

**Sociology of Education  
EDPL 613**

Tuesday, 4:15 – 7:00 p.m.  
Benjamin Building, Rm. 0114

Course Instructor

Bob Croninger  
Assistant Professor  
Benjamin Building, Rm. 2110D

(301) 405-2927  
[rc164@umail.umd.edu](mailto:rc164@umail.umd.edu)

Office Hours

TBD

Graduate Assistant

Kirk Walters  
[maineswalters@msn.com](mailto:maineswalters@msn.com)

TBD

---

**Course Overview**

Description

The purpose of this course is to introduce students to some of the major themes in the sociology of education, as well as some of the theoretical frameworks, epistemological traditions, and analytical skills used by sociologists to investigate social phenomenon and inform public policy. Throughout the course we'll look at schools, colleges, and universities as social institutions, emphasizing their function in modern societies and their impact on social processes and the life chances of individuals. We'll follow in the tradition of C. Wright Mills, who challenged sociologists and political leaders to question their assumptions about what distinguishes a personal problem from a social problem. An underlying challenge presented by this course, therefore, is to disentangle personal and organizational failures from broader social processes and inequalities that rest at the heart of many education issues

We'll begin by examining what sociologists refer to as the status attainment model, not because it is the best or most informative model but because it has had the greatest influence on the sociology of education and education policy. Status attainment research became the dominant sociological paradigm in the United States shortly after World War II, as survey research and advancements in computer software and hardware made it possible to analyze large quantities of data efficiently. Using statistical techniques and survey data, researchers sought to explain the personal and social mechanisms that influence individual attainment and life-course outcomes. From a policy perspective, status attainment research tapped into the nation's ideological focus on individual rights and responsibilities, helping to establish a philosophical and political link between education practices and public policies.

Status attainment research generally supports the idea that education is an important

social institution in modern societies, generating both personal and collective benefits when individuals acquire higher levels of educational attainment. From a policy perspective, the social problem or policy issue is how to expand educational opportunities and promote greater effectiveness in schools, colleges, and universities. Critics of the status attainment paradigm, however, question whether educational institutions are a reliable – or even legitimate – mechanism for distributing social resources and promoting economic or social well being, at least as they currently operate. We'll consider some of these critiques as part of the course -- specifically, schools as a mechanism for social control and schools as a mechanisms for preserving social inequalities.

Although sociologists have debated the purpose and function of educational institutions, most agree that access to educational opportunities has a profound effect on individual life chances and attainment. We'll consider how specific education policies and practices -like school choice, curriculum differentiation, school finance, and school assignment - shape the range of educational opportunities afforded students. Because issues of equity have moved to the forefront of education policies during the past fifty years, we'll discuss the consequences of these policies and practices for students from different social backgrounds - primary among these differences are differences by social class, race/ethnicity, and gender.

We'll conclude the course with an examination of sociological theories and research that seeks to understand the social dynamics within schools and the processes by which policymakers and educators attempt to change schools in fundamental ways. Willard Waller's famous description of schools as small societies highlights the importance of understanding the quality of social relationships in and around schools if sociologists are to understand both what does and does not happen in schools. From this perspective, we'll consider the latest reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, No Child Left Behind, and we'll apply sociological theories and research to debate the limitations and merits of the policy initiatives (e.g., high-stakes accountability) that are a part of the legislation.

### Course Requirements

Course requirements include reading course assignments and participating in weekly class discussions, participation in a policy debate, completing two short writing assignments, and completing a final research project:

- *Preparation for class discussion.* I'll provide questions to frame many, though not all, of the readings. You should come to class prepared to address these questions or with articulated questions of your own. Because class discussions will be an important part of this class, your participation will make an important difference in what you and others learn.
- *Participation in a policy debate.* Everyone will be asked to participate in a brief policy debate about some aspect of the No Child Left Behind legislation. For information about the legislation see . . . <http://www.nochildleftbehind.gov/next/overview/index.html>. You'll work in teams of roughly 4-5 students and present a policy brief on some aspect of the legislation (roughly 4-5 pages). I'll say more about this during class. Participation in the debate and the brief will be 20% of your grade.

