

GPPA 430: EDUCATION POLICY AROUND THE WORLD

University of California, San Diego | Winter 2024

January 5, 2024

Prof. Agustina Paglayan

Email: apaglayan@ucsd.edu. Use email to contact me, not Canvas messages.
OH: Fri 12:30-2:30pm. Sign-up required here: <https://calendly.com/apaglayan/oh>
OH location: <https://ucsd.zoom.us/j/2995458202>

Lectures

Day & Time: Fri 9:00am -11:50am
Zoom link: <https://ucsd.zoom.us/j/98835837872> (sign in to Zoom using your UCSD email)

I Course description and learning goals

Education systems play a crucial role in shaping individual wellbeing and the wealth of nations. Around the world, the provision of education falls under the purview of governments; these regulate, fund, and often directly manage schools. They set policies on what should be taught in schools, who can become a teacher, how teachers should be compensated, how much funding should be allocated to schools, whether private providers are eligible for public subsidies, whether and how school performance should be assessed, and more. These education policy decisions vary considerably across countries and, sometimes, within them. In this course we will examine how these decisions shape education systems' performance, and why governments make the decisions they make. The focus will be on primary and secondary education in developing countries, although occasionally we will also discuss education in the U.S. and other developed countries.

By the end of the course, students should be able to:

- Describe the main trends and challenges facing education systems around the world today;
- Assess what the evidence says about the effectiveness of common policy proposals to address these challenges (e.g., compensating teachers based on their students' test scores, giving information to parents about schools' performance, contracting out the management of schools to the private sector, spending more on education, etc.); and
- Make politically-attuned education policy recommendations.

In addition, the course seeks to promote the development of the following general skills:

- Communication skills, both oral and written;
- Resourcefulness and independent research skills;
- Quantitative analysis skills;
- Critical thinking skills (which will be applied to assess the logic of arguments and the quality of the evidence used to support them);
- Synthesis skills;

- Professional development skills including, for example, the ability to participate thoughtfully and respectfully in group discussions, write clearly, meet deadlines, and use appropriate language in all communications).

The course will be taught remotely and synchronously at this link: <https://ucsd.zoom.us/j/98835837872>. Room RBC 1301 will be available to students all quarter during the assigned class time. Make sure that you join the class sessions using your individual UCSD Zoom account; this is the only way I can verify that you attended class.

3 Expectations and Grading

- Participation in in-class discussion of readings (30% of final grade). Each week has on average three required academic articles and/or book chapters. Make sure you have carefully read and digested *all* required readings *before* each class; your ability to engage in discussions of these readings will form the basis of your participation grade. You can have one unexcused absence (e.g., to attend a job interview, wedding, etc.) before it reflects on your grade. Attending class is a prerequisite to earn participation credit. You can miss up to 15 minutes of a given class due to connectivity issues; if you miss more than that, that class will count as an unexcused absence. However, attendance is insufficient to earn participation credit. Full credit for participation requires (a) coming prepared to class and (b) making thoughtful contributions to the in-class discussion of the readings in small-group *and* whole-class discussions.

- Twitter threads (10%). For any two weeks of the quarter between weeks 2 and 9, write a Twitter thread about *one* of the assigned readings for that week, where you summarize and assess the reading as you would for those who haven't read it. Your thread should articulate research findings so that they are as accessible as possible to policymakers and the general public. Your thread should include the following elements:

1. What is the article's main claim? (maximum 150 characters)
2. What Table or Figure provides the strongest support for that claim? (maximum 150 characters)
3. Do you buy the claim? (maximum 150 characters)
4. What is your overall assessment of the article? (maximum 150 characters)

We will use these threads to jumpstart the discussion of the readings.

Submission instructions:

- Twitter threads are due by 3:00pm the day before each class via Canvas.
- Use the Twitter thread example posted on Canvas to format your thread.
- Save your Twitter thread as a PDF document (no Word documents or other formats).
- Name your file as follows: [ARTICLE'S FIRST AUTHOR'S LAST NAME], [ARTICLE'S SECOND AUTHOR'S LAST NAME], ..., [ARTICLE'S LAST AUTHOR'S LAST NAME]. For example, if I was writing a Twitter thread for Duflo, Esther, Rachel Glennerster, and Michael Kremer. 2006. "Using Randomization in Development Economics Research: A Toolkit," the name of my Twitter thread file would be Duflo, Glennerster, Kremer.pdf.
- Do not include your name or other identifying information anywhere on the PDF.
- Include a total character count at the end of the thread.

