FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY

DEPT. OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND POLICY STUDIES, COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

Instruction that moves, leadership that inspires, scholarship that makes a difference for the 21st century.

Florida State University
College of Education
Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies
EDF 5630- Sociology of Education
Fall, 2012
Stone 3305 Monday 7:00-9:45P

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Office hours; M 5-6pm and before and after class, Th 2-3:00pm, and by appt.

A. Course Prefix, Title and Credits
EDF 5630- Sociology of Education, 3 Credit Hours

B. Prerequisites or Co-requisites
N/A

C. Description

While schools are certainly sites of teaching and learning, they are also complex social organizations that reflect, are influenced by, and themselves shape broader society. To understand these processes, it is important to consider relationships among actors within schools – teachers, students, their classmates, their parents, coaches, counselors, 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 patterns of inequality in what students learn, how long they stay in schooling, and what happens to them as they enter adulthood. These patterns may vary by where they live, the socioeconomic situation of their families, their racial-ethnic background, their citizenship status, their gender, and other dimensions of their personal background. Additionally, these background characteristics are often tied to the quality and social organization of the schools that students attend, further influencing the structure of educational opportunities they have available to them. Finally, the course will examine cross-national differences in education and educational values in relation to individual and societal life course outcomes such as career choice, marriage and family, earned income, and economic competitiveness.
Over the course of the term and where appropriate, sociological methods and writing will be taught, in preparation for the final paper and for potential pursuits in the discipline. Students will complete a major course paper by the end of the term intended to be useful towards their own educational and career goals.

D. Required Texts, Readings, and/or other Resources – Readings will be posted on Blackboard at least one week in advance of the relevant class. There will be no text books for the course.

E. Topical Course Outline

1. Schools as social organizations
   a. Introducing sociology and the social organization of schools
   b. Unpacking schools’ social contexts

2. Contexts and factors shaping differences in schooling and schooling outcomes
   a. Schools as sites for social development
   b. Perspectives on variation by class, family, race, gender, and other background characteristics

3. Schools and society
   a. School choice, mobility, and institutional effects
   b. Cross-national perspectives on the sociology of education
   c. Schooling in the context of globalization and local, state, and national policies

F. Teaching Strategies

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 of class discussion:

1. What is the research question and how does it relate to the current set of readings?
   a. If this is primarily a theoretical reading, is it summarizing a body of work or suggesting a new way of thinking about a problem?
   b. If it is primarily an empirical text, what is the hypothesis that is being tested, and what are the major issues at hand?

2. What is being analyzed, and how convincing are the authors that they have done a rigorous job measuring, reviewing, and/or evaluating the topic?
   a. If this is a theoretical paper, how satisfied were you by the range and scope of literature drawn upon?
   b. If this is an empirical paper, how appropriate was the data that was used?

3. What were the findings, and how well supported were they by the evidence presented?
4. How does this piece contribute to your understanding of the field, and how did it advance the literature? What response should it motivate among sociologists of education and educational practitioners, if appropriate?

G. Expectations and Attendance

a. Attendance. Excused absences include documented illness, deaths in the immediate family and other documented crises, call to active military duty or jury duty, religious holy days, and official University activities. Accommodations for these excused absences will be made and will do so in a way that does not penalize students who have a valid excuse. Consideration will also be given to students whose dependent family members (e.g., children or parents) experience serious illness. All students are expected to abide by this class attendance policy. Students must also provide, when possible, advance notice of absences as well as relevant documentation regarding absences to the
instructor as soon as possible following the illness or event that led to an absence. Regardless of whether an absence is excused or unexcused, the student is responsible for making up all work that is missed. University-wide policy requires all students to attend the first class meeting of all classes for which they are registered.

b. **Expectations.** Laptop computers will be allowed in the classroom, for the purposes of taking notes and referring to electronic readings only. Mobile devices are permitted as well if necessary to receive emergency calls about children or other family members, but must be kept on vibrate. Should laptops or mobile devices be used inappropriately and become a distraction, we will revisit this policy. Please plan to arrive on time and attend class for the entire class session. Because this is a long evening course in a room with no food allowed in the assigned classroom, we will have a 15 minute break midway through each class. Finally, we have a rich diversity of professional, academic, and life experiences to draw upon in this course and enrich our examination of the readings and studies we will discuss. This is an asset. As such, we will be attentive to treating one another with respect.

