



SOCIOLOGY 315: Sociology of Education

Course Description and Objectives: The U.S. education system is currently under critical review for failing to achieve expected levels of academic performance. This is particularly true at the primary and secondary levels but it is also a reasonable critique of higher education. In this respect, the U.S. education system stands at a critical juncture in history. In this course we explore the historical precedents that structure the current education system as a means of understanding how *individual* factors such as race, ethnicity, social class and gender drive educational outcomes in this country. In turn, we will also pay particular attention to how *institutional* factors, such as funding (private vs. public), academic governing bodies, faculty direction (research vs. teaching) and so on, influence educational results. In short, this course explores how educational institutions affect students' learning outcomes. This course will be run in a seminar fashion, and as a result, student participation in discussions will be absolutely imperative to both the individual success of students and the course itself.

Student Learning Outcomes

1. Detail interactions between American schools and American culture and society.
2. Describe the relationships of public attitudes to educational realities.
3. Examine the consequences on disadvantaged children of their unequal treatment in education.
4. Know the history of inequality in education.
5. Summarize problems with old-style IQ tests, attempts to disassociate intelligence testing from culture, and different types of intelligences.
6. Describe the two sides in the ongoing debate about whether American education should remain strictly the three R's vs. multipurpose.
7. List the complex multiplicity of issues involved in funding education.
8. Develop effective writing skills.

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Department of Sociology
Spring 2012
MWF 9:00-9:50am
MCD, 317

Textbooks:

The Structure of Schooling: Readings in the Sociology of Education (SS), edited by Richard Arum, Irene R. Beattie and Karly Ford. Pine Forge Press, 2nd edition, 2011.

The Death and Life of the Great American School System: How Testing and Choice Are Undermining Education (DL), by Diane Ravitch. Basic Books, 2010.

*Additional articles are available on Website and via hyperlinks in the syllabus.

Assignments/Exams

Participation (20%):

Part I (10%): This class will include both lecture and discussion. For this reason, it is expected that students *read* the assigned material *before class* so that they can actively participate in classroom discussions. It should go without saying but active participation requires students to be present in the classroom. If a student misses an extensive amount of class (more than 3 classes), his/her participation grade will drop significantly.

Part II (10%): Most Fridays (8 in all, specific dates highlighted below) I expect students to come to class prepared to discuss and analyze a particular newspaper article through the lens of the concepts that we are discussing that week (i.e., tracking, testing, social capital, etc.). For this assignment I expect students to: (1) regularly read a professional news source such as the New York Times, The Economist, The Los Angeles Times, The BBC, The Denver Post, etc., (2) each week choose an article that fits with the core theme for the class that week, (3) print the article and read it and (4) jot down several discussion questions for the class to consider. In class I will expect each student to *be prepared to* provide a brief review of his/her article and then we will all discuss the *student generated* discussion questions. At the end of class students will turn in their articles along with their discussion questions (be sure to write your name on your article!).

Reflective essay (10%): Early in the semester you will write a point-counterpoint essay concerning the emerging role of private corporations in the education system. Instructions for this assignment are provided on the course website. The essay is due in class on 02/13/2012.

Midterm exam (20%): A midterm exam will be given on February 29th and March 2nd. The exam consists of true/false questions, multiple choice questions and short essays. If you read and attend lecture you will be well prepared for the exam. A brief in-class review will be provided as well.

Final paper (20%): Students will pick a research topic related to the class and write a six to eight page essay. Each student will also provide an in-class presentation related to their research topic. The paper can be on any topic related to the course with written approval or in consultation with the instructor. Each student should begin to develop his or her paper topic early in the semester. The primary requirement of the paper is that you incorporate sociological concepts into your research topics (i.e., social capital, stratification, tracking, etc.). Each student must submit a topic paragraph to the instructor by 02/27/2012 and the final paper is due 04/18/2012. Literature used to develop the paper must be from professional, peer-reviewed journals and other academic sources.

Final Presentation (10%): Students will present their final paper topics in class during the last few weeks of the semester. Presenters are allotted 15 minutes each. Students should focus on presenting the basic argument of their final paper as clearly and concisely as possible. Each presenter should allot several minutes at the end for feedback and suggestions.

Final Exam (20%): Students will take a comprehensive final exam during finals week. The format of the exam will be similar to that of the midterm, and while it will focus on the second

half of the semester, students should be prepared to answer questions pertaining to the first half of the semester as well. The exam will be held in class on Tuesday, May 8th at 8:00am.

Written work: All written work must be typed, double-spaced, 12-point font (Garamond or Times New Roman preferred), with 1” margins on all sides. Papers *may not* be turned in via e-mail unless I request a digital copy. Late papers will be penalized with a 10 point deduction for each day after the deadline.

Extra Credit: For each essay, if you utilize the writing lab I will increase your final grade for that particular assignment by 5 percent. (Note: You will need to provide edited drafts with your final essay.)

Persons with Disabilities: If you have any sort of disability or personal problem which prevents the fullest expression of your abilities, please let me know as soon as possible during the semester - before it interferes with your work - so that I can make a reasonable accommodation for your needs.

Academic Misconduct: Taking the easy way out will have real consequences in this class. Plagiarism, cheating, or any other form of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Any student engaging in academic dishonesty will be dropped from the course and formal charges will be brought before the Department Chair.

