This course investigates the federal role in education since our nation's founding, with a primary focus on primary and secondary education policy from the 1960s to the 2000s. Central questions include: What role should the national government play in encouraging, equalizing, or administering American education? What role can the government play, given institutional and legal constraints? How have federalism or legislative obstructionism impeded reform in the past, and how have some initiatives successfully navigated the system to establish themselves in the American school system? Answering these questions requires investigation of racial desegregation, compensatory education for low-income students, and special education for the disabled, as well as “local control,” policy implementation and evaluation, accountability, block grants, interest groups and lobbies, the idea of nationally standardized testing, and the different goals assigned to public schooling in the United States (e.g., social integration/inclusion, individual academic achievement, etc.), the federal legislative process, the role of the civil service, the actions of federal courts, and inter-governmental relations at the local, state, and national level.

**Required Texts**

We will be reading the following texts in their entirety. Students are not expected to purchase all of them; I would recommend buying those of particular interest and reading others on physical reserve at McKeldin library. All other readings, marked with an [R], are available on electronic reserve through our course website, at elms.umd.edu.


**Grading**

**Weekly Reading Responses (25% of final grade)**
Each week, students will need to post a short response to the assigned reading. The response should provide an overview of the author’s argument, at least one direct reference to the reading, and one question that we might take up in discussion. Students are encouraged to respond to classmates’ posts, both before and after class discussion. **Responses are due no later than midnight on Sunday, providing classmates time to review and respond to them before Tuesday’s meeting. Responses will be graded for accuracy, insight, and clarity of writing. Students may skip one week’s response without penalty.**

**Class Participation (25% of final grade)**
Students are expected to arrive in class each week with a hard copy of the reading, ready to pose or respond to the discussion questions posted online. Strong participation grades reflect a willingness to engage in sustained discussion on a topic and answer difficult questions, as well as mastery of the reading. Knowing that our class is a community of shared deliberation, students should demonstrate generosity and respect to their classmates; all should feel equally welcome to engage. If you need to miss class, please send a brief email in advance.

**Final Paper (Draft 5%; Full Paper 45% of final grade)**
Students will need to write a final paper of twenty-five to thirty-five pages (inclusive of notes) on a topic relevant both to course content and to their own research interests. The paper should be impeccably well written—of publication quality—and should include comprehensive research, either in the form of a literature review and/or original work. Possible topics include critical analyses of a particular form of school governance, historical or philosophical appraisals of current school governance initiatives, or policy proposals for school governance in the future. Please note that the titles below are merely an introduction into the rich literature of school governance, which encompasses political science, economics, history, and many other fields. Court cases, state and federal legislation, and social movements all offer innumerable possibilities for meaningful research.

Students are encouraged to discuss their topic with the professor before getting underway. **A complete draft of the paper is due in class on April 24th. Final papers are due in my mailbox by 4:00 P.M. on Friday, May 12th. Late work will not be accepted without a prearranged extension.**

**Week 1—Introductions; The Early National Period, 1781-1800**
- Duffey, “Northwest Ordinance as a Constitutional Document” [R]
Contest’[R]
• Scribner, “False Start: The Failure of an Early Race to the Top” [R]

Also recommended—
Conant, Thomas Jefferson and the Development of American Public Education

Week 2—Reconstruction, 1862-1876
• DuBois, Black Reconstruction in America: An Essay Toward a History of the
Part Which Black Folk Played in the Attempt to Reconstruct Democracy in
America, 1860-1880 (1935): 637-669. (R)
• Cox and Cox, “General O.O. Howard and the ‘Misrepresented Bureau’” (1953)
in Donald G. Nieman, ed. The Freedmen’s Bureau and Black Freedom (1994):
105-134. (R)
• Anderson, “Ex-Slaves and the Rise of Universal Education in the South, 1860-
• Browne, “The Expenses are Borne by Parents’: Freedmen’s Schools in
407-422. (R)
• Goldhaber, “A Mission Unfulfilled: Freedmen’s Education in North Carolina,

Also recommended—
Blassingame, “The Union Army as an Educational Institution for Negroes, 1862
Alton Hornsby, Jr. “The Freedmen’s Bureau Schools in Texas, 1865-1870,”
Donald G. Nieman, “Andrew Johnson, the Freedmen’s Bureau, and the Problem
of Equal Rights, 1865-1866” (1978) in Donald G. Nieman, ed. The Freedmen’s
of Opportunity” (1981) in Donald G. Nieman, ed., The Freedmen’s Bureau and
Paul A. Cimbala, “Making Good Yankees: The Freedmen’s Bureau and Education in
Reconstruction Georgia, 1865-1870” (1985) in Donald G. Nieman, ed. The
Robert C. Morris, “Educational Reconstruction,” in Eric Anderson and Alfred A.
Moss, Jr., eds. The Facts of Reconstruction: Essays in Honor of John Hope

Week 3—General Aid, 1870s-1890s
• Lee, The Struggle for Federal Aid: First Phase (New York: Teachers College
1949).
• Edwards, “Federal Relations to Education,” The Courts and the Public Schools (pp. 1-22) [R]

**Week 4—Equal Educational Opportunity: Racial Desegregation**

• Balkin, *What Brown v. Board of Education Should Have Said*

Also recommended—


Week 5—The Elementary and Secondary Education Act

- Jeffrey, *Education for Children of the Poor*


Week 6—Head Start

- Sanders, *A Chance for Change*


**Week 7—Implementing Federal Policy in the 1970s**
- Nelson, *Elusive Ideal*

**Week 8—Education for Children With Disabilities**
- O’Gara, “‘Where Are the Children?’: The New Data Game at HEW,” *Washington Monthly* (June 1979), 35-38. (R)
- Ong-Dean, *Distinguishing Disability: Parents, Privilege, and Special Education* (2009), 13-38, 113-168. (R)

**Week 9— Equal Educational Opportunity: Funding**
- Reed, *On Equal Terms*

Also recommended—

Week 10—A Nation at Risk
• Bell, The Thirteenth Man

Also recommended—

Week 11—Origins of NCLB
• Rhodes, An Education in Politics

Kaestle and Lodewick, To Educate a Nation: Federal and National Strategies of School Reform (2007)
Lorraine M. McDonnell, Margaret J. McLaughlin, and Patricia Morison, eds., *Educating One and All: Students with Disabilities and Standards-Based Reform* (1997)
Elizabeth H. DeBray, Kathryn A McDermott, and Priscilla Wolhstetter, eds.
Maris Vinovskis, *From A Nation at Risk to No Child Left Behind: National Education Goals and the Creation of Federal Education Policy* (2009)

**Week 12—The Data Game**
- Vinovskis, *Overseeing the Nation’s Report Card* [R]
- Weiss and Gruber, “The Managed Irrelevance of Federal Education Statistics” [R]
- Bracey, “The Big Tests” [R]

**Week 13—Going High (and Low)**

Integrating Post-Secondary Education:
- Carnevale, *From Change 2008, “College for All?”*
- Murray, “Should the Obama Generation Drop Out?”
- Rosenbaum, “All Good Jobs Don't Require a College Degree”

Integrating Preschool:
- Rose, “Where Does Preschool Belong?” in *To Educate a Nation*
- Burke and Sheffied, “Universal Preschool’s Empty Promises”
- Whitehurst and Klein, “Do We Already Have Universal Preschool?”

**Week 14—New Directions for Equity?**
- Hutt and Tang, “The New Educational Malpractice Litigation” [R]
• *Vergara v. California* [R]
• Brown, “Civil Rights Group Makes Legal Case” [R]