H. **Sexual Harassment Policy** – Sexual harassment is a form of discrimination based on a person’s gender. Sexual harassment is contrary to the University’s values and moral standards, which recognize the dignity and worth of each person, as well as a violation of federal and state laws and University rules and policies. Sexual harassment cannot and will not be tolerated by the Florida State University, whether by faculty, students, or staff; or by others while on property owned by or under the control of the University.

I. **Grading**

Grades will be reduced by five percentage points for each 24-hour period in which it is late. If you have extenuating circumstances that keep you from turning in assignments by their due dates, it is your responsibility to contact me at least two days before the paper’s due date to make alternative arrangements. Grades for the course will be based on the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Essays + Critiques</td>
<td>35%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research paper (prospectus = 5% of this grade)</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oral presentation of paper</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leading class discussions</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class participation, attendance, and discussion</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
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**GRADE SCALE**

- **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** = below 60%

**Free Tutoring from FSU**

On-campus tutoring and writing assistance is available for many courses at Florida State University. For more information, visit the Academic Center for Excellence (ACE) Tutoring Services’ comprehensive list of on-campus tutoring options - see [http://ace.fsu.edu/tutoring](http://ace.fsu.edu/tutoring) or contact tutor@fsu.edu. High-quality tutoring is available by appointment and on a walk-in basis. These services are offered by tutors trained to encourage the highest level of individual academic success while upholding personal academic integrity.
J. **Honor Code** - The Florida State University Academic Honor Policy outlines the University’s expectations for the integrity of students’ academic work, the procedures for resolving alleged violations of those expectations, and the rights and responsibilities of students and faculty members throughout the process. Students are responsible for reading the Academic Honor Policy and for living up to their pledge to “. . . be honest and truthful and . . . [to] strive for personal and institutional integrity at Florida State University.” (Florida State University Academic Honor Policy, found at [http://dof.fsu.edu/honorpolicy.htm](http://dof.fsu.edu/honorpolicy.htm).

K. **ADA Requirements and Services**

Students with disabilities needing academic accommodation should:
(1) register with and provide documentation to the Student Disability Resource Center; and
(2) bring a letter to the instructor indicating the need for accommodation and what type. This should be done during the first week of class.

This syllabus and other class materials are available in alternative format upon request.

For more information about services available to FSU students with disabilities, contact:

Student Disability Resource Center
874 Traditions Way
108 Student Services Building
Florida State University
Tallahassee, FL 32306-4167
(850) 644-9566 (voice)
(850) 644-8504 (TDD)
sdr@doe.fsu.edu
[http://www.disabilitycenter.fsu.edu/](http://www.disabilitycenter.fsu.edu/)

L. **Syllabus Change Policy** - Except for changes that substantially affect implementation of the evaluation (grading) statement, this syllabus is a guide for the course and is subject to change with advance notice.

M. **Assignments**

**Essay critiques**

*Papers.* Each student will be expected to prepare and complete three critical essays, based on the primary sections of the class. The first and third essays should be between 3-4 pages long, and the second will be 5-6 pages long, double-spaced. The review essay should identify a point of view or perspective that you take away from the readings in that section – including supplemental readings. Your essay should develop this theme with appropriate cited references to the text that support your point of view. Due dates are listed in the course calendar.

**Peer reviews.** The purpose is to (a) learn how to give feedback, (b) see other approaches to writing academic papers, (c) observe the strengths and weaknesses of graduate student writing and in turn (d) learn how to make your own papers better (often easier to identify strengths and weaknesses in others' writing than in our own) and (e) what to consider in evaluating graduate student writing (for your potential future career stages). Your "peer feedback" will be evaluated on the basis of the quality and thoughtfulness you put into the evaluation. Remember to be constructive rather than just critical. I selected a series of peer evaluation prompts intended to elicit constructive feedback targeted towards achieving goals a-e.

