Sociology 113 – Sociology of Education

Fall 2017 -- Tuesday, Thursday 8:00-9:30, 56 Barrows

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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, orienting perspectives and theories for understanding the way education works, and then a selection of specific issues in education.

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 marshal those facts to evaluate other claims, and to sensitively weigh evidence.

Assignments
There are three kinds of written assignments: Quizzes, Mid-terms, and a Final Exam.

Quizzes
Pop quizzes will be assigned throughout the term. A quiz may occur at any time during class. Further, a quiz may occur in parts during a single class or multiple classes—part 1 might be assigned at one point during the class period, while part 2 might be assigned at another point, and third, fourth, or additional parts might be assigned later. Part 1 one might occur in one class, and a subsequent part might be assigned in another class. Failure to complete all parts of a quiz result in a zero score for that quiz for the student. Further, continuing to work on the quiz when time is up is also reason for the grade on the quiz to be zero. Other rules to assure the fairness of the quiz for all students may be applied as the term unfolds.

Mid-terms
There are three mid-terms. They are September 19, October 19, and November 21.

Exam
The final exam will be administered during the time assigned for our final exam, during which you will be asked to answer one or more essay questions at the exam. The content of the exam is cumulative.
Grade Percentages for each Type of Assignment
Each mid-term counts 20% for a total of 60%. Collectively the quizzes count 20%. The final exam counts 20%.

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.

Books and Articles for the Course
Much of the reading material is available via JSTOR, Google Scholar, or via OskiCat, and some of the other material is available at specific web-sites (e.g., my web-site). The readings that are at specific non-JSTOR sites are generally available to the public. The general public does not have access to JSTOR or much of OskiCat, but if you are a student at UC-Berkeley you have access to both. JSTOR and OskiCat are accessible from university computers; if you prefer to access these sites from home you need set up a proxy server. University web-sites contain information on how to do that for the different types of computers one might use.

I strongly encourage you to become familiar with JSTOR, as it will serve you well. Of course, almost everything available via JSTOR is also available in hardcopy in the various libraries at UC-Berkeley. Thus, you need not have JSTOR access to obtain the JSTOR course reading.

Papers that are on publicly available web-sites have the url in the syllabus, while papers on JSTOR or OskiCat are noted in the syllabus with a bold JSTOR or OskiCat after the citation. For the JSTOR and OskiCat papers you’ll need to use the search tools of the site to find the paper. For JSTOR the author or title are needed. For OskiCat 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, 2560 Bancroft. Papers that are in the Reader are noted in the syllabus with a bold READER after the citation. These articles may be 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 obtaining access to these materials.

There are also 3 books on the syllabus:


PART I – INTRODUCTION

Week 1, Aug 24


PART II – FOUNDATIONAL RESOURCES

>> Week 2, Aug 29-31 – Schools as Organizations

Aug 29 – Organizations as Rational Systems


Aug 31 – Effects of Organizations Schools Debate


>> Week 3, Sep 5-7 – School Purposes and Selected Organizational Explanations of “Failing” Schools

Sep 5 – The Purpose(s) of Schooling


Sep 7 – Selected Organizational Explanations of “Failing” Schools


PART III – KEY ORIENTING PERSPECTIVES

>> Week 4, Sep 12-14 – Selected Political Explanations of “Failing” Schools

Sep 12 – Public Confidence and Support

Sep 14 – The Political Returns to “Failing” (or “Absorbing State”) Schools


>>Week 5, Sep 19-21 – Mid-term Sep 19, reading week Sep 21

Sep 19 – Mid-Term #1

Sep 21 – Reading Session

>>Week 6 – A Structural Marxist Analysis of Schooling in the United States

Sep 26 – Historical Development of Schools in the U.S.


Sep 28 – Structures of Schools/Schooling and Determinants of Success


>>Week 7, Oct 3-5 – Human and Cultural Capital Theory

Oct 3 – Human Capital Theory


Oct 5 – Cultural Capital Theory


>> Week 8, Oct 10-12 – Social Capital Theory and A Cultural Marxist Account

Oct 10 – A Cultural Marxist Account


Oct 12 – Social Capital Theory


>> Week 9, Oct 17-19 – Mid-term

Oct 17 – Mid-Term Review Questions

Oct 19 – Mid-Term #2

PART IV – SELECTED ISSUES IN EDUCATION

>> Week 10, Oct 24-26 – Educational Attainment and Achievement

Oct 24 – Levels and Correlates of Educational Attainment


Oct 26 – Levels and Correlates of Measured Achievement


>> Week 11, Oct 31-Nov 2 – Tracking and Curricular Programs

Oct 31 – Dimensions of Curriculum Differentiation and Effects of Tracking


Nov 2 – GATE and Special Education

Special Education: What a Long, Strange Trip It’s Been!” Remedial and Special Education 19: 219-228. Google Scholar


>> Week 12, Nov 7-9 – Privatization and Charter Schools

Nov 7 – Privatization


Nov 9 – Charter Schools


>> Week 13, Nov 14-16 – Immigration and Education

Nov 14 – The Wider Context of Immigration


Nov 16 – Immigration and Education


>> Week 14, Nov 21-23 – Mid-Term and Holiday

Nov 21 – Mid-Term #3

Nov 23 – Thanksgiving

>> Week 15, Nov 28-30 – The Experience of Teaching and Selected Teacher Responses
Nov 28 – The Experience of Teaching


Nov 30 – Selected Teacher Responses


>> Week 16, Dec 5-7 – Last Week of Classes, Review and Wrap-up

Dec 5 – Review

No Reading

Dec 7 – Wrap-up

No Reading

>> Final Exam

Final Exam, Tentative Date and Time, Thursday, December 14, 7-10pm