Sociology 314: Unequal Educations

Spring 2015
T TH 1:30-2:45
King 327

Dr. Daphne John
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Office Hours:
Mondays: 1:30-3:30
Thursdays 2:45-3:30
and by appointment

Course Description

This course focuses on education as a social institution and the inequalities structured within it. Using theory and empirical evidence, education in the United States will be examined from pre-school through post-secondary levels. The intersections of education and other institutions, (e.g. political, economic and familial) are analyzed and include discussions of race/ethnicity, class, gender and sexuality. Further, the role of education in social reproduction and social control will be examined. *This Course counts toward CAST and GSFS majors*

Required Texts


Required Assignments

Educational Autobiography 10% DUE: 2.26
Paper Topic Statement 5% DUE: 4.2
Annotated Bibliography 10% DUE: 4.23
Critical Essays (2) 15%, 20% DUE: 3.12, 4.16
Research Paper 25% DUE: 5.16 by 11am
Quizzes 15% DUE: 2.24, 3.5, 3.17, 4.7, 4.21, 5.5
Course Goals

To....

Develop a “sociological imagination” regarding education—how one’s own experiences in education can be understood in a structural context: This course is framed around Mills’ framework of the sociological imagination which emphasizes the connection between biography and history as well as the interaction of individual and society.

Gain knowledge of the history and origins of education in the United States: Integral to understanding contemporary issues in education is knowledge of the origins of education in the United States, particularly how this development is linked to changes in other social institutions.

Develop an understanding of education as a social institution: Education often is examined as a process, but also can be understood structurally as a social institution. It is valuable to be able to both separate the two, as well as understand how they are related.

Develop an understanding of the intersectional inequalities which persist in education: Structural boundaries to educational attainment are examined in regards to race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality and class in order to emphasize how these intersectional statuses impact the structure and outcomes of education.

Develop an understanding of how education plays a role in social control: Critique of education challenges its social function. It is useful to examine the possible “hidden curricula” that exist within the institution of education that emphasizes hegemonic conformity.

Description of Assignments

Quizzes: There will be BRIEF quizzes on the reading beginning week 3, with no quiz during mid-term week for a total of 6 quizzes. If all six quizzes are completed, the lowest grade will be dropped. Quizzes will be administered at the beginning of class and may NOT be taken late or made up, regardless of the reason (each quiz worth a total of 3 points).

Educational Autobiography: This assignment is designed to allow you to reflect on your experiences within the social institution of education starting with your first day of schooling to present day at Oberlin College. The paper should be approximately 5-7 pages in length and as detailed as possible (graded as points 10-0).

Critical Essays: You will critically analyze information from the course readings and discussions in essay form. A choice of essay prompts will be provided. Each paper should be 5-6 pages in length with appropriate referencing/citation, including a bibliography. At least one (1) outside scholarly source also must be included in the essay.
American Sociological Association citation style or American Psychological Association citation is to be used.

**Paper Topic Statement:** This assignment is the first component of preparation for the final research paper and is comprised of a one to two sentence topic statement and a paragraph that explains any background information and helps familiarize the reader with information relevant to the topic (graded on a pint scale of 5-1). **Included in this grade is meeting with the instructor to discuss the topic-time/date TBD.**

**Annotated Bibliography:** This assignment is the second component of preparation for the final research paper. Annotations (bibliographic reference and brief summaries) of 8 or more scholarly sources to be used for the final research paper are required. American Sociological Association citation style American Psychological Association citation is to be used.

**Research Paper:** This paper is based on library research consisting of monographs, edited texts, empirical data, journal articles and other scholarly sources used to illuminate and expound upon a topic relevant to the course. The paper should reflect a conceptual analysis and synthesis of the information you gather, rather than a series of summaries. The paper also should use appropriate citation and referencing of sources, including a bibliography of at least 10 sources. It is expected that the final paper, exclusive of the bibliography, will be approximately 10-12 pages in length. American Sociological Association citation style or American Psychological Association citation style is to be used.

