University of North Texas
Department of Counseling and Higher Education
EDHE 6000 – Proseminar in Higher Education

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Proseminar in Higher Education
Thursdays, 5.30-8.20 pm
Wooten Hall #214
Fall 2017

About the instructor
Barrett Taylor, PhD
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Office hours: Mondays, 2.00 pm – 5.00 pm
Thursdays, 2.00 pm – 5.00 pm
Although I am in my office almost every weekday, I often have meetings scheduled
during these times. I therefore strongly suggest that you email me to make an
appointment before coming to my office. Simply write to me at one of the two addresses
posted above, noting the days and times at which you are available to meet. I generally
reply to email within 24 hours, and often even sooner.

Course objectives
This course is designed as part of a sequence of classes intended to prepare you for work
in higher education as a scholar-practitioner. To that end, this course has two
complementary objectives.

First, this class will familiarize you with basic principles and current issues in higher
education. Such issues include the general contours of our profession, major approaches
to research on higher education, and general topics of interest to scholars in our field.
Due to the introductory nature of the course, I will give special attention to the ways in
which these topics touch upon other core issues in higher education – such as
organization and administration, state and federal policy, and student choices – in an
effort to integrate this course’s content with the other classes you will take while at UNT.

Second, this course will acquaint you with our profession. To this end, the course aims to
help you to develop the range of skills that characterize advanced scholar-practitioners in
higher education. Necessary skills include the ability to write clear scholarly prose, and to
present academic content orally. Course assignments will be graded accordingly. If you
do not possess a copy of a “style guide” to writing, I highly recommend purchasing and
familiarizing yourself with one. I remain partial to Strunk and White’s Elements of Style,
but any of a number of guides can help you to improve your writing. Please note that this
is a guide to writing style, mechanics and usage. Strunk and White is not a substitute for
the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (“APA manual”),
which is the official referencing guide of this department.
In addition, scholar-practitioners must be able to read and comprehend a variety of sources, including books, policy reports, and peer-reviewed journal articles. This will involve some familiarity with qualitative and quantitative research methods. If you do not possess this familiarity, simply do your best with course readings and raise relevant questions in class. You are responsible for learning all materials presented in the course, so please ask questions that you have so that you can hone your skills as a reader of academic content.

Assignments

- **Scholarly essay**: In this assignment, the student will write 3-5 pages arguing that higher education is best understood as one of the following:
  - A technical enterprise to be managed and optimized
  - A social system to be understood and shaped by broad systematic changes

While the study of higher education requires both perspectives, your job in this paper is to argue that one is more central than the other. Your argument must be scholarly, meaning that you strike a dispassionate tone and draw upon academic literature and concepts to justify your claims.

- For example, consider: “Higher education is best understood as a technical process because students deserve better and technical fixes improve processes.” This may be a reasonable assertion. However, it is neither dispassionate nor grounded in scholarship. Instead, consider something like, “Students contribute a growing share of tuition revenues to public institutions (SHEEO, 2016) yet improvements in outcomes have been partial (Tandberg & Hillman, 2013). This juxtaposition raises troubling questions.” The point is the same, but the means of making it differ.

There is no “right answer” to this prompt. Both answers are correct. Accordingly, the assignment will be graded on use of evidence, selection of appropriate scholarly sources for review, and APA mechanics. **Counts as 40% of final grade.**

- **Final paper**: In this assignment of approximately 10-12 pages, students will use rigorous scholarship (e.g., peer-reviewed papers, books and book chapters from academic publishers, policy reports from nonpartisan groups) in order to frame an argument about a topic of interest. The student should develop a clear argument about the topic (e.g., “declining state appropriations have led to increased tuition”) and provide evidence from other sources to support this argument (e.g., “because decreases in subsidies typically mean increases in prices (Winston, 1999),” “as Archibald and Feldman (2008) showed in their analyses of higher education costs and state budgeting mechanisms,” and so on). Because peer review is a central component of professional work, students will present draft versions of their papers in the final two weeks of the semester. Final papers should respond to feedback provided during the presentations. **Counts as 40% of final grade.**

- **Participation and presentation**: **Attendance at all course sessions is required.** In accordance with Texas state law, absences on religious holy days will be considered excused. Students must complete assignments within a reasonable time frame after the absence at no penalty to their grade. I request that you let me know at your earliest convenience if you will be observing a religious holy day at
a time during which we have scheduled a course meeting. If you must miss a
course meeting for any other reason, please notify the instructor immediately. In
addition to attendance, students are required to:

- Article review presentation: In a 10-12 minute presentation, students
  should briefly summarize the article but primarily analyze its approach to
  the study of higher education. What is the main unit of analysis? From
  what theoretical perspective(s) does the study proceed? What methods are
  employed? What can such a study tell us about higher education? What
  are its limitations? Do not merely summarize or offer opinions about the
  article. Provide insights into the author’s decisions and their
  consequences. No single study can account for all things. The purpose of
  this assignment is therefore to strengthen your ability to read research and
  think about the ways in which it is generated.

