The problems confronting urban public schools in the United States are complex and multifaceted. While we are constantly overrun with news reports that track the consistent failure of schools in the inner city, we are rarely presented with the opportunity to fully explore the issues confronting urban education from more than one perspective. More often than not, we rely on shortsighted information about the nature of the inner city or the attitudes, misgivings, and lack of understanding of urban dwellers and school leaders as methods through which to define and understand the complex problems faced by school people in these areas. This course seeks to enhance and enlarge graduate students’ ability to conduct research, be effective leaders, practitioners or policymakers in urban schools by providing them with a broad overview of urban education as a field of inquiry. To that end, the course explores three key issues: 1) The historical development of urban schools as a history of reform, 2) The ideology, political economy, schooling (individual and group) challenges that urban students, teachers, and administrators face, and 3) the promise and challenges of urban school transformative pedagogy and reform projects.

The course might be aptly titled “Critical Perspectives in Urban Education” because it relies heavily on the literature that examines closely the links between schools and the social order. In other words, the authors offer promise and criticisms of urban schools and then examine the social, economic and political factors that have shaped those conditions in the first place.
For example, the history of urban schools and U.S. cities provides an important examination of the link between schooling and the social context and provides the theoretical grounding for the course. Historical and Contemporary social theories will be applied by authors as major lenses through which to explore the historic development and current conditions of urban school reform projects. In particular, the connections between schooling outcomes and social and economic shifts locally as well as the impact of globalization and immigration upon the urban reform will also be explored. In doing so, we will utilize your knowledge of surrounding communities and stakeholders (teacher unions, businesses, e.g.) as case studies. Next, the course explores the lives of urban students and the teachers and administrators who work with them. This discussion is based on studies that involve qualitative and quantitative examinations of the lives of marginalized students, mainly African and Latino/a students in urban school districts. We learn, from the perspective of students, why urban schools fail them miserably. We also include the voices of students and teachers regarding the improvement of urban schools. Finally, the course explores the nature and impact of school reform in urban communities. In doing so, the course analyzes both successful and unsuccessful contemporary efforts to reform urban schools as well as urban teacher education. Course materials will discuss the impact of political race identity, class, and gender/sexuality on school reform. Texts also build upon a model of urban teacher education that is both optimistic and challenging. All of the texts draw particular attention to the impact of social context on urban school reform efforts in the United States.

**COURSE GOALS**

The course seeks to provide graduate students with an overview of the larger broader issues that impact the development and maintenance of urban schools in the United States. More specifically, the course will introduce students to a variety of lenses through which they will learn to examine the nature of urban schools, their historical development, their link to the social and political context and the perspectives of the people who inhabit them. In this course, we will analyze the formation, development and current conditions of urban schools from a number of different perspectives. To that end, the course also seeks to equip students with the ability to apply sociological analyses to contemporary problems. In doing so, students will be expected to use one or more analytical frames to analyze conditions in urban school districts in the U.S., from a comparative framework involving the state of Maryland, as well as national, and local school communities.

**REQUIREMENTS**

**COURSE TEXTBOOK REQUIRED**

COURSE READING OPTIONS FOR BOOK REVIEW ASSIGNMENT


*It is my policy that no student will be penalized for not having the finances to secure a copy of the readings/books. If typical efforts to secure library copies of the book from other UM system campuses or public libraries are unsuccessful, kindly inform the instructor so arrangements can be made. When possible, additional copies of books are placed on reserve in the basement of the Benjamin Building.*

**Academic Integrity**
Your work should be characterized by academic integrity and honesty. All students are expected to abide by the code of academic integrity throughout this course. 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 code is available on the web at [www.inform.umd.edu/JPO](http://www.inform.umd.edu/JPO). If you have any questions regarding the university’s policy on academic integrity, please talk to me.

**Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities**
If you have a documented disability that is relevant to the work that you will do in this course, please contact me as soon as possible so that appropriate accommodations can be made.

**Religious Beliefs and Practices**
Students will not be penalized because of observances of their religious beliefs. Whenever possible, students will be given reasonable time to make up any academic assignment that is missed due to participation in a religious observance. It is the student’s responsibility to inform the instructor as soon as possible of any intended absences for religious observances.

