

University of Cincinnati
Sociology of Education
Soc. 372-001

TTh, 2:00-3:15, Zimmer 308

Instructor: Dr. Robert Garot

Email: garotr@email.uc.edu

Phone: (513) 556-4708

Office: 1008 Crosley Tower (Tenth Floor)

Office Hours: TTh, 1:00-2:00

Sociology Office: 1018 Crosley Tower

Sociology Department Phone: (513) 556-4700

Course Overview

Education is an extremely important institution in America. It influences the lives of people at a very impressionable age, it shapes the self-image of its students in ways that impact them the rest of their lives, it is often the largest single employer in many communities and has an enormous economic function in the community, and it is given a pivotal role in the mythology of America that says that anyone can move to a higher social class if they take the proper steps for achievement. Next to the family, this is the institution with which each of you have had the most significant and prolonged experience. In this course, we will see how sociology conducts research and analyses schools and educational processes. In so doing, students will further expand their ability to exercise the sociological imagination.

It is essential that you *wrestle* with the readings for each week, and *mull over* how they apply to your own experience. I hope to open new perspectives to you, and what transforms information into a perspective that opens up new ways of thinking is wrestling with what you encounter. For each reading, I hope that you work to understand not just *what* the author is saying, but *why*. What received wisdom is she or he trying to challenge? With what ideas might they be competing? What is their evidence? I hope that you will enhance for yourself the value of what you read through the paired (and perhaps literally opposed) habits of mind of skepticism (Am I really believe that?) and suspended disbelief (What if it were true?).

The idea is to foster an intense, searching class discussion. A great deal of learning happens in discussion, when one's new ideas, guesses, hunches, ideological convictions, and moral persuasions rub unexpectedly up against others'. I will assist this process through my questioning in class, and want you to have challenged each reading so that you, in turn, can be challenged by others in class.

Please feel free to discuss topics further with me after class, or before class by appointment. Be sure to exchange phone numbers with two or three other students and form study groups.

Required Texts

Arum, Richard and Irene R. Beattie. 2000. The Structure of Schooling: Readings in the Sociology of Education. London: Mayfield Publishing Company. (*Referred to hereafter as AText.@*)

Reader: Available at Du Bois Bookstore, 321 Calhoun Street. (*Referred to hereafter as AReader.@*)

Be sure to complete each week's readings **PRIOR TO** coming to class. Additional background readings are available for students who wish to read further on the week's topic. Also, be sure to check the class website frequently for announcements.

Attendance/In-Class Presentations

Attendance and participation in lecture is integral to this course. Because there will be discussion of materials not included in the readings, it is essential that you make every class meeting. Lecture notes will not be available. Although this is a large class, efforts will be made to encourage participation from students during the lectures – so come prepared.

Requirements

In the first week, you will form groups which will be responsible for gathering further research on one week's reading, and presenting this material to class. Your group presentation and write-up will be worth 20% of your grade. Members of your group must visit me during my office hours at least once, one week before the presentation, to brainstorm and practice your presentation with me.

30% of your grade will be based on a final paper. Extensive guidelines for this paper are included in this syllabus.

You will also take one mid-term and a final exam. Questions on exams will be provided in a short and long answer format. The final will be cumulative, but it will focus heavily on the final weeks of the course. No make-up exams will be given – so you must conform to the times as scheduled for the midterm and final. If you absolutely cannot attend a scheduled exam, you must let me know beforehand, provide written documentation of your reason for missing (a doctor's note for an illness, an obituary for a death in the family, etc.), and schedule your exam with the Linda Kocher, the Sociology departmental secretary.

Grading Policy

You will not be graded on a competitive basis, so in theory everyone can do well in the class. However, in order to get a top grade, students will be expected to achieve standards of excellence in their work. If you are dissatisfied with any grade you receive, you must submit a written request for a review of the grade, including a defense, no later than one week after the work is handed back to the class. By requesting a review of the grade you receive, you invite the possibility that the new grade will be lower than the original grade, as well as the possibility that it will be higher.

