Course Description & Rationale

Since John F. Kennedy’s 1961 executive order to implement affirmative action policies, institutions of higher education have looked for ways to encourage minority and low-income students to matriculate. Some institutions, such as such as Harvard, UC Berkeley, UT Austin, and UMichigan, have experienced lawsuits against the policy’s implementation. As universities stress their desire for diverse, well-rounded, high achieving classes and continue to implement methods to attract highly qualified students, there is disagreement about which methods are both effective and fair. How can educational administrators, parents and community members work together to improve college access and increase equality? Do we still need to “take affirmative action to ensure that applicants are...treated...without regard to their race, color, religion, sex, or national origin," or has affirmative action outlived its original purpose? Has the college access gap widened or shrunk? Are students’ experiences on campus living up to the goal of equal opportunity? This course will explore the topic of affirmative action through some traditional classroom techniques (reading/ writing/ discussion) as well as experiential education techniques (such as creating a public policy portfolio project, having conversations with professionals who administer affirmative action at colleges and universities, and pitching proposals to a panel of policy experts).

The central work of the course involves creating a portfolio of venues to explore, design, publicize, and promote an affirmative action or anti-discrimination policy/program. Completing the course readings and discussions will develop the skills necessary to complete the portfolio. Throughout the course, students will work in small groups to develop a policy campaign using techniques from writing to video to speeches. This course design attempts to raise students’ awareness of the multiple communication modes for making a compelling and persuasive policy proposal. To create their portfolios, students must advance an issue, demonstrate the techniques they have used to study and develop it, and effectively persuade their audience of the policy/program’s value. Student groups will meet with the professors biweekly or more frequently (as needed) to stay on track and to get help with process and resources.

Required Texts:

Assignments:

**Portfolio** (Total of 75%)

1. Three short assignments and midterm/final group evaluations (15%)

2. A research review paper defining and explaining the issue and underlying problem. This paper will use scholarly literature and primary source data as evidence to convince the audience of the problem’s importance, as well as the group’s credibility in presenting its solution. (15%)

3. A policy memo outlining the problem and proposed solution. Unlike the research review paper, this memo will be aimed at an institution that has been identified as a candidate for adopting the proposal. It will describe the potential barriers to getting the problem heard, the policy accepted, and the policy implemented. This document will analyze other successful and unsuccessful efforts at tackling the issue with the goal of developing thoughtful strategies for success on this current campaign. It will include a motivation for change, steps to be taken, and methods for evaluating the change. (15%).

4. A multi-media public outreach strategy that combines text, images, and video, in support of the idea. Options include: websites, YouTube videos, TedX talks, blogs, television commercials, posters, social media campaigns, billboards, and more. Project groups will submit a written “strategic plan” that explains the target audience(s), choices of media and forums, and how the approaches are (or aren’t) working together to accomplish the group’s overall goals. (15%)

5. A formal presentation of the strategies to the class and to an invited panel of affirmative action professionals from Dartmouth. (15%)

**Reading Journal** (15%)

Each student will post a weekly journal entry consisting of 500-750 words, single-spaced, about a specified selection of the week’s readings. Journals must include a paragraph paraphrasing the thesis or main argument of each selected reading, a paragraph of reaction to the reading, and a paragraph connecting the readings to each other and/or aspects of the portfolio project. Reactions can include any of (but is not restricted to) the following: the student’s opinion of the way the text deals with affirmative action issues, a critique of the author’s opinions, a comparison of the work with other readings students have done for this class or others, and personal reactions to the reading. The goal of this exercise is to describe, connect, and reflect on ideas.

**Class Participation** (10%): You are expected to attend every class and participate in every discussion. Your class participation grade will be based on the quality of your participation, not the quantity; however, the former normally requires a reasonable amount of the latter. Each day, after class, I take notes on participation and assign a grade to each student. 3 = asked interesting questions and/or engaged classmates in meaningful discussion, 2 = answered questions and/or gave opinions, 1 = present but silent, 0 = absent. For excused absences, I will replace your 0 with your mean participation grade for the term. To earn a good participation grade, you should:

- read assignments in advance of the class during which we discuss them
- make an outline of the important points and write a few discussion questions to ask
-offer insightful and constructive comments about the week’s readings
-ask stimulating questions and "dumb" questions
-listen to your classmates and respond to what they are saying
-engage your classmates in class and/or on the Canvas discussion group

Course Objectives:
• understand theories of educational stratification
• understand the history of affirmative action in American higher education
• examine issues in access to higher education in the United States with particular attention to ethnic, racial, and socioeconomic differences;
• study alternatives to affirmative action that might improve access to higher education among low-income and minority students;
• study historical and current implementation of the affirmative action executive order and consider how the public policy has changed/is changing
• create an informative and persuasive report/proposal based on scholarly literature, media reports, and other public policy texts.