- Policy Proposal (40%). Write a concise policy memo (2 pages single-spaced, 12-point font + Appendix if relevant) where you provide evidence-based and politically-attuned education policy recommendations to a country of your choice from the following list: Mexico, Brazil, Uganda, Kenya, Thailand, Indonesia, Jordan, Hungary, India, the United States. The audience for the report is the Minister or Secretary of Education. A good memo should be chock-full of relevant facts while at the same time being synthetic and to the point. You can work on this assignment individually or in pairs but need to notify me of your choice no later than **February 2**.

First submission (15%). Due no later than **February 15 by 9am** via Canvas. Write a 1-page policy proposal where you (1) provide a diagnosis of the current state of primary and/ or secondary schooling in the country taking into consideration (a) enrollment, (b) learning outcomes, (c) funding, (d) teachers and teacher policies, (e) the governance structure, and anything else that is relevant to the country you choose, and (2) provide a policy recommendation based on a diagnosis of the country's main needs in the education sector. You can also include a 1-page Appendix with graphs or tables if these are useful to make your point.

Second submission (25%). Add 1-page section that discusses the country's political context, especially any features of this context that might be relevant to the education policy-making process. Then, adjust section 2 of your first submission to improve the political feasibility of your policy recommendations. The full report can be no more than 2 pages single-spaced. Due no later than **March 13 by 9am** via Canvas.

- Final Exam (20%). The final exam will be administered via Canvas on **Thursday, March 21 from 11:30am to 2:30pm**. The exam will be open-book.

Submitting written work and course policy on the use of Artificial Intelligence tools. (1) Students agree that by taking this course they agree to have all written assignments reviewed for textual similarity and plagiarism using Turnitin or another tool chosen by the instructor. (2) Although Artificial Intelligence tools (e.g. ChatGPT) can be useful for many tasks, in this course the use of Artificial Intelligence tools or any other external aids *at any point* when producing written assignments or oral comments constitutes plagiarism and is therefore grounds for failing the course. (3) The instructor retains the right to evaluate students orally to determine the student's mastery of course materials and/or to determine whether a student's submitted work complies with academic integrity standards. The instructor may use the information gathered from an oral evaluation as an input to determine the grade on a student's assignment and/or to report a case of academic integrity violation to the Office of Academic Integrity.

Late submissions. Plan ahead to avoid late submissions. Late submissions will be penalized by 2.5 percentage points (p.p.) every 60 minutes late. E.g. if you submit your assignment 1 to 60 minutes late, you will have a 2.5-p.p. grade reduction; 61 to 120 minutes late, a 5-p.p. reduction, etc. No assignments will be accepted more than 48 hours after the due date without an approved and documented excuse. Acceptable excuses include illness, which must be documented by the UCSD health service or your physician, or a death or serious illness in the immediate family. Please notify me in writing of your need for an extension and I will put you in contact with Nancy Gilson as she has responsibility for collecting documentation.

Contesting a grade. I hope there will be no reason to contest a grade. However, if you strongly feel that your grade on an assignment does not reflect the quality of your work, you may appeal through the

following procedure: Write a one-page, single-spaced memo that explains, in as much detail as possible, why you think you should have received a different grade. Email me your memo, your graded assignment, and a letter in which you formally request a re-grade. I will reevaluate the work and assign a new grade, which may be higher, lower, or identical to the one you originally received. This new grade will be final. Grade complaints will not be entertained beyond seven calendar days after an assignment or exam has been returned graded to you.

4 Academic honesty

All suspected cases of lying, cheating, plagiarism, or other violations of academic integrity standards will be referred to the Office of Academic Integrity. Any violation of UCSD's academic honesty policy for which a student is found responsible will be considered grounds for failing the course. You are expected to be the sole author of all your individual work, and to properly attribute ideas, quotations, and sources. If you are unsure how to do this, please come to office hours or ask in class. If you are unsure what constitutes cheating, plagiarism, or other violations, please see UCSD's [academic honesty policy](#).