**Instructor policies**

- Your consistent, on-time attendance and participation are required. Please do not attend to other activities during class (cellphones, knitting, etc.). Come prepared to actively discuss the readings assigned for that day.
- **After two absences,** additional absences will generally lower your final grade in the course. In case of illness or personal emergency, your absence will be excused. This policy is governed by the honor code; to report an excused absence, please contact me.
- **Assignments are due IN CLASS the day they are due.** An extension will be automatically applied to all assignments until 4:00 the day they are due. After this grace period, 1/3 of a letter grade (e.g. an A would be reduced to an A-) will be deducted for each day of lateness, unless you previously have made arrangements with the instructor because of illness or emergency. Assignments are to be handed in on paper (double sided is fine)-*please retain a copy of this work for yourself.* Please use the Times New Roman 12pt font or an equivalent, double spaced (unless specifically instructed to use another format) and NUMBERED pages. **Staple your papers before turning them in.** **After one week, assignments will not be accepted for credit.**
• You must fulfill all course obligations and complete all assignments in order to potentially receive credit for the course, even if taking the course pass/no pass.
• Office Hours are listed at the top of this syllabus. Upon special request, I will meet with students at times outside of my office hours. Please see me IN PERSON to set up such an appointment.
• I receive up to 30 or more e-mails per day. Please do not expect me to reply immediately to an e-mail question or request. If something is urgent, please CALL ME in my office or signify in the e-mail header that it is urgent.
• Honor Code: This course will follow the policies described in the Oberlin College Honor Code and Honor System. Please include the statement “I affirm that I have adhered to the Honor Code in this assignment” in all written work. Please contact me if you have any questions about citation/referencing, or the relationship of the Honor Code to your work in this course. For more information on the Honor Code, see http://www.oberlin.edu/students/student_pages/honor_code.html.
• The College makes reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities. Students should notify the Office of Disability Services located in Peters G-27/G-28 and their instructor of any disability related needs. For more information, see http://new.oberlin.edu/office/disability-services/index.dot. Any student eligible for and needing academic adjustments or accommodations because of a disability is requested to speak with the professor.
• The instructor reserves the right to modify the syllabus during the semester, if needed.

Schedule

Please complete the readings by the day they are listed. We will discuss these readings in class. Either bring the readings to class or bring your notes.

2.3 Introduction

History and Theory

2.5 Rury: Introduction-History, Social Change and Education
     Ch. 1-Colonial America: Religion, Inequality, and Revolution

On Blackboard

Sadovnik: Theory and Research in the Sociology of Education
Durkheim: On Education and Society
2.10 Rury: Ch.2-Emergence of a Modern School System: The 19th Century
Ch.3-Ethnicity, Gender, and Race: Contours of Social Change in the 19th Century

On Blackboard

Collins: Functional and Conflict Theories of Educational Stratification
Bowles and Gintis: Broken Promises: School Reform in Retrospect

2.12 On Blackboard

Coleman: Social Capital in the Creation of Human Capital

From Critique and Utopia: New Developments in the Sociology of Education in the 21st Century
Ch. 10 Mc Donough and Nunez, Bourdieu’s Sociology of Education: Identifying Persistent Inequality, Unmasking Domination, and Fighting Social Domination

Bess, Jennifer: More Than a Food Fight Intellectual Traditions and Cultural Continuity in Chillico’s Indian School Journal, 1902–1918, American Indian Quarterly

Rury: Ch. 4-Growth, Reform and Differentiation: The Progressive Era

2.17 Rury: Ch. 5-Education, Equity, and Social Policy: Postwar America through the 1970’s
Ch. 6- Chapter 6-Globalization and Human Capital: From “A Nation at Risk” to Neo-liberal Reform
Epilogue

On Blackboard

From The School in the United States: A Documentary History (Fraser)
Ch. 13: From No Child Left Behind to the Common Core, 2001-2014

From Education and Capitalism: Struggles for Learning and Liberation
Russom: Obama’s Neoliberal Agenda for Public Education

Practice

2.19 Ravitch: Introduction
Ch. 1-Our Schools are at Risk
Ch. 2 -The Context for Corporate Reform
2.24 **QUIZ**

Ravitch: Cha. 5-The Facts about Test Scores  
Ch. 6-The Facts about the Achievement Gap  
Ch. 7-The Facts about the International Test Scores  
Ch. 8-The Facts about High School Graduation

2.26 Ravitch: Ch. 10-How Poverty Affects Academic Achievement

*On Blackboard*

Orfield, Gary: Tenth Annual Brown Lecture in Education Research: A New Civil Rights Agenda for American Education.