- *Two "short" writing assignments.* There will be two "short" writing assignments (4-5 pages each). I'll give out the directions for these assignments two weeks prior to their due date. Each assignment will ask you to examine an education issue from a sociological perspective. I'll provide you with information about the issue in class two weeks before each assignment is due. Each assignment will constitute 20% of your grade.
- *Final research project.* You'll be required to write a "long" paper (15-20 pages) for your final project. Final projects may take one of four forms: (a) a sociological analysis of a major education policy, (b) a critical synthesis of relevant literature about an education issue, (c) a design of a study for investigating an issue relevant to the sociology of education, or (d) the write up for an actual study (e.g., structured observation in a classroom or school, secondary data analysis) that you conduct as part of this class. You'll be required to meet with me personally or provide me with a one-page prospectus describing your final research project by March 18<sup>th</sup>. The final project will constitute 40% of your grade

### General Policies

All students are expected to abide by the code of academic integrity throughout this course and all other courses offered at the University of Maryland. Academic dishonesty, including cheating, fabrication, and plagiarism will not be tolerated and will be reported to the Student Honor Council. The full text of the University's honor code is available on the web at [www.inform.umd.edu/CampusInfo/Departments/jpo/code-acinteg.html](http://www.inform.umd.edu/CampusInfo/Departments/jpo/code-acinteg.html). Students who have questions about the code or their obligations under the code should contact the Office of Judicial Programs and Student Ethical Development (4-8204).

The University is obligated, whenever possible, to provide appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities. Students who have questions about their rights or accommodations may contact Disability Support Services (4-7682). A student with a documented disability or any other special need who wishes to discuss academic accommodations should contact me as soon as possible.

It is the University policy (and my own) that students should not be penalized because of their religious beliefs and observances. Whenever possible, students will be given reasonable time to make up any academic assignment that is missed due to participation in a religious observance. Please inform me of any conflicts between the course schedule and personal religious observances as soon as possible so that appropriate arrangements may be made.

## **Materials**

### Required Books

There are four required books for the course. Each has been ordered and should be available at the Maryland Book Exchange and other stores that carry University of Maryland textbooks.

Lemert, Charles. (2002). Social things. An introduction to the sociological life 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield. An excellent introductory text into professional sociology and its underpinnings in the everyday experiences of people. Very readable. Lemert's

description of the discipline and practice of sociology is in the tradition of C. Wright Mill's 1959 classic, Sociological imagination.

MacLeod, Jay. (1995). Ain't no makin' it. Aspirations and attainment in a low-income neighborhood (2<sup>nd</sup> edition). Boulder, CO: Westview Press. One of the best contemporary, interpretative studies of how poor and working-class males interpret educational opportunities. (Unfortunately, the book is relatively silent about the experiences of young, working-class females.) Rare for its careful examination of both black and white adolescent responses to education. Confirms and deepens earlier sociological works that highlight the personal and social conflicts embedded in formal educational processes.

Rumbaut, Ruben G., & Fortes, Alejandro (Eds.). (1985). Ethnicities: Children of immigrants in America. Berkeley: University of California Press. Ruben and Fortes assemble an interesting set of scholarly essays about the experiences of second-generation immigrants in the United States. Challenges conventional notions of assimilation and multiculturalism, and, in doing so, highlights important educational issues for educators and policymakers.

Arum, R., & Beattie, I. R. (2000). The social structure of schooling: Readings in the sociology of education. Mountain View, CA: Mayfield. As suggested by the title, this is a basic collection of readings in the sociology of education. By using a general collection of readings, I hope to introduce you to a broader range of sociological theories and research. I will supplement these readings with articles and other text during the course.