Course Requirements:
• Portfolio project
• Weekly reading journals
• Class participation

Schedule:
Week 1: Theories of Educational Stratification 98 (M = intro, W & F = theory lectures)
• Bowen, W. and D. Bok (1998) Chapter 1: Historical Context, pp. 1-14 from The Shape of the River: Long-Term Consequences of Considering Race in College and University Admissions. 14

**Preliminary Project Assignment 1**: In 500 words or less, propose an aspect of affirmative action or anti-discrimination about which you feel passionate and on which a group could focus, due by the end of the first week. Discuss and cite the sources that prompted your interest. Due on Wednesday of Week 2.
Week 2: Background on Affirmative Action in Education. 259 (M = more theory, W = history F = Proposals/group formation)


Optional class outing on Thursday April 4: Camille Brown & Dancers at the HOP: “ink”

Preliminary Project Assignment 2: read all the proposals, vote for three you would most like to work on, and prepare a 2-minute argument for your proposal. In class we will hear the presentations of the top five proposals and assemble into portfolio groups based on mutual interest. Due on Friday of Week 2.

Week 3: Inequality & status attainment 160 (M = ropes course, W = group work time, F = discussion of readings)

- Mandatory group initiative games and ropes course at Storrs Pond: meet at 8 am at Robinson Hall, be back on campus at 9:55
- Coleman, J. S., (1968). The Concept of Equality of Educational Opportunity, in *Schools and Society*, Ballantine and Spade (Eds.), pp. 231-239. 8
- Contreras, F. (2013). *Achieving equity for Latino students: Expanding the pathway to higher education through public policy*, Chapter 1: The role of the public policy arena in educating Latino students (pp. 1-23) and Chapter 2: Falling through the cracks: who transitions to college and who doesn’t? (pp. 24-52) 50

Preliminary Project Assignment 3: Schedule two hours of group meeting time that will be your regular meeting every week. Write a group work plan for arguing your issue and dividing the workload for each of the required portfolio pieces. Include a bibliography of sources for your portfolio project issue. Due on Friday of Week 3.

Week 4: Ethnicity and race in schools 117 (M = guest lecture?, W = group work time, F = discuss readings)

- Guest lecture by Charlie Wheelan?
- **Read materials for your portfolio**

**Week 5: Minority Access to Higher Education** 145 (M = guest lecture, W = group time, F = discuss readings)
- Guest lecture by Jim Washington, Director of Admissions for Strategic Initiatives on Monday April 22
- Richard Sander and Stuart Taylor Jr., (2012), *Mismatch: How Affirmative Action Hurts Students It’s Intended to Help, and Why Universities Won’t Admit It*, Chapters 1, 7-10 (pp. 3-14 and 115-174).

**Research Review Assignment:** Submit a preliminary draft of the research review.

**Midterm group peer evaluation**

**Week 6: Research on Affirmative Action in Higher Education** 157 (M = guest lecture?, W = group time, F = discuss readings)
- Guest lecture by Charlie Wheelan?
- https://osf.io/preprints/socarxiv/8z629/
• Contreras, F. (2013). *Achieving equity for Latino students: Expanding the pathway to higher education through public policy*, Chapter 6: Affirmative action policies and Latino student access to public higher education, (pp. 121-142). 21

**Policy Memo Assignment:** Submit a preliminary draft of the policy memo outlining the problem and proposed solution.

**Week 7: Financing Education** 111 (M = guest lecture?, W = group time, F = discuss readings)

**Guest lecture by Tyler Bergmeier??**

• Contreras, F. (2013). *Achieving equity for Latino students: Expanding the pathway to higher education through public policy*, Chapter 4: The role of financial aid, tuition policy, and affordability in Latino higher education access, (pp. 78-96). 18

**Outreach Strategy Assignment:** Submit a draft for the public outreach campaign including descriptions of text, images, and video. Also, please submit your midterm peer evaluation.

