In this course we will investigate the contradictions and possibilities of education. Throughout the course students will learn some basic facts of education and its organization in the United States as well as a selection of key orienting perspectives and theories for understanding the way education works.

The aim of these efforts is threefold. As one might imagine, one course aim is that students learn particular substantive facts about education. A second aim is that students learn a range of theoretical perspectives analysts have developed for considering education and society. A third aim is that students become adept at evaluating evidence bearing on the relation between substantive facts and theoretical perspectives. The first aim is important, but it is the second and third aim that sets our work apart and makes it a college-level course. Consequently, the point is not only to learn facts, but also and most important, to be able to marshall those facts to evaluate other claims, and to sensitively weigh evidence.

Assignments
There are four written assignments. They are due September 23, October 21, November 12, and December 13 (in lieu of a Final Exam). Each due date you must submit a Fact Sheet on an education issue of your choice. The Fact Sheet should convey facts and draw on selected theories and concepts from the previous weeks. Each Fact Sheet counts 25% of your grade.

Lectures
Lectures will generally provide new information, and elaborate or extend the reading, not repeat it. Please complete the reading assignment for the date before class meets.

Material for the courses
Reading material
Much of the reading material is available via JSTOR, Google Scholar, or via UCLibrarySearch, and some of the other material is available at specific web-sites (e.g., my web-site). After each paper its location will be noted in bold (e.g., JSTOR). JSTOR and UCLibrarySearch are accessible from university computers; if you prefer to access these sites from home you need to follow library instructions for doing so. University web-sites contain information on how to do that for the different types of computers one might use.
Papers that are on publicly available web-sites have the url in the syllabus, while papers on JSTOR or UCLibrarySearch are noted in the syllabus with a bold JSTOR or UCLibrarySearch after the citation. For the JSTOR and UCLibrarySearch papers you’ll need to use the search tools of the site to find the paper. For JSTOR you need the author or title. For UCLibrarySearch first find the journal, then find the appropriate electronic location of that issue, and then a search using some information from the citation (e.g., author, title) will be needed.

Some articles are not available electronically; those papers are in a Reader for purchase at Copy Central, 2411 Telegraph Avenue. Papers that are in the Reader are noted in the syllabus with a bold READER after the citation. These articles are less common on the syllabus, but they are essential (or I would not assign them given the extra drudgery of making them available). Thus, I encourage you to obtain the Reader as it is likely by far the easiest way of accessing these materials.

The Cal Bookstore has copies of the following books, or you may order them through whatever other means you prefer (e.g., amazon):


Audio or Audiovisual Material
Occasionally you are assigned to watch or listen to an interview or commentary on a specific episode of the *This Week in Sociological Perspective* podcast before the class session. Episodes are typically 40-50 minutes, and the (usually) interview or (sometimes) commentary assigned is about 25-28 minutes. When you are asked to watch or listen the notice is marked with the following symbol: 

The audio version of *This Week in Sociological Perspective* is available through Apple Podcasts, Google Podcasts, Podtail, and Spotify (though I understand that Spotify coverage is . . . spotty). The video version is available at [http://twispvideo.libsyn.com/](http://twispvideo.libsyn.com/)
PART I – INTRODUCTION

Week 1, Aug 26


PART II – FOUNDATIONAL RESOURCES

>> Week 2, Aug 31- Sep 2 – The Purpose(s) of Schooling and Schools as Rational Organizations

Aug 31 – The Purpose(s) of Schooling


Sep 2 – Organizations as Rational Systems


also watch or listen to the April 15, 2021 podcast episode of This Week in Sociological Perspective, for an interview with Professor Jacob Felson on “Online or in Person? Examining College Decisions to Reopen during the COVID-19 Pandemic.”

>> Week 3, Sep 7-9 – Effects of Organizations and Selected Organizational Explanations of “Failing” Schools

Sep 7 – Effects of Organizations Schools Debate


Sep 9 – Selected Organizational Explanations of “Failing” Schools


>> Week 4, Sep 14-16 – Selected Political Explanations of “Failing” Schools

Sep 14 – Public Confidence and Support

Sep 16 – The Political Returns to “Failing” Schools


>> Week 5, Sep 21-23 – Fact Sheet 1 and Review

Sep 21 – Fact Sheet Information and Review

Sep 23 – Fact Sheet 1 due at 5pm in pdf format via email

PART III – KEY ORIENTING PERSPECTIVES

>> Week 6, Sep 28-30 – Human Capital Theory and Cultural Capital Theory

Sep 28 – Human Capital Theory


Sep 30 – Cultural Capital Theory


>> Week 7, Oct 5-7 – Social Capital Theory and Resistance Theory

Oct 5 – Social Capital Theory


also watch or listen to the June 4, 2020 podcast episode of This Week in Sociological Perspective for an interview with Professor Jessica Calarco on “Avoiding Us versus Them: How Schools' Dependence on Privileged 'Helicopter' Parents Influences Enforcement of Rules.”

Oct 7 – Resistance Theory

>>Week 8, Oct 12-14 – A Structural Marxist Analysis of Schooling in the United States

Oct 12 – Historical Development of Schools in the U.S.


Oct 14 – Structures of Schools/Schooling and Determinants of Success


>> Week 9, Oct 19-21 – Fact Sheet 2 and Review

Oct 19 – Fact Sheet Information and Review

Oct 21 – Fact Sheet 2 due at 5pm in pdf format via email

>>Week 10, Oct 26-28 – Tracking and Curricular Programs

Oct 26 – Curriculum Differentiation, Social Background, and Effects of Tracking


Oct 28 – GATE and Special Education


also watch or listen to the May 21, 2020 podcast episode of This Week in Sociological Perspective, for an interview with Professor Jayanti Owens on “Relationships between an ADHD Diagnosis and Future School Behaviors among Children with Mild Behavioral Problems.”
>> Week 11, Nov 2-4 – Education, Immigration, and The Wider Context of Immigration

Nov 2 – The Wider Context of Immigration


Nov 4 – Immigration and Education


>> Week 12, Nov 9-11 – Fact Sheet 3 Info and Holiday

Nov 9 – Review and Fact Sheet 3 Info (due 5pm in pdf format via email on Friday, Nov 12)

Nov 11 – Veterans’ day Holiday

>> Week 13, Nov 16-18 – Educational Attainment and Measured Achievement

Nov 16 – Levels, Correlates, and Theories of Educational Attainment


also watch or listen to the October 29, 2021 podcast episode of *This Week in Sociological Perspective*, for an interview with Ms. Tabitha Wilbur on “Stressed but not Depressed: A Longitudinal Analysis of First-Generation College Students, Stress, and Depressive Symptoms.”

Nov 18 – Levels, Correlates, and Theories of Measured Achievement

also watch or listen to the July 30, 2020 podcast episode of *This Week in Sociological Perspective* for an interview with Professor Kristen Hourigan on “Girls Try, Boys Aim High: Exposing Difference in Implied Ability, Activity, and Agency of Girls Versus Boys in Language on McDonald's Happy Meal Boxes.”

**>> Week 14, Nov 23-25 Privatization and Holiday**

**Nov 23 – Privatization**


**Nov 25 – Thanksgiving Holiday**

**>> Week 14, Nov 30-Dec 2 – The Experience of Teaching and Selected Teacher Responses**

**Nov 30 – The Experience of Teaching**


also watch or listen to the June 10, 2021 podcast episode of *This Week in Sociological Perspective*, for a commentary on different approaches to worker empowerment. Note: The commentary occurs in the second segment.

**>> Dec 2 – Discussion**

**>> Final Assignment (Final Fact Sheet) due 5pm on Monday, December 13**