### Bel Jean Reader

There is a selection of required readings available for purchase at the Maryland Book Exchange. The Maryland Book Exchange is located at 4500 College Avenue in College Park. Ph.#: 301.927.2510

## **Course Readings & Schedule**

### I. Theoretical & Historical Foundations

We'll spend the first two weeks discussing the discipline and practice of sociology, as well as the origins of the sociology of education as a field of study, particularly in the United States. The schedule provides two sets of readings - required and related. All readings are due on the date listed. Be prepared to discuss required readings in class. Optional readings are meant to help you identify classic or related sources that may address topics of interest.

#### *Week 1, January 27<sup>th</sup>*

Overview of course: Discussion of course organization, expectations, readings, and assignments. Discussion of the sociological viewpoint: What is it? What are some of the major historical perspectives, theoretical traditions, and intellectual questions that inform sociology as a discipline? What role can sociology play in informing education policy and practice? There are no required or related readings for the first week of class.

### *Week 2, February 3<sup>rd</sup>*

Although sociologists in Europe and the United States (and most likely elsewhere) have long been interested in education as a social institution, it wasn't until the 1960s that education officially became a sub-discipline within sociology. This week we'll discuss Lemert's perspective on sociology as a "way of seeing" and consider the evolution of the sociology of education in the United States.

#### Required readings (due for class):

- Introduction & chapters 1- 7, Social things.
- Dreeben, Robert. (1994). The sociology of education: It's development in the Unites States. In A. Pallas (Ed.), Research in sociology of education and socialization (Vol. 10, pp. 7-52). Greenwich, CN: JAI Press

#### Related readings (optional):

- Bidwell, Charles E. (1999). Sociology and the study of education. In Ellen Condliffe Lagemann & Lee S. Shulman (Eds.), Issues in education research. Problems and possibilities (Chapter 5, pp. 85-104). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Bidwell, Charles, & Friedkin, N. (1988). Sociology of education. In Neil J. Smelser (Ed.), Handbook of sociology (Chapter 14, pp. 449-471). Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Mills, C. Wright. (1959). The sociological imagination. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press (especially Chapter 1).
- Trent, William T., Braddock, Jomills H., & Henderson, Ronald D. (1985). Sociology of education: A focus on education as an institution. In Edmund W. Gordon (Ed.), Review of research in education (Chapter 8, pp. 295-336). Washington DC: American Education Research Association.

## II. Purposes and Functions of Schooling

During the next three weeks we'll consider different explanations for the existence of schools and mass education in modern societies. A central question is whether or not schools function to promote social mobility and economic well-being or whether or not schools function to reproduce social inequalities and secure valued resources for individuals from privileged social backgrounds.

### *Week 3, February 10<sup>th</sup>*

Emile Durkheim provided one of the initial explanations for the emergence of mass education in modern societies - nation building and social control. Durkheim believed that the role of educational institutions in modern societies was to replace, or at least supplement, the role that religious institutions and families played in traditional societies - namely, socializing young people into a common culture and the moral foundations of collective life. Subsequent sociologists expanded these ideas to examine the role of educational institutions in the development of nation-states and the transmission of cultural values and social roles. ***I'll hand out materials for the first written assignment in class. The first paper will be due in class on February 24<sup>th</sup>.***

Required readings (due for class):

- Chapters 8-12, Social things.
- Readings 8, Structure of schooling.
- Labaree, David (1997). Public goods, private goods: The American struggle over educational goals. American Educational Research Journal, 34, 39-81.

Related readings (optional):

- Boli, J., & Ramirez, F. O. (1987). On the union of states and schools. In G. M. Thomas, J. W. Meyer, F. O. Ramirez, & J. Boli (Eds.), Institutional structure: Constituting state, society, and the individual (Chapter 8, pp. 173-197). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Dreeben, Robert. (1968). On what is learned in school. Addison-Wesley.
- Durkheim, Emile. (1959). Education: Its nature and its role. In Education and sociology (Chapter 1, pp. 61-90). Glencoe, IL: Free Press.
- Meyer, John W., Ramirez, Francisco O., & Soysal, Yasemin N. (1992). World expansion of mass education, 1870-1980. Sociology of Education, 65, 128-149.
- Parsons, Talcott. (1959). The school as a social system: Some of its functions in American society. Harvard Educational Review, 29, 297-318.
- Walters, Pamela Barnhouse. (1984). Occupational and labor market effects on secondary and postsecondary educational expansion in the US, 1922-1979. American Sociological Review, 49, 659-671.

