an A-).

## **Final Paper: Total 40% of Grade**

For this class, you will pursue an independent term paper that provides you with the freedom to work individually on a topic of your choosing. Through a series of assignments and consultations with the TF and professor, you will develop your topic over the course of the second half of the semester. The term paper will be related to the topics covered in the class.

All assignments should be submitted using the American Political Science Format (learn about the APSA [here](#)) including using APSA citation rules.

## **Problem Statement 5% of Grade**

Write a 700 word memo identifying a political problem regarding education in a country, region, or organization of your choice (NB: 700 words is approximately 2 pages). The problem statement should attempt to do three things:

1. Identify why the problem is important.
2. Identify the key political actors, their incentives and motivations, and their constraints.
3. Identify key sources and empirical evidence to justify your claims.

You are encouraged to write about an issue you wish to focus on for the rest of the semester. This must be done individually, although consulting with me, the TF, or fellow class mates is encouraged.

The proposal is due on **Wednesday, November 8 by 12PM EST.**

## **Term Paper: 35% of Grade**

For the term paper, you are required to write a paper that incorporates the problem statement and original interpretation and analysis. As in the problem statement, your final paper should seek to identify why the problem under study is important, the key actors, their incentives, motivations, and constraints. The literature review should be a condensed version of that submitted for the literature review. Finally, you should analyze why actors acted in a certain way, what their institutional constraints were to acting differently, education and structural outcomes, and finally, any potential unintended consequences of the actions taken. Sources may included primary and secondary sources of quantitative or qualitative nature, as well as original interviews, or data analysis.

The Final Paper should be approximately 5,000 words, including bibliography and footnotes (NB: 5,000 words is approximately 15 pages double-spaced using Times New Roman with 1” margins on all sides. I give the page count as a guide rather than requirement and would prefer you adhere to the word count). Please include a title page, page numbers, complete bibliography, and word count.

The final paper is due on **Wednesday, December 13 by 12PM EST.**

## Overview of Syllabus

### 1. Defining the Terms of the Debate

- (a) Wednesday, August 30: Why are Education Politics Different?
- (b) Wednesday, September 6: What is Politics? The Study of Power

### 2. Institutions & Agents in Education

- (a) Monday, September 11 & Wednesday, September 13: Educational Institutions, Institutional Change, & Stability
- (b) Monday, September 18: Bureaucrats
- (c) Wednesday, September 20: Teachers and Teachers Unions
- (d) Monday, September 25: Decentralizing Power
- (e) Wednesday, September 27 & Monday, October 2: International Development Organizations

### 3. Case Studies

- (a) Latin America
  - i. Wednesday, October 4: Major Issues in Education Policy in Latin America
  - ii. Wednesday, October 11: The Legacy of Market-Oriented Reforms and Education
  - iii. Monday, October 16: International Development Organizations
  - iv. Wednesday, October 18: Students as Political Agents: Tertiary Education in Chile
  - v. Monday, October 23: Political Interference of the Bureaucracy
  - vi. Monday, October 30: The Politics of Engaging Parents: Limits and Possibilities
- (b) South Asia
  - i. Wednesday, November 1: Major Issues in Education Policy in South Asia
  - ii. Monday, November 6: Economic Development and Education
  - iii. Wednesday, November 8: Teacher Accountability
  - iv. Wednesday, November 15: The Private Sector in Theory
  - v. Monday, November 20: The Private Sector in Practice

### 4. Wrapping-Up

- (a) Monday, November 27: The Politics of Data and RCTs
- (b) Wednesday, November 29: Policy Feedback in Education

## Defining the Terms of the Debate

### Wednesday, August 30: Why are Education Politics Different?

Please email the TF a brief (one or two paragraph) description of what program you are in, your interests in education, and prior work, education, and research experiences by **Friday, September 1 by 12PM EST**.

- Ansell, Ben W. 2010. From the Ballot to the Blackboard: The Redistributive Political Economy of Education. New York: Cambridge University Press. pgs. 1-11 or from Section 1.1 to Section 1.2 inclusive. [link](#)

### Wednesday, September 6: What is Politics? The Study of Power

- Lasswell, Harold D. Politics: Who Gets What, When, How. New York: Whittlesey House, 1936. Preface & Chapter 1. [link](#)
- Bachrach, Peter, and Morton S. Baratz. 1962. "The Two Faces of Power." American Political Science Review 56 (4): 947-52. [link](#)
- Lukes, Steven. 2011. "Power." The Encyclopedia of Power. [link](#)

## Institutions & Agents in Education

### Monday, September 11 & Wednesday, September 13: Education Institutions, Institutional Change, & Institutional Stability

- For Monday, September 11:
  - North, Douglass C. 1993. "Economic Performance Through Time: The Limits of Knowledge." Nobel Prize Lecture. [link](#)
  - Pierson, Paul. 2000. "Increasing Returns, Path Dependence, and the Study of Politics." American Political Science Review 94 (2): 251-67. [link](#)
- For Wednesday, September 13:
  - Hacker, Jacob S. 2004. "Privatizing Risk without Privatizing the Welfare State: The Hidden Politics of Social Policy Retrenchment in the United States." American Political Science Review 98 (02): 243-60. [link](#)
  - Moe, Terry M. 2015. "Vested Interests and Political Institutions." Political Science Quarterly 130 (2): 277-318. [link](#)