  Counts as 20% of final grade.

Grades and evaluation
A course grade of “A” (90-100) indicates exemplary work. A “B” (80-89) denotes work
that meets expectations of a graduate student. A “C” (70-79) is assigned to work that does
not meet expectations of graduate student performance. Grades of “D” (65-69) and “F”
(<65) are assigned when work is unacceptable.

Late assignments
Assignments are due at the dates and times specified in the syllabus. Late work will be
penalized one plus or minus for each day that it is late.

Course readings
There is one required text for this course:

Bastedo, M. N., Altbach, P. G., & Gumport, P. J. (2016). American higher education in

In weekly assignments, I will refer to this text as “BA&G.”

In addition to this text, students are required to subscribe to and read the free daily
newsletter Inside Higher Ed. This is a journalistic source that lacks scholarly rigor, but
which provides regular updates on major stories in our field. We will regularly apply our
developing social scientific skills to current higher education events in class discussions.

We also will read from a variety of book chapters, peer-reviewed journal articles, and
policy reports. Some of these documents will be made available to you through an
electronic course reserve. This reserve is offered as a convenient way to access materials
available through the UNT library, and its contents are intended only for educational “fair
use” within copyright provisions (i.e., you are not to distribute these documents to others).
Find the course reserve by clicking the “course reserve” link on the UNT library’s main page. You then can search for this class using the course number found at the top of this syllabus. The password for this reserve is “Prosem” (case-sensitive). You must not share this password with others outside the class. Further, library staff will not be able to provide the password to you should you lose it. Please ask a classmate or request a duplicate copy of the syllabus.

Peer-reviewed journal articles are available through the UNT library. They are not part of the electronic reserve because you can find them easily using the citation information found in this syllabus.

**Academic Integrity**

Academic Integrity is defined in the UNT Policy on Student Standards for Academic Integrity. Academic Dishonesty includes cheating, plagiarism, forgery, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, and sabotage. Any suspected case of Academic Dishonesty will be handled in accordance with University policy and procedures. Possible academic penalties range from a verbal or written admonition to a grade of “F” in the course. Further sanctions may apply to incidents involving major violations. The policy and procedures are available at: [http://vpaa.unt.edu/academic-integrity.htm](http://vpaa.unt.edu/academic-integrity.htm).

**Student Behavior in the Classroom**

Student behavior that interferes with an instructor’s ability to conduct a class or other students’ opportunity to learn is unacceptable and disruptive and will not be tolerated in any instructional forum at UNT. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior will be directed to leave the classroom and the instructor may refer the student to the Center for Student Rights and Responsibilities to consider whether the student’s conduct violated the Code of Student Conduct. The university’s expectations for student conduct apply to all instructional forums, including university and electronic classroom, labs, discussion groups, and field trips. The Code of Student Conduct can be found at: [www.unt.edu/csrr](http://www.unt.edu/csrr).

**Access to information – Eagle Connect**

All UNT students should activate and regularly check their EagleConnect (e-mail) account. EagleConnect is used for official communication from the University to students. Many important announcements for the University and College are sent to students via EagleConnect. For information about EagleConnect, including how to activate an account and how to have EagleConnect forwarded to another e-mail address, visit [https://eagleconnect.unt.edu](https://eagleconnect.unt.edu). This is the main electronic contact for all course-related information and/or material.

**UNT “Student Success” campaign**

UNT is committed to your success. The University has determined that the following behaviors increase your chances of succeeding:

- Show up
- Find support
- Take control
- Be prepared
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• Get involved
• Be persistent

ADA statement
The University of North Texas makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide you with an accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding your specific needs in a course. You may request accommodations at any time, however, ODA notices of accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. Students are strongly encouraged to deliver letters of accommodation during faculty office hours or by appointment. Faculty members have the authority to ask students to discuss such letters during their designated office hours to protect the privacy of the student. For additional information see the Office of Disability Accommodation website at http://www.unt.edu/oda. You may also contact them by phone at 940.565.4323.