#### *Week 4, February 17th*

An alternative, though not necessarily conflicting proposition, is that educational institutions promote social mobility, achievement, and economic growth in modern societies. The relationship between education and status attainment (e.g., earnings or occupational prestige) has often been provided as evidence that a country has an open and fluid society, one which provides individual opportunities for social advancement through the acquisition of technical skills and knowledge. This week we'll examine the status attainment paradigm and some research that seeks to test it.

Required readings (due for class):

- Introduction, Part I & readings 1-5, 23, 39, Structure of schooling.
- Rosenbaum, James E., & Binder Amy. (1997). Do employers really need more educated youth? Sociology of Education, 70, 68-85.
- Salamon, Lester M. (1991). Overview: Why human capital? Why now? In David W. Hombeck & Lester M. Salamon (Eds.), Human capital and America's future (Chapter 1, pp. 1-39). Baltimore: Johns Hopkins.
- Woodhall, Maureen. (1997). Human capital concepts. In A. H. Halsey, Hugh Lauder, Phillip Brown & Amy Stuart Wells (Eds.), Education, Culture, economy, and society (Chapter 13, pp. 219-223). Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.

Related readings (optional):

- Heath, Anthony, & McMahon (1997). Education and occupational attainments: The impact of ethnic origins. In A. H. Halsey, Hugh Lauder, Phillip Brown &

Amy Stuart Wells (Eds.), Education, Culture, economy, and society (Chapter 43, pp. 646-662). Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.

- Olneck, Michael. (1979). The effects of education. In Christopher Jencks, Susan Bartlett, Mary Corcoran, James Crouse, David Eaglesfield, Gregory Jackson, Kent McClelland, Peter Mueser, Michael Olneck, Joseph Schwartz, Sherry Ward, & Jill Williams, Who gets ahead? The determinants of economic success in America (Chapter 6, pp. 159-190). New York: Basic Books.
- Sewell, William H., Hauser, Robert M., & Featherman, David L. (Eds.), (1976). Schooling and achievement in American society. New York: Academic Press.
- Sewell, William H., & Hauser, Robert M. (1975). Education, occupation, and earnings. Achievement in American society. New York: Academic Press.
- Sorokin, Pitrim. (1927). Social mobility. New York: Harper.

### *Week 5, February 24<sup>th</sup>*

Not all sociologists see the link between education and life-course outcomes as evidence of social mobility or an open society. On the contrary, many sociologists point to the fact that educational attainment is also related to an individual's family background (i.e., one's socioeconomic status). These sociologists see educational institutions not as promoting social equality but as promoting social inequalities. We'll discuss some of these theories this week.

***First paper due in class.***

Required readings (due for class):

- Readings 6, 10, 11, Structure of schooling.
- Bourdieu, Pierre. (1986). The forms of capital. In John E. Richardson (Ed.), Handbook of theory of research for the sociology of education (pp. 241-258). Greenwood Press.
- Bowles, Samuel, & Gintis, Herbert. (2002). Schooling in capitalist America revisited. Sociology of Education, ~ (1), 1-18.
- Coleman, James (1966). Equality of educational opportunity (executive summary, pp. 1-33). Washington D.C.: U.S. govt. printing office.

Related readings (optional):

- Bowles, S., & Gintis, H. (1976). Schooling in capitalist America. New York: Basic Books.
- Bourdieu, P. (1977). Outline of a theory of practice. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press (especially Chapter 2).
- Collins, Randall. (1977). Some comparative principals of educational stratification. Harvard Educational Review, 47, 1-27.

### III. "Integrating" Macro & Micro Perspectives on Education

There is a long - and perhaps irresolvable - debate in sociology about how to integrate the roles of social structures and individual choice in determining individual life chances. Such a debate is central to the sociology of education and, not surprisingly, to education policies that seek to address persistent social problems like poverty, unemployment, and juvenile delinquency. We'll spend the next two weeks discussing this issue.