Points will be distributed as follows:

Weekly Presentation: 20%
Final Paper: 30%
Mid-Term: 25%
Final: 25%

A+ 98-100	B+ 88-89	C+ 78-79	D+ 65-69
A 93-97	B 83-87	C 73-77	D 55-64
A- 90-92	B- 80-82	C- 70-72	D- 50-54

Cheating/Plagiarism

Any cases of cheating or plagiarism will be referred to the Office of the Dean of Students. For guidelines on avoiding these offenses, please see the University Of Cincinnati Student Code of Conduct at: http://www.psc.uc.edu/pp/PP_Code_Of_Conduct.htm

Weekly Topics and Readings

Please note that the following schedule, including project and exam dates, is tentative, and may change based on how quickly we cover the material.

Part I: Introduction

Week 1: Contemporary Issues

April 1st and 3rd

Reader: Ray McDermott and Hervé Vareene, pp. xi to xiv in Successful Failure
Lisa Delpit, pp. 11-20 in Other People's Children

Week 2: The History of Schooling in the U.S.

April 8th and 10th

Reader: Jeannie Oakes, AUnlocking the Tradition@ in Tracking
Linda McNeil, pp. 3-10 in Contradictions of Control

Week 3: Status Attainment and the Social Mobility

April 15th and 17th

Reader: Jay MacLeod, pp. 3-23 in Ain=t No Makin= It

Text: Randall Collins, AFunctional and Conflict Theories of Educational Stratification@ (10)

Week 4: Socio-Economic Status and Schools

April 22nd and 24th

Text: Hans-Peter Blossfeld and Yossi Shavit, APersisting Barriers: Changes in Educational Opportunities in Thirteen Countries@ (23)

Paul Willis, AElements of a Culture@ (24)

Jay MacLeod, ATeenagers in Claredon Heights: The Hallway Hangers and the Brothers@ (25)

Annette Lareau, A Social Class Differences in Family-School Relationships: The Importance of Cultural Capital@ (26)

Tuesday, April 29th: Mid-Term Exam

Part II: Structures of Stratification

Week 5: Racial Segregation and Resource Inequality

April 29th and May 1st

Text: James Coleman, A The Coleman Report@ (15)

Jonathon Kozol, A The Dream Deferred, Again, in San Antonio@ (17)

Gary Orfield, A The Growth of Segregation@ (18)

Week 6: Elite Schools

May 6th and 8th

Text: Peter Cookson and Caroline Hodges Persell, A The Chosen Ones@ (13)

Reader: Tiffany Chin, A Sixth Grade Madness@

Week 7: Inner City Schools

May 13th and 15th

Reader: William Lowe Boyd, A What Makes Ghetto Schools Succeed or Fail?

Michelle Fine, pp. 1-27 in Framing Dropouts

Week 8: Gender and Schools

May 20th and 22nd

Text: Roslyn Arlin Mickelson, A Why Does Jane Read and Write So Well? The Anomaly of Women=s Achievement@ (30)

Barrie Thorne, A Boys and Girls Together... But Mostly Apart@ (31)

Michael Apple, A Teaching and >Women=s Work=@ (32)

Week 9: Discipline

May 27th and 29th

Reader: Michel Foucault, A Docile Bodies@

Text: Emile Durkheim, A The First Element of Morality: The Spirit of Discipline@ (8)

Week 10: Deschooling

June 3rd and 5th

Reader: Paulo Freire, pp. 75-118 in Pedagogy of the Oppressed

Ivan Illich, pp. 1-24 in Deschooling Society

June 5th: Final Exam, Final Paper Due

**Sociology of Education
Paper Guidelines
Professor Garot**

COMPLETING YOUR PROJECT

In completing this assignment, you will choose one of the three options outlined below. Specific guidelines are provided for each option. In all cases, however, you should follow these five steps:

Step 1: Choose an option

Consider which option is best for you in light of your interests, your inclinations, your schedule. Start early. These are not projects which can be successfully accomplished in the final weeks of the term. Option 1 requires you to read additional material. For Option 2 you must identify a subject and arrange a time to interview him or her. Option 3 requires extensive time for preparing field notes. See below for further elaboration.

Step 2: Gather your data

Do your reading or conduct your interviews early enough in the quarter to leave time to analyze what you've learned and write your paper. The guidelines below for each option describe how to collect information. For Options 2 and 3, you should also review Chapter 8 of A Guide to Writing Sociology Papers.

Step 3: Analyze your data

As you review the data you've gathered -- looking over readings or interview transcripts or notes -- notice any particular issues that emerge. How do the experiences/perspectives/comments of the real or fictional people involved illustrate or contradict what we've covered in class?