From *Sociology of Education: A Critical Reader 2nd Edition*  
Ch. 19: Tracking/More than Misplaced Technology

3.3 *On Blackboard*

From *Silenced Voices and Extraordinary Conversations*  
Weis: Acquiring White Working-Class Identities: Legitimate and Silenced Discourse within the School

Finn, Patrick: Preparing for Power in Elite Boarding Schools and in Working-Class Schools, *Theory Into Practice.*


3.5 **QUIZ**

*On Blackboard*

From *Just Schools: Pursuing Equality in Societies of Difference*  
Markus: Ch 3-Identity Matters: Ethnicity, Race and the American Dream

Sarat: Ch 4- Contested Terrain: Visions of Multiculturalism in an American Town
Lindkvist: Ch 6-The Reach and Limits of Cultural Accommodation: Public Schools and Somali Immigrants in Maine

Grossman and Porche: Perceived Gender and Racial/Ethnic Barriers to STEM Success

3.10 *On Blackboard*
From *Latinos and Education: A Critical Reader*
Urrieta, Ch. 7-Dis-Connections in “American Citizenship and the Post/neo-colonial: People of Mexican Decent and Whiteness Pedagogy and Curriculum

Darder and Uriarte: The Politics of Restrictive Language Policies: A Postcolonial Analysis of Language and Schooling
Silence: An Analysis of the Cultural Practice of Talking

From *Education and Capitalism: Struggles for Learning and Liberation*
Bale: Ch. 3-Linguistic Justice at School

3.12 *On Blackboard*
From *Social Science Research* 41 (2012) 1–15
DiPrete and Jennings: “Social and behavioral skills and the gender gap in early educational achievement”

Garcia and Slesaransky-Poe: “The Heteronormative Classroom: Questioning and Liberating Practices”

From *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy* 53(8) May 2010. “Moving Beyond the Inclusion of LGBT Themed Literature in English Language Arts Classrooms: Interrogating Heteronormativity and Exploring Intersectionality”

From *Youth and Sexualities*
Rasmussen: Safety and Subversion: The Production of Sexualities and Genders in School Spaces

3.17 **QUIZ**

*On Blackboard*

From *Journal of School Health*, January 2014, Vol. 84, No. 1. ‘They Were Only Joking’: Efforts to Decrease LGBTQ Bullying and Harassment in Seattle Public Schools


GLSEN The 2013 National School Climate Survey: The Experiences of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Youth in Our Nation’s Schools

3.19 From More than a Score
Ravitch: Forward
Kohn: Introduction
Hagopian: Preface: the Testocracy versus the Education Spring

Ravitch: Ch. 11-The Facts About Teachers and Test Scores
Ch. 12-Why Merit Pay Fails
Ch. 13-Do Teachers Need Tenure and Seniority

3.31 More than a Score, Ch. 1-8

4.2 More than a Score, 9-11

4.7 Quiz

More than a Score, 12-17

4.9 More than a Score, 18-22

4.14 More than a Score, 23-27, Afterword

4.16 Ravitch: Ch. 14-The Problem with Teach for America
Ch. 15-The Mystery of Michelle Rhee
Ch. 16-The Contradictions of Charters

Fabricant and Fine:
Ch 1- An Introduction to the Landscape of Charter Reform
Ch 2- The Promise: The Genesis of Expectation and the Challenge of Charter Reform
Ch 3- The Tension Between Promise and Evidence

4.21 Quiz

Fabricant and Fine:
Ch. 4-Interlocking Power and the Deregulation of Public Education
Ch. 5 “Crisis”: A Moment for Dispossession and Profit
Ch. 6 Reclaiming “Public”: Deepening National Commitments to Public Investment and Public Innovation
Challenges and Solutions

4.28 Ravitch: Ch. 21-Solutions: Start Here
Ch. 22-Begin at the Beginning
Ch. 23-The Early Years Count
Ch. 24-The Essentials of Good Education
Ch. 25-Class Size Matters for Teaching and Learning

4.30 Ravitch: Ch. 26-Make Charters Work for All
Ch. 27-Wraparound Services Make a Difference
Ch. 28-Measure Knowledge and Skills with Care
Ch. 29-Strengthen the Profession

5.5 **Quiz**

Ravitch: Ch. 30-Protect Democratic Control of Public Schools
Ch. 31-The Toxic Mix
Ch. 32-The Privatization of Public Education is Wrong
Ch. 33-Conclusion: The Pattern on the Rug

Post-Secondary Education

5.7 Ravitch: Ch. 9-The Facts about College Graduation Rates

*On Blackboard*
From *Sociology of Education: A Critical Reader 2nd Edition*
Rosenbaum: College-for-All: Do Students Understand What College Demands?

From *Degrees of Inequality*
Mullen: Ch.3-Deciding to Go to College
Ch.4-Choosing Colleges