5 Inclusive learning environment

I am fully committed to creating a learning environment that supports diversity of thought, perspectives, experiences, and identities. I urge each of you to contribute your unique perspectives to discussions of course questions, themes, and materials so that we can learn from them, and from each other. If you should ever feel excluded, or unable to fully participate in class for any reason, please let me know.

6 Requesting accommodations

Students requesting accommodations for this course due to a disability must have a current Authorization for Accommodation (AFA) letter issued by the Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD: <http://disabilities.ucsd.edu>), which is now located on the 3rd Floor of Pepper Canyon Hall. AFA letters are now provided to Faculty electronically by OSD, per student request. Contact Nancy Gilson for further information.

7 Email policy

I will reply to emails within two business days, usually a lot sooner, but if you do not hear back from me within two business days, please email me again as it will mean I did not receive your first email.

8 Office hours

Office hours are an opportunity for you to discuss course materials, assignments, career aspirations, feedback about how the course is going, etc. You set the agenda. You can come to office hours in pairs or groups if you find that helpful. Office hour times, location, and sign-up sheet can be found on page 1 of this syllabus.

9 Sexual Misconduct/Title IX Statement

UC San Diego prohibits sexual violence and sexual harassment and will respond promptly to reports of misconduct. If you wish to speak confidentially about an incident of sexual misconduct, please contact CARE at the Sexual Assault Resources Center at (858) 534-5793. Students should be aware that faculty members are considered responsible employees and are not a confidential resource; as such, if you disclose an incident of sexual misconduct to a faculty member, they have an obligation to report it to UC San Diego's Title IX office, the Office for the Prevention of Harassment & Discrimination (OPHD). To learn more about sexual misconduct, visit: <https://students.ucsd.edu/sponsor/sarc/index.html>. To report an incident to the University, please contact OPHD at ophd@ucsd.edu.

10 Additional resources

- Writing Hub: <https://commons.ucsd.edu/students/writing/index.html>
- Library Help, eReserves and research tools: <https://library.ucsd.edu/ask-us/triton-ed.html>
- Mental Health Services: <https://caps.ucsd.edu>
- UC San Diego Basic Needs Resources: <https://basicneeds.ucsd.edu/>

11 Schedule and required readings

This section provides an outline of the topic, motivating questions, and list of required readings for each class. I suggest you do the readings in the order I have listed them. (Recommended readings are also listed for those interested in reading more about a particular topic; we will cover some of these during lecture, but they are optional.) If there are revisions of the syllabus, I will let you know via Canvas.

A few required readings should be done as skim-reading; when this is indicated, you should devote 30 minutes max to understand the reading's main findings and how the authors arrived at these findings.

All journal articles should be downloadable through the links provided below, which are accessible to UCSD users. If you have trouble with a link, use the full citation information provided below to find the article via Google Scholar.

PART I: Education Patterns

W1 Jan-12 Schooling and Learning

Topics: The expansion of schooling over time. Schooling versus learning. Measures of learning. Monetary returns to schooling. Non-monetary benefits of schooling (e.g., health, fertility, political participation). EFA, MDGs and SDGs. The challenge of educational research. Primer on causal inference methods.

Required readings:

World Development Report 2018. *Learning to Realize Education's Promise*. Chapters 1 & 3. [\[link\]](#)

Duflo, Esther. 2001. "Schooling and labor market consequences of school construction in Indonesia: Evidence from an unusual policy experiment." *The American Economic Review*, 91(4), 795-813. **Skim read only.** [\[link\]](#)

Recommended:

Duflo, Esther, Rachel Glennerster, and Michael Kremer. 2006. "Using Randomization in Development Economics Research: A Toolkit." *NBER Technical Working Paper*. FIRST 15 PAGES (up to "Publication Bias") [[link](#)]

Murnane, Richard, and John Willett. 2011. *Methods matter: Improving causal inference in educational and social science research*. Chapters 1 and 4. Oxford University Press.

PART II: Education Policy

W2 Jan-19 Teacher Incentives

Topics: Teacher absenteeism. Monitoring. Pay-for-performance. The interaction between teacher incentives and education inputs. The limits of incentives.

