**OVERVIEW**

This course examines schools as social institutions that continuously shape students’ agency (empowerment) as learners and, ultimately, as citizens in the United States. We focus on understanding how the goals of American schooling include more than achievement around academic subject matter; students are additionally introduced and asked to comply to cultural norms and expectations that reflect the social, cultural, economic and political values of the culture of power. In addition, we examine, 1) the impact of resource access – material, human, and symbolic – on teaching and learning experiences; 2) how poverty and race, for example, shape educational opportunity; and 3) the ways in which school and classroom interactions contribute to students’ identity formation – as learners and as linked to future roles they may enact in society. The course challenges us to consider whether schooling is in fact a means for social mobility for all students, particularly those most marginalized by society. The course themes consider the multiple types of schools including, for example, comprehensive neighborhood, charter and magnet public schools. Lecture, readings, and discussion are supplemented by film, actual classroom footage and visits to schools.

**REQUIRED TEXT**


**OPTIONAL TEXTS**


Additional required readings will be assigned. These readings (listed in the syllabus) are available online via Canvas.
COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Your participation is essential to this course and allows us to learn from each other. Hence, regular class attendance is crucial and required, assigned readings and video viewings are to be completed prior to each class meeting, and students are expected to participate in class discussions and activities. To show respect to the professor and your peers, cell phones should not be used during class time, and laptops should only be used to take notes during lectures and presentations. Participation counts for 10% of your grade. Each student may miss two (2) classes, for any reason. However, each absence past the second will result in a 10% reduction from the final class-participation grade. Six or more absences will result in failure of the course. If you are going to miss class, please keep up with assignments and do all that you can to determine what you have missed.

ASSIGNMENTS

Required assignments and their due dates are indicated on the syllabus. Late assignments will not be accepted without written permission of the instructor. The required assignments include:

- PowerPoint presentation on reading(s) (20 minutes)
- Reading Responses (1-2 pages each)
- Schools, Capital, and Social Reproduction paper (5-7 pages)
- School Experience group presentation (20 minutes)
- School Experience group paper (10-12 pages)

Grading for the course will be as follows:

- Participation (10%)
- PowerPoint presentation on reading(s) (10%)
- Reading Responses & Short Reflections (20%)
- Schools, Capital, and Social Reproduction paper (20%)
- School Experience group presentation & paper (20%)
- Final reflection activity (20%)

PowerPoint Presentation

On designated dates throughout the semester, an individual student or a group of students will lead the discussion on the assigned material for that class period. The presenter(s) will be responsible for making a presentation using PowerPoint. The presentation should: (1) point out three powerful/meaningful ideas that were gained from each assigned reading; (2) investigate the commonalities and differences between the assigned readings for that class period (if more than one reading was assigned) and/or relate that day’s material to other themes from the course; (3) provide at least one connection via audio/video clip, quotation, personal experience, etc that will illustrate, further enhance or extend our understanding of the topic; and (4) pose at least two provocative questions that will invite discussion amongst your peers in the classroom. Three bonus points will be awarded if the presentation includes a brief, creative activity related to the assigned reading that captures students’ interest and engages their active participation.
**Reading Responses & Short Reflections**

During the semester, you will be asked to either submit reading responses or short reflections that address the readings and/or videos assigned during a particular week. The reading responses should be approximately 250-500 words (1-2 pages double-spaced) in length and demonstrate that you are deeply engaging with the reading. More specifically, the response should demonstrate an understanding of important themes in the new readings and make meaningful connections to past material covered. You may respond to any of the following prompts:

1) Summarize three of the most powerful takeaways you gained from the reading(s).
2) Discuss whether you agree or disagree with one or more aspects of the reading(s).
3) Discuss connections between the reading(s) and your experiences in schools.

**“Schools, Capital, and Social Reproduction” Paper**

Watch the documentary, *Boys of Baraka* (available online [https://vimeo.com/6948025](https://vimeo.com/6948025)). Utilizing theoretical understandings of the forms of capital (embodied/institutional/objectified cultural capital and social capital), as presented in the course readings and lectures, provide a written analysis (5-7 pages) interrogating the ways in which schools are spaces where socially reproductive cycles are both interrupted and reinforced. Specifically link social reproduction and capital by discussing how success in school is shaped by: 1) the capital one can access, both inside and outside of school; 2) the symbolic value of one’s capital; 3) opportunities to exchange existing capital into other forms; and 4) opportunities to ‘build’ new capital.

