



EDU A840Y & A841Y:
Global, International, and
Comparative Education
Proseminar

Fall 2021-Spring 2022

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Course Description

This Proseminar is the required core course for the Global, International, and Comparative Education (GICE) Concentration. It is designed to provide an introduction to the field of international and comparative education and create an intellectual and professional community among students in the concentration. This community will support all concentrators to learn from one another and collaborate professionally, both during the master's year and in establishing and growing careers.

The GICE Concentration reflects our HGSE mission of changing the world through education by preparing students for professional careers in education in low- and middle-income countries, advancing the opportunities of marginalized learners. The Concentration is designed to support students in learning how to address inequalities in school success and future opportunities, as part of a diverse intellectual community.

This course is limited to and required for students in the Global, International, and Comparative Education concentration. Students are required to attend a weekly full-class session online and then small group sessions in-person.

Learning Goals & Commitments

We come together with a diversity of professional practices and career aspirations, and with commitment to and passion for global and comparative education that advances the educational opportunities for marginalized learners in low- and middle-income countries;

We strive to create intellectual community, to learn from one another, with open-mindedness and curiosity about the views and experiences of others and about the relationships among evidence and our emerging interpretations of how education influences individuals and societies;

We engage in shared learning, discussion, and reflection over common content in the fields of global, international, and comparative education with opportunities to connect learning from other courses, reflections on our past professional practice, and personalized interests;

Together, we will strive to expand educational opportunities globally, with robust intellectual and interpersonal skills to effectively lead from various roles in the ecosystem of institutions which collectively form the global education movement.

Welcome! From Emmerich Davies

Hi and welcome! My name is Emmerich Davies, and I am really excited to be co-leading this course with Sarah and Fernando. We are colleagues in the making, so you are welcome to call me Emmerich, but Dr./Professor Davies or Davies Escobar also work. The result of being a half-Panamanian, half-Jamaican immigrant to the United States with German, Italian, Welsh, and Spanish names means that I have long stopped caring how people address me.

The child of a career UNICEF employee, I have lived in many places, but home is Panama City, Panama, and Providence, Rhode Island. I love major port cities where people gather for exchange and intermingling of cultures, languages, and families. Much of my life has been spent in them: Kingston, Jamaica, Panama City, Panama, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, London, England, and Kolkata, India.

These experiences have driven my research interests, namely how do people come to define their various identities as members of society? I'm interested in this question with respect to how teachers and parents see their relationship with the state. I have projects in Brazil, India, and soon, Liberia, that tries to understand how changing political and economic circumstances influence how people view their role in society, what they owe the state and the state owes them. I partner with governments and policy makers to better understand how the people that interact with education systems form opinions about those same systems.

Outside of work, the pandemic forced me outside and into canoes in rivers and lakes, and that looks likely to stick well past these strange times. I will also talk your ear off about the politics and nihilism of supporting the Boston Red Sox, West Indies cricket team, and Panama national football teams, the influence of Panamanian music on reggaeton, and music shows and festivals in the Boston-Providence area more generally.



Welcome! From Sarah Dryden-Peterson

Hello and Welcome. My name is Sarah Dryden-Peterson, and I am delighted to co-lead this course with Fernando and Emmerich. I go by many names, some very connected to who I am to particular people and parts of the identities I bring to this learning community (like Mama to our children or Ms. D to my former middle school students). You are welcome to call me Sarah, I am very comfortable with this, if you are; and you are also welcome to call me Professor Dryden-Peterson, if that feels better to you. I appreciate you letting me know how you like to be called as well.

I have chosen to live in many places – Uganda, South Africa, France, Botswana, Boston. But the place I call home is Toronto, where I grew up on the traditional lands of the Anishnabeg, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee, the Wendat, and the Mississauga of the Credit. For over 15,000 years, Toronto has been a gathering place, where many people have come together. The big questions I am passionate about have origins in this home place and processes of building welcoming communities and learning how to create peace together. By the time I graduated from high school, over half of Toronto's population had migrated to the city from outside Canada's current borders. Growing up, I remember feeling that I was witnessing and part of exciting new social movements, while also experiencing long-standing divisions within Canada, around language, power, and colonialism. These early experiences have shaped the questions that drive my curiosity and how I approach my teaching and research.

Some of the projects I am most excited by right now include our initiative, [Refugee REACH](#), which brings together researchers, educators, and policymakers to foster welcoming communities and quality education in settings of migration, and a research project that works with young people and schools to analyze school-based practices that disrupt inequities and build welcoming communities in contexts of conflict. I am most alive in my work when I am constantly learning, often through sustained collaborations with communities, NGOs, and governments and in being part of learning and teaching communities like this one. Some of what brings me joy these days is hiking with our family, coming upon a blooming wildflower in an unlikely place, organizing transnational family games nights, trying new recipes, and inventing LEGO creations with our two daughters.