Required readings:

Duflo, Esther, Rema Hanna, and Stephen P. Ryan. 2012. "Incentives work: Getting teachers to come to school." *American Economic Review* 102(4): 1241-78. [[link](#)]

Muralidharan, Karthik, and Venkatesh Sundararaman. 2011. "Teacher performance pay: Experimental evidence from India." *Journal of Political Economy* 119(1): 39-77. [[link](#)]

Belles-Obrero, Cristina, and Maria Lombardi. 2019. "Teacher Performance Pay and Student Learning: Evidence from a Nationwide Program in Peru." IZA Working Paper. [[link](#)]

Mbiti, Isaac, Karthik Muralidharan, Mauricio Romero, Youdi Schipper, Constantine Manda, and Rakesh Rajani. 2019. "Inputs, incentives, and complementarities in education: Experimental evidence from Tanzania." *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 134(3): 1627-1673. [[link](#)]

Recommended:

Bold, Tessa, Mwangi Kimenyi, Germano Mwabu, Alice Ng'ang'a and Justin Sandefur. 2018. "Experimental Evidence on Scaling Up Education Reforms in Kenya." *Journal of Public Economics*. [[link](#)]

Beteille, Tara, Mary E. Breeding, and David Evans. 2021. "Teacher pay for performance: Does it really work?" *Education for Global Development*. World Bank. [[link](#)]

Behrman, Jere R., Susan W. Parker, Petra E. Todd, and Kenneth I. Wolpin. 2015. "Aligning learning incentives of students and teachers: Results from a social experiment in Mexican high schools." *Journal of Political Economy* 123(2): 325-364. [[link](#)]

Duflo, Esther, Pascaline Dupas, and Michael Kremer. 2015. "School governance, teacher incentives, and pupil-teacher ratios: Experimental evidence from Kenyan primary schools." *Journal of Public Economics* 123: 92-110. [[link](#)]

Gilligan, Daniel O., Naureen Karachiwalla, Ibrahim Kasirye, Adrienne M. Lucas, and Derek Neal. 2018. *Educator incentives and educational triage in rural primary schools*. NBER Working Paper No. 24911. [[link](#)]

W3 Jan-26 Teacher Training and Professional Development

Topics: Teacher training and recruitment. Selectivity and prestige. Who becomes a teacher. How much teachers know. Teacher professional development.

Required readings:

Duflo, Esther, and Abhijit Banerjee. October 26, 2019. “Economic incentives don’t always do what we want them to.” *New York Times*. [available on Canvas]

Bold, Tessa, Deon Filmer, Gayle Martin, Ezequiel Molina, Brian Stacy, Christophe Rockmore, Jakob Svensson, and Waly Wane. 2017. “Enrollment without Learning: Teacher Effort, Knowledge, and Skill in Primary Schools in Africa.” *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 31(4): 185-204. [[link](#)]

Bruns, Barbara, and Javier Luque. 2014. *Great Teachers: How to Raise Student Learning In Latin America and the Caribbean*. Washington, DC: The World Bank. Chapter 3. [[link](#)]

Recommended:

Evans, David, Anna Popova , Mary E. Breeding and Violeta Arancibia. 2021. “World Teachers’ Day: The Professional Development That Actually Makes a Difference.” Center for Global Development blog post. [[link](#)]

Elacqua, Gregory, Diana Hicapie, Emiliana Vegas, and Mariana Alfonso. 2018. *Profesión: profesor en América Latina ¿Por qué se perdió el prestigio docente y cómo recuperarlo?* Washington, DC: Inter-American Development Bank. [[link](#)]

W4 Feb-2 Education Spending

Topics: Education spending. Teacher salaries. Class size. ICTs.

Required readings:

Lafortune, Julien, Jesse Rothstein, and Diane Whitmore Schanzenbach. 2018. “School Finance Reform and the Distribution of Student Achievement.” *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics* 10(2): 1-26. [[link](#)]

Alva, Camila, Matteo Bobba, Gianmarco Leon, Christopher Neilson, and Marco Nieddu. 2017. “Teacher Wages, Student Achievement and the Recruitment of Talent in Rural Peru.” IZA Working Paper. [[link](#)]

De Ree, Joppe, Karthik Muralidharan, Menno Pradhan, and Halsey Rogers. 2015. "Double for nothing? The Effect of Unconditional Teachers' Salary Increases on Performance." *Quarterly Journal of Economics*. [[link](#)]

Recommended:

Evans, David K., Fei Yuan, and Deon Filmer. 2022. “Teacher pay in Africa: Evidence from 15 countries.” *World Development*. [\[link\]](#)

Richard J. Murnane, Marcus R. Waldman, John B. Willett, Maria Soledad Bos, and Emiliana Vegas. 2017. “The Consequences of Educational Voucher Reform in Chile.” NBER Working Paper 23550. [\[link\]](#)

W5 Feb-9 Governance

Topics: Private vs. public management of schools. School choice and vouchers. Quality assurance systems. Curriculum policy. Student assignment policies.