*Week 6, March 2<sup>nd</sup>*

How do social structures influence the educational aspirations and experiences of young people? What role do individual and personal characteristics play in determining a person's educational experiences and individual life chances? We ask these questions through an examination of the lives of the Hallway Hangers and Brothers in MacLeod's *Ain't no makin' it*.

Required readings (due for class):

- Readings Part III & 24, Structure of schooling.
- Chapters 1-8, *Ain't no makin' it*.

Related readings (optional):

- Hollingshead, August B. (1949). Elmtown's youth. New York: John Wiley & Sons.
- Lareau, Annette. (1989). Home advantage. Social class and parental intervention in elementary education. London: Falmer.
- Willis, Paul. (1977). Learning to labour. New York: Columbia University Press.

*Week 7, March 9<sup>th</sup>*

We'll finish our discussion of MacLeod's book and pull together what we have learned so far. Be prepared to discuss whether or not you think MacLeod's work confirms, rejects or suggests an alternative explanation for the role of educational institutions in a modern society, particularly the manner in which schools affect the distribution of social resources and opportunities. Use the Mehan article to place MacLeod's work in a broader context. ***I'll hand out materials for the second written assignment in this class. The second paper will be due in class on March 30<sup>th</sup>.***

Required readings (due for class):

- Chapters 9-11, *Ain't no makin' it*.
- Mehan, Hugh. (1992). Understanding inequality in schools: The contribution of interpretative studies. Sociology of Education, 65, 1-20.

Related readings (optional):

- Anyon, Jean. (1981). Social class and social knowledge. Curriculum Inquiry, 11, 1-42.
- Fine, Michelle. (1993). [Ap]parent involvement: Reflections on parents, power, and urban public schools. Teachers College Record, 94, 682-710.
- Knapp, Michael S., & Woolverton, Sara. (1995). Social class and schooling. In James Banks & C. Banks (Eds.), Handbook of research on multicultural education (Chapter, 30, pp. 663-682). New York: MacMillan.
- Valli, Linda. (1985). Office education students and the meaning of work. Issues in Education, 3, 31-44.

#### IV. Differential Access to Learning

We'll next look at three broad sets of policies that influence the distribution of educational opportunities and resources - school choice, student assignment, and curricular differentiation.

*Week 8, March 16<sup>th</sup>*

Roughly 10% of all children attend private elementary and secondary schools in the United States. Higher proportions attend private post-secondary education institutions in the United States and in other countries. This week we'll discuss differences by sector in educational opportunities and resources and whether school choice would expand or restrict the educational opportunities afforded specific populations. *Please provide a one-page prospectus of your final project or meet with me personally about what you would like to do for your final by today's class.*

Required readings (due for class):

- Readings 13- 14, Structure of schooling.
- Kane, Thomas J. (1996). Lessons from the largest school voucher program. Two decades of experience with Pell grants. In B. Fuller & R. F. Elmore (Ed.), Who chooses? Who loses? Culture, Institutions, and the unequal effects of school choice (pp. 173-183). New York: Teachers College Press.
- Lee, Valerie, Croninger, Robert, & Smith, Julia. (1996). Equity and choice in Detroit. In B. Fuller & R. F. Elmore (Ed.), Who chooses? Who loses? Culture, institutions, and the unequal effects of school choice (pp. 70-94). New York: Teachers College Press.
- Persell, Caroline H., Catsambis, Sophia, & Cookson, Peter. (1992). Differential asset conversion: Class and gender pathways to selective colleges. Sociology of Education, 65, 208-225.

Related readings (optional):

- Bryk, Anthony, Lee, Valerie, Holland, Peter. (1993). Catholic schools and the common good. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Cookson, Peter W., Jr., & Persell, Caroline H. (1985). Preparing for power: America's elite boarding schools. New York: Basic Books.
- Peshkin, Alan. (1988). God's choice. The total world of a fundamentalist school. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Witte, John F. (2000). The market approach in education. An analysis of America's first voucher program. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University.

