

Are you interested in international comparative education from Anglo-Saxon, Asian-Confucian, Germanic, and Nordic perspectives?

The course **International Comparative Education: Varieties and Commonalities in a Global World** will address all of these themes. It will be offered in Summer Term 1 (May-June). Enrolments are welcome.

**EDST 565a (941)**  
**Summer 2013 Term 1**  
**Mondays and Wednesdays 4:30 to 7:30 pm**  
**WMAX 216**

## **International Comparative Education: Varieties and Commonalities in a Global World**

**Instructor: Hans Pechar**

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A few decades ago, education at all levels was a matter of national and/or provincial (state) policy with little, if any, interference from outside. Today education is part of a global network in which mobility, cooperation, and competition among national systems is increasing steadily. As a consequence, interest in various kinds of comparative educational research – driven partly by academic curiosity, partly by policy objectives – is growing.

In this course, we will take a theoretical and critical approach to comparative education. We will review the international policy discourse and discuss some of the fundamental puzzles, such as the following: What is the impact of the early childhood learning environment on the literacy of adolescents? How does the impact of parental socioeconomic background on educational achievement differ among countries? How do equitable opportunities and outcomes differ by gender? How do Aboriginal populations fare in an educationally globalized world? In which countries is education primarily seen as a public good, and where are private benefits and responsibilities emphasized? What are the social and economic preconditions of “world class” universities? Are such institutions desirable? What are different national approaches to lifelong learning?

The course will be structured around four modules:

- First, based on OECD indicators we will identify various dimensions in which substantive differences among nations can be observed (e.g., public versus private provision and funding of

education, early streaming versus comprehensive schooling, participation rates in vocational and tertiary education);

- Second, we will consider conceptual frameworks that explain the differences observed. As education has become included as part of the “welfare state,” theories about differences in welfare provision provide a meaningful framework for comparative educational research. Likewise, theories about “varieties of capitalism” explain how education systems contribute to the comparative advantage of different regimes;
- Third, by combining empirical indicators and theory we will construct a global landscape of regional patterns, focusing on how these regions exert influence beyond their borders. Specifically, we will examine Anglo-Saxon, Asian-Confucian, Germanic, and Nordic patterns.
- Finally, we will discuss implications for policy and practice. What insights can we glean about from international comparisons?

### **Hans Pechar Bio**

Hans Pechar is a Professor in the Faculty for Interdisciplinary Studies, Alpen Adria University, Vienna, Austria. The focus of his research is comparative higher education and economics of higher education. Currently, he represents Austria in the governing board of OECD CERI. His recent publications address topics of policies of access to higher education, governance of Austrian universities, and equity in education.