Required readings:

Hsieh, C.T. and Miguel Urquiola. 2006. “The effects of generalized school choice on achievement and stratification: Evidence from Chile’s school voucher program.” *Journal of Public Economics* 90(8): 1477-1503. [\[link\]](#)

Romero, Mauricio, Justin Sandefur, and Wayne Sandholtz. 2019. “Outsourcing education: Experimental evidence from Liberia.” *American Economic Review*. [\[link\]](#)

Romero, Mauricio, and Justin Sandefur. 2019. “Beyond Short-term Learning Gains: The Impact of Outsourcing Schools in Liberia after Three Years.” CGD Working Paper. [\[link\]](#)

Recommended:

Akmal, Maryam, Lee Crawford and Susannah Hares. October 28, 2019. “Low-Cost Private Schools: What Have We Learned in the Five Years Since the DFID Rigorous Review.” Center for Global Development. [\[link\]](#)

PART III: Education Politics

W6 Feb-16 Democracy

Required readings:

Velasco, Andrés. November 28, 2019. “Bipolar Economics.” *Project Syndicate*. [\[link\]](#)

Harding, Robin, and David Stasavage. 2013. “What Democracy Does (and Doesn’t Do) for Basic Services: School Fees, School Inputs, and African Elections.” *The Journal of Politics* 76(1): 229-245. [\[link\]](#)

Paglayan, Agustina. 2021. “The Non-Democratic Roots of Mass Education: Evidence from 200 Years.” *American Political Science Review*. [\[link\]](#)

Kramon, Eric, and Daniel Posner. 2016. “Ethnic Favoritism in Education in Kenya.” *Quarterly Journal of Political Science* 11: 1–58. [\[link\]](#)

Recommended:

Ansell, Ben. 2008. "Traders, teachers, and tyrants: democracy, globalization, and public investment in education." *International Organization* 62(2): 289-322. [[link](#)]

W7 Feb-23 Teacher Unions

Required readings:

Paglayan, Agustina. 2019. "Public-Sector Unions and the Size of Government." *American Journal of Political Science* 63(1): 21-36. [[link](#)]

Bruns, Barbara, Isabel Harbaugh Macdonald, and Ben Ross Schneider. 2019. "The politics of quality reforms and the challenges for SDGs in education." *World Development* 118: 27-38. [[link](#)]

Schleicher, Andreas. 2011. "Building a High-Quality Teaching Profession: Lessons from around the world." Chapter 4. OECD. **Skim read only.** [[link](#)]

W8 Mar-1 Demand for Education (second half)

Required readings:

Bursztyn, Leonardo. 2016. "Poverty and the political economy of public education spending: Evidence from Brazil." *Journal of the European Economic Association* 14(5): 1101-1128. [[link](#)]

Jensen, Robert. 2010. "The (Perceived) Returns to Education and the Demand for Schooling." *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 125(2): 515-548. [[link](#)] **Skim read only.**

González, Felipe. "Collective action in networks: Evidence from the Chilean student movement." Working Paper. [[link](#)]

W9 Mar-9 The "Dark Side" of Education Systems: Indoctrination and Patronage

Required readings:

Akthari, Mitra, Diana Moreira, and Laura Trucco. 2018. "Political turnover, bureaucratic turnover, and the quality of public services." Working Paper. [[link](#)]

Paglayan, Agustina. 2022. "Education or Indoctrination? The Violent Origins of Public School Systems in an Era of State-Building." *American Political Science Review*. [[link](#)]

Cantoni, Davide, Yuyu Chen, David Yang, Noam Yuchtman, and Jane Zhang. 2017. "Curriculum and Ideology." *Journal of Political Economy* 125(2): 338-392. [[link](#)]

W10 Mar-16 The Future of Education

Required readings: TBD