Step 4: Write your paper

Consult guidelines for each option for ways to organize and present your research. A Guide to Writing Sociology Papers or other writing guides might also be helpful. In all cases, your paper should include:

- ! an introduction to/overview of the themes of your paper
- ! a description of what you did (methods)
- ! a discussion/analysis of your findings, relating them to what we've studied in the course

I expect that these assignments can be completed in 8-10 pages. Slightly longer papers will be accepted, but extra length does not necessarily produce a better analysis (or a better grade).

Step 5: Submit your paper and any required supporting materials (a) in proper format, (b) during lecture

An acceptable paper must meet these specifications: It must be typed, double-spaced, and stapled. Please do not use any kind of folder. In the upper right-hand corner of the cover page you should include your name, and the option number you selected.

Chapter 10 of A Guide to Writing Sociology Papers provides detailed tips on producing your finished product. Likewise, you may want to consult a style manual, such as the MLA Handbook. For example, you should use a standard citation format for referring to written or lecture materials we've covered. List your references on a page at the end. Keep a copy of your paper in case of loss or damage.

Plan ahead: very few exceptions will be made to the announced due date. I will only consider circumstances that are (1) unavoidable, (2) verifiable, and (3) resolved with me before the December 7 deadline. In those rare instances where I do grant an extension, grades for papers submitted after the deadline will typically be reduced by five points a day.

EVALUATION OF YOUR PROJECT

Your paper will be worth 30% of your final grade, and will be graded in terms of the following criteria:

(1) *What degree of understanding of course materials is demonstrated?* How appropriate were the course materials used in the discussion/analysis? Avoid trying to connect your observations to every possible concept. Focus on those most relevant to what you've observed and/or on those your data best illustrate. For those concepts you select, make clear your understanding of them and their relevance. Cite sources and show you know their relevance.

(2) *To what degree were specific, detailed examples used to illustrate points made?* All claims and conclusions must be supported by specific examples, from field notes, interviews, or literary text.

(3) *How serious an effort was made to gather data?* All options are likely to be somewhat time-consuming. It is of less concern exactly how much time you put in than how thoughtfully you approached the project, how seriously you approached the task of gathering and analyzing data in terms of course materials.

(4) *How well-organized and clearly-written is the paper?* In terms of format, does it follow the specifications outlined above? In terms of organization, is it coherent and logical? Do sentences, paragraphs, and sections fit together in a meaningful way, to make a strong statement?

PAPER OPTIONS

Option 1: Studies of Schools

Many great studies have been conducted of schools. This class provides you with the opportunity to read one such study, and critically evaluate it in light of the readings. As you read your study, be prepared to share the evolution of your thinking with the class. If you wish to analyze a study which is not included on the following list, please show it to me first for my approval. Possible studies may include:

Anyon, Jean, Ghetto Schooling

Carlson, Dennis, Teachers and Crisis

Davidson, Ann Locke, Making and Molding Identity in Schools

Devine, John, Maximum Security

Eckert, Penelope, Jocks and Burnouts: Social Categories and Identity in the High School.
 Fine, Michelle, Framing Dropouts
 Holt, John, How Children Fail
 Holt, John, How Children Learn
 Horowitz, Ruth, Honor and the American Dream
 Hyman, Irwin A. and Pamela A. Snook, Dangerous Schools
 Kozol, Jonathan, Death at an Early Age
 Kozol, Jonathan, Savage Inequalities
 McDermott, Ray and Hervé Vareene, Successful Failure
 Metz, Mary Haywood, Classrooms and Corridors
 Oakes, Jeannie, Keeping Track
 Rathbone, Cristina, On the Outside Looking In
 Thorne, Barrie. Gender Play: Girls and Boys in School.
 Vigil, Diego, Barrio Gangs
 Warner, Sylvia Ashton, Teacher
 Wolcott, Harry, The Man Behind the Principal=s Desk

Your paper should take the form of a well-organized essay, analyzing the processes related to education in terms of the concepts learned in this course (Note that it is not your primary task to engage in the sort of textual analysis described in A Guide to Writing Sociology Papers, i.e., to consider the author's background, etc. Neither is it a literary review.) The questions below may serve as general guides to your analysis. Not every question is relevant to every book; conversely, you may well have additional ideas of what to discuss about the monographs you read.

