

Privatization and Public Policy: Who Gains and Who Loses?

Public Policy and Law (PBPL) 318

Trinity College

Fall 2020 | Tue/Thu 2:00–3:15pm

[Zoom Link](#) | Meeting ID: 960 0416 3827 | Passcode: PBPL318

Professor: Elise Castillo, Ph.D. (she/her)

Email: Elise.Castillo@trincoll.edu (I aim to return emails within 24 hours, except on Saturdays)

Office Hours

Tue/Thu 10:45-11:45am

[Zoom Link](#) | Meeting ID: 949 2044 1423

Passcode: OHTR

Wed 2:00–3:00pm

[Zoom Link](#) | Meeting ID: 993 1069 5633

Passcode: OHW

By appointment

(Email me and suggest a few times)

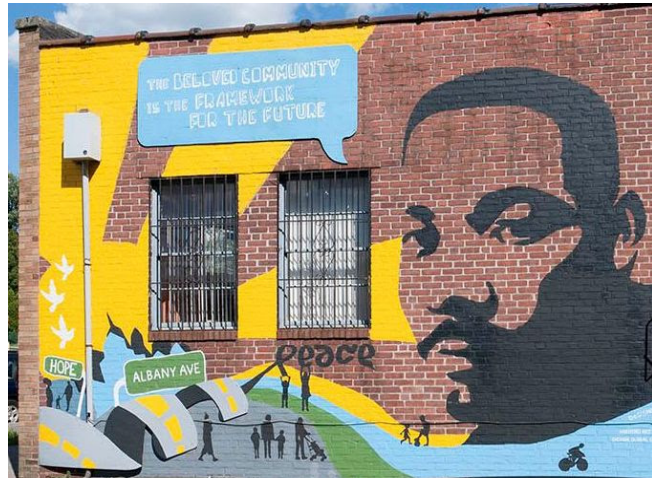


Image: From *Hartford Seen*, Pablo Delano (2020)

My office hours are times that I reserve specifically for meeting with my students. You do not need to sign up in advance. During office hours, I am happy to answer your questions about class material or assignments, or offer academic advice or mentorship. Generally, I meet with each student for 15 minutes, so it's helpful if you come with a clear sense of what you'd like to discuss so that we can make the most of our time together.

Course Description

Governments increasingly contract or partner with the private sector to deliver public goods and services based on the theory that doing so will enhance efficiency and cost-effectiveness. Although policymakers often attend to the economics of privatization, this course explores privatization's political and social dimensions, asking, who gains and who loses when public goods and services are privatized?

Throughout this course, we will employ *critical policy analysis* (CPA) and *critical race theory* (CRT) to examine theories underlying privatization, evidence of its impact, and debates regarding its costs and benefits. An emerging approach in the field of policy studies, CPA is a framework through which scholars "interrogate process, politics, and power" (Horsford, Scott, & Anderson, 2019). CRT is a related framework that emerged in the field of legal studies, and scholars use it to examine "the relationship among race, racism, and power" (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). Thus, CPA and CRT help us to see who is involved in the policy process, how policies distribute power, how race and racism shape the policy process, and the impact of policies on racial and socioeconomic equity and justice.

This course comprises four units. Unit 1 covers theoretical and political perspectives on privatization, combining conceptual readings with empirical research and media coverage of contemporary examples. Units 2 and 3 each focus on two cases of privatization: the criminal justice system and K–12 public education, respectively. Unit 4 considers possibilities for responsible and ethical privatization. Across all units, using the tools of CPA and CRT, we will analyze privatization’s impact on equity, justice, democracy, and the common good. In addition, this course includes a Community Learning Component: a partnership with [The Connecticut Mirror](#), a nonprofit, nonpartisan digital news site focusing on issues related to Connecticut state policy and politics. Students will submit for publication short evidence-based opinion pieces on a privatization topic impacting Connecticut residents.

