EAD 969: Issues in the Academic Profession  
Michigan State University  
Fall Semester 2007

Mondays, 7:10-10:00 p.m.  
228 Erickson Hall

Professor Roger G. Baldwin  
427 Erickson Hall  
(517) 355-6452  
rbaldwin@msu.edu

Office Hours: By appointment

Course Overview

The academic profession forms the very heart of higher education. Colleges and universities would lose their core purpose without students. Similarly, they would have no means of production or delivery without faculty members. Hence, students of higher/postsecondary education must understand the academic profession if they are to comprehend the workings and future direction of higher learning in America.

Although the academic profession can trace its roots back many centuries, its modern form is relatively new. The academic profession as we know it, emerged late in the 19th century and has continued to evolve as higher education has grown, adopted new roles, and expanded its mission in our society. Many forces continue to shape the academic profession and a host of current issues are under discussion within and outside the ranks of the professoriate. This course will focus on key issues that are challenging and reshaping the academic profession as we know it.

The course will operate as a seminar where each participant plays a crucial role. Classes will be discussion oriented. All participants, including the instructor of record, will function as co-learners. Dialogue and debate will be the responsibility of ALL class members. If we all come prepared for class and share our knowledge, experience, and insights, we will facilitate each other’s growth and gain the maximum benefit from this in-depth learning opportunity.

Course Learning Objectives

Students should achieve the following learning outcomes by the end of the seminar:

1. Knowledge of perennial and current issues shaping the faculty experience and faculty careers in postsecondary education.
2. Familiarity with classic and recent research and writing on the academic profession.

3. Comprehension of the faculty career development process and the differing nature of distinct phases of academic life.

4. Understanding of the values, traditions, and mores of the academic profession.

5. An appreciation of how context (e.g., institution, discipline) shapes faculty work and careers.

6. Knowledge of the historic evolution of the academic profession as a basis for understanding forces that will shape the profession’s path into the future.

7. Identification of potential research topics concerning the academic profession.

Course Materials


Most other required course reading materials will be available online through Angel at:

https://angel.msu.edu

Novels selected for the session on “Faculty in Literature” can be borrowed from libraries or purchased from commercial bookstores.

Course Assignments

1. Class Participation and Leadership (20%)

Students are expected to read weekly assignments prior to class meetings and to participate actively in class discussions. Each class member will take a leadership role in identifying key issues raised in course readings, formulating discussion questions, and facilitating discussion in one or more class sessions. This responsibility will circulate weekly. Questions derived from class readings will be reviewed with the instructor and posted on our course Angel site by 12 noon on Friday before the class session when the readings will be discussed.
2. Faculty Interviews and Reflective Analysis Paper (20%)

Employing a protocol we will develop together, students will interview two faculty members representing different, but related, perspectives/situations in the academic profession (e.g., different career stages, disciplines, institution types, levels of instruction). Your reflective analysis paper should compare and contrast participants’ responses and employ relevant course literature to interpret your interview findings. Your goal is to identify and explain commonalities and differences within the faculty experience. *This paper will be due mid-term. We will decide in class on the due date for this assignment.*

3. Book Review of a Novel on the Academic Profession (15%)

Write a 4-5 (double-spaced) page analytical review of a novel focusing on the academic profession. What is the book’s primary thesis? What insights on the academic profession does the novel provide? Does the novel present a fair and accurate picture of academic life? What is the basis for your judgments on the book’s merits. Students may choose to read *Lucky Jim* by Kingsley Amis, *Straight Man* by Richard Russo, or *Stoner* by John Williams. Discussion of these two novels plus your original ideas for novels or short stories on the academic profession will be the focus of our class on November 19. Written *book reviews will be due on November 19.*

4. Team Class Facilitation (20%)

Student teams will organize an informal one-hour class discussion with one of the following groups of resource persons:

- A novice and a veteran faculty member
- Two faculty members from different environments (e.g., different disciplines, different institution types)
- Department chair and an academic dean concerning contemporary faculty issues and their role in supporting faculty work/performance
- Directors or coordinators of faculty development at MSU and another postsecondary institution

Teams will invite resource persons, elicit relevant discussion questions from class members prior to the class session, and facilitate class discussion with the resource persons.

