COURSE DESCRIPTION

Schools are considered sites for teaching and learning, yet, they are also complex social organizations that are influenced by and shape broader society. To understand these processes, it is important to consider relationships among actors within schools – teachers, students, their classmates, their parents, administrators and other school staff – as well as the impacts of local, state, and federal policies on the social organization of schools. The sociological perspective can be useful to examine varying patterns of inequality in what students learn, how long they stay in schooling, and what happens to them as they enter adulthood. Throughout the course we’ll look at educational institutions in the United States and their impact on social processes and the life chances of individuals. We’ll heed the call of C. Wright Mills, who challenged sociologists and political leaders to question their assumptions about what distinguishes a personal problem from a social problem.

This is a discussion course that will encourage a high level of student participation, which will contribute to your grade (as specified below). Towards that end, here is a guide to how to read the course texts in preparation for class discussion:

- What is the author’s argument and how does it relate to the current set of readings?
- If it is primarily an empirical text, what is the hypothesis that is being tested, and what are the major issues at hand? How appropriate was the data that was used?
- What is being analyzed, and how convincing are the authors that they have done a rigorous job measuring, reviewing, and/or evaluating the topic?
- What were the findings, and how well supported were they by the evidence presented?

It is expected that students will spend about 10 hours per week completing tasks related to this course. As a general guide, students should expect to spend about 3 hours reading assigned weekly course materials, about 1 hour reviewing lecture notes, and about 4-5 hours working on portions of the final paper.

COURSE MATERIALS

Additional required readings and media links will be posted on our D2l website.

**Desire to Learn (D2L)**

Our D2L site will serve as an extension of the classroom. It is vital that at minimum, you log in weekly to find out about important announcements, additional readings, drop boxes, and discussion strings.

**COURSE ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING SCALE**

**Course policies**

**Deadlines:***All course deadlines are firm. *I will not grant extensions* on assignments unless students provide appropriate documentation. For each day that the assignment is late, the grade will be lowered by one-third of a grade (e.g., an A- becomes a B+ if a paper is one day late). Papers are also considered late if they do not meet the time deadline.

**Attendance and Participation:** Class attendance is required for this course so I will take attendance for each class. I expect that everyone will participate in class discussions, and that this participation will be based on an informed and thoughtful engagement with the assigned reading. Participation will be measured through a variety of online and in class activities.

**Office Hours:** In addition to my regularly scheduled office hours, I am available by appointment if those hours are difficult for some students to visit. I am also regularly accessible by e-mail, and will make every effort to respond promptly to all e-mails.

**PARTICIPATION:**

**Film Notes:** When watching films, you will be required to take film notes using a template, which will be provided before viewing each film.

**Online Discussions (M & W weekly):** You will be expected to participate in class discussions via D2L. The success of this class depends on students to complete all reading assignments in a thorough, thoughtful, and critical manner. This will require you to take notes on reading assignments, and identify questions and points of contention in preparation for active participation in online discussions via D2L. *It is critical that students prepare for class by reading the assignments.* Beginning the second week, you will be split into 5 groups to discuss the weekly content material. During week two and beyond, every student must respond to a prompt regarding the week’s required readings in the appropriate group discussion area by either on Monday of that week or on Wednesday of that week depending on which group you are enrolled in. The deadlines for groups are as follows:

- **Groups 1, 3, & 5 = 5p on Monday**
- **Groups 2 & 4 = 5p on Wednesday**

**Reading Presentations:** For each class session, designated students will present readings that have been assigned for that particular day. These presentations will begin during week 3, “Educational Environments.” A list with names and the designated readings are provided on D2L within the “Reading Presentations” module. You will provide a one half to one page outline of the reading, summary, OR PowerPoint slides to highlight the key details and concepts within the article. This document should be uploaded onto D2L within the “Reading Presentations” module **NOT LATER THAN 9P** on the evening that precedes the class day in which you are scheduled to present. Failure to upload the
document yet present in class will result in a 10 point/20 point loss. Failure to present in class, yet upload the document will result in a 15/20 point loss. Failure to do either will result in a 20 point loss.