Our study of privatization will be guided by the following questions:

- Who benefits and who loses when public goods, services, and the policymaking process are privatized?
- How are power dynamics altered when public goods and services are privatized? What is the relationship between race, class, and gender and redistributions of power?
- What are the implications of privatization for racial equity? How do contemporary cases of privatization map onto the legacy of racism and history of racially unjust policies?
- What are the implications of privatization for democracy and the common good?
- What are the moral or ethical considerations regarding privatization?

Learning Objectives

Over the course of the semester, you will:

- Employ the tools of critical policy analysis and critical race theory to analyze the costs and benefits of privatization
- Enhance your critical reading skills by evaluating the work of scholarly researchers, policymakers, advocates, and journalists writing about privatization
- Employ credible evidence and analysis to craft persuasive oral and written arguments

Course Materials

The following books are required. They are each available to read for free as e-books from the Trinity College library, or to purchase at the Trinity College bookstore.

Eisen, L. B. (2018). [Inside private prisons: An American dilemma in the age of mass incarceration](#). New York, NY: Columbia University Press.

Rooks, N. (2018). [Cutting school: The segrenomics of American education](#). New York, NY: The New Press.

Additional readings will be posted on our course Moodle site. Readings may be subject to change.



Image: Panel from "Mail Transportation," Fletcher Martin (1938) [In San Pedro, CA Post Office]

Course Assignments and Grading

Assignment	Due Date	Points Possible
Class participation		
	Every class	20
Evidence-based opinion piece		
Proposal	Thursday, October 1	5
First draft	Tuesday, October 8	10
Peer review	Tuesday, October 13	5
Final draft	Tuesday, October 20	20
Research critique		
Proposal	Tuesday, November 3	5
Outline	Tuesday, November 10	10
First draft	Tuesday, December 1	10
Peer review	Thursday, December 3	10
5-minute Zoom presentation	Tuesday, December 8, and Thursday, December 10	5
Final draft	Thursday, December 17	25
		Total possible: 125

Your final course grade will be calculated by dividing the total points earned by the total points possible.

The grading scale is as follows:

90 to 100% = A (outstanding work)

80 to 89% = B (good work)

70 to 79 % = C (adequate work)

Below 70% = D or F (unsatisfactory work)

Each letter grade is divided into equal thirds for

minus (-), regular, and plus (+) letter grades (e.g.

80 to 83.33 is a B-, 83.34 to 86.67 is a B, and

86.68 to 89.99 is a B+).

Class Attendance and Participation

"As a classroom community, our capacity to generate excitement is deeply affected by our interest in one another, in hearing one another's voices, in recognizing one another's presence."
bell hooks, *Teaching to Transgress* (1994), p. 8

In this remote seminar, excellent class participation includes the following:

- *Coming prepared to each class.* Come to each class having completed all required readings and assignments and with all necessary materials, such as readings and notes. Arrive on time and ready to engage.
- *Actively engaging in class discussions.* Make thoughtful and analytic contributions to class discussions based on completed readings and assignments.
- *Listening and respond to others with respect.* Make space for others to share their perspectives and opinions in class discussions. Listen attentively and respectfully. If you disagree with something someone has said, do so graciously, respectfully, and with evidence to support your counterargument. Be open to learning from others' experiences, perspectives, and interpretations.

Please see the "Assignment Details" document for additional details on how I will be evaluating your participation.

Three times during the semester (once per unit, for Units 1–3), you will work with one or two classmates to prepare shared reading notes and discussion questions for class. You will sign up for these dates during the first week of class. On the days when you are responsible for preparing these notes and questions, I will expect you to serve as a "resident expert" on the day's readings and to take a leadership role in the discussion.

We are all experiencing the uncertainty and anxiety caused by the global pandemic in different ways. Your own and your family's circumstances may impact your ability to participate and engage in class. I ask that you do your best to attend class on time, minimize distractions during class, and **turn on your camera when possible (especially if you are attending our Zoom classes from your dorm room at Trinity)**. Please also do your best to communicate with me as soon as possible should you encounter any challenges to attending or participating actively in class.

Evidence-Based Opinion Piece (To be published in *The Connecticut Mirror*)

The goal of this assignment is to apply *your own evidence-based perspective* to a privatization issue affecting Connecticut residents. Additional details are on the "Assignment Details" document.