**CLASS REQUIREMENTS**

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<td>Discussion Leaders</td>
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<td>Day of Critique</td>
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<td>Reading Critique</td>
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<td>PowerPoint</td>
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<td>“Take-Home” Midterm</td>
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<td>Final--Case Study</td>
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Total Points: 100

Point Distribution for Grades in this Graduate Course:
A+= 98-100; A=90-97; A-=84-89; B+=77-83; B=71-76; B-=65-70; C+=59-64

Description of Assessments

A. Discussion Leaders Reading Critique: One of the main goals of graduate education is honing your analytical and presentation skills, but doing so with both clarity and brevity in mind. In this course you will have ample opportunity to do so through reading and reflecting on a variety of issue pertaining to urban education in the assigned readings. Reading critique Powerpoints should be comprehensive enough for three-group members to offer a 25-30-minute presentation (and an additional 2 hours worth of interactive learning and activities) to engage a dialogue between you, the reading, and your audience (us). Student groups with Powerpoints that are not written at an adequate graduate level will be returned to the student group(s) for revising. Student groups who receive grades of less than a B+ on an assignment may revise for an improved grade. Student groups are encouraged to negotiate with the professor to replace the reading(s) on the syllabus with the reading(s) they find to be either more pertinent or illustrative of the main points of the unit to be taught on the day they lead the discussion.

B. Midterm as Co-Authored Book Review: Requirements: 5-7 pages, double-spaced, 12 point font - succinct, opinionated and well-written analysis (Check sample reviews as “templates” for the Journal to which you intend to submit your review). Book reviews should also be made available on ELMS and/or the class listserv.

Purpose – What is the difference between a book review and an essay? In an essay or informal analysis of a book or article, you summarize the author’s main points and arguments and then in the best-case scenario, you insert your own opinions of the monograph. A book review has a subtle, but important different mission. A book review should allow someone who has never read the book or may only read the review in an academic journal to obtain knowledge from judgments such as: 1) Would I want to invest in this book for my own professional library, is it specific and invaluable to my field? 2) This book sounds interesting, something I may want to demonstrate that I am current with the literature in my field, but I don’t believe I need to own it. 3) This book definitely does not sound interesting to me, although the title led me to believe that it would be something in my field, the review has helped clarify the real intention and purpose of the book.

Content – A strong review first provides a basic summary of the who, what, where, and why of a text. It then may go into one of a few different directions: It could be a discussion of
how this book is simply another addition to the body of literature, on let’s say, minority and urban higher educational history – and then you would point out how it is different, how the same, etc. Or, you could use the book as an example of how higher education is seen by politicians (government officials, university presidents, etc.) in a disdainful manner, as an institution that no longer has a role in society (the emblematic) angle. Look at sample book reviews in academic journals pertinent to your field such as: Ed. Foundations, Ed. Studies, Ed. Review, Ed. Researcher, Journal of Latinos in Higher Edu., Journal of Black Ed., or Anthropology and Ed. Quarterly

Elements – Key questions to ask yourself – who is the author, where is she / he coming from theoretically or politically? Sources – what type of sources are utilized? Are they reliable, traceable to their original source, convincing? Does the author have enough evidence to back up her / his statements – or do you think the sources have been skewed, i.e. are they truly representative? Why or why not? Use of statistics – are the statistics convincing or contrived? What questions might you raise about them? What does it add to (a) Understanding urban educational history, (b) Understanding urban educational reform, (c) Understanding urban educational practice and (d) Understanding urban Teacher Education.

Overall Analysis – The concluding sentences should give your opinion as to whether you recommend the book, or with what qualifications, for example, do you conclude that yes, this is a book you recommend if you really want an introductory survey of the history of higher education? Or, that this book is recommended only if you have a thorough knowledge of statistical analysis, etc. Or, even though this book has many flaws in style, and grammar, the author nevertheless has several important points and that all policymakers interested in higher education should have it on their bookshelf. Or, although this author has left out the history of women in this book, it contains one or two useful paragraphs about the role of college athletics in shaping and institution’s culture.

C. You will be graded by each of your peers anonymously using a Likert-type scale

D. **Guidelines on the Final Case Study Project will be distributed in class.

**Note Future Reading below means reading not required, but suggested for enrichment during or after the course ends.

CLASS MEETINGS
Part One: Historical Contexts

Day One: September 2, 2008
Introduction: Urban Education, main course themes and assignments

*Getting to Know Each Other: “Sharing 1 Joy and 1 Concern”

Logistic 1: Please list one thing you really want/expect from this course. Please list one thing you really don’t want/expect form this course (anonymously)
**Logistic 2:** All email will be sent through the class ELMS listserv

**Logistic 3:** Negotiate to assign 3-person groups (for Discussion Leader Days and Co-authored Book Review (for a Journal and for ELMS)

**Logistic 4:** Elected discussion leaders to serve as “guest lecturers” from Summer 2008 include Eric Watts, and Jill Depiper-Neumay

**Logistic 5:** Analytic Framework-Ideology, Political Economy, and Schooling

**Logistic 6:** Validation, Commitment, Confidentiality—No Fault, Collaboration, Compatibility

**Logistic 7:** Introductory Discussion: American Cities in the Twentieth Century: How is urban education influenced and why is it becoming a bad word?


