

INTERNATIONAL AND COMPARATIVE EDUCATION

Subject (code, title, credits)	International and Comparative Education
Department	Education
Term	Fall 2026
Instructor	Dr. Ilaha Balakishiyeva
E-mail	Balakishiyeva.ilaha@khazar.org
Classroom/hours	To be announced
Prerequisites	None
Language	English
Compulsory/Elective	To be confirmed
Required textbooks and course materials	Main and reference texts: Phillips, D., & Schweisfurth, M. (2014). Comparative and International Education: An Introduction to Theory, Method and Practice. Bloomsbury. Bray, M., Adamson, B., & Mason, M. (Eds.). (2014). Comparative Education Research: Approaches and Methods. Comparative Education Research Centre / Springer. Jules, T. D., Schweisfurth, M., Shields, R., & Thomas, M. A. M. (Eds.). (2025). The Bloomsbury Handbook of Method in Comparative and International Education. Bloomsbury. Additional academic articles, chapters, international reports, and country case materials will be assigned throughout the semester.
Course outline	The course is organized in three connected blocks: • Block I: Understanding and comparing education systems. • Block II: Globalization, policy transfer, and educational reform. • Block III: Governance, performance, equity, and contemporary comparison.
Course description	This course introduces students to international and comparative education through a progressive study of how education systems are compared, how national contexts shape educational institutions and practices, and how globalization influences policy reform. Students first develop a foundation in comparative approaches and methods, then apply these ideas to selected national education systems. The second part of the course examines globalization, policy borrowing, political economy, governance, decentralization, higher education, international organizations, and global indicators. The course concludes by considering equity, social justice, and the Azerbaijan education system in comparative perspective.
Course objectives	• Develop an understanding of the purposes, concepts, and methods of international and comparative education. • Examine how historical, cultural, political, economic, and institutional contexts shape education systems.

	• Compare selected national education systems and identify meaningful similarities and differences. • Analyse the effects of globalization, policy borrowing, and policy transfer on education reform. • Examine governance, decentralization, higher education, international organizations, and global educational indicators. • Develop students' capacity to conduct and present comparative educational analysis.
Learning outcomes	By the end of the course, students should be able to: • Explain key concepts and approaches in international and comparative education. • Apply basic comparative methods to educational systems, policies, and institutions. • Compare selected education systems using appropriate contextual evidence. • Analyse policy borrowing, globalization, governance, and reform processes across countries. • Critically discuss international organizations, global indicators, performance, equity, and social justice. • Conduct a short individual research assignment and contribute to a collaborative comparative assignment.
Teaching methods	• Lectures • Group discussion • Comparative case analysis • Reading discussion • Individual research • Group assignment and presentation • Quizzes

Evaluation Methods

Evaluation Method	Date/Deadline	Points
Midterm Exam	Week 8	35
Final Exam	Week 15	35
Individual Research Assignment	Week 13	10
Group Assignment and Presentation	Week 14	10
Quizzes	Weeks 7 and 13	5
Attendance and Class Activity	Throughout semester	5
Total		100

Assessment Details

Individual Research Assignment – 10 points

Students will prepare an individual research paper of approximately 1,500 words related to international and comparative education. The specific topic and detailed requirements will be provided or approved by the instructor during the semester. The paper should demonstrate appropriate use of academic literature, clear organization, critical analysis, and the student's ability to apply concepts introduced in the course.

- Clear research focus and organization – 2 points

- Quality and appropriate use of sources – 2 points
- Understanding of relevant concepts – 2 points
- Critical analysis and argumentation – 2 points
- Conclusions, academic writing, and presentation – 2 points

Group Assignment and Presentation – 10 points

Students will work in small groups on a comparative education task assigned or approved by the instructor. The group will analyse the selected issue using evidence from more than one educational context and present the results in class. The exact topic and presentation requirements will be announced during the semester.

- Clarity of the comparative focus – 2 points
- Quality and relevance of evidence – 2 points
- Depth of comparative analysis – 2 points
- Conclusions and interpretation – 2 points
- Presentation quality and contribution to group work – 2 points

Quizzes – 5 points

Two short quizzes will be administered during the semester. Each quiz is worth 2.5 points. Quizzes may include key concepts, short-answer questions, and brief comparative questions based on lectures and assigned readings.