*Week 9, March 23<sup>rd</sup>*

***No class. Spring break***

*Week 10, March 30<sup>th</sup>*

Even if we restrict our attention to the 90% of the students who attend public elementary and secondary schools in the United States, there are still vast differences in the quality of educational opportunities afforded children. Residential segregation, economic deprivation, and

school finance policies create dramatic differences in the educational experiences of students from different family backgrounds. *Second paper due in class.*

Required readings (due for class):

- Readings 15 -19, 27-29, Structure of schooling.
- Rury, J & Mirel, J. (1997) The political economy of urban education. In Michael Apple (Ed.), Review of Research in Education, 22, 49-110.
- Kantor, H., & Brenzel, B. (1992). Urban education and the 'truly disadvantaged': The historical roots of the contemporary crisis, 1945-1990. Teachers' College Record, 42, 521-562.
- Ogbu, John U. (1994). Racial stratification and education in the United States: Why inequality persists. Teachers' College Record, 96, 264-298.

Related readings (optional):

- Bennett, Christine I. (1995). Research on racial issues in American higher education. In James Banks & C. Banks (Eds.), Handbook of research on multicultural education (Chapter 38, pp. 548-569). New York: MacMillan.
- Coleman, James. (1988). Social capital in the creation of human capital. American Journal of Sociology, 94 (Supplement) s95-s120.
- Kozol, Jonathan. (1991). Savage inequalities. Children in America's schools. Crown.
- Orfield, G. (1996). Dismantling desegregation: The quiet reversal of Brown v. Board of Education. New Press.
- Wilson, William I. (1987). The truly disadvantaged. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

*Week 11, April 6<sup>th</sup>*

One of the primary policies that create differential life trajectories for students within the same school is tracking. Even when students attend the same school or class there can be substantial differences in their educational experiences and access to learning opportunities. *We'll divide into groups of 4-5 students for the debate of No Child Left Behind. I'll hand out materials for each team outlining the issues and discuss my expectations for the policy briefs and your participation in the debate. The debate is scheduled for April 27<sup>th</sup>. I'll provide time in class for you to meet in small groups.*

Required readings (due for class):

- Readings 20-22, 30-31, Structure of schooling.
- Alba, R., & Lavin, D. (1981). Community college and tracking in higher education. Sociology of Education, 54, 223-237.
- Oakes, Jeannie, Gamoran, Adam, & Page, R. N. (1992). Curriculum differentiation: Opportunities, outcomes, and meanings. In P. W. Jackson (Ed.) Handbook of research on curriculum (pp. 570-608). Washington DC: American Educational Research Association.
- Slavin, Robert E. (1987). Ability grouping and achievement in elementary schools: A best-evidence synthesis. Review of Educational Research, 57, 293-336.

Related readings (optional):

- Oakes, Jeannie. (1985). Keeping track: How schools structure inequality. New Haven: Yale.
- Rosenbaum, James E. (1976). Making inequality: The hidden curriculum of high school tracking. New York: John Wiley.
- Powell, Arthur G., Farrar, Eleanor, & Cohen, David. (1985). The shopping mall high school. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

#### V. Lives of Teachers and Students within Schools

Surprisingly few sociological studies have examined closely the lives of teachers and students within schools. Those studies that do tend to highlight conflicts between teachers and students or the emergence of a distinct youth culture in conflict with official policies and adult normative standards. These internal social dynamics can have a dramatic influence on students and schools, as well as on the manner in which schools affect individual life chances.

*Week 12, April 13<sup>th</sup>*

***No class. Annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association.***

*Week 13, April 20<sup>th</sup>*

This week we'll discuss the importance of social relationships within schools and how those relationships influence the academic attainment of students, particularly students from different social backgrounds.