Each team will jointly write a two-page academic plan and analysis explaining the purpose and objectives of their session, discussing the insights gained from the class discussion, and critiquing the session’s strengths and shortcomings.
5. **Research Paper or Research/Action Project and In-Class Presentation (25%)**

Each class member will conduct a literature review on a major contemporary issue in the academic profession or conduct an original research or action project on an important and timely issue in the academic profession (e.g., the faculty experience in online education, the faculty role in for-profit colleges, the impact of women on the academic profession, the pros and cons of unbundling faculty roles) At the conclusion of the paper, the author will identify and briefly discuss two to three topics for future research that emerge from his or her study. Either assignment option will involve writing a 10-15 page paper. More details on these options will be provided in a forthcoming assignment. Students will present their research papers or projects orally during the final class sessions and lead a discussion on the issues raised in their paper/project. **Papers will be due on Monday, December 3.**

**A note for students with disabilities:**
If you require any accommodation or services, please inform me or contact the Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities (www2.rcpd.msu.edu/Home), Bessey, 353-9642.

**Session topics and readings:**

**August 27:** What is the Academic Profession? History and Evolution of the Academic Profession; Demographic Trends

Schuster & Finkelstein, Ch. 2, The American faculty in perspective
Ch. 3, The professoriate in profile

**September 3:** Labor Day, NO CLASS MEETING

**September 10:** Faculty at Work: Faculty Roles, Responsibilities, and Beliefs

Schuster & Finkelstein, Ch. 4, The changing complexion of faculty work
Ch. 5, Academic culture and values and the quality of work life

**Angel Readings:**


September 17: Changing Context, Evolving Faculty Work and Roles

Angel Readings:


Gappa et al., Ch.1, “The changing context for faculty work and workplaces”

O’Meara et al., (2003). Faculty work in challenging times: Trends, consequences & implications. Liberal Education.

September 24: Faculty in Different Contexts: Disciplinary and Interdisciplinary, Institutional

Angel Readings:

Clark, Small worlds, different worlds: The uniqueness and troubles of American academic professions, Daedalus, 126(4), 21-42.

Fairweather and Beach, Variations in faculty work at research universities….,” Review of Higher Education, 26(1).

Frost and Jean, Bridging the disciplines…. Journal of Higher Education, 74(2).


Leggon, The scientist as academic. Daedalus, 126(4), 221-244.

October 1: Faculty Career Stages and Faculty Development

Schuster & Finkelstein, Ch. 6, The changing academic career

Angel Readings:

Baldwin, Faculty career stages and implications for professional development


Minner, The guilty pleasures of an endowed professor: My adventure at the very top of the academic food chain,” *AAHE Bulletin X(X)*, 7-9.


October 8: Aspiring and New Faculty Issues: Preparation, Job Search, and Socialization

Angel Readings:


Gaff, The disconnect between graduate education and the realities of faculty work: A review of recent research.” *Liberal Education* (Summer 2002)


Olsen and Sorcinelli, The pre-tenure years: A longitudinal perspective.”


October 15: Academic Freedom; Tenure and its Critics

Angel Readings:


October 22: What about the Rest of the Faculty? Part-time Faculty; Non-tenure-track Faculty; “Virtual” Faculty

Schuster & Finkelstein, Ch. 7, The revolution in faculty appointments: A closer look

Angel Readings:


Gappa et al., Ch. 4, The academic profession today: Diverse appointments to meet diverse needs


October 29:  Individual consultations on course papers and projects [NO CLASS MEETING]

November 5: What about the Rest of the Faculty? Women Faculty; Faculty of Color

Angel Readings:


November 12:  Faculty Evaluation, Post-Tenure Review, and Rewards

Schuster & Finkelstein, Ch. 8, Compensation and academic careers

Angel Readings:


**November 19: Images of the Academic Profession: Faculty in Literature**

Read and be prepared to provide a critical analysis of one of the following academic novels:

Kingsley Amis, *Lucky Jim*

Richard Russo, *Straight Man*

John Williams, *Stoner*

Also, bring your own ideas for books or stories on the academic profession.

*Written book review due Nov. 19*

**November 26: Faculty Worklife Issues**

**Angel Readings:**


Gappa et al., Ch. 11, Ensuring flexibility in academic appointments


December 3: Forces Shaping the Future of the Academic Profession; Globalization; Student Identified Issues

Schuster and Finkelstein, Ch. 10, American academic life restructured
Ch. 11, What’s ahead?

Angel Readings:


Final paper due on December 3

December 10: Forces Shaping the Future of the Academic Profession: Student Identified Issues; Researchable Issues and Questions; Course Wrap Up