**Day Two: September 9, 2008**

**Required Readings:** Selections from David Tyack, *The One Best System* (1974) [1840s-1940s]

**Activity:** Obama vs. McCain on Urban Education (Pros and Cons) and (To degree does contemporary politics support the one best system approach?)

Future Reading:


Cohen and Reese, “Education and America’s Cities,” from *The City and Education in Four Nations* (1992)

MacDonald, Nilles, & Botti, *Urban Education in the Changing South: Columbus, Georgia* (2008).

**Day Three: September 16, 2008**


Future Readings:

Suggested Readings


Wilson, The Truly Disadvantaged: The Inner City, the Underclass and Public Policy (1990)

Part Two: Challenges Facing Contemporary Urban Schools

Day Four: September 23, 2008

No Child Left Behind and Today’s English Language Learners/New Immigrants and Urban Schools.

*Required Readings (Guest Lecturer, Jill Neumay-Depiper):


Future Readings:


**Part III: Models of Change via Urban School Reform**

**Day Five: September 30, 2008**

**Required Reading:** Models of Change: Anyon, *Radical Possibilities: Public Policy, Urban Education, and a New Social Movement*, Part I

Future Readings:


The Long Reach of the Coleman Report in Education: Read selections of Coleman, J.S. *Inequality of Opportunity* (online)

**Day Six: October 7, 2008 (Guest Discussion Leader-Kenneth Fischer)**

**Writing Workshop:** Further Discuss Book Review Assignment and Case Study Project

*Activity:* Play and critique the New Board Game: “Will it Phase You”

**Day Seven: October 14, 2008**
Models of Change (cont.)

*Required Reading (Guest Lecturer, Kenneth Fischer): Anyon, Radical Possibilities: Public Policy, Urban Education, and a New Social Movement, Part II

Day Eight: October 21, 2008
Required Reading: Anyon, Radical Possibilities: Public Policy, Urban Education, and a New Social Movement, Part III

Day Nine: October 28, 2008:
Models of Change (cont.)

1. Brian Schultz (and DVD in Class)
2. Comer School Development Program (includes See Darcy Hutchins-Joyce Epstein of Baltimore-Online)
3. Urban Teacher Residencies

Future Reading:

Informational CD form UNC-Chapel Hill School of Education “The Handbook for Educators who work with Children of Mexican Origin

DVD “Operation Respect and the Don’t Laugh at Me Program” www.operationrespect.org (From Univ. of Toledo Center for Peace Education)


Part III: Urban School Reform via Teacher Education

Day Ten: November 4, 2008: -No Class—Election Day!
Day Eleven: November 11, 2008

Required Reading and Other Materials: Diversity Pedagogy (Rosa Hernandez Sheets-Excerpts)

Future Readings:

Day Twelve: November 18, 2008:
Required Reading (Guest Lecturer, Wei-You):
What are the social, political, and economic goals of public schooling in the U.S.?


Day Thirteen: November 25, 2008: No Class—Work on Case Study Final Project—Request the critique of your group members (although it is an individually performed and assessed assignment).

Day Fourteen: December 2, 2008: Learning from Urban Youth Perspectives

Required Reading: Learning from Urban Youth Perspectives as an Educational Goal


**Day Fifteen: December 9, 2008—Begin Presentations of Final Projects**

**Final Project Description—More information will be given in class regarding the Case**

The final project is an opportunity to create a case of a problem that may keep urban students from reaching their highest potential. A problem must be related to a subject/discipline coupled with race/ethnicity, class, gender issues and proposed solutions for addressing issues relating to urban school populations. These might be curricular, programmatic, teacher-based, district-wide, school-based, political, or economic solutions. You should review some of the readings and information from the book reviews in our class for information to aid you in this assignment. Please find a partner or partners in the class with whom to share and critique case study ideas and make an appointment with me or via email send a short query or proposal on the case you wish to create.

The final production will be a PowerPoint based presentation of ten minutes to the class and a ten to fifteen page paper that (a) describes the case, and (b) offers options A, B, and C (and chooses one) with directions that an educator could take to resolve the issue in the case (justified by literature review). (c) discusses how reforms have either worked in the past, any evaluations or studies, and its current status in the educational reform literature. Ultimately, cases will be used as part of a college-wide initiative in teacher education to teach via cases linking you to the education of future teachers. These cases should also build your literature review toward your dissertation/thesis work, and link somehow to your overall program of studies and/or portfolios. The PowerPoint will be presented in class on December 9 and 16 and the paper may be turned in the following day in my mailbox in 2311 Benjamin Building on December 17.

**Day Sixteen: December 16, 2008—Presentations of Final Projects (Continued).**

*Peer Evaluations*

*Course Evaluations (online)*

*Nomination (anonymous) of one discussion leader/“guest lecturer” in Urban Ed. For Summer or Fall 2009*

*Hughes brings Pizza!*