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Special Topics in College Student Affairs:
The Research University in Modern America

Spring 2014

1.5 Credits

Tillett 103A Wednesday 5:00 – 7:40 p.m.

Professor Richard L. McCormick

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Office hours: Wednesday 1:00 – 4:00 p.m. and by appointment

Course Description

This course will provide a survey of some of the most important issues and opportunities facing American research universities and their students today. In the first several weeks of the course, relying heavily on Jonathan R. Cole's masterpiece, *The Great American University*, we will explore the rise of research universities, their distinctive characteristics and achievements, and the challenges they are facing. In the next several weeks, relying just as heavily on Jeffrey J. Selinger's recent critique of American higher education, *College (Un)Bound*, we will examine the forces that are currently disrupting colleges and universities and some likely trends for the future. Students will also explore subjects of their own choosing through current issues of *The Chronicle of Higher Education* and *The New York Times*. This course will provide a wide-ranging introduction to American higher education today.

The course will be conducted as a seminar, which means that discussion among students and the instructor will be the focus of each class meeting. An occasional bit of lecturing will provide some essential background. An expert visitor may enliven a portion of several of our class meetings.

Requirements and Expectations

Each student in the course will be expected:

1. To do the assigned readings according to the schedule below, to attend each class, and to participate actively in class discussion.
2. To choose, in consultation with the instructor, one important contemporary topic or problem related to American research universities; to peruse throughout the duration of the course every issue of *The Chronicle of Higher Education* and *The New York Times* and read every article published therein on the chosen topic; to keep a journal on that topic based on the articles read; to write, at the end of the course, a three to five page essay reflecting on the chosen topic; to share these reflections orally at the final class meeting; and to submit both the journal and the essay to the instructor at that time.

Each of these two expectations will count equally toward the student's final grade.

Required Texts

Jonathan R. Cole, *The Great American University: Its Rise to Prominence, Its Indispensable National Role, Why It Must Be Protected* (New York: Public Affairs, 2009)

Jeffrey J. Selingo, *College (Un)Bound: The Future of Higher Education and What It Means for Students* (Boston/New York: New Harvest, 2013)

The Chronicle of Higher Education (The instructor will ensure that each student has access to the online edition of this publication for the duration of the course.)

The New York Times

Schedule of Class Meetings and Reading Assignments

January 22 **Introduction: World War II and the rise of American research universities**

Cole, *The Great American University*, pages 1-8, 75-108

Selingo, *College (Un)Bound*, pages vii–xviii

January 29 **The “golden age” of research universities and their achievements**

Cole, *The Great American University*, pages 109–16, 145–74, 207-44, 299-342

February 5 **Challenges facing research universities**

Cole, *The Great American University*, pages 345-418

February 12 **The future of research universities**

Initial student presentations on their chosen topics
Cole, *The Great American University*, pages 419-510

February 19 **Forces and factors disrupting higher education**

Selingo, *College (Un)Bound*, pages 3-101

February 26 **How the disruptive forces will change colleges and universities**

Selingo, *College (Un)Bound*, pages 105-83

March 5 **Final Student presentations on their chosen topics**

Journals and essays due in class

Course Policies

Class conduct Students will be expected to arrive in class on time, to treat their fellow students respectfully, and to give their undivided attention to the work of our learning community for the duration of the class period.

Academic integrity Students will be expected to adhere to the highest professional standards in their class participation and their writing. Please review and abide by the University's Academic Integrity Policy. See <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/>.

Disability accommodations Rutgers University recognizes its responsibility for creating an institutional climate in which students with disabilities can thrive. If you have any type of disability for which you require special accommodations to promote your learning in this course, please register with the Office of Disability Services immediately and notify the instructor. For more information, go to <https://ods.rutgers.edu/>.

Expected Learning Outcomes

Through their work in this course, students should attain a solid basic understanding of the research university in modern America. They should be familiar with its origins, its characteristics and achievements, the forces and factors that are bringing change to higher education, and some of the most important challenges for the future. Through study of their chosen topics, students should gain experience in obtaining knowledge about higher education, in forming opinions and drawing conclusions based upon that knowledge, and in expressing their findings and conclusions both orally and in writing. Students who anticipate careers in Student Affairs within research universities should better understand the institution-wide context of the student-related activities in which they will be engaged.