**Class Debate on “Waiting for Superman” (Nov 19):** You will be divided into two groups (pro v. con) in order to carry out a debate from an issue presented in the film *Waiting For Superman.* Groups and instructions will be announced well in advance, and students will be expected to meet with group members during a designated class period in preparation for the debate.

**WRITING ASSIGNMENTS:**

*Response Papers (Oct1)(Nov3):* You will write two 5-7 page double-spaced response essays to questions posed regarding a topic presented in the readings, class discussions, or films.

*Midterm (Oct 22):* The midterm exam will cover material discussed from weeks 1-6. Plan to write an answer to one of three essay questions in addition to at least 5 short questions.

*Final Paper and Presentation (Dec 8):* You will write a 7-10 page final paper which will be in the form of a literature review. You will need to write for your paper throughout the semester in four phases: Proposal, Annotated Bibliography, Paper Outline, and Final Paper. More detailed information that describes each assignment and due dates are provided below. I understand that many of you may have never performed a literature review, so I will continually offer guidance and provide instructions and resources on how to complete this task. These items will be posted on D2L within the “Final Paper: Literature Review” module. I will provide critical feedback and guidance throughout the process and I would also strongly suggest you avail yourself of the services of the University Writing Center located in 127 Curtin Hall, 229-4339, [http://www4.uwm.edu/writingcenter/](http://www4.uwm.edu/writingcenter/) as early as possible in order to review and edit your final paper before the deadline which is on Dec 8. During the final weeks of the course, you will provide a 10 minute presentation of your paper using PowerPoint or some other platform of your choice.

**Midterm 15%**  
Response Papers (2) 20%  
Participation 20%  
Final Paper 35%  
Presentation 10%  

A = 93-100  
A- = 90-92  
B+ = 87-89  
B = 83-86  
B- = 80-82  
C+ = 77-79  
C = 73-76  
C- = 70-72  
D+ = 67-69  
D = 63-66  
D- = 60-62  
F = <60
Final Paper and Presentation: The Literature Review

A literature review paper reviews and synthesizes the current understanding of a particular topic. It is a very useful way to become up to date on the state of knowledge and the research that has been done in a particular research area. Writing a review paper is good practice for synthesizing and organizing a lot of information into a concise product (i.e. a short written document). Reviewing and summarizing the literature is a critical skill for sociologists and other social scientists. In particular, this skill is an important component of identifying research questions and writing research proposals. When writing such a paper, we rarely, if ever, just sit down and write a first draft and submit it. Rather, we write outlines and multiple drafts, editing each draft ourselves, in addition to having others edit our papers. You will practice this process with your paper. You must do scholarly library research to collect journal articles (and books) to write your paper. Information from the Internet will not be accepted, unless it is from a journal that is published or available on the web. The five main steps involved in developing this paper are each graded separately:

(1) [10 pts] PROPOSAL
(2) [20 pts] ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY
(3) [20 pts] PAPER OUTLINE
(4) [50 pts] FINAL PAPER
(5) [50 pts] PRESENTATION

DESCRIPTION OF THE MAIN STEPS:

(1) Proposal – You will write a 1 page description of the topic that you wish to analyze

(2) Annotated Bibliography – this assignment will help you organize, summarize, and synthesize your sources as you write the paper

(3) Paper Outline - An outline will be invaluable for helping you to designate the themes in your paper and how to begin to organize it

(4) Final Paper – We will have one class devoted to a peer review session where you will provide and receive feedback

(5) Presentation – You will create a format to present your paper to your peers during the final exam period

DUE DATES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Assigned Date</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Annotated Bibliography</td>
<td>Oct. 13</td>
<td>Nov. 10, 2015</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paper Outline</td>
<td>Nov. 12, 2015</td>
<td>Nov. 19, 2015</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Paper</td>
<td>Sep. 2, 2015</td>
<td>DEC. 8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Presentation</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>Dec. 3 – Dec. 18, 2015</td>
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# COURSE CONTENT AND TIMELINE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WEEK</th>
<th>DAY</th>
<th>TOPIC</th>
<th>READINGS</th>
<th>DUE</th>
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</table>
| **WK 1** | TR | Overview of Course | T=Textbook  
D2L=readings posted on our class D2L site | |