Welcome! From Fernando M. Reimers

I look forward to meeting you and to the conversations we will have in this proseminar, and I'm excited to be doing this work w Emmerich and Sarah.

I work in the field of education because I am curious about how educational institutions can help people develop agency, and the capacity to shape their lives and to collaborate with others in shaping the communities of which they are a part. I have taught at the Universidad Central de Venezuela –where I did my undergraduate studies--, and at Harvard, and have worked in international development projects with governments, education organizations and development agencies in Africa, Asia, Europe, the Middle East and Latin America. My current research interests focus on advancing understanding of the educational impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic and options to build back better, part of a broader research agenda on how to support the improvement of public education systems, which is the focus of the Global Education Innovation Initiative I lead.

I have learned a great deal from my former students, and collaborated with many of them on multiple projects, and take great joy in following their careers and seeing them expand educational opportunities for others. When not working on education related stuff, I enjoy talking walks and hikes with my wife Eleonora Villegas-Reimers, also a Professor of Education, and trying to keep up with my two grown-up sons in their adventures. I am also an amateur gardener and writer of children's books, and I'm currently working on a children's book on trees around the world.

You can call me any permutation of my first and last name. Stop by my office hours to say hi and let me know your plans to make the world better.



Course Organization & Cadence

This course meets on Fridays during dedicated Concentration time (12-1:15pm ET), beginning in late October and concluding at the end of the academic year.

It is organized around alternating full group sessions and small learning communities. Every other Friday, we meet in a full group session to bring together our whole community for engagement in big ideas in the fields of global, international, and comparative education, at times with outside speakers. On alternating Fridays, we meet in small learning communities, facilitated by a Teaching Team member, to discuss, debate, and reflect on these ideas and apply them to our own work, dilemmas, and areas of interest. By the Tuesday between the full group session and the small learning community, you will share a reflection in your Learning Journal, engaging on a set of provided questions.

For example: We meet as a full group on Friday October 22. Your Learning Journal Reflection is due Tuesday October 26. We meet in small learning communities on Friday October 29. *See full list of dates on the [Syllabus](#).*

Collective Expectations

Every student is welcome in this classroom. Each of our experiences in learning in this course is made richer and more valuable as a result of being together in this learning. The kinds of learning environments that allow students to thrive include trust, respect, safety, curiosity, civility, and love, all of which are enhanced by practices of listening, asking questions, openness, self-critique, and valuing of the collective. We expect of ourselves and each other that we will foster these kinds of environments in this class, and we will have opportunities to practice how to do so.

We expect hard conversations and know that we will sometimes make mistakes in our speaking and in our listening; we expect courage to engage with each other through these conversations as we seek to deepen our understandings and perspectives. Racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, xenophobia, and other forms of discrimination, in any form, will not be tolerated.

Your questions, feedback, critique, and collaboration are welcome and appreciated as we seek to work together to create a class environment in which everyone feels welcome, valued, and able to thrive as an individual and as a member of the learning community.

Please see more on Canvas about collective classroom expectations that can support our purposes.

Assessment

Cycles of reading, reflection, and discussion allow you to deepen your engagement with the course materials, provide opportunities for feedback and growth, and provide the basis for assessment.

You can expect to write reflective and analytic memos of about 500 words every other week. Through a Learning Journal format, these memos will be shared with your small learning community and provide the basis for discussion and engagement. Ongoing dialogue connected to these memos, both orally and in written comments and questions, will provide the basis for learning and growth.

This class may only be taken SAT/UNSAT (there are no grades).

Student Hours and Communication

Everyone is welcome in student hours. Student hours are part of the Teaching Team's schedule and not an imposition on our time – on the contrary, we view student hours as a dynamic part of the class community and a chance to learn about you, your interests, the ideas you are having related to the course, or other interests, endeavors, and goals.

You can schedule meeting times through Calendly (all links available on Canvas).

Members of the Teaching Team will respond to email messages within 24 hours during working hours Monday through Friday. Weekend messages may not be returned until Monday.

We will send out bi-weekly class emails to reflect on the course materials and discussions and to share any new notes about the upcoming week.

Syllabus

Full Class Sessions

- October 22: Pathways
- November 5: Philosophies
- November 19: Comparison
- January 28: Ethics
- February 11: Spheres of Action
- February 25: Equity & Equality in Education
- March 11: Global Institutions & Financing
- April 1: Dilemmas
- April 15: Dilemmas
- April 29: Final Gathering

Small Group Communities

- October 29
- November 12
- December 3
- February 4
- February 18
- March 4
- March 25
- April 8
- April 22

October 22: Pathways

Purposes

- Build our GICE intellectual and professional community;
- Reflect on how our experiences have shaped our worldviews, interests, and work;
- Engage in backward planning as related to GICE goals for this year.

Question of the Week

- Who am I in my work?