Component and Length	Due Date	Points Possible
Proposal: 1 paragraph (80–100 words)	Thu, Oct. 1	5
First draft: 700 to 1,000 words (1.5 to 2 single-spaced pages)	Thu, Oct. 8	10
Peer review	Tue, Oct. 13	5
Final draft: 500–800 words (1 to 1.5 single-spaced pages)	Tue, Oct. 20	20

Research Critique

The goal of this assignment is to analyze and critique *another researcher's perspective* on a privatization issue. Additional details are on the "Assignment Details" document.

Component and Length	Due Date	Points Possible
Proposal: 1 paragraph (80–100 words)	Thu, Nov 3	5
Outline: Up to 1 single-spaced page (bullet points are fine)	Tue, Nov 10	10
First draft: 700 to 1,000 words (At least 2 sections of the paper; 3–4 double-spaced pages)	Tue, Dec 1	10
Peer review	Thu, Dec 3	10
5-minute presentation (on Zoom)	Tue, Dec 8 and Thu, Dec 10	5
Final draft: 8–10 double-spaced pages	Thu, Dec 17	25

Academic Policies

Late Assignments

The global pandemic is continuing to impact our lives, and we don't know what additional challenges we may experience this semester. Therefore, there is no penalty for late assignments this semester. Instead, as soon as you know that you need additional time, please email me and let me know when you will submit the assignment—that will be your new due date. **The exception to this policy is the Research Critique (due Thursday, December 17)**, to ensure that I have adequate time to submit your final grade before the end of the semester.

Accessibility

Trinity College is committed to creating an inclusive and accessible learning environment consistent with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Like many things, the need for disability accommodations and the process for arranging them may be altered by the Covid-19 changes we are experiencing and the safety protocols currently in place. Students with disabilities who may need some accommodation in order to fully participate in this class are urged to contact the Student Accessibility Resource Center, as soon as possible, to explore what arrangements need to be made to assure access.

If you have approval for academic accommodations, please notify me by the end of week two of classes. For those students with accommodations approved after the start of the semester, a minimum of 10 days' notice is required. Please be sure to meet with me privately to discuss implementation. Student Accessibility Resources can be reached by emailing Lori.Clapis@trincoll.edu or SARC@trincoll.edu.

Intellectual Honesty

According to Trinity College policy, intellectual honesty "assumes that students do their own work and that they credit properly those upon whose work and thought they draw" (Trinity College Student Handbook, 2016). While we often draw upon the work of others, it is essential that any work presented as your own is indeed your own, no matter how big or small the assignment. Ideas and/or words that are not yours should always be appropriately cited.

You may use any citation style (e.g., APA, Chicago, MLA), as long as you do so consistently. If you have any questions about how to cite another author's work appropriately, or how to draw upon another author's work without plagiarizing, please ask me.

Intellectual dishonesty and plagiarism in any form will not be tolerated in this class. Instances of academic dishonesty or plagiarism may result in assignment failure, course failure, referral to the Honor Council, and/or other consequences.

Helpful Things to Know

(Adapted with thanks to Dr. Eve Ewing)

Trinity College Writing Center. We are all developing as writers and thinkers (myself included), and we all improve through receiving feedback. For assistance and feedback on your writing, at any stage, consider scheduling an appointment with a Writing Associate at Trinity's [Writing Center](#). If you visit the Writing Center for support on the first or final draft of the Evidence-Based Opinion Piece or Research Critique, you will receive extra credit (0.5 point).

Trinity College Library. Our librarians are amazing and eager to help you identify sources for research projects or other assignments. Although you can make a virtual appointment with any librarian, Rob Walsh, our social science librarian, has particular expertise in the library sources relevant to our class. You can email him at Robert.Walsh@trincoll.edu or [make an appointment on the library website](#).

Research Support. Professor Daniel Douglas provides social science research support services to students during scheduled hours (Tuesdays 5:30–7:30pm, Wednesdays 4:00–6:00pm, Thursdays 5:30–7:30pm) and by appointment using Skype and Zoom. Students are encouraged to consult with Professor Douglas with questions about finding sources related to publicly-available data, quantitative data analysis software (e.g., Stata, SPSS), and general research design questions. Schedule 30-minute appointments using the [Web Appointment Scheduling System](#).

