

SOCIAL CONTEXTS I: SOCIOCULTURAL FOUNDATIONS OF EDUCATION

15:255:615:01

Fall 2011 Wednesdays 4:50-7:30pm
Tanja Sargent

tanja.sargent@gse.rutgers.edu
Tel: 732-932-7496 x8121, GSE 15C
Office hours: Wednesdays 3:30-4:30 pm or by appointment

Mode of instruction Seminar

Learning goals

Students will develop critical perspectives on the contexts, institutional structures, practices, and dominant assumptions of schooling that produce social inequalities and will consider the ways that schools and classrooms can be re-imagined to support educational equity. Students will develop their social science research, writing and presentation skills.

Course description

This course draws primarily on readings in educational sociology and critical educational studies to explore the role of schools in society. We will be examining the ways that schools produce and resist social and cultural inequalities.

Required readings

I. Textbooks available from Rutgers University Bookstore:

- 1) Carter, P. L. (2005). *Keepin' It Real: School Success Beyond Black and White*. Oxford: Oxford University Press
- 2) Demerath, P. (2009). *Producing success: The culture of personal advancement in an American high school*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- 3) Lareau, A. (2003). *Unequal Childhoods: Class, race and family life*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- 4) Suarez-Orozco, C., Suarez-Orozco, M., & Todorova, I. (2008). *Learning a New Land: Immigrant Students in American Society*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

II. Additional readings available online through library e-Reserves.

Course website

You can access the course website by logging in at <https://sakai.rutgers.edu/>. The website will be an integral part of the course and it is crucial that you become familiar with it as soon as the course begins. Please contact me immediately if you are having any difficulties. Class announcements are posted regularly on the course website. Announcement notifications are sent to your Rutgers email address. If you do not usually use your Rutgers email address please be sure that you have set up email forwarding from this account to the account that you do use. You can access your Rutgers email account and adjust your settings.

Grading and Assignments

Your grade in the course will be based on participation in class, online posting of weekly reflections, and three installments of your final paper.

	% of Grade
Attendance (five absences constitutes a failing grade in course)	5%
Weekly blog posts --ten required (due Tuesdays at midnight)	10%
Final paper proposal due November 16	5%
Article presentation November 21	10%
Final presentation in class December 7	10%
Final paper due December 14	60%
<i>Total</i>	100%

Attendance

1% will be deducted from your final grade for every unexcused absence. After the first excused absence, 0.5% will be deducted from final grade for every subsequent excused absence.

Final paper

You will begin thinking about your final paper on the first day of class. Choose an area of interest and then try to identify a specific conceptual relationship that you would like to explore. **For example:** In *Unequal Childhoods*, Annette Lareau develops a theory about the relationship between **social class** and **childhood development**. In her work, she shows how parenting practices and different beliefs about the role of the family in the education of the child vary by social class and how these impact the “cultural capital” available to the children and the subsequent implications for the children’s future life outcomes. More detailed guidelines about the final paper will be given in the form of a grading rubric.

Class presentations

You will make two in-class presentations during the semester. The first presentation will be on an article outside of the course readings that you have found related to your research for your final paper. You will also make a presentation of your final paper during the last class session. More detailed guidelines will be given in the presentation rubrics. Use of PowerPoint is strongly encouraged but not required.

Blog

Weekly blog posts are due online by Tuesday midnight each week. A printed hard copy of your blog post is also due in class each week. Please use your blog as a way to prepare yourself to contribute during class discussion. Requirements for each entry are as follows

1. At least 300 words in length (although you can write as much as you like) posted by the deadline.
2. Each post must be a reflection on the assigned readings for the week and should indicate a familiarity with some of the ideas in at least two of the assigned articles/chapters.
3. Each post must link something in the readings to your own life experience and/or research interests.
4. Include (at least) one question that you can bring up for discussion in class should you have the opportunity.
5. Post a friendly, supportive and encouraging comment on two other blogs.

April 15, 2011 version.

If you fulfill all of these requirements you will get the full 5 points for your post.

Academic Integrity

Breaches of academic integrity are very serious and I do take action in the case of a violation. It is crucial that you familiarize yourself with the university policy on these issues which can be found online at <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/>

Week	Theoretical frameworks	Readings	Assignments DUE
Week 1 Sept. 7	Introduction to sociological and critical perspectives <i>Using Sakai, blogs and wikis</i> <i>Thinking conceptually</i>	Mills, C. Wright. (1959/2000). <i>The Sociological Imagination</i> . New York: Oxford University Press. Chapter 1. Erikson, T. H. (2004). <i>What is anthropology?</i> London: Pluto Books. Chapters 1, 2, 4 &9.	Set up blog profile Blog: (Due Tuesday at midnight) a. Write at least 300 words in which you display your understanding of ideas in at least one of the assigned readings in this week's readings and apply these ideas and concepts to your own experience. b. Include a discussion question. c. Comment on the blogs of at least two other people (Due at start of class).
Week 2 Sept 14	The dilemma of difference <i>Using online library resources</i>	Minow, M. (1990). <i>Making all the difference: Inclusion, exclusion, and American law</i> . Ithaca: Cornell University Press. McDermott, R., & Varenne, H. (1995). Culture as Disability. <i>Anthropology and Education Quarterly</i> , 26(3), 324-348.	(Same as Week 1)
Week 3 Sept 21	Stratification and inequality	Hallinan, M. T. (1988). Equality of Educational Opportunity. <i>Annual Review of Sociology</i> , 14, 249-268. Kao, G., & Thompson, J. (2003). Racial and Ethnic Stratification in Educational Achievement and Attainment. <i>Annual Review of Sociology</i> , (29),	1. Blog 2. Final paper assignment 1--proposal

