

ETHN 189—CALIFORNIA’S PUBLIC EDUCATION CRISIS: A TEAM-TAUGHT COURSE

Fridays, 12-2:50, Comunidad Room, Cross Cultural Center

Course Instructor: Yen Le Espiritu

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

The future of California’s institution of higher education is now in the deepest crisis of its history. This team-taught course provides a critical, historical, comparative, global and multidisciplinary examination of this public education crisis. Topics covered include California’s 1960 Master Plan for Higher Education, the material and cultural forces behind the privatization of higher education, the impact of the withdrawal of state responsibility for public education, and the progressive student, staff and faculty coalitions that have emerged to demand high quality, affordable, and accessible higher education for all qualified students. An explicit goal of the course is to train students to be advocate scholars who work not only to inform but also to persuade.

REQUIREMENTS:

***Note: All readings are available through E-Reserve.**

- 1) **Poster Assignment:** Explore the Center for the Study of Political Graphics website. <http://www.politicalgraphics.org/home.html>. The center has a large collection of political posters from around the world, as well as links to contemporary political poster makers. Locate three posters that you think are effective and explain why (1 page).
Due date: Friday, April 16
- 2) **Midterm:** Take-home midterm, 4-5pp. Midterm will ask students to reflect on the larger question of education, equity, and privatization, citing readings from at least two of the weeks' assignments.
Due Friday, May 7
- 3) **Video Testimonials assignment:** Explore the database of video testimonials with faculty, students, and staff on the budget cuts put together by Lauren Berliner and Andy Rice <http://www.youtube.com/user/ucsdgaribaldi#p/u>. Select two videos that you consider to be especially effective and explain why (1 page).
Due date: Friday, May 21
- 4) **Final Assignment:** As advocate scholars, students are asked to produce a final activist media project—poster, video, performance, etc.—that could be used in our ongoing struggles. The poster and video testimonial assignments are meant to prepare you for this assignment. We challenge you to produce a final media project that would be directed at a particular audience that has not yet been central to movements for public education (scientists, for example).
Due date: Project Presentations last day of class—June 4.
- 5) **Advocate Scholar Portfolio:** As advocate scholars, students are asked to actively participate in various activities to “save” public education: writing letters to the editors to keep media’s attention on the budget cuts; join the student coalition group; gather signature for the California Democracy Act; organize in dorm buildings; organize your own teach-ins etc. Please keep track of your activities throughout the quarter and submit an advocate scholar portfolio on the last day of class, June 4.

Grading:

Poster Assignment	10%
Midterm	30%
Video Testimonial Assignment	10%
Final Media Assignment	35%
Advocate Scholar Portfolio	15%

WEEK 1—APRIL 2

Introduction – Yen Espiritu (Ethnic Studies)

**Between Crisis and Opportunity: The University of California in Historical Perspective—
Danny Widener (History)**

Moments of crisis are also moments of opportunity. Nowhere is this more true than in California, where, since its founding more than 100 years ago, the University of California has been a key factor in shaping the direction of state, national, and international politics. This presentation will explore how previous moments of instability have led to dramatic changes—often for the better—on university campuses.

Reading:

UCSD Faculty Coalition Statement. 2009. “Education Is a Public Good.”

WEEK 2—APRIL 9

Access and Affordability of the University of California—Ákos Róna-Tas (Sociology)

In the last 25 years the price of higher education has increased over four hundred percent, three times faster than the median family income. Is UC still affordable? How does it compare to other schools? What happens to access when tuition rises? How has the composition of the student body changed?

Readings:

Nicholas Barr. 2004. “Higher Education Funding.” *Oxford Review of Economic Policy*, Vol. 20, No. 2.

Michael Mumper. January 2003. “The Future of College Access: The Declining Role of Public Higher Education in Promoting Equal Opportunity.” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*. Vol. 585, pp. 97-117.

Access and Affordability of the Cal State System and Community Colleges—Niki Santorelli (City College, AS).

Video Testimonials of Budget Cuts on Students, Faculty, and Staff-- Lauren Berliner and Andy Rice

WEEK 3—APRIL 16

Impact of the Budget Crisis on K-12 Education—Bud Mehan (CREATE) and Dr. Tony Burks (School Improvement Officer, San Diego Unified School District)

The budget crisis in California is having a considerable negative impact on K-12 education. Because the State government officials seem to lack the political will to raise revenue to maintain the quality of public education, schools are forced to make drastic cuts, including: laying off counselors, maintenance personnel, librarians, administrators--even classroom teachers. The implications of this approach for educational equity and excellence concerns will be discussed.