Student Technology Assistants. The Student Technology Assistants (STA) work with Trinity's Research, Instruction, and Technology (RIT) staff to provide remote assistance and support regarding your technology needs, including using Zoom and Moodle. Contact the STAs at sta-help@trincoll.edu, drop by their virtual help desk (<https://trincoll.zoom.us/my/sta.helpdesk>), or read more on their [website](#).

SensusAccess File Converter. If you wish, you may convert course readings in PDF form into alternative formats, including audio files. In doing so, you can listen to the reading while following along with the written text. Trinity's RIT website includes additional details on the [SuccessAccess File Converter](#).

Title IX Resources and Mandated Reporting. As a faculty member, I am considered a "Responsible Employee." This means that if you disclose to me instances of sexual assault, sexual harassment, other sexual misconduct, dating violence, domestic violence, or stalking, I am required to share this information with Trinity's Title IX Coordinator or Deputy Coordinator. See Trinity's [Title IX website](#) for additional information.

If you need to talk to someone who will maintain confidentiality, you can reach out to any of the following "Privileged Employees":

Spiritual and Religious Life, Trinity College Chapel, (860) 297-2013

The Reverend Trevor Beauford

Counseling Center: 135 Allen Street, (860) 297-2415

Randolph M. Lee, Ph.D., Director

Kristine Kennan, Psy.D., Associated Director

[After business hours, call to receive an available counselor's phone number]

In addition, the following “Confidential Employees” will not disclose names or other details that may reveal individuals’ identities, but they will report general details, such as the nature, date, time, and general location of the alleged incident.

The Health Center: Wheaton Hall, (860) 297-2018

Martha Burke O’Brien, Director

Health Center Staff, with the exception of front desk staff

Women & Gender Resource Action Center (WGRAC), Mather Hall, 2nd Floor, (860) 297-2408

Laura Lockwood, Director

Mental Health. Many of us face issues with our mental health over the course of our lives. Sometimes, being a student can create or exacerbate these issues. In addition, it is common to experience additional anxiety due to the global pandemic and other national political events. If you are struggling, your mental health is suffering, or you just need someone to talk to, I encourage you to make an appointment with the [Counseling and Wellness Center](#), or call (860) 297-2415. These services are free and confidential.

Learning Remotely/Online During the Pandemic. For many of us, learning remotely/online is still a new experience. There will likely be technical glitches and other unexpected challenges along the way. In addition, we’re all balancing academic commitments with other responsibilities related to health, work, caregiving, and more; and these commitments may be more challenging during the pandemic.

My goal is to support you in doing the best work you can in light of these challenges. I encourage you to prioritize your health and wellness, which are far more important than the grades you get in this class or any class. If you are finding it difficult to balance your health and wellness with your work in this class, please let me know. It’s okay to ask for help.

I ask that you be patient with me if the challenges to the semester force me to make last-minute changes. I will do my best to communicate any changes clearly and with as much notice as possible. Finally, please be patient with your peers as well as we all navigate this semester together.



Image: “Living Without Borders / Vivir Sin Fronteras,” True Colors Mural Project with Juana Alicia (2009) [In Berkeley, CA]

Unit 1: Theoretical and Political Perspectives

Tuesday, Sept. 8: Course introduction

Thursday, Sept. 10: Theoretical underpinnings: Neoliberalism and market logic

Harvey, D. (2007). *A brief history of neoliberalism*. Introduction (pp. 1–4) and Ch. 3 (pp. 64–66). [6]

Freeman, J., & Minow, M. (2009). Ch. 1: Introduction: Reframing the outsourcing debates. In *Government by contract: Outsourcing and American democracy* (pp. 1–20). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. [20]

Tuesday, Sept. 15: Examining privatization via critical policy analysis and critical race theory, Part I

Diem, S., Young, M. D., & Sampson, C. (2019). Where critical policy analysis meets the politics of education: An introduction. *Educational Policy*, 33(1), 3–15. [Focus on pp. 1–7]

Delgado, R., & Stefancic, J. (2017). Introduction. *Critical race theory: An introduction* (3rd ed.). New York: New York University Press. [Focus on pp. 3–13]

Black, C. (2019, May 9). [It's time to reopen Chicago's closed mental health clinics](#). Perspectives. *The Chicago Reporter*.