The "assignment breakdown with respect to writing papers would then be as follows:
Leading class discussions
I will randomly assign all class members a reading assignment based on the course calendar. You will be responsible for initiating and leading class discussion for that day. The preparation of a single sheet of discussion questions or some other visual aid to engage the class (Power Point, poster, etc.) is encouraged. Presentations should help engage the class in a lively discussion of the readings. If students wish to change the week(s) that they present, they will have to swap days with another member of the class and notify the instructor no later than the morning of that class meeting.

Research paper
Each student will prepare a 15 page research paper on a topic of interest to them in the sociology of education. There are three options for this paper:

1. An empirical paper testing a hypothesis relevant to an issue discussed during the course (in the style of an article in Sociology of Education)
2. A research synthesis (in the style of Annual Review of Sociology)
3. A research proposal (in the style of a dissertation proposal).

Choose the paper type most appropriate to your current academic goals. All three will be important styles to master in the long run for those who are pursuing a career in academia, but the paper should help you complete your goals – working with data you currently have that may be rigorous enough to publish, mastering an area of the research literature relevant to a research question you would like to pursue, or preparing a proposal for the department or for external funding. The paper should include at least 10-15 references.

Your research paper must be underway by mid-semester. To insure that your research paper will be completed by the end of the term and reflect the high standards required for the course, you must have a one page prospectus to me no later than October 15th. After your prospectus is approved, I will be happy to review "pages in progress." This process of reviewing your draft paper can help focus your energy, develop your ideas, and correct early errors.

Oral report - A very brief but comprehensive oral presentation based on your paper will be presented in class on the last day of class. Your 10 minute presentation should cover the following: What did you study and why? What have you learned that you did not know before? What key information should others know about this topic? What are the implications for the field?

N. Schedule of Course Readings and Assignment Dates
Notes: Readings are to be done in advance of the class for which they are listed. Papers are due electronically by 11:59pm the day of the class meeting. Optional readings are truly optional, intended to help guide the development of a literature base in areas of interest and to continue the intellectual conversation over holiday break periods.
Leading class discussions
I will randomly assign all class members a reading assignment based on the course calendar. You will be responsible for initiating and leading class discussion for that day. The preparation of a single sheet of discussion questions or some other visual aid to engage the class (Power Point, poster, etc.) is encouraged. Presentations should help engage the class in a lively discussion of the readings. If students wish to change the week(s) that they present, they will have to swap days with another member of the class and notify the instructor no later than the morning of that class meeting.

Introduction

Week 1 – August 27th: First class meeting

Part 1 – Schools as social organizations

Week 2 – September 3rd: No class meeting;

Optional supplemental readings:


Week 3 – September 10th: Theoretical perspectives on schools and society

A. Classic sociological theory


B. Critical theory


Week 4 – September 17th: School actors and the organization of schools

• **Optional supplemental readings:**
  
  

**Week 5 – September 24th:** Social structure and educational opportunity – **Review essay on part 1 due**

**A. Education as a path to (equal) opportunity**


**B. Social Reproduction**


**Part 2 – Contexts and factors shaping differences in schooling and schooling outcomes**

**Week 6 – October 1st:** Schools as sites for young people’s social development

• **Optional supplemental reading:** Harrison, L., Sailes, G., Rotich, W., & Bimper, A. (2011). Living the dream or awakening from the nightmare: race and athletic identity. *Race, Ethnicity and Education, 14*(1), 91-103.

Week 7 – October 8th: Family and Schools – The home environment, social class and social space

- **Optional supplemental readings:**

Week 8 – October 15th: Race-ethnicity, language, and culture

- **Optional supplemental readings:**
Week 9 – October 22nd: Gender, gender identity, and sexual identity


Week 10 – October 29th: In-class workshop on preparing sociological research papers

Paper #2 due Nov. 1st at 9pm

Part 3 – Schools and Society

Week 11 – November 5th: School choice, school mobility, and institutional effects

  - Optional supplemental readings:

Week 12 – November 12th: No class meeting – Peer feedback on Paper #2 due


Week 13 – November 19th: Globalization and international perspectives on the sociology of education


**Week 14 – November 26th**: Pathways from education to career – *Review essay on Part 3 due*


**Week 15 – December 3rd**: *Oral presentations in class; Peer feedback on Paper #3 due*

**Finals Week** – *Final paper due via Blackboard Dec. 14*