Required readings (due for class):

- Kohl, Herbert (1994). I won't learn from you. The New Press, 1-33.
- Lee, Valerie E., Croninger, Robert G., Linn, Eleanor, & Chen, Xianglei. (1996). The culture of sexual harassment in secondary schools. American Educational Research Journal, 33, 383-418.
- Croninger, Robert G., & Lee, Valerie E. (2001) Social capital and dropping out of high school. Benefits to at-risk students of teachers' support and guidance. Teachers College Record, 103, 548-541.
- Merten, Don E. (1997). The meaning of meanness: Popularity, competition, and conflict among junior high school girls. Sociology of Education, 70, 175-191.

Related readings (optional):

- Cusick, Philip A. (1983). The egalitarian ideal and the American high school. Studies of three schools. New York: Longman.
- Grant, Gerald. (1988). The world we created at Hamilton High. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Lortie, Dan. (1975). Schoolteacher. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- MacLaren, Peter (1980). Cries from the corridor. Toronto: Methuen.
- MacLaren, Peter (1989). Life in schools. New York: Longman.
- Waller, Willard. (1932). The sociology of teaching. New York: John Wiley & Sons.

## VI. Perspectives on Change and Reform

A basic assumption of many sociological theories is that schools function to justify the social distribution of scarce goods and opportunities. The perceived importance of these goods and opportunities determines the extent to which specific populations will compete or contest the control and operation of educational institutions.

*Week 14, April 27<sup>th</sup>*

We'll examine the No Child Left Behind Legislation from a sociological perspective. We'll divide into four teams and debate specific policy initiatives promoted by the legislation - specifically, the use of high-stakes testing to promote school change and the likely consequences of these policies for children and families from different social backgrounds. *While there are no required or optional readings for this class, you'll need to draw from prior readings and do additional research on the No Child Left Behind legislation in preparation for the debate. I will work with individual teams of students to help identify relevant sources for various positions.*

*Week 15, May 4<sup>th</sup>*

What is the future of educational institutions in the United States? One way of answering this question is to consider the challenges posed by changing social demographics and structures. What do studies of the immigrant children tell us about the adequacy of the status attainment model and education policies based on it. We'll focus on material in Rumbaut's and Portes' collection of readings, Ethnicities. If the class evaluation forms are available, I'll ask you to fill them out at the end of class.

Required readings (due for class):

- Chapters 1-10, Ethnicities. (We'll do a jigsaw for these readings. I'll assign chapters on April 27<sup>th</sup>.)

*Week 16, May 11<sup>th</sup>*

We'll wrap up the course with a discussion of who determines how schools should be changed? What function does reform play socially? Politically? Educationally? These are some of the questions that we will address together in class, along with how sociology might inform education policy. ***Final paper due in class.***

Required readings (due for class):

- Readings 9, 44, & 45, Structure of schooling.
- Delpit, Lisa D. The silenced dialogue. Power and pedagogy in educating other people's children. In A. H. Halsey, Hugh Lauder, Phillip Brown & Amy Stuart Wells (Eds.), Education, Culture, economy, and society (Chapter 38, pp. 582-594). Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.
- Malen, Betty, Croninger, Robert, Muncey, Donna, & Redmond-Jones, Donna. (2002). Reconstituting schools: "Testing" the "Theory of Action". Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 24, 113-132.
- Wells, Amy S., & Sema, Irene. (1996). The politics of culture: Understanding local political resistance to detracking in racially mixed schools. Harvard Educational Review, 66, 93-118.

Related readings (optional):

- Brown, Phillip. (1995). Cultural capital and social exclusion: Some observations on recent trends in education, employment, and the labor market. Work, Employment, and Society, 9, 29-51.
- Epstein, Joyce L. (1996). New connections for sociology and education: Contributing to school reform. Sociology of Education, Extra Issue, 6-21.
- Moritmore, Peter. (1997). Can effective schools compensate for society? In A. H. Halsey, Hugh Lauder, Phillip Brown & Amy Stuart Wells (Eds.), Education, Culture, economy, and society (Chapter 31, pp. 475-4878). Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.
- Tyack, David, & Cuban, Larry. (1995). Tinkering toward utopia: A century of public school reform. Boston MA: Harvard University Press.