

Educational Studies 315: Higher Education in America

Trinity College

Spring 2008

Tuesdays and Thursdays 1:15 pm- 2:30 pm

McCook 309

Instructor:

Frederick Alford

Dean of Students Office

Ext. 2157

Frederick.alford@trincoll.edu

Overview: This course will focus on selected topics in higher education. In our inquiries into the various themes we will draw upon historical references to understand modern viewpoints concerning and challenges facing higher education in America, as well as how these institutions function. Given the vast scope of higher education, we will not be able to cover all that we might if there were no time limits, and this course will focus primarily on undergraduate education in traditional four-year institutions.

The goals of this course will be to develop an understanding of and appreciation for the uniqueness and importance of American colleges and universities; to think critically; to write and speak with force, clarity and succinctness; and to be insightful in posing relevant questions and resourceful in answering them.

Attendance- Students are expected to attend class and students with more than three unexcused absences will have their course grades reduced by two grade increments (i.e. a B average would drop to a C+ or a C+ to a C-) for each unexcused absence in excess of three. Absences will be excused only with proper documentation (doctor's note, obituary, etc.) **Students who miss seven or more class meetings, whether excused or not, will be ineligible to pass the course.**

Grading: Students will be graded based on two examinations, two papers, a group project, and class participation. Each examination will comprise 20% of the course grade (total 40%); the papers will each be worth 10% (total 20%); a group project will be worth 25% and class preparedness and participation will be worth 15%. The instructor will reserve the right to include in class quizzes in the calculation of a grade for preparedness and participation.

Group Projects: Students will be assigned to groups to work collectively on a project that will require groups to analyze an issue related to campus climate at Trinity and prepare a report or presentation. The selection of groups will be at the discretion of the instructor. Specific guidelines for projects will be distributed in class.

Class and Reading Schedule: *The following schedule may be altered to accommodate new educational opportunities or extended inquiry. All readings other than Seamans and Horowitz will be in a source book which all students should expect to purchase. Changes will be noted in class.*

Primary Texts:

Horowitz, H. Campus Life. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 1987

Seaman, B. Binge: Campus Life in the Age of Disconnection and Excess Hoboken:Wiley. 2005

January 22 and 24

American Dream and Myths of Education: There are some key questions that permeate most inquiries into education and that will come up repeatedly in this course. How should one balance excellence and equity? Is there a law of diminishing returns on education? Which works better the carrot or the stick? Is intelligence fixed or variable? Who really runs the show?

McGuffey- Selected Stories from McGuffey's First Reader and McGuffey's Second Reader

De Tocqueville- Democracy in America

Jefferson- "On the General Diffusion of Education"

Eagan-"Deep Thought for Dummies"

January 29 and 31

Religion: The early colleges were founded by and for the clergy and this section is designed to explore the context in which this took place. How have things evolved from those roots? What role does religion play in the history of Trinity and in the life of a modern college? (*Guest lecturer on January 31.*)

Herbst, J.- "From Religion to Politics"

Marsden, G. "The Soul of the American University

Mather, C. "Cotton Mather's History of Harvard, 1702."

"New England's First Fruits, 1643."

"Statutes of Harvard College"

"Yale Laws, 1745"

Rudolph- "The Religious Life"

February 5 - 12

Growth and Character: In this section we will take a look at the proliferation and growth of higher education and tensions that exist between strict adherents of the liberal arts tradition and those who see utilitarian value in education. Is there a difference between education and training? Is an education a means to an end or an end in and of itself? What are those ends?

Blackmer et., al., General Education in School and College.

Eliot- "Liberty in Education."

Finn: Scholars, Dollars, and Bureaucrats

Gilman- "The Nature and Function of a University."

Morrill Act of 1862

Riesman and Jencks- The Academic Revolution

Rosovsky- "The Purposes of Liberal Education." The University.