Thursday, Sept 17: Examining privatization via critical policy analysis and critical race theory, Part II

Newkirk II, V. R. (2020, March). [Episode II: Come Sunday](#). Floodlines Podcast. *The Atlantic*. (25 min.)

Gotham, K. F. (2012). Disaster, Inc.: Privatization and post-Katrina rebuilding in New Orleans. *Perspectives on Politics*, 10(3), 633–646. [13]

Tuesday, Sept. 22: Markets, efficiency, and privatization

Stone, D. (2012). Ch. 3: Efficiency. In *Policy paradox: The art of political decision making* (pp. 61–85). New York, NY: W.W. Norton. [24]

Feldman, K. (2018, January). [Trashed: Inside the deadly world of private garbage collection](#). *ProPublica*.

Optional: Watch 7-minute video, ["Treated Like Trash"](#) (ProPublica 2018)

Thursday, Sept. 24: Privatization, accountability, and transparency

Guest speaker: Rob Walsh, Social Science Librarian

Minow, M. (2009). Ch. 5: Outsourcing power: Privatizing military efforts and the risks to accountability, professionalism, and democracy. In *Government by contract: Outsourcing and American democracy* (pp. 110–127). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. [26]

Stolberg, S. G. (2020, Aug. 14). [Firm collecting virus data refuses to answer senators' questions](#). *The New York Times*.

Tuesday, Sept. 29: The role of philanthropy

Scott, J. (2009). The politics of venture philanthropy in charter school policy and advocacy. *Educational Policy*, 23(1), 106–136.

Miller, S., & Rojas, F. (2019, April 9). [Philanthropy to the rescue? Not in New Haven Schools](#). CT Viewpoints. *The Connecticut Mirror*.

Buchanan, P. (2019, November 26). [The Dalios should heed the lessons of education philanthropy failures](#). CT Viewpoints. *The Connecticut Mirror*.

Savino, M. (2020, May 27). [Lack of transparency, not politics, led to the demise of the Partnership For Connecticut](#). CT Viewpoints. *The Connecticut Mirror*.

Horvath, H. (2020, May 28). [The Partnership For Connecticut could have been trusted to do the right thing](#). CT Viewpoints. *The Connecticut Mirror*.

Thursday, Oct. 1: Privatizing the policymaking process

****Evidence-based opinion piece (EBOP) proposal due (Upload to Moodle by 2:00pm ET)**

Anderson, G., & Donchik, L. M. (2016). Privatizing schooling and policy making: The American Legislative Exchange Council and new political and discursive strategies of education governance. *Educational Policy*, 30(2), 322–364. [44]

Moyers & Company. (2012). [United States of ALEC](#). (Watch the 30-min. video)

Unit 2: The Politics of Privatization: The Case of Private Prisons

Tuesday, Oct. 6

Eisen, L. B. (2018). Intro, Ch. 1, & Ch. 2. *Inside private prisons: An American dilemma in the age of mass incarceration*. [45]

Optional: Listen to L. B. Eisen discuss *Inside private prisons* on [KQED Forum](#) (2018) [28 minutes]

Thursday, Oct. 8

****EBOP first draft due (Upload to Google Docs by 2:00pm ET)**

Eisen, L. B. (2018). Ch. 3 & 4. *Inside private prisons*. [31]

Tuesday, Oct. 13

****EBOP peer review due (Upload to Google Docs by 2:00pm ET)**

Eisen, L. B. (2018). Ch. 5 & 6. *Inside private prisons*. [46]

Thursday, Oct. 15

Eisen, L. B. (2018). Ch. 7 & 8. *Inside private prisons*. [41]



Image: Untitled (Mother Bending Over Child), Miné Okubo (1942–1944)