Readings:

EdSource. “Local Revenues for Schools: Limits and Options in California.” September 2009.

EdSource. “The Basics of California’s School Finance System.” January 2009.

EdSource. "School Finance Highlights 2009-10: The Impact of the Fiscal Crisis on California Public Schools." January 2010.

WEEK 4—APRIL 23

UC Budget 101—Jeff Elman (Dean—Division of Social Sciences)

This presentation will discuss the many funding sources for UC (and UCSD); the historical constraints on how funds are spent; and the process by which the budget is determined. It will focus in particular on funding for the core academic activities of teaching and research.

The Impact of Budget Cuts on Staff—Shelley Marquez (Chief Administrative Officer at the Center for Research in Language, the Institute for Neural Computation and the Kavli Institute for Brain and Mind)

WEEK 5—APRIL 30

Neoliberal Restructuring of Universities--The international context—

This session will focus on showing that the California education crisis is neither local nor coincidental, but part of a larger process of privatization of public spaces and goods. We will show how this affects public education in various parts of the world and how the different modes of resistance created in response might help us in our struggle here.

Readings:

Background:

Grace Hong, "*The Future of Our Worlds*": Black Feminism and the Politics of Knowledge in the University under Globalization

<http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/meridians/summary/v008/8.2.hong.html>

Cris Shore, "Reforming New Zealand's universities: reflections on the production of academic subjects"

<http://www.nomadit.co.uk/easa/easa08/panels.php5?PanelID=251>

Overview Global Protests:

2008: http://fading-hope.blog-city.com/students_protest_worldwide_against_commercialisation_bologn.htm

2009: <http://www.emancipating-education-for-all.org/content/overview-education-protests-2009>

The South African Example: University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg

Resist Wits 2001 - <http://resistwits.tripod.com/>

"Putting Profit First" - <http://resistwits.tripod.com/reswsowet7sept.htm>

"Cleaned Out: Outsourcing At Wits University" -

<http://www.labournet.net/world/0108/wits1.html>

The Outsourced University - <http://resistwits.tripod.com/outsourc.htm>

"'Chaos' at Wits during student protests" - <http://www.mg.co.za/article/2007-10-03-chaos-at-wits-during-student-protests>

"Wits protest continues" -

http://www.news24.com/Content/SouthAfrica/News/1059/f0bd3b6287aa4a23805399408530810/16-09-2009%2005-34/Wits_protest_continues

"Police called in as Wits students protest fee hikes" - <http://www.mg.co.za/article/2009-09-16-police-called-in-as-wits-students-protest-fee-hikes>

The European Example:

"Elitism, Philistinism and Populism: the sorry tale of British Higher Education Policy" -

<http://www.opendemocracy.net/ourkingdom/jeremy-gilbert/elitism-philistinism-and-populism-sorry-tale-of-british-higher-education-p>

"Clampdown on overseas student visas sparks funding concerns" -

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2010/feb/11/clampdown-overseas-student-visas-funding>

"The universities are burning" – huge student mobilisations in Austria -

<http://www.marxist.com/universities-burning-student-mobilisations-austria.htm>

"International Student Movement" website - <http://emancipating-education-for-all.org/>

"Stop the Cuts - defend Sussex" - <http://defendsussex.wordpress.com/>

"discussion paper" to all education movements worldwide! -

http://www.emancipating-education-for-all.org/worldwide_discussion_paper

WEEK 6—MAY 7

The crisis for the humanities: Lisa Lowe (Literature)

In the second half of the 20th century, the traditional role of the humanities in forming national citizens in language, history, and culture was transformed by democratization and globalization of the public university, on the one hand, and its increasing privatization and corporatization, on the other. In the present crisis, in which the university is dramatically reorganized by market priorities away from its earlier public mission, how do we reinvent the significance of the humanities as a 21st-century public good? How can languages, world history, social values, and global ethics form parts of its mission?

Readings:

Christopher Newfield, *Unmaking the Public University: The Forty-Year Assault on the Middle Class* (Harvard UP, 2008), Chs. 1-2 (19-47), 7 (107-122), 13 (208-219), 16 (265-275).