### Monday, September 18: Bureaucrats

- Part I (pg. 3-26) of Lipsky, Michael. 2010. Street-Level Bureaucracy: Dilemmas of the Individual in Public Services. 30th Anniv. New York: Russell Sage Foundation. [link](#)
- Moe, T. M. 2005. "Political Control and the Power of the Agent." Journal of Law, Economics, and Organization 22 (1): 1-29. [link](#)

### **Wednesday, September 20: Teachers and Teachers Unions**

- Bêteille, Tara. 2015. "Fixers in Indias Teacher Labor Markets: Behind the Scenes." *Asian Survey* 55 (5): 942-68. [link](#)
- Murillo, Maria Victoria, and Lucas Ronconi. 2004. "Teachers' Strikes in Argentina: Partisan Alignments and Public-Sector Labor Relations." *Studies in Comparative International Development* 39 (1): 77-98. [link](#)

### **Monday, September 25: Decentralizing Power**

- Falleti, Tulia G. 2005. "A Sequential Theory of Decentralization: Latin American Cases in Comparative Perspective." *American Political Science Review* 99 (3): 327-46. [link](#)

### **Wednesday, September 27 & Monday, October 2: International Development Organizations**

- For Wednesday, September 27:
  - Putnam, Robert D. 1988 "Diplomacy and Domestic Politics: The Logic of Two-Level Games." *International Organization* 42, no. 3: 427-60. [link](#)
- For Monday, October 2:
  - Haas, Peter M. 1992. "Introduction: Epistemic Communities and International Policy Coordination." *International Organization* 46 (1): 1-35. [link](#)

## **Latin America**

### **Wednesday, October 4: Major Issues in Education Policy in Latin America**

- UNESCO Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2013/4. "Teaching and Learning: Achieving Quality for All - Regional Fact Sheet: Latin America and the Caribbean." [link](#)
- UNESCO Global Education Monitoring Report 2009. "Overcoming Inequality: Why Governance Matters - Regional Fact Sheet: Latin America and the Caribbean." [link](#)
- Hammond, John S. "Learning by the Case Method." Case Study. Harvard Business School, April 16, 2002. iPa©
- Read one of the following:
  1. The Political Culture of Democracy in the Americas, 2014: Democratic Governance across 10 Years of the AmericasBarometer Executive Summary. [link](#)
  2. The Latin American Voter. [link](#)
- Read one of the following:
  1. Deficiencies in Basic Goods and Services more Damaging than Perceptions of Corruption to Venezuela's President Maduro. [link](#)

2. Public Health Services Use in Latin America and the Caribbean. [link](#)
  3. Low Levels of External Efficacy Can be Improved by Government Efforts to Deliver Better Outcomes. [link](#)
- Read one of the following:
    1. Amid Brazil's Crises, Low and Declining Respect for Political Institutions. [link](#)
    2. Amid Brazil's Protests, a Troubling Surge in Support for Military Intervention. [link](#)
    3. The World Cup and Protests: What Ails Brazil? [link](#)
  - Read one of the following:
    1. Surveying State Capacity. [link](#)
    2. State Capacity and Democratic Governance in Latin America: A Survey Data-Based Approach to Measurement and Assessment. [link](#)

### **Wednesday, October 11: The Legacy of of Market-Oriented Reforms and Education**

- Varley, Pamela, and Merilee S. Grindle. "Tackling Poor Performance, Extreme Inequality, Public Complaisance: Brazil's Education Minister Forges a New Role for the Ministry." Harvard Kennedy School of Government, 2000. iPa©
- Varley, Pamela, and Merilee S. Grindle. "Tackling Poor Performance, Extreme Inequality, Public Complaisance: Brazil's Education Minister Forges a New Role for the Ministry (Sequel)." Case Study. Harvard Kennedy School of Government, 2000. iPa©

### **Monday, October 16: International Development Organizations**

- Andrews, Matt. "What Makes a Policy Intervention Successful? Part A: Background." Harvard Kennedy School Case Study. Harvard Kennedy School of Government, 2010. iPa©
- Hunter, Wendy and David S. Brown. 2000. "World Bank Directives, Domestic Interests, and the Politics of Human Capital Investment in Latin America." Comparative Political Studies February 33: 113-143. [link](#)

### **Wednesday, October 18: Students as Political Agents: Tertiary Education in Chile**

- Guzman-Concha, Cesar. 2012. "The Students' Rebellion in Chile: Occupy Protest or Classic Social Movement?" Social Movement Studies 11, no. 3-4: 408-15. [link](#)

