

**Introduction to Comparative Education:
Theories, Perspectives, Histories**

較教育学研究基礎

EDUX601L

Dr. Will Brehm

Course Description

Comparative education is a dynamic field enlivened by differences of theoretical and methodological views on what it means to ‘compare’ two or more schools or societies, yet united by the belief that one’s own educational system and practice can be improved by examining other ways of teaching and learning. This course will critically examine the foundations of the field of comparative education, problematizing the historical fixation on the “West” as the main reference point for understanding education development worldwide. The goal is to move beyond the debates about ‘best practices’ and ‘policies’ - often presented in comparative education literature as un-problematically flowing from the West to the ‘developing world’ - and instead consider the implications of colonial and imperialist forces for education systems, policies, practices, as well as for educational research itself. Course readings and discussions will attempt to disrupt the dominant narratives of neoliberal globalization by shifting points of reference to other world locations, including Asia, Africa, and the former socialist bloc in Eastern/Central Europe. The goal is to develop an appreciation for the multiplicity of perspectives and practices surrounding comparative education and the ways in which global and local forces shape schooling around the world.

Mode of Instruction

The primary format for this course is a participatory seminar. Members of the seminar will be asked to read weekly materials and come to class prepared to discuss them. Class discussion, readings, presentations, and written assignments will be used. I encourage students to draw on their personal experiences and opinions in discussions and class assignments. Every student brings a wealth of personal experience and practical expertise (everyone has gone to school!) that will enhance the learning process and make our time together more meaningful. By sharing reflections on our personal, professional, and academic experiences and opinions, we will be able develop critical understandings of historical memory in this course.

Grading and assignments

Participation (15%) - Come to class prepared to discuss the assigned readings, ask questions about the readings, and engage your peers in informed discussion about the assigned readings/topic. Active participation in class discussions that reflect an understanding and synthesis of assigned readings is the goal. *Each class you must submit a hard copy of a “Reading Note” about the week’s*

readings (1 page). Please include discussion questions based on the readings. You will be asked to use these readings notes in class. No late submissions will be accepted.

Student-led Presentation & Discussion (20%) - Depending on the number of students in the class, individuals or groups of students will be responsible for preparing a presentation on a selected reading/readings for class. When it is your turn to present, you should prepare brief handouts for fellow students and set the stage for class discussion. Further details about the presentation will be discussed in class.

FreshEd Essay & Presentation (25%) - The FreshEd Podcast seeks to make educational research accessible to a public audience (<http://www.freshedpodcast.com>). For this assignment, you will select and listen to one (or more) FreshEd episodes about a topic that interests you. You will then write a 5-page essay where you (1) provide a synopsis of the issue discussed in the episode(s); (2) find and discuss competing or concurrent research (minimum 8 additional references) that allows for greater depth of knowledge on the topic; and (3) provide three (or more) discussion questions about the topic generally and/or podcast episode specifically. *You must submit a hard-copy of your essay and present your findings on the last day of class.*

Outline and Final paper (40%) – Write a 10- to 12-page paper in which you identify an education issue that is of interest to you and reflect on how theories and methods from the field of comparative education have been and might be used to examine and/or address this issue. How have different comparative education scholars approached this issue? What are the implications of these approaches for policy and practice? How might alternative comparative approaches be employed?

You must submit an outline of your final paper during the last day of class. An outline guide sheet will be provided to students. Feedback on your draft will be provided through email or in person. The outline will be worth 10%.

The final paper must be submitted by email by noon one month after class. I will be available for individual consultation if requested by a student. The final paper will be worth 30%.

Course Outline

Class 1: Introduction

Student introductions, course overview, and introductory lecture

Class 2: What is Comparative (and International?) Education

Required:

Mignolo, W. (2011). *The darker side of Western modernity: Global futures, decolonial options.* (chapter 1).

- Silova, I. and Brehm, W.C. (2010). For the love of knowledge: William W. Brickman and his comparative education. *European Education: Issues and Studies*, 42(2), pp. 17-36.
- Steiner-Khamsi, G. (2006). The development turn in comparative education. *European Education*, 38(3), 19-47.
- Wilson, D. (1994). Comparative and international education: Fraternal or siamese twins? *Comparative Education Review* 38(4), 449-486.

