

**The Independent (Private) Liberal Arts College**  
**HIED 6/76601**

Spring 2008 -- Kent State University  
Wednesdays 5:30 pm to 8:15 pm in White room 124B  
(format and substantial content courtesy of Dr. Janice Gerda)

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**Overview:**

In this course, students will explore a unique type of institution in American higher education, the independent, or so-called “private” liberal arts college. We will examine these colleges from a macro level perspective, attempting to identify common themes and challenges across institutions, as well as the micro level, investigating the nature of specific examples of institutions. Primary emphasis will be on institutions that are independent of direct governmental control (private), liberal arts, residential undergraduate focused and small (2500 or fewer FTE students).

**Objectives:**

Students participating fully in the course will:

- identify and describe historical and philosophical bases of liberal arts colleges as a class
- read and critique works about individual liberal arts colleges
- identify, describe, and discuss challenges facing liberal arts colleges today
- understand the unique challenges of higher education administrators in liberal arts colleges
- consider the future of liberal arts colleges
- begin or continue to develop a professional identity
- consider the private liberal arts college as a fit for a professional work setting
- listen, discuss, read, challenge, imagine, contribute, present, write, and laugh

**Texts and Readings:**

**Recommended, but not required:**

American Psychological Association. (2001). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association, (5th ed.)*. Washington, DC: Author

Astin, Alexander. (1997). *Four Critical Years*

Brint, S., Riddle M., Turk-Bicakci, L., Levy C. (2005). *From the Liberal to the Practical Arts in American Colleges and Universities: Organizational Analysis and Curricular Change*, Journal of Higher Education, Vol. 76

Chambers, Fredrik. (1978). *Black Higher Education in the United States: A Selected Bibliography on Negro Higher Education and Historically Black Colleges and Universities*. Greenwood Press.

Drewry, Henry N. and Doermann, Humphrey. (2001). *Stand and Prosper: Private Black Colleges and Their Students*. Princeton University Press.

Harwarth, Irene. (1997). *Women's Colleges in the United States: History, Issues & Challenges*

Koblick, S., & Graubard, S. R. (2000). *Distinctively American: The residential liberal arts college*. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction.

Kuh, G.D., Schuh, J.H., Whitt, E.J., & Associates. (1991). *Involving Colleges: Successful Approaches to Fostering Student Learning and Development Outside the Classroom*. Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Pope, Loren. (second revised edition 2006). *Colleges That Change Lives: 40 Schools That Will Change the Way You Think About Colleges*. Penguin Books.

Rudolph, Frederick. (1962). *The American College and University: A History*. Vintage Books.

Shulman, J. L. and Bowen, W.G. (2002). *The Game of Life: College Sports and Educational Values*. Princeton University Press.

Tederman, J. S. (1997). *Advice from the dean: A personal perspective on the philosophy, roles, and approaches of a dean at a small, private, liberal arts college*. Washington, DC: National Association of Student Personnel Administrators.

Van Doren, Mark (1959). *Liberal Education*. Beacon Press.

Vesey, Laurence R. (1970). *The Emergence of the American University*. The University of Chicago Press.

#### **On-line documents:**

Brenneman, *Liberal Arts Colleges*; the password is liberal26. It is in lower-case, one word, and alphanumeric. [Available on Ereserve]

Blaich, C., Bost, A., Chan, E., & Lynch, R. (2004). *Executive summary: Defining liberal arts education*. Available online at [http://liberalarts.wabash.edu/cila/home.cfm?news\\_id=1400](http://liberalarts.wabash.edu/cila/home.cfm?news_id=1400) (read the Executive Summary, then read the full paper]

Carnegie Foundation – <http://www.carnegiefoundation.org/Classification>

Yahoo! Directory – *U.S. Private Colleges and Universities*. Available online at <http://dir.yahoo.com/Education>

*The Chronicle of Higher Education*. Students are expected to keep abreast of current events within higher education. One of the best ways to do that is reviewing *The Chronicle of Higher Education* on a daily or weekly basis. Please keep an eye out for issues, events, or articles related to private liberal arts colleges.