Student perceptions of teaching (SPOT)
Completion of the online form students’ perceptions of teaching is a requirement for all organized classes at UNT. This short survey will be made available to you at the end of the semester, providing you a chance to comment on how this class is taught. I am very interested in the feedback I get from students, as I work continually to improve my teaching. I consider your completion of this online survey to be an important part of your participation in this class.

Emergency notification and procedures
UNT uses a system called Eagle Alert to quickly notify you with critical information in the event of an emergency (i.e., severe weather, campus closing, and health and public safety emergencies like chemical spills, fires, or violence). The system sends voice messages (and text messages upon permission) to the phones of all active faculty staff, and students. Please make certain to update your phone numbers at www.my.unt.edu. Some helpful emergency preparedness actions include: 1) know the evacuation routes and severe weather shelter areas in the buildings where your classes are held, 2) determine how you will contact family and friends if phones are temporarily unavailable, and 3) identify where you will go if you need to evacuate the Denton area suddenly. In the event of a university closure, please refer to Blackboard for contingency plans for covering course materials.

Retention of student records
Student records pertaining to this course are maintained in a secure location by the instructor of record. All records such as exams, answer sheets (with keys), and written papers submitted during the duration of the course are kept for at least one calendar year after course completion. Coursework completed via the Blackboard on-line system, including grading information and comments, is also stored in a safe electronic
environment. You have a right to view your individual record; however, information about your records will not be divulged to other individuals without the proper written consent. You are encouraged to review the Public Information Policy and F.E.R.P.A. (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act) laws and the university’s policy in accordance with those mandates at the following link:

http://essc.unt.edu/registrar/ferpa.html
Unit I – Orientation to the profession
August 31, 2017 – Introduction and syllabus review

September 7, 2017 – Professionals, accountability, and ethics
  • Chapter 1, “Professional knowledge and skill,” pp. 17-
https://www.nature.com/news/predatory-journals-recruit-fake-editor-1.21662

In-class exercise: White supremacists on campus

September 14, 2017 – Selection and socialization into a profession
Gumport (Chapter 5) in BA&G

In-class exercise: What do you want from a dissertation chair and committee?

September 21, 2017 – Fundamental tools of the profession – APA basics, doctoral student handbook, and UNT Libraries
*Meet in Willis Library #136*
Familiarize yourself with APA resources at http://www.library.unt.edu/help/tutorials/apa-style-sciences
UNT higher education program doctoral student handbook

September 28, 2017 – Explicit and latent missions: What is higher education about?
Altbach (Chapter 7) in BA&G
Geiger (Chapter 1) in BA&G


**In-class exercise: Professional growth and uncomfortable content**

October 5, 2017 – Higher education as a technical enterprise and a social system


Students present preliminary paper ideas in class

Unit II – Broad topics in the study of higher education

October 12, 2017 – Student opportunity and success

Bahr and Gross (Chapter 16) in BA&G


Smith (Chapter 13) in BA&G

Schudde and Goldrick-Rab (Chapter 12) in BA&G

Presenters choose one of:

Crisp, G., Doran, E., & Reyes, N. A. S. (2017). Predicting graduation rates at 4-year broad access institutions using a Bayesian modeling approach. *Research in Higher Education*. [https://doi.org/10.1007/s11162-017-9459-x](https://doi.org/10.1007/s11162-017-9459-x)


**October 19, 2017 – Faculty, academic work, and learning**

Altbach (Chapter 4) in BA&G  
Neumann and Campbell (Chapter 14) in BA&G  
O’Neil (Chapter 2) in BA&G

**Presenters choose one of:**


**October 26, 2017 – Administration and governance**

Bastedo (Chapter 3) in BA&G  

Eckel and Kezar (Chapter 6) in BA&G

**Presenters choose one of:**


**November 2, 2017 – Governments, money and competition**
Johnstone (Chapter 11) in BA&G
McGuinness (Chapter 9) in BA&G
Mumper et al. (Chapter 8) in BA&G
Slaughter and Rhoades (Chapter 17) in BA&G

Presenters choose one of:

November 9, 2017 – No class – Scholarly essay due to barrett.taylor@unt.edu by 5.30 pm

Unit III – Toward your own contribution to the study of higher education
November 16, 2017 – Alumnae panel: From coursework to dissertation

November 23, 2017 – No class – Thanksgiving holiday

November 30, 2017 – Final presentations, part i

December 7, 2017 – Final presentations, part ii

December 11, 2017 – Final paper due to barrett.taylor@unt.edu by noon