**Week 8: I’m In, Now What?** 170 (M = guest lecture, W = group time, F = discuss readings)

**Guest lecture by Sonu Bedi, Professor of Government on Wednesday May 15**


**Optional:** Submit drafts of research review, policy memo, and outreach strategy.
Week 9: Why Diversity Matters 130 (M = discuss readings, W = group time, F = discuss readings)


Optional: Submit penultimate drafts of research review, policy memo, outreach strategy, and presentation slides.

Week 10: The Alternatives: Making and Implementing Policies that Work 81 (M = Memorial Day, W = discuss readings)

- Contreras, F. (2013). Achieving equity for Latino students: Expanding the pathway to higher education through public policy, Chapter 7: Raising Latino student achievement and success through education policy, (pp. 143-162).

Exam Week:
Presentation Assignment: Present your portfolio to the Affirmative Action Policy Board (Jim Washington, Sonu Bedi, Ron Shaiko, Theodosia Cook, Tyler Bergmeier?, Linda Fowler?, Charlie Wheelan?)
Final Assignment: Submit final drafts of all components of the portfolio
Final group peer evaluation
OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION:
I dislike having rules and penalties. In a perfect world, every student would be self-motivated by love for the subject to pay rapt attention in every class and turn in every assignment on time. However, real world experience has led me to state the following:

1. **Extensions**: Late work incurs a penalty of one letter grade per 3-hour period. You get one 24-hour exception to this rule, no questions asked. To invoke it, you must tell me, in writing. If you need an additional exemption from this policy due to family illness or death in the family, I’ll need to have a written communication (a dated note from the doctor, the funeral home, or your airline ticket).

2. **Academic integrity**: A few years ago, two of my students turned in papers that they had not written themselves. When I discovered this, my heart sank. I had trusted these students without question. I will trust you the same way, and in return I ask that you do your own work honestly. If you run out of time or ideas, have a personal issue, or some other unexpected problem—contact me. I am here to help you learn. It’s better to turn in your own work a little late and take the penalty than to fail the course and permanently mar your academic reputation because of academic dishonesty. Here is a link to Sources and Citation at Dartmouth College http://Dartmouth.edu/writingspeech/learning/materials/sources-and-citations-dartmouth

3. **In-class behavior**: Please turn off your cell phone and store it somewhere out of sight. Get enough sleep that you can sit upright, and take care of restroom needs before class. Anything that makes you seem less than 100% prepared and focused on the class will affect your participation grade.

4. **Accommodations**: If you have a disability that may need disability-related academic adjustments and services for this course please see me privately as early in the term as possible. Students requiring disability-related academic adjustments and services must consult the Student Accessibility Services office (Carson Hall Suite 125, 646-9900, StudentAccessibilityServices@Dartmouth.edu). Once SAS authorizes services, you must show the signed SAS Services and Consent Form and/or a letter on SAS letterhead to their professor. If you have questions about whether you qualify to receive academic adjustments and services, contact the SAS office. All inquiries and discussions will remain confidential.

5. If you must miss classes for a religious observance, varsity competition, or doctor’s appointment, please let me know in writing, in advance. There are no other excused absences.

6. If you wish to discuss one of your grades with me, you must write me an email describing your concerns. I will meet with you after you have demonstrated the depth of your concern and documented the reasons you feel a change is appropriate.

7. Unless you have specific accommodations from the Student Accessibility Services Office, you must take notes by hand in this class. Fried (2008) and Muller & Oppenheimer (2014) show that handwriting notes is far superior to typing them.¹²

¹ Students who used laptops in class spent considerable time multitasking and...laptop use posed a significant distraction to both users and fellow students. Most importantly, the level of laptop use was negatively related to several measures of student learning, including self-reported understanding of course material and overall course performance.” Carrie B. Fried. 2008. In-class laptop use and its effects on student learning. Computers & Education. Vol. 50(3): 906-914.

² “Even when laptops are used solely to take notes, they may still be impairing learning because their use results in shallower processing...Students who took notes on laptops performed worse on conceptual questions than students who took notes longhand. Whereas taking more notes can be beneficial, laptop note takers’ tendency to transcribe lectures verbatim rather than processing information and reframing it in their own words is detrimental to learning.” Muller & Oppenheimer (2014). The Pen Is Mightier Than the Keyboard Advantages of Longhand Over Laptop Note Taking, Psychological Science, 25, 6, 1159-1168.