#### **Other readings may be distributed or assigned.**

#### **Attendance:**

Your participation for the full time of each class period is important to you, your classmates, and me. As stated in the KSU attendance policy, regular attendance is expected of all students. You are responsible for all information distributed or announced in class. I expect you to make every effort to attend every class session. Although it is not possible to truly “make up” a class period, I understand that sometimes it is necessary to miss class. If an absence is unavoidable, please let me know ahead of time. You will want to make arrangements with a classmate to collect handouts and announcements for you. Students with more than three absences should not expect to receive an A grade. Download the Digest of Rules and Regulations from <http://www.kent.edu/CurrentStudents/>

### **Academic Integrity:**

As members of the community of higher education, we are all subject to the standards of academic integrity. As a student, you are subject to the Code of Student Conduct. I strongly encourage you to review the Code, especially if you are a new student, as ignorance is not a valid defense should charges be brought against you. As your instructor, I have made a commitment to hold you to the standards of the community.

Please pay special attention to the section on plagiarism and academic honesty. I expect that the work you submit to me will be created for this course and not used for other courses. **READ CAREFULLY:** Download the Digest of Rules and Regulations from <http://www.kent.edu/CurrentStudents/> or contact Judicial Affairs Office in Twin Towers, (330) 672-4054.

### **Students with Disabilities**

KSU Statement: "University policy 3342-3-18 requires that students with disabilities be provided reasonable accommodations to ensure their equal access to course content. If you have a documented disability and require accommodations, please contact the instructor [Janice Gerda] at the beginning of the semester to make arrangements for necessary classroom adjustments. Please note, you must first verify your eligibility for these through Student Disability Services (contact 330-672-3391 or visit [www.kent.edu/sds](http://www.kent.edu/sds) for more information on registration procedures)."

### **Activities and Assignments:**

Assignments are due at the beginning of class on the dates indicated. Late assignments may receive little or no written feedback and will receive a lower grade unless we have made other arrangements prior to the due date. Typically, late assignments will be graded as usual and then one grade level deducted. Papers over 24 hours late will be reduced 2 grade levels, etc.

It might be helpful for you to use each other to proofread, discuss concepts, and develop ideas. However, please make sure that your work is indeed your own and that you give credit where credit is due.

Typographical and grammatical errors weaken your credibility as a writer and make your arguments more difficult to understand. Your effectiveness as a presenter also affects your ability to convey concepts. Skillful use of language, proofreading, and presentation skills will be rewarded in your grade, whereas weaknesses will be noted and taken into consideration when grading. Written assignments should be submitted in APA Style (5th edition) unless otherwise noted. Please include a word count on the cover page of each assignment with a word limit.

### **Class Attendance, Participation, Reading –**

You will be expected to read assignments and discuss them in class. Please read with a curious and critical eye, and be ready to challenge or expand upon what you read. Because of the nature of this class, in-class participation in discussions is essential to your own and others' learning. Therefore, full attendance will be required to receive full credit for this portion of your grade.

### **Article Reviews – (2)**

Find an article (empirical, opinion, or news story) that discusses a current concern or issue of liberal arts colleges. For each, in a **short paper**, summarize the main points of the piece, critique it, and discuss the implications for liberal arts colleges. Be prepared to share your discoveries and thoughts with the class (the instructor will call on you). Word limit: 700 words.

### **College History Reviews – (2)**

- (1) Read **two independent college histories** (prior approval of the instructor is required).
- (2) For each, **prepare a written review** with four sections: summary of the historical context of the institution (i.e. time, place, circumstances) in relation to the rest of the United States, summary of the challenges faced by the institution, independent assessment of the state of the institution today (this requires you to do independent research), what you learned about liberal arts colleges and the impact of the past on the present. Paper length: 4-6 pages.

### **College Types Presentation –**

Groups (or individuals) will prepare an **executive summary** (to be distributed to the whole class) and present on one of the following types of liberal arts colleges:

- single-sex institutions,
- historically Black colleges (HBCs),
- highly-selective colleges,
- non-selective colleges,
- “super small” colleges (less than 1,000 FTE),
- religiously-affiliated colleges.

The goal will be to **lead the class** in learning about the commonalities and differences of this sub-category of small colleges. Executive summary should be no more than 2-3 pages. If you would like the class to do reading before the presentation, please distribute the assignment at least one class meeting in advance.

**College Position/Placement Profile –** Select a liberal arts college with which you are not affiliated (you are not a current or former student, employee, or other close stakeholder) and **identify a position** within that institution for which you would like to apply. The position need not be currently available, but it must be one that already exists at the institution. Prepare a **written profile of the college** that describes:

1. the founding story,
2. institutional profile,
3. current mission and curricular uniqueness,
4. administrative structure,
5. physical environment,
6. institutional culture,
7. major challenges (institutional and divisional) of the present and future, and
8. the contribution you see yourself making to the institution’s success in the position you selected.