Drawn while incarcerated at Japanese Internment Camp, Topaz Relocation Center, UT

Tuesday, Oct. 20

****EBOP final draft due (Upload to Moodle by 2:00pm ET)**

Eisen, L. B. (2018). Ch. 9 & 10. *Inside private prisons*. [41]

Thursday, Oct. 22

Eisen, L. B. (2018). Ch. 11 & Conclusion. *Inside private prisons*. [25]

Unit 2.5: Analyzing Research and Research Critiques

Tuesday, Oct. 27

Think Tank Report: In the Public Interest. (2013). [Criminal: How lockup quotas and “low-crime taxes” guarantee profits for private prison corporations](#). Washington, D.C.: Author.

Critique: Gilroy, L. (2013). [New report mischaracterizes private prison contract occupancy rate provisions](#). The Reason Foundation.

Thursday, Oct. 29

Think Tank Report: Cohodes, S. (2018). Charter schools and the achievement gap. Princeton, NJ: The Future of Children, Princeton, & Brookings.

Critique: Torres, A.C., & Golann, J.W. (2018). NEPC Review: Charter schools and the achievement gap. Boulder, CO: National Education Policy Center.

Unit 3: The Case of K–12 Public Schools: Privatization and “Segrenomics”

Tuesday, Nov. 3

****Research critique (RC) proposal due (Upload to Moodle by 2:00pm ET)**

Rooks, N. (2018). Introduction. *Cutting school: Privatization, segregation, and the end of public education* [22]

Optional: Listen to N. Rooks discuss *Cutting School* on [“Segrenomics: The Long History of Cashing in on Unequal Education.”](#) Have You Heard Podcast (2018). [28 minutes]

Thursday, Nov. 5

Listen to [“Teach For America: Wendy Kopp.”](#) How I Build This Podcast (2017). [46 minutes]

Rooks, N. (2018). Ch. 1: Rich college students, poor public schools. *Cutting school*. [25]

Tuesday, Nov. 10

****RC outline due (Upload to Moodle by 2:00pm ET)**

Rooks, N. (2018). Ch. 2 & 3. *Cutting school*. [57]

Thursday, Nov. 12

Rooks, N. (2018). Ch. 4: How the north wasn't one. *Cutting school*. [29]

Listen to ["The Cost of School Choice."](#) Reveal Podcast (2019). [\[Listen to first 42:18 \(3 segments\)\]](#)

Tuesday, Nov. 17

Rooks, N. (2018). Ch. 5 & 6. *Cutting school*. [45]

Thursday, Nov. 19

Rooks, N. (2018). Ch. 7 and Coda. *Cutting school*. [51]

Tuesday, Nov. 24, and Thursday, Nov. 26: No class (Thanksgiving)



Image: The Migration Series, Panel 58, Jacob Lawrence (1940–1941)

Unit 4: Privatization and the Public Good / Final Paper Preparation

Tuesday, Dec. 1: Tying privatization to public values, Part I

****RC first draft due (Upload to Moodle by 2:00pm ET)**

Reich, R. (2018). Ch. 4: Repugnant to the whole idea of a democratic society? On the role of foundations (pp. 135–168). In *Just giving: Why philanthropy is failing democracy and how it can do better*. Princeton University Press. [34]

Thursday, Dec. 3: Tying privatization to public values, Part II

****RC peer review due (Upload to Moodle by 2:00pm ET)**

Minow, M. (2003). "A daring system." In *Partners, not rivals: Privatization and the public good* (pp. 142–174). Boston, MA: Beacon Press. [32]

Tuesday, Dec. 8:

RC presentations, Part 1 (5 minutes each)

Thursday, Dec. 10:

RC presentations, Part 2 (5 minutes each)

Thursday, Dec. 17:

Final RC due (Upload to Moodle by 11:59pm ET)



Image: Aspiration, Aaron Douglas (1936)

Acknowledgements

Some of the statements on this syllabus were inspired by or adapted from statements on the syllabi of other scholars, including Drs. Jessica Calarco, Eve Ewing, Abby Williamson, and Stefanie Wong.