**Part I: Theoretical Foundations and the Institution of Education**

| WK 2 | Sep 8 | T | *The Sociology of Education and Theoretical Perspectives I: Symbolic Interactionism* | T: Reading 1: Sociology of Education: A Unique Perspective for Understanding Schools  
T: Reading 2: Getting Started: Understanding Education Through Sociological Theory  
T: Reading 5: On Understanding the Processes of Schooling: The Contributions of Labeling Theory | |
|------|-------|-----|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|---|
| Sep 10 | TR | *Theoretical Perspectives II: Functionalism* | T: Reading 3: The School Class as a Social System  
| **WK 3** | Sep 15 | T | *Theoretical Perspectives III: Conflict Theory* | T: Reading 4: Conflict Theory of Educational Stratification  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Book Title</th>
<th>Reading Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sep 17</td>
<td>TR</td>
<td><em>Educational Environments</em></td>
<td>T: Reading 9. The Structure of Educational Organizations John W. Meyer and Brian Rowan</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>T: Reading 10. A Broader and Bolder Approach Uses Education to Break the Cycle of Poverty Pedro A. Noguera</td>
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<td>T: Reading 11. Exit Exams Harm Students Who Fail Them—and Don't Benefit Students Eric Grodsky</td>
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<td>T: Reading 11. Exit Exams Harm Students Who Fail Them—and Don't Benefit Students Eric Grodsky</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| WK 4  | Sep 22 | T | *Schools as Organizations* | T: Reading 14. How Schools Work  
Rebecca Barr and Robert Dreeben  

T: Reading 17. Learning the Student  
Role: Kindergarten as Academic Boot  
Camp Harry L. Gracey  

T: Reading 19. School Principal:  
Complications and Complexities Dan C.  
Lortie |
|------|-------|---|---------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Sep 24 | TR | Knowledge | T: Reading 25. Being Sociological  
About Knowledge: Setting the Agenda  
Rob Moore  

T: Reading 26. Monuments Between  
Covers: The Politics of Textbooks David  
Tyack  
T: 234-240  

D2L: Selected Chapters from  
“Pedagogy of the Oppressed” Paulo  
Freire  

- Forward 29-34  
- Ch 2 71-86 |  

Response 1 assigned  

*Part II: Axes of Difference and Sources of Inequality*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WK 5 Sep 29</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>Social Capital</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>D2L: Bordieu, P. “The Forms of Capital.”</td>
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</table>

Paper Proposal assigned
|-------|----|-----------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| WK 6 Oct 6 | T | Race | T: Reading 28: The Geography of Inequality: Why Separate Means Unequal in American Public Schools  
T: Reading 31: Explaining Racial Variations in Education  
D2L: Selected Chapters from Jencks and Mayer, “The black-white test score gap” | Paper Proposal due |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>D2L: Valenzuela, Angela. TBA. Subtractive Schooling</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>D2L: Goldsmith, P. R. (2009). Schools or neighborhoods or both? Race and ethnic segregation and educational attainment. Social Forces, 87(4), 1913-1941</td>
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<tr>
<td>WK 7</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>Film: Walkout</td>
<td>Annotated Bibliography assigned</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct 20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct 22</td>
<td>TR</td>
<td>Midterm Exam</td>
<td>WKS 1-6</td>
</tr>
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</table>
| WK 9 Nov 3 | T | School Choice | D2L: Home Schooling and the Future of Public Education  
D2L: Lessons about School Choice from Minnesota: Promise and Challenges  
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Nov 5 | TR | School Choice | D2L: Chapman and Antrop-Gonzalez, “A Critical Look at Choice Options as Solutions to Milwaukee’s Schooling Inequities”  
<p>| WK 10 Nov 10 | T | Film: WAITING FOR SUPERMAN | D2L: Orfield and Lee, “Brown at 50: King’s Dream or Plessy’s Nightmare | Annotated Bibliography due |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WK 11</th>
<th>Nov 17</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>Debate Prep (in class)</th>
<th>Instructions TBA</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nov 19</td>
<td>TR</td>
<td>WAITING FOR SUPERMAN</td>
<td>The Great Debate</td>
<td>Paper Outline due</td>
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<td><strong>WK 12</strong></td>
<td>Nov 24</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>Educational Reform</td>
<td>Reading 49. Learning From Abroad Ben Levin, Robert B. Schwartz, and Adam Gamoran</td>
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<td>Reading 51. Deschooling Society Ivan Illich</td>
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<td>Nov 26</td>
<td>TR</td>
<td>No Class</td>
<td>Thanksgiving Recess</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>WK 13</strong></td>
<td>Dec 1</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>Educational Reform</td>
<td>D2L: Ravitch, Diane, “Reign of Error: The Hoax of the Privatization Movement and the Danger to America’s Public Schools” (Selected Chapters)</td>
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<td>• How Poverty Affects Academic Achievement</td>
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<td>• The Facts About Teachers and Test Scores</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dec 3</td>
<td>TR</td>
<td>Paper Presentations</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>WK 14</strong></td>
<td>Dec 8</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>Paper Presentations</td>
<td>Final Paper Due</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dec 10</td>
<td>TR</td>
<td>Paper Presentations</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>WK 15</strong></td>
<td>Dec 14</td>
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<td><em><strong><strong>STUDY WEEK NO CLASS</strong></strong></em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam Week</td>
<td>Dec 18</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Paper Presentations 10a-12n</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
UNIVERSITY AND SOCIOLOGY DEPARTMENT POLICIES