If appropriate, incorporate class readings and discussions, as well as other literature about liberal arts colleges. Appendices and visual aids are welcome. A visit to the campus of the institution is encouraged but not required. Your goal is to demonstrate that you grasp the challenges facing the college (or the divisional entity within that college) and that you see how your position (with you in it, of course) contributes to meeting those challenges. Paper length: 8-10 pages. **Prepare to be interviewed** by classmates for this position and to provide sections 1-7 to your interviewers. Due March 5; interview on March 12.

### **Literature Review –**

70000-level students: Choose a research question related to a learning objective of this course. Complete a literature review, due on the day of your choice but no later than the last regular class meeting. Submit your proposed question and proposed due date no later than the third week of class.

## **Evaluation:**

	60000	70000
Class Attendance, Participation, Reading,	10	expected
Article Reviews 1 and 2 (5% each)	10	10
Book Reviews 1 and 2 (15% each)	30	30
Presentation of College Type	20	20
College Position Profile/Placement Exchange	30	30
(70000-level students) Literature Review	-	10

95-100	A
90-94.9	A-
86.7-89.9	B+
83.4-86.6	B
80-83.3	B-
76.7-79.9	C+
73.4-76.6	C
70-73.3	C-
66.7-69.9	D+
60-66.6	D
<60	F

### **Assignments and Due Dates (SUBJECT TO CHANGE due to availability of guest speakers):**

#### **I - Jan. 16** – First Class

a. Introductions, b. Course overview & ground rules, c. My biases and interests; want you to find your own perspective, d. I want **you** to do the digging into the current state of affairs for independent colleges

Assignment for next class: read Dartmouth case; explore liberal arts college histories (submit what you found)

#### **II - Jan. 23** – The Liberal Arts Curriculum – the pendulum between learning and society

Assignment for next class: read Van Doren chapter IV, prepare **College Type executive summary** and prepare for class discussion, review Carnegie typology.

#### **III - Jan. 30** - Diversity of institutional types (through the looking glass--our lenses of race, class, culture, generation and gender)

Assignment for next class: **first article review due**

#### **IV - Feb. 6** - Governance:

- “dictatorship with all the trappings of democracy” – who calls the shots?
- collegiate organization (oxymoron, endangered species, or unique business model?)

Assignment for next class:

#### **V. - Feb. 13** – Financing independent education – who benefits; who pays?

Assignment for next class: **second article review due**

#### **VI – Feb. 20** – Innovation and change in higher education and the opportunities and challenges of small independent liberal arts colleges

Assignment for next class:

#### **VII – Feb. 27** – Positions in the marketplace: job interviewing and expectations; your own and those of the independent liberal arts college

Assignment for next class: **Position/Placement Profile due** (bring an extra copy of portions 1-7 ONLY to be collected and then distributed to your interviewer)

**VIII – Mar. 5 – Opportunities and Challenges:**

Assignment for next class: be prepared for in-class Position/Placement Profile **interview** (professional attire recommended)

**IX – Mar. 12 –** Position/Placement Profile interviews and critique (in-class activity for which make-up is not possible, so full attendance is essential) – first college history review due next class

**Spring Recess – March 17-23**

Assignment for next class: **first college history review due.**

**X – Mar. 26 –** Enrollment: recruitment, retention and campus (student) culture

Assignment for next class:

**XI – Apr. 2 –** Compare and contrast independents vs. the publics – not good or bad, but different

Assignment for next class:

**XII – Apr. 9 –** Discussion about readings, presentations and special topics (see below)

Assignment for next class: **second college history review due.**

**XIII – Apr. 16 –** Discussion about readings, presentations and special topics (see below) - President Thomas V. Chema, President Hiram College.

Assignment for next class:

**XIV – Apr. 23 –** Discussion about readings, presentations and special topics (see below)

Assignment for next class:

**XV – Apr. 30 –** Back to the future....

**SPECIAL TOPICS:**

What's it mean to be independent?

Impact of federal/state involvement

Guest speakers/panelists:

College President

Government official

Private lobby group representative

Small college faculty/administrator

Fund raiser/grant writer

Other?