**“School Experience” Presentation & Paper**

For this assignment, you will spend time in two contrasting elementary, middle, or high schools. The schools should differ in terms of student demographic makeup (e.g., race/ethnicity, SES) and/or in terms of type (i.e., charter, magnet, urban/suburban public, private). Logistically, organize yourselves into groups of 4-5 and arrange to spend approximately 3 hours per school. While in each school, you are encouraged to tour the building(s), observe classroom teaching, and ask questions to any available administrators, staff and/or students. In addition, if the school allows, you may offer to assist with simple teaching and learning activities in the classrooms where you are observing. The purpose of this assignment is for you to acquire vivid images of school settings and a window into the students’ experiences. Your group will develop an in-class 20-minute PowerPoint presentation of observations, experiences, and theoretically grounded reflections as well as comparisons across the school contexts. Group papers of 10-12 pages are also required to complete this assignment.

*Unless otherwise indicated, all written assignments should be submitted electronically through Canvas.* Students are always encouraged to make an appointment to meet with me to clarify specific questions and/or to discuss one’s progress.
**Academic Integrity**

All students are expected to adhere to high standards of academic integrity. In this class that means that all work presented as original must, in fact, be original, and the ideas and contributions of others must always be appropriately acknowledged. Quotations must, of course, be acknowledged, but so must summaries, paraphrases, and the ideas of others. If you have any doubts or questions about documentation requirements, please ask me.