School-to-Prison: Pipeline or Canal? Dennis Childs (Literature)

In this section of the course we will discuss the degree to which the prison industrial complex (PIC) represents a central component of what communities of color, activists, and radical academics refer to as "the war at home." Along these lines, we will focus on how the main "raw material" in the industrialization of punishment is college aged youth, and how the mass incarceration of young people represents what is now often described as the "School-to-Prison Pipeline." We will also critically engage with the connections between Arnold Schwarzenegger's plan to privatize prisons in California with the trend toward privatizing public education. Some overarching questions will be: What are the

economic, ideological, and cultural connections between modern imprisonment and chattel slavery? What does the intersection of capitalism, white supremacy, patriarchy, and homophobia have to do with the fact that over 2.3 million people are in cages in the U.S.? What can youth--as the main target of the prison state--do to combine anti-PIC activism with grassroots efforts to rescue public education?

Readings:

Victor Rios, "The Hyper-Criminalization of Black and Latino Male Youth in the Era of Mass Incarceration," *Souls*, 8: 2, 40 — 54.

Dean Spade, "'It's War In Here': A Report on the Treatment of Transgender and Intersex People in New York State Men's Prisons," *The Sylvia Rivera Law Project*, 2007.

Fact Sheets:

1. "California's Investment in Incarceration Instead of Higher Education," CURB (Californians United for a Responsible Budget)

2. "Zero Tolerance Discipline, Discrimination, and the School to Prison Pipeline," The New York Civil Liberties Union (NYCLU)

WEEK 7—MAY 14

California Politics and Higher Education--Isaac Martin (Sociology) and Marisa Abrajano (Political Science)

This session will discuss the politics of the state budget process as it affects public higher education. This will include a discussion of California political institutions and their effects on the budget. It will also include a discussion of the growing polarization of the public and politicians and its affect on legislative gridlock both in the US and California.

Readings:

Thad Kousser. 2010. "Does Partisan Polarization Lead to Policy Gridlock in California?" *California Journal of Politics and Policy*, vol. 2, no. 2, article 4.
<<http://www.bepress.com/cjpp/vol2/iss2/4/>>f

Jack Citrin. 2009. "Introduction: Proposition 13 and the Transformation of California Government." Pp. 1-10 in Jack Citrin and Isaac William Martin, eds. *After the Tax Revolt*. Berkeley Public Policy Press.

Jean Ross. 2009. "Proposition 13 Thirty Years Later: What Has It Meant for Governance and Public Services?" Pp. 135-140 in Citrin and Martin, eds. *After the Tax Revolt*. Berkeley Public Policy Press.

WEEK 8, MAY 21

The Media: Representations and Activist Interventions--Curtis Marez (Ethnic Studies) and Brian Goldfarb (Communication)

Media representations play an important role in conflicts over spending and educational

policy. This session will consider historical and recent media coverage of state education funding as well as activist uses of media as a tool for organizing, outreach, and presentation of counter narratives.

Viewing Assignment: Students should watch assigned video clips, url to be announced.

WEEK 9: MAY 28

Role of Union in Academia—Luis Martin-Cabrera (Literature)

As Universities (public and private) increasingly adopt a corporate model, the role of unions become vital. In this session I would use my experiences as a union organizer at Yale and the University of Michigan to open a discussion on the different possibilities to resist and change this model. I will use these very disparate experiences as a way to reflect on the labor structure of the university under a corporate model. We will pay special attention to the intensive exploitation of students and part-timers both inside and outside the classroom as a tactic to channel funds toward other areas of the university (i.e. the hiring of a managerial class).

Readings:

Michael Denning. 2004. "Neither Capitalist nor American: The Democracy as Social Movement" in *Culture in the Age of Three Worlds*. New York and London: Verso, pp. 209-226.

"Casual Nation." A Report by the Coalition of Graduate Employee Unions.

Tactical Media, Viral and Digital Activism—Ricardo Dominguez (Visual Arts/CalIT2)

What can we learn from the histories of tactical media in the 1980's and 1990's to activate, expand and re-configure the current phase of digital and viral activism now? The presentation will focus specifically on electronic civil disobedience, hacktivism(s), activist gestures, and net.swarming.

Readings:

Critical Art Ensemble – 1995 Electronic Civil Disobedience (Chapter 1).
<http://www.critical-art.net/books/ecd/index.html>

Jill Lane. Digital Zapatistas (TDR -2000).
<http://www.thing.net/~rdom/ucsd/DigitalZapatistas.pdf>

Sasha Costanza-Chock (2001). Mapping The Repertoire of Electronic Contention.
http://www.scf.usc.edu/~costanza/electronic_rep_draft.pdf

Ricardo Dominguez. Electronic Civil Disobedience: Inventing the Future of Online Agitprop Theater. PMLA, Volume 124, Number 5, October 2009, pp. 1806–1812 (7). (E-Reserve)

Videos on Tactical Media. <http://www.informationactivism.org/>

WEEK 10: JUNE 4

Student presentations