What is the author=s main argument?
 What evidence does the author use to sustain this argument? Is it convincing?
 What theories does the author draw upon?
 What does the author say about social mobility?
 Does the author present structures that inhibit or aid in social mobility? How do such structures function?
 Does the author compare different settings? What is gained or lost from such a comparison?
 Does the author comment about tracking?
 Does the author discuss data relevant to labeling theory?
 What does the author say about race and gender?
 What sort of discipline practices are presented?
 How does the author present learning occurring?
 Does the author present alternatives to current practices? Why does the author present these specific alternatives?

Option 2: Interview an education professional

In this option, you will gather first-hand information on the training and work experiences of a education practitioner.

Arranging the interview: Make plans to conduct an interview (preferably in person) of about an hour with someone who is a teacher. Do not interview someone with whom you are closely

related (an intimate friend or a family member, or me!) -- this tends to produce less valuable data.

In contacting a potential research subject, explain that you are a student attempting to learn more about the training and work of various education professionals. Ask permission to tape the interview (which is encouraged but not required). Assure him/her that confidentiality will be respected -- and remember your ethical obligation to maintain his or her privacy, forever.

Conducting the interview: Consult Chapter 8 of A Guide to Writing Sociology Papers for tips on conducting, taping, and making notes on interviews. Ask your interview subject to describe, as specifically as possible, his or her work experiences. The following are suggested guidelines, but always ask for examples that illustrate your subject's account. To produce your paper, you will need specifics.

What motivated you to become a _____?
Where and when did you receive your training?
What theoretical approaches were you taught?
What is the most useful, valuable thing you learned?

Describe for me your typical work day.
How is your daily work different than what you imagined it would be when you decided on your career?
What are some of the greatest difficulties students have presented for you?
What parts of your work are the most rewarding for you?
What kinds of problems are typical?

What do you think learning consists of?
How do you try to reach students?
Do you ever have any problems with discipline? Why or why not? How do you typically handle such problems?
What role do parents and the community play in your classroom?
Do you encounter any problems that you feel are specific to this community? Explain.

What is your opinion of your school?
What is your opinion of this community?
Is there anything you feel the administrators should do differently at your school?
Would you rather be teaching in a different school/community? Where would that be, and why?
What do you see yourself doing in five years? In ten years?

Analyzing and writing up your data: In your paper, describe your subject (using a pseudonym): who is he/she? How did you identify him/her as a potential subject? What was it like to interview him/her? Next, describe your subject's work life in some detail, based on his/her responses. Where does he or she describe him- or herself in the system of education occupations?

Submitting your paper: You must include your interview notes (single-spaced is okay) as an appendix to your paper. On a single sheet of paper, include the true name and contact information of your subject.

Option 3: Participant-observation

If you have, or can quickly arrange, a paid or volunteer position in an educational setting, you may analyze your experiences for this option. This is undoubtedly the most time-consuming option; however, it may also be the most gratifying and interesting, and would certainly be useful to you if you are considering a career in a education. Check with me for an okay on your proposed site *before* you begin the project.

Observing interactions related to mental health care: Review Chapter 8 of A Guide to Writing Sociology Papers for tips on observation and notetaking. Remember that your goal is to record and analyze specific examples of the interactions that go on in this setting. Pretend you are completely naive about personal and interpersonal troubles: what kind of social setting is this? what kind of interactions go on here? Be sure to take as many notes as possible, even about (especially about) what may seem like everyday, ordinary events. Don't assume you know what is important and what isn't. Be sure to leave yourself time to type up your field notes as soon as possible after each observation; to get enough detail, this may take two hours for every hour of observation.

Analyzing and writing up your data: By reviewing your notes, you may discover patterns of activity you didn't notice while they were occurring. Use the guidelines in A Guide to Writing Sociology Papers to identify recurrent themes in what you observed. Relate the themes or patterns you have observed to relevant course materials. What social factors -- race, class, gender, age, status -- did you see in play?

Although we turn our attention to these in lecture toward the end of the quarter, it would be advisable for you to read them in time to incorporate into your paper.

Submitting your paper: You must include your field notes, which may be single-spaced, as an appendix to your paper. On a separate, single sheet of paper, include the location of your observation site, and the name and phone number of your volunteer coordinator or work supervisor.