Rudolph- The American College and University

Yale Report of 1828

February 18 : First Paper Due

February 19 – March 4

Students: Do Horowitz's prototypes of college students hold up when we apply them to Trinity? How and how much students have changed over the years? How have students traditionally identified the goals of their education? If academia has been a battle with opposing sides, who is on which side?

Movie- TBD

Astin et al.- "Overview of the Unrest Era."

Horowitz- Campus Life

Seaman- Binge Chapter 2

March 6 and 11

Athletics: What is the proper role of athletics in higher education? Should athletics be used as a factor in admissions decisions? How do athletics contribute to the educational mission?

Pauly- "A Man for Two Seasons."

Schulman and Bowen- The Game of Life

Seaman- Binge . pgs. 207-221

Sperber- Beer and Circus

March 13 - **Mid-Term Examination**

March 25 and 27

Governance and Leadership: This will be an inquiry into how higher education institutions run, who holds sway and over what, and how are schools governed. Who runs these places? What is the role of the president and the trustees? Who determines the work ethic? What other authorities oversee colleges? How do deans get things done? What is accreditation? (*Guest lecturer on March 27.*)

Hofstadter- Development of Academic Freedom in the United States

Jones- "Musings Learned: A Reflective Primer."

Janofsky- "College Leaders' Earnings Top \$ 1 Million."

Knapp- TBA

Rosovsky- "Deaning."

April 1

Faculty and Tenure: Many argue that faculty are the college and the quality of the faculty is governed to large extent by the quality of the appointments they make. Few jobs have such painstaking paths to appointment, yet few jobs guarantee lifetime employment. Is tenure still necessary? Does tenure promote an hegemony of political correctness that curtails the very freedoms that tenure was meant to ensure?

Sperber- Beer and Circus

Townsend- "A Survey of Tenure Practices in History."

Rosovsky- "Tenure: A Model Case." The University.

Janofsky- "Professors' Politics Draw Lawmakers into the Fray."

April 3

Greek Letter Societies: How and why did fraternities and sororities make their way onto the landscape and how have they endured? Do they contribute or detract from the educational missions of their host institutions?

Seaman- Binge Chapter 8

Matthews and Crothers- "Hazing Days."

Robson- Baird's Manual of American College Fraternities

April 6 -11

Diversity: We will take a broad look at the benefits and challenges related to diversity and then take a close look at the transformation of the City Colleges of New York when they adopted a policy of open admissions in the 1970's.

Levine- "Discrimination in College Admissions."

Rudenshteyn- "The Uses of Diversity."

Seaman – Binge Chapter 7

April 13- Second Paper Due

April 15

Philanthropy: International students are often struck by the cost of tuition in American colleges and universities. When they hear that institutions also expect students to give money after they graduate they are amazed. In this section we will look at how the role development plays in the functioning of higher education. (*Guest lecturer, Readings to be distributed*)

April 17 and 22

Alcohol: Is the drinking behavior of students today different than in past generations? Why is everyone so concerned? Is there really anything colleges can do to deal with the problem?

Berkowitz- "Social Norms Approach."

Harvard Magazine- "Puritan Party Time."

Seaman- Binge pgs. Chapters 5, 9 and 11

Wechsler et al.- "College Binge Drinking in the 1990's: A Continuing Problem."

Wieberg- "Colleges Are Reaching Their Limit on Alcohol."

April 24 and May 1

Shifting Expectations: The value of higher education has always been a subject of debate, but the debate intensified in the mid 1980's with the publication of "Involvement in Learning." Are students of today less capable than college students from previous cohorts? What is different?

C.E.E.B. College Handbook, 1961-63

Cruz-Urbe et. al C.A.S.E. Report

Fiske: Guide to Colleges, 2004

Kamp- "Europe on Three Credits a Day." and "The 50 Stupidest College Courses in America."

Seaman- Binge Chapters 4, 12, and 13

Willen- "US Colleges Get Swanky."