Ideas to Engage

With our question of the week in mind, we invite you to engage with this reading:

"International Education is a Broken Field: Can ubuntu education bring solutions?", by [Benjamin Piper](#), Senior Director Africa Education with the Research Triangle Institute, based in Nairobi, Kenya, which he published in International Review of Education in 2016 (all readings available on Canvas).

November 5: Philosophies

Purposes

- Understand the various perspectives that educators, policymakers, and researchers bring to answer the question, “What is the purpose of education?”
- Reflect on our individual beliefs on the purpose of education.
- Surface assumptions and perspectives of others in the group.

Question of the Week

- What are the purposes of education?

Ideas to Engage

With our question of the week in mind, we invite you to engage with this reading:

[Paul Peterson](#). 2010. *Saving Schools: From Horace Mann to Virtual Learning*. Harvard University Press. Introduction and Chapter 1 (all readings available on Canvas).

November 19: Comparison

Purposes

- Understand the definition of comparative and international education, and the relationship between both fields.
- Recognize the role of international organizations in educational development.
- Understand the concepts of policy transfer and policy borrowing and the implications of the conditions under which they take place.
- Identify the major organizations carrying out cross-national studies of educational assessments, recognize the similarities and differences in the studies they conduct, and the implications of those for policy.

Question of the Week

- What is the relationship between comparative and international education?

Ideas to Engage

With our question of the week in mind, we invite you to engage with this reading:

[David Phillips](#) and [Michele Schweisfurth](#). (2014) *Comparative and International Education. An Introduction to Theory, Method, and Practice*. Bloomsbury. Second Edition. Chapter 1. Making comparisons. Pages 7-24 (all readings available on Canvas).

January 28: Ethics

Purposes

- Analyze how power shapes relationships and collaborations
- Reflect on how we come to new understandings of ourselves and our work through collaborative processes
- Engage in applied work and reflection to understand how we develop the ethics that guide our work

Question of the Week

- What ethics guide my work?

Ideas to Engage

With our question of the week in mind, we invite you to engage with this reading:

The [SAN Code of Research Ethics](#), published by the South African SAN Institute in 2017, outlines principles of engagement based in respect, honesty, justice and fairness, care, and process (all readings available on Canvas).

February 11: Spheres of Action

Purposes

- Understand the ecological systems in which education is situated
- Identify the ecological systems/ spheres of action of focus for one's own work
- Apply the comparative case study framework to one's own work

Question of the Week

- What ecological system / sphere of action are you focused on in your work?

Ideas to Engage

With our question of the week in mind, we invite you to engage with this reading:

“Rethinking the concept of “context” in comparative research,” by [Lesley Bartlett](#) and [Fran Vavrus](#), which they published in the *World Yearbook of Education 2019: Comparative Methodology in the Era of Big Data and Global Networks* (all readings available on Canvas).

February 25: Equity & Equality in Education

Purposes

- Recognize differences and relationship between education poverty and education inequality
- Understand differences between static and dynamic perspectives on poverty and inequality, and the study of education trajectories and transitions to understand the dynamics of poverty and inequality
- Recognize various indicators of education poverty and inequality, using cross-national studies of educational achievement

Question of the Week

- How can comparative research inform education policies to reduce educational inequality?

Ideas to Engage

With our question of the week in mind, we invite you to engage with this reading:

[Andreas Schleicher](#). 2018. PISA 2018. Insights and Interpretations. Paris: OECD. Pages 19-35 (all readings available on Canvas).

March 11: Global Institutions & Financing

Purposes

- Understand the international architecture of education financing in contemporary and historical perspective. Who have been the biggest donors? Who have been the biggest recipients of international aid? Where does this money go?
- Understand the tensions between donors and aid recipients in how to spend money

Question of the Week

- What are the various ways of financing education? Who are the main players in this financing?
- What are the tensions inherent in education financing?

Ideas to Engage

With our question of the week in mind, we invite you to engage with this reading:

- [Mario Novelli](#). 2010. The new geopolitics of educational aid: From Cold Wars to Holy Wars? *International Journal of Educational Development*. 30(453-459)
- We also invite you to explore one of these data sources, in particular how much is spent on education, and in comparison to one other sector, before we meet as a group:
 - [United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs \(UNOCHA\) Humanitarian Aid Contributions](#)
 - [The Organisation for Economic Co-Operation \(OECD\) and Development Creditor Reporting System](#)

(all readings available on Canvas).

April 1: Dilemmas

Purposes

- We have intentionally left the focus of our last two sessions open and flexible so we can adapt and respond to our collective interests as a GICE community and to emergent and current dilemmas.

April 15: Dilemmas

Purposes

- We have intentionally left the focus of our last two sessions open and flexible so we can adapt and respond to our collective interests as a GICE community and to emergent and current dilemmas.

April 29: Final Gathering

Purposes

- We will gather as a GICE community to learn from and celebrate each other's work.