Date	Topic	Reading	Assignments
01/16	No Class	MLK Day	
01/18	Introduction	-Syllabus (benjaminjameswaddell.com) -Obama and education. -A Sociological Approach to Education.	*Read “Tips for being a successful student.” (Website.)
01/20		-Jonathan Kozol. “Savage Inequalities: Children in America’s Schools.” (Website.)	
01/23	Education and Nationalism	-Benedict Anderson. <i>Imagined Communities</i> , pp. 1-7 and pp. 37-65 (Website).	
01/25		-SS, “Theoretical and Historical Perspectives,” pp. 1-3. -SS, “The ‘Rationalization’ of Education and Training,” pp. 4-6 -SS, “Social and Cultural Mobility,” pp. 7-11. -SS, “Sponsored and Contest Mobility and the School System,” pp. 11-22.	
01/27	Forms of Capital	-Pierre Bourdieu. “The Forms of Capital,” pp. 15-29 (Website). -SS, “Schools, Families, and Communities,” pp. 50-59. *Discuss students’ analysis of newspaper articles.	*Bring a copy of your resume to class. *Turn in article/questions.
01/30	The Community and	-SS, “The School and the Community,” pp. 67-73.	*Begin point-counterpoint

	the School	-Steven Manning, "How Corporations are Buying Their Way into the Classroom." (Website.)	essay.
02/01	NCLB	-DL, Ch. 1 and 2, pp. 1-30.	
02/03		-“A Nation at Risk,” 1983 (http://www2.ed.gov/pubs/NatAtRisk/index.html). - Lynne Chenny. “The End of History.” (Website). *Discuss students’ analysis of newspaper articles.	*Turn in article/questions.
02/06	Education and Stratification	-SS, “Stratification Within and Between Schools,” pp. 101-104. -SS, “Beyond the Educational Frontier,” pp. 91-99.	
02/08		-SS, “The Chosen Ones,” pp. 105-113. -SS, “Trust in Schools,” pp. 114-120.	
02/10		-DL, Ch. 3, pp. 31-47. *Discuss students’ analysis of newspaper articles.	*Turn in article/questions.
02/13	Inequalities and Education	- <i>Brown v. the Board of Education</i> , 1954 (Website.) -SS, “Equality of Education Opportunity: The Coleman Report,” pp. 120-136.	*Point-counterpoint essay due in class.
02/15		-SS, “Brown at 50: King’s Dream or Plessy’s Nightmare?” pp. 165-177.	
02/17		-“Racial Diversity in Public Schools: Has the Supreme Court Dealt a Blow to Integration?” pp.71-94. (Website.) *Discuss students’ analysis of newspaper articles.	*Turn in article/questions.
02/20	No Class.	Presidents’ Day	
02/22	Final Projects	-Discuss final paper topics.	
02/24	Free-market Education in the NCLB Era	-SS, “Charter Schools and the Public Good,” pp. 572-579. -DL, Ch. 4, pp. 47-69.	
02/27	In-class Review	Mid-term review.	*Submit topic paragraph in class for final paper.
02/29	Mid-term exam	Mid-term exam (multiple choice)	
03/02	Mid-term exam	Mid-term exam (essays)	
03/05	Education in Developing Countries	-SS, “Persisting Barriers: Changes in Educational Opportunities in Thirteen Countries.” -Dr. Hanemann. "Nicaragua's Literacy Campaign."	
03/07	Guest speaker	-Guest Speaker Dochyta Faclón: Revolution and Education under the Sandanistas.	
03/09	No Class (Science Fair)	-Start working on final presentation/paper!!!	
03/12	No Class!	Spring Break! -Keep working on final presentation/paper!!!	
03/14	No Class!		
03/16	No Class!		
03/19	NCLB, cont.	-DL, Ch. 9, pp. 169-195.	
03/21		-DL, Ch. 10, pp. 195-223.	
03/23	In-class film	-In class film, <i>Waiting for Superman</i> (111 min.)	-Read ahead in DL.

03/26		-In class film, <i>Waiting for Superman</i> (111 min.)	
03/28	Lessons from NCLB	-Finish up <i>Waiting for Superman</i> . -DL, Ch. 11, pp. 223-242. -"Lynne Chenny's attack on the history standards, ten years later," pp. 1-5 (Website.)	
03/30	No Class	-Read ahead, keep working on final paper.	*Turn in article/questions.
04/02		-Devah Pager "Marked: Race, Crime, and Finding Work in an Era of Mass Incarceration." (Website.) -Bertrand and Mullainathan "Are Emily and Greg More Employable Than Lakisha and Jamal?" pp. 673-677. (Website.)	
04/04	New Americans in the Education System	-SS, "The New Second Generation," pp. 355-363. -SS, "English-Only Triumphs, But The Costs Are High," pp. 567-571. -SS, "Rewriting Race and Gender High School Lessons," pp. 382-391.	
04/06	The College Campus	-In-class presentation: The College System *Discuss students' analysis of newspaper articles.	*Turn in article/questions.
04/09		-SS, "Creating a Class: College Admissions and the Education of Elites."	
04/11		-Ellen Mutari and Melaku Lakew. "Class Conflict Tuition Hikes." (Website.)	
04/13		-Phyllis Rosser. "Too Many Women in College." (Website.) -Jerry A. Jacobs. "Detours on the Road to Equality: Women, Work and Higher Education." (Website.) *Discuss students' analysis of newspaper articles.	*Turn in article/questions.
04/16		-SS, "Do Employers Really Need More Educated Youth?," pp. 484-494.	
04/18	Presentations		*Final essays due in class.
04/20	Presentations		
04/23	Presentations		
04/25	Presentations		
04/27	Presentations		
04/30	Presentations		
05/02	Presentations		
05/04	Review	-In-class review for Final Exam	
05/08	Final Exam	Final Exam Tuesday, May 8th @ 8:00am	