Attendance and Class Activity – 5 points

Attendance and meaningful participation are expected throughout the semester. The 5 points include attendance as well as active contribution to class discussions, comparative exercises, reading discussions, and case-based activities.

Generative Artificial Intelligence (GAI) Use Policy

GAI tools such as ChatGPT, Gemini, Claude, Copilot, and similar platforms may be used in this course for research-support purposes. Students may use GAI to explore a topic, generate search terms, identify possible perspectives, clarify concepts, develop preliminary ideas, or locate potential sources. However, AI-generated text must not be copied and pasted directly into assignments, presentations, or other assessed work. All submitted work must be written in the student's own words and must demonstrate the student's own understanding, analysis, and judgment. Students are responsible for checking and verifying all information obtained through GAI before using it. AI-generated references, statistics, quotations, factual claims, or other information should not be treated as reliable unless they have been verified through credible academic or institutional sources. The use of GAI during quizzes, the midterm examination, and the final examination is not permitted. Direct submission of AI-generated content, fabricated references, or unverified information may be treated as a violation of academic integrity and may result in a reduced grade or a grade of zero for the relevant work.

Course Policy

- Students are expected to attend classes regularly and participate actively in discussions and comparative exercises.
- All submitted work must follow principles of academic integrity. Plagiarism, fabrication of sources, or misrepresentation of authorship is not permitted.
- Deadlines and detailed instructions for assignments will be announced during the semester.

Tentative 15-Week Schedule

Week	Topic	Main Focus	Assessment / Activity
1	Introduction to International and Comparative Education	What international and comparative education studies; why educational systems are compared; education as an international and global issue.	Course introduction
2	Approaches and Methods in Comparative Education	Units of comparison; country comparison; qualitative and quantitative approaches; comparative case studies; strengths and limitations of comparison.	Comparative methods exercise

Week	Topic	Main Focus	Assessment / Activity
3	Culture, Context, and Education Systems	How culture, history, institutions, and social context shape education; why educational practices cannot always be transferred directly from one country to another.	Reading discussion
4	Comparing Education Systems I: Finland, Australia, and Canada	Structure of schooling, governance, curriculum, teacher preparation, access, and major characteristics of the three systems.	Country comparison
5	Comparing Education Systems II: China, Singapore, and Japan	Centralization, curriculum, examinations, teacher policy, academic performance, and major characteristics of East Asian systems.	Country comparison
6	What Can We Learn from High-Performing Education Systems?	Comparative analysis of Weeks 4–5; similarities and differences in governance, teacher policies, assessment, and the limits of “best practice.”	Comparative synthesis
7	Globalization and the Changing Role of National Education Systems	How globalization affects education policy; internationalization; global education agendas; convergence and continuing national differences.	Quiz 1
8	Midterm Examination	Assessment of Weeks 1–7.	Midterm Exam – 35 points
9	Policy Borrowing, Lending, and Educational Reform	Why governments borrow policies; how policies move between countries; adaptation, resistance, and local context; examples of international policy transfer.	Policy-transfer case analysis
10	Political Economy of Education Reform	Privatization, marketization, human capital, education and economic development, and the role of political and economic interests in reform.	Case discussion
11	Centralization, Decentralization, and School Autonomy	Comparing centralized and decentralized systems; educational decentralization; school autonomy; accountability; examples from Mexico and European systems.	Comparative governance exercise
12	Higher Education Governance in Comparative Perspective	Comparing higher education governance systems; institutional autonomy, state regulation, internationalization, and responses to globalization in Europe and Asia-Pacific.	Higher education case analysis
13	International Organizations, Global Indicators, and Educational Performance	OECD, UNESCO, World Bank; international benchmarking; PISA and other international assessments; how international data influence national education policy.	Quiz 2; Individual Research Assignment due

Week	Topic	Main Focus	Assessment / Activity
14	Equity, Social Justice, and the Azerbaijan Education System in Comparative Perspective	Comparing access, inequality, inclusion, and educational opportunity; positioning Azerbaijan within the comparative framework developed during the semester.	Group Assignment Presentations – 10 points
15	Final Examination	Comprehensive final assessment.	Final Exam – 35 points