### **Monday, October 23: Political Interference of the Bureaucracy**

- Mizala, Alejandra, and Ben Ross Schneider. 2014. "Negotiating Education Reform: Teacher Evaluations and Incentives in Chile (1990-2010): Negotiating Education Reform." Governance 27 (1): 87-109. [link](#)

- Larreguy, Horacio, Cesar E. Montiel Olea, and Pablo Querubin. 2017. “Political Brokers: Partisans or Agents? Evidence from the Mexican Teachers’ Union.” *American Journal of Political Science*. [link](#)

### **Wednesday, October 25: Class Canceled**

### **Monday, October 30: The Politics of Engaging Parents: Possibilities and Limits**

- Corrales, Javier. 2006. “Does Parental Participation in Schools Empower or Strain Civil Society? The Case of Community-Managed Schools in Central America.” *Social Policy & Administration* 40 (4): 450-470. [link](#)
- Ganimian, Alejandro J. 2016. “Why Do Some School-Based Management Reforms Survive While Others Are Reversed? The Cases of Honduras and Guatemala.” *International Journal of Educational Development* 47 (March): 33-46. [link](#)

## **India**

### **Wednesday, November 1: Major Issues in Education Policy in India**

- Chavan, Madhav. “Motivation, action and impact.” Introduction to the Annual Status of Education Report 2016. [link](#).
- Varshney, Ashutosh. 2017. “India’s Democracy at 70: Growth, Inequality, and Nationalism.” *Journal of Democracy* 28 (3): 41-51. [link](#)
- Skim the following:
  - ASER 2016 (Rural) findings. Annual Status of Education Report 2016. [link](#).
  - ASER assessment tasks. Annual Status of Education Report 2016. [link](#)
  - ASER English Reading Test Sample. Annual Status of Education Report 2016. [link](#)
  - ASER English Math Reading Test Sample. Annual Status of Education Report 2016. [link](#)

### **Monday, November 6: Economic Development and Education**

- Mangla, Akshay. “Inclusive Growth in India: The State and Education.” Harvard Business School Case Study. Harvard Business School, March 31, 2015. iPa©
- Musacchio, Aldo, Rafael Di Tella, and Jonathan Schlefer. “The Korean Model of Shared Growth, 1960-1990.” Harvard Business School Case Study. Harvard Business School, 2012. iPa©

### **Wednesday, November 8: Teacher Accountability**

- Muralidharan, Karthik, and Venkatesh Sundararaman. 2011. “Teacher Opinions on Performance Pay: Evidence from India.” *Economics of Education Review* 30 (3): 394-403. [link](#)



- Bételle, Tara, and Vimala Ramachandran. 2016. “Contract Teachers in India.” *Economic & Political Weekly* 51 (25): 41. [link](#)

### **Monday, November 13: Class Canceled**

### **Wednesday, November 15: The Private Sector in Theory**

- Pritchett, Lant. 2002. “When Will They Ever Learn? Why All Governments Produce Schooling.” Working Paper. Kennedy School of Government. [link](#)
- Muralidharan, Karthik, and Venkatesh Sundararaman. 2015. “The Aggregate Effect of School Choice: Evidence from a Two-Stage Experiment in India.” *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 130 (3): 1011-66. [link](#)

### **Monday, November 20: The Private Sector in Practice**

- Barrera-Osorio, Felipe, David S. Blakeslee, Matthew Hoover, Leigh L. Linden, Dhushyanth Raju, and Stephen P. Ryan. 2017. “Delivering Education to the Undeserved Through a Public-Private Partnership Program in Pakistan.” Working Paper 23870. NBER Working Paper Series. Cambridge, MA: NBER. [link](#)
- Romero, Mauricio, Justin Sandefur, and Wayne Aaron Sanholtz. 2017. “Can Outsourcing Improve Liberia’s Schools? Preliminary Results from Year One of a Three-Year Randomized Evaluation of Partnership Schools for Liberia.” Working Paper 462. Center for Global Development Working Paper Series. Washington D.C.: Center for Global Development. [link](#)

## **Wrapping-up**

### **Monday, November 27: The Politics of Data and RCTs**

- Banerjee, Abhijit V., and Esther Duflo. 2009. “The Experimental Approach to Development Economics.” *The Annual Review of Economics*, no. 1. [link](#)
- Castillo, Nathan M., and Daniel A. Wagner. 2014. “Gold Standard? The Use of Randomized Controlled Trials for International Educational Policy.” *Comparative Education Review* 58 (1): 166-173. [link](#)

### **Wednesday, November 29: Policy Feedback in Education**

- Mettler, Suzanne. 2010. “Reconstituting the Submerged State: The Challenges of Social Policy Reform in the Obama Era.” *Perspectives on Politics* 8 (3): 803-24. [link](#)
- MacLean, Lauren M. 2011. “State Retrenchment and the Exercise of Citizenship in Africa.” *Comparative Political Studies* 44 (9): 1238-66. [link](#)
- Nolan-García, Kimberly A., and María Inclán. 2017. “Union Affiliation, Socialization, and Political Identities: The Case of Mexico.” *Latin American Politics and Society* 59 (2): 53-76. [link](#)