Recommended:

- Bereday, G. (1964). Sir Michael Sadler's 'Study of foreign systems of education.' *Comparative Education Review*, 7(3), 307-314.
- Cook, B. J., Hite, S. J., & Epstein, E. H. (2004). Discerning trends, contours, and boundaries in comparative education: A survey of comparativists and their literature. *Comparative Education Review* 48(2), 123-149.
- Cowen, R. (2009). On history and on the creation of comparative education. In R. Cowen, & A. M. Kazamias (Eds.), *International Handbook of Comparative Education*. (pp. 7-10). Dordrecht: Springer.
- Eckstein, M. (1983). The comparative mind. *Comparative Education Review*, 27(3), 311-322

Class 3: Contrasting theoretical and methodological approaches

- Noah, H. (1984). The use and abuse of comparative education. *Comparative Education Review*, 28(4), 550-562.
- Sellar, S. & Lingard, B. (2014). The OECD and the expansion of PISA: New global modes of governance in education. *British Educational Research Journal*, 40(6), 917-936.
- Silova, I. and Brehm, W.C. (2015). From myths to models: The (re)production of world culture theory in comparative education. *Globalisation, Education and Societies*, 13(1), pp. 8-33.
- Gorur, R. (2016). Seeing like PISA: A cautionary tale about the performativity of international assessments. *European Educational Research Journal*.

Class 4: What is Asia and what can we learn from it?

Required:

- Kenway, J. (2015). Chen's conceptual openings. In Zhang, H. et al., (Eds), *Asia as method in education studies* (pp. 13-31). New York, Routledge.
- Chen, K.S. (2010). Asia as method: Overcoming the present conditions of knowledge production. In K.S. Chen, *Asia as method: Towards de-imperialization* (pp. 211-256). Durham: Duke University Press.
- Kuswandano, et al. (2015). Towards deimperialization of instructional strategies: cases of task-based learning and reflective practice implementation in the

Indonesian context. In Zhang, H. et al., (Eds), *Asia as method in education studies* (pp. 97 - 110). New York, Routledge

Recommended:

Tobin, J., Hsueh, Y, and Karasawa, M. (2009). *Preschool in three cultures revisited* Chapters 2-4 (pp. 22-223). Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Class 5: What is Africa and what can we learn from it?

- Abdi, A. (2010). Globalization, culture and development: Perspectives on Africa. *Journal of Alternative Perspectives in the Social Sciences*, 2(1), 1-26.
- Bartlett, L., & Vavrus, F. (2014). Transversing the vertical case study: Methodological approaches to studies of educational policy-as-practice. *Anthropology and Education Quarterly* 45(2), 131-147.
- Tabulawa, R. T. (2009). Education reform in Botswana: Reflections on policy contradictions and paradoxes. *Comparative Education*, 4(1), 87-107.
- Vavrus, F. (2016). Topographies of power: Critical historical geography in the study of education in Tanzania. *Comparative Education* 52(2), 136-156.

Class 6: What is (post)socialist education and what can we learn from it?

- Silova, I. (2014). The interplay of “posts” in comparative education: Post-socialism and post-colonialism after the cold war. In L. Vegas (Ed.), *Empires, post-coloniality and interculturality: Comparative education between past, post, and present* (pp. 181-198). Rotterdam: Sense Publishers.
- Cernikova, H. (2012). Postcolonialism, postsocialism, and the anthropology of east-central Europe. *Journal of Postcolonial Writing*, 48(2), 155-163.
- Aydarova, O. (2015). Global discourses and local responses: A dialogic perspective on educational reforms in the Russian Federation. *European Education*, 47(4), 331-345.
- Bain, O. (2010), Education after the fall of the Berlin Wall: The end of history or the beginning of histories? In I. Silova (Ed.), *Post-Socialism is not Dead: (Re)Reading the Global in Comparative Education* (pp. 27-57). Emerald Group Publishing Limited.

Class 7: Bringing it home

- Straubhaar, R. (2015). The stark reality of the ‘White Saviour’ complex and the need for critical consciousness: A document analysis of the early journals of a Freirean educator. *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education*, 45(3), 381-400.
- Sriprakash, A. and Takayama, K. (2018). The racial projects of Comparative and International Education: contested histories and possible futures. *The WCCES Chronicle*, 2(2). Online: <https://www.worldcces.org/article-5-by-sriprakash--takayama>

Takayama, K., Sriprakash, A., and Connell, R.W. 2017. Towards a postcolonial comparative and international education. *Comparative Education Review*. 61 (S1): 1-24

Class 8: Conclusion

Student Presentations