

ADHE 565a (941)
**International Comparative Perspectives on Access,
Admissions, and Student Mobility**

Instructor: Dr. Hans Pechar
Room: H 115
Dates: May 29 – June 26
Days/Time: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 4:30 – 7:30 pm (plus CSSHE conference participation)

It goes without saying that students in North America pass through rigorous admission procedures before enrolling at institutions of higher education. Imagine if such admission systems did not exist. What consequences would that have for the relationship between students and institutions of higher education? This is not just a rhetorical question. As a matter of fact, many European higher education systems have completely different ways of admitting students than those taken for granted in North America; some countries have no admission procedures at all. In some European countries, it is not the university (the receiving institution), but the school (the delivering institution) that decides on access to higher education. Certificates of selective secondary schools often grant a kind of “entitlement” to enrol at universities. Access and admissions policies at Asian institutions of higher education also have their own unique qualities.

This course deals with the stunning variety of ways that different education systems organise the transition from school to higher education. The purpose of this course is to problematize our routine ways of thinking about access and admission and to challenge the preconceptions and normative assumptions that are embedded in such thinking. In an age of globalization, an international comparative analysis of access and admission is not just a fascinating intellectual exercise. A comprehensive analysis of international differences is essential in understanding the different ways in which access and related admission policies and procedures could be conceptualized and enacted. In addition, through the course readings and discussions, we will address the practical local, national, and global consequences of grappling with policies with goals related to enhancing both student mobility and the recruitment of foreign students.

The following topics will be addressed:

1. Emergence of mass higher education: historical and comparative perspectives
2. “Over”- and “undereducation” – how much higher education is appropriate (enough)? Should society define a ceiling?
3. Higher and highest education – universities and non-university sectors
4. The interface between school and university (the education pipeline). Three prototypes of transition.
5. Germany – a typical European pattern
6. Japan – a typical Asian pattern
7. Canada/USA – a typical North-American pattern

8. Fair game? The role of standardized tests in admission
9. Access and persistence: How much drop-out is acceptable?
10. Different cultures of teaching and learning. Tensions between guidance and freedom
11. The architecture of academic grades. One tier and two tier systems
12. Accessibility and affordability – two sides of the same coin?
13. Internationalization of higher education and its impact on admission