The Secretary of the University maintains a web page that contains university policies that affect the instructor and the students in this course, as well as essential information specific to conduct of the course. The link to that web page is:  http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/SyllabusLinks.pdf

Students with Disabilities. Verification of disability, class standards, the policy on the use of alternate material and test accommodations can be found at the following:  
http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/DSAD/SAC/SACItr.pdf

Religious Observances. Policies regarding accommodations for absences due to religious observance are found at the following:  http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S47.pdf

Students called to active Military Duty. Accommodations for absences due to call-up of reserves to active military duty are found at the following:  http://www4.uwm.edu/current_students/military_call_up.cfm

Incompletes. You may be given an incomplete if you have carried a course successfully until near the end of the semester but, because of illness or other unusual and substantiated cause beyond your control, have been unable to take or complete the final examination or to complete some limited amount of course work. An incomplete is not given unless you prove to the instructor that you were prevented from completing the course for just cause as indicated above. The conditions for awarding an incomplete to graduate and undergraduate students can be found at the following:  http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S31.pdf

Discriminatory Conduct (such as sexual harassment). Discriminatory conduct will not be tolerated by the University. It poisons the work and learning environment of the University and threatens the careers, educational experience and well-being of students, faculty and staff. Policies regarding discriminatory conduct can be found at:  http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S47.pdf

Academic Misconduct. Students are responsible for the honest completion and representation of their work, for the appropriate citation of sources, and for respect of others' academic endeavors. Policies for addressing students cheating on exams or plagiarism can be found at the following:  http://www4.uwm.edu/dos/conduct/academic-misconduct.cfm

Complaint Procedures. Students may direct complaints to the Sociology Department Chair or the Associate Dean for Social Sciences in the College of Letters & Sciences. If the complaint allegedly violates a specific university policy, it may be directed to the Sociology Department Chair, the Associate Dean for Social Sciences in the College of Letters & Sciences, or to the appropriate university office responsible for enforcing the policy. Policies may be found at:

http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S49.7.htm

Grade Appeal Procedures. A student may appeal a grade on the grounds that it is based on a capricious or arbitrary decision of the course instructor. Such an appeal shall follow the established procedures adopted by the department, college, or school in which the course resides or in the case of graduate students, the Graduate School. These procedures are available in writing from the respective department chairperson or the Academic Dean of the College of Letters & Science. Procedures for undergraduate student grade appeal can be found at

Procedures for graduate student grade appeal can be found at

http://www.graduateschool.uwm.edu/students/policies/

**Final Examination Policy.** Policies regarding final examinations can be found at the following:

http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S22.htm

**Book Royalties.** In accord with Department of Sociology policy, the royalties from the sale of faculty-authored books to students in their classes are donated to a UWM Foundation/Sociology Account to support future awards and activities for UWM students in Sociology.

Update 08/2014