**Grading Expectations**

90%+ Exceptional work; well-crafted; well-organized; well-articulated; very clear
80%+ Good work; fluid and clear with slight gaps in the articulation of ideas
70%+ Satisfactory work with substantial gaps in the articulation of ideas
60%+ Mediocre; poorly crafted; poorly articulated; rushed, evidently last minute
## SCHEDULE OF TOPICS, READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Class Focus and Associated Readings</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1/14/20</td>
<td><strong>Focus:</strong> Class introduction, organization and course requirements</td>
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<td>1/16/20</td>
<td><strong>Focus:</strong> Perceptions about the role of the American school; The purpose of the American school</td>
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| 1/21/20 | **Focus:** Competing purposes of schooling – The American struggle over educational goals<br><br>**Reading:**
<br><br>**Video:** *Changing Education Paradigms* (Sir Ken Robinson)<br>https://www.ted.com/talks/sir_ken_robinson_changing_education_paradigms |
| 1/23/20 | **Focus:** The Single Story; The Education Debt<br><br>**Reading:**
<br><br>**Video:** *The Danger of the Single Story* (Adichie Chimamanda)<br>https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story?language=en |
| 1/28/20 | **Focus:** Taking a historical look – The beginnings of American education<br><br>**Readings:**
Fraser, Chapter 1 (Focus on the following; skim other entries)<br>• Chapter Introduction, p. 1-4; Virginia’s Cure, p. 7; MA’s Old Deluder Satan Law, p. 8-9; Benjamin Franklin, Autobiography, p. 9-10
<br><br>Fraser, Chapter 2 (Focus on the following; skim other entries)<br>• Chapter Introduction, p. 17-20; Jefferson, p. 20-23; Rush, p. 25-29; Webster (Fraser Intro), p. 29; Webster, The American Spelling Book, p. 39-41
<br><br>**Video:** *School, The Story of American Public Education (The Common School: 1770 - 1890)*<br>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fPc7RnGOho0&list=PL00795BC38B4368D4&index=1<br>Watch parts 1-6 |
| 1/30/20 | **Focus:** Taking a historical look – The Common School Movement<br><br>**Reading:**
Fraser, Chapter 3, pages 44-53 (until the "Religious Education" section) and "The Desegregation of the Boston Public Schools" - pages 73-82.
<br><br>**Video:** *School, The Story of American Public Education (1950-1980)*<br>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xXZQB1Q4yT0&list=PL5RgakF-XbTyzEgfEFwnHPvr1aahh3GX |
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<tr>
<td>2/4/20</td>
<td><strong>Focus:</strong> Growing up in the margins of America: Culture and race as central issues in U.S. education</td>
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<td><strong>Readings:</strong> Kozol: Chapters 1 and 3</td>
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<td><strong>Video:</strong> Separate and Unequal <a href="http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/film/separate-and-unequal/">http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/film/separate-and-unequal/</a></td>
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<td><strong>SUBMIT REFLECTION</strong></td>
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<td>2/6/20</td>
<td><strong>Focus:</strong> Growing up in the margins of America: Culture and race as central issues in U.S. education</td>
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<td><strong>Reading:</strong> Kozol: Chapter 4</td>
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<td><strong>Video:</strong> Racial segregation in American schools. Return to the 1960s <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pmrtJD9kT4I">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pmrtJD9kT4I</a></td>
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<td><strong>SUBMIT READING RESPONSE</strong></td>
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<td>2/11/20</td>
<td><strong>Focus:</strong> The achievement ideology and social reproduction</td>
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<td><strong>Readings:</strong> MacLeod: Chapters: 1, 2, 3</td>
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<td><strong>Video:</strong> How Economic Inequality Harms Societies <a href="https://www.ted.com/talks/richard_wilkinson_how_economic_inequality_harms_societies?language=en">https://www.ted.com/talks/richard_wilkinson_how_economic_inequality_harms_societies?language=en</a></td>
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<td>2/13/20</td>
<td><strong>Focus:</strong> Forms of capital theory and habitus</td>
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<td><strong>Readings:</strong> MacLeod: Chapters 4, 5</td>
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<td><strong>Video:</strong> I Sued the School System <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dqTTojTija8">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dqTTojTija8</a></td>
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<td>2/18/20</td>
<td><strong>Focus:</strong> Social and cultural forces on academic achievement</td>
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<td><strong>Reading:</strong> MacLeod: Chapter 6</td>
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<td><strong>SUBMIT REFLECTION</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>2/20/20</td>
<td><strong>Focus:</strong> Social reproduction</td>
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<td><strong>Readings:</strong> MacLeod: Chapter 7 and Appendix 2</td>
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| 2/25/20   | **Focus**: Teacher Case Studies – Teaching in Today’s Classrooms  
**Readings**:  
“Start Where You Are, But Don’t Stay There” - Chapters 2 and 3  
SUBMIT REFLECTION |
| 2/27/20   | **Focus**: Teacher Case Studies – Teaching in Today’s Classrooms  
**Reading**:  
“Start Where You Are, But Don’t Stay There” – Milner, Chapter 4  
SUBMIT REFLECTION |
| 3/3/20    | **Focus**: Introduction to structures and agency theory  
**Video**: Learning Matters: First To Worst  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r5NhiM9ApCw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r5NhiM9ApCw) |
| 3/5/20    | **Focus**: Refreshing the hope; Structures and agency theory continued  
“Schools, Capital, and Social Reproduction” paper due @ 11:59 PM |
| 3/10/20   | SPRING BREAK |
| 3/12/20   | SPRING BREAK |
| 3/17/20   | **Focus**: Confronting Poverty and Race in Schools and Classrooms  
**Reading**:  
“Rac(e)ing to Class” – Milner, Introduction and Chapter 1 |
| 3/19/20   | **Focus**: The school to prison pipeline; School discipline; The power of relationships  
**Readings**:  
Noguera: Chapters 6 & 7  
**Video**: Colorado high school replaces punishment with 'talking circles'  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g8_94O4ExSA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g8_94O4ExSA)  
SUBMIT REFLECTION |
| 3/24/20   | **Focus**: Tools for creating more just schools; Collaborative research and restorative justice  
**Reading**:  
**Video**: Restorative Welcome and Reentry Circle  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HiLtvK8Q0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HiLtvK8Q0)  
SUBMIT REFLECTION |
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| 3/26/20  | **Focus:** Charter Schools; What difference does school choice make?  
          Reading:  
          SUBMIT READING RESPONSE |
| 3/31/20  | School Onsite Visits – No Class |
| 4/2/20   | School Onsite Visits – No Class |
| 4/7/20   | **Focus:** Limited options within the American education system?  
          *In Class* Film: *The Lottery* |
| 4/9/20   | “School Experience” Presentations |
| 4/14/20  | “School Experience” Presentations |
| 4/16/20  | **Focus:** Reclaiming the promise of education  
          Readings:  
          Noguera: Chapters 9 and 11  
          SUBMIT REFLECTION |
| 4/21/20  | Group Work on School Experience Paper – (No Class)  
          “School Experience” Paper Due @ 11:59 PM |
| 4/23/20  | Collaborative final reflection activity; Completed and presented in class |