Week	Theoretical frameworks	Readings	Assignments DUE
Week 4 September 28	Institutions	<p>417-442. Buchmann, C., DiPrete, T., & McDaniel, A. (2008). Gender Inequalities in Education. <i>Annual Review of Sociology</i>, 34(319-337).</p> <p>Ladson-Billings, G. (2006). From the achievement gap to the education debt: Understanding achievement in US schools. <i>Educational Researcher</i>, 35(3), 3-12.</p> <p>Freire, P. (1993). <i>Pedagogy of the oppressed</i> (New rev. 20th-Anniversary ed.). New York: Continuum, Chapter 2.</p>	<p>1. Blog, discussion question and comments</p> <p>2. Using the library electronic resources find (at least) 2 academic articles related to your final paper topic. Be prepared to say a couple words about them in class.</p>
Week 5 October 5	<p>Politics and markets</p> <p>Film: <i>Waiting for Superman</i></p>	<p>Chubb, John E. and Moe, Terry M. (1990). <i>Politics, Markets and America's Schools</i>. Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, chapters 1 and 2.</p> <p>Finn, C., Manno, B., & Vanourek, G. (2001). The Radicalization of School Reform. <i>Society</i>, 38(4), 58-63.</p>	<p>1. Blog, discussion question and comments</p> <p>2. Using IRIS, Amazon, Google Books or other online searches find (at least) one academic book that is related to your final paper topic. Make plans to acquire the book. Be prepared to talk about it in class.</p>
Week 6 October 12	<p>Hidden curriculum</p> <p><i>Handout</i>. -Final paper rubric.</p>	<p>Anyon, J. (1980). Social Class and the Hidden Curriculum of Work. <i>Journal of Education</i>, 162, 67-92.</p> <p>Oakes, J. (2000). The Distribution of Knowledge: (An excerpt from Keeping Track.) In R. Arum & I. Beattie (Eds.), <i>The Structure of Schooling: Readings in the Sociology of Education</i>. New York: McGraw-Hill.</p>	<p>1. Blog, discussion question and comments</p> <p>2. Final paper assignment 2-- introduction and background.</p>

Week	Theoretical frameworks	Readings	Assignments DUE
<p>Week 7 October 19</p>	<p>Cultural production</p>	<p>Demerath, P. (2009). <i>Producing success: The culture of personal advancement in an American high school</i>. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Blog as usual on your reading for the week - relate reading to your personal experiences and include a discussion question and be sure to comment on other posts. As part of this week's blog include an outline of the contents of your selected chapter for Demerath. 2. Choose an excerpt from your selected chapter that you could share with the class and discuss why this excerpt was interesting to you. 3. Final paper assignment 3-- outline
<p>Week 8 October 26</p>	<p>Class and family background</p>	<p>Lareau, A. (2003). <i>Unequal Childhoods: Class, race and family life</i>. Berkeley: University of California Press.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Blog, discussion question and comments. As part of this week's blog include an outline of the contents of your selected chapter for Lareau. 2. Choose and excerpt from the book that you could share with the class and discuss why this excerpt was interesting to you.
<p>Week 9 November 2</p>	<p>Immigration and language issues, culture and ethnicity. <i>Handout:</i> -Article presentation rubric.</p>	<p>Suarez-Orozco, C., Suarez-Orozco, M., & Todorova, I. (2008). <i>Learning a New Land: Immigrant Students in American Society</i>. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Blog, discussion question and comments. As part of this week's blog include an outline of the contents of your selected chapter for Suarez-Orozco et al. 2. Choose 3 excerpts from the book that you could share with the class and discuss why these excerpts were

Week	Theoretical frameworks	Readings	Assignments DUE
Week 10 November 9	Agency and identity	Carter, P. L. (2005). <i>Keepin' It Real: School Success Beyond Black and White</i> . Oxford: Oxford University Press, Introduction and chapters 1, 2, 5 and 6.	Blog, discussion question and comments. interesting to you.
Week 11 November 16	Gender and sexuality	Connell, R. W. (2002). <i>Gender</i> . Cambridge: Polity Press, chapters 1 and 5.	1. Blog, discussion question and comments. 2. Choose book/article that you will present next week and be prepared to tell us about it in class.
Week 12 MONDAY November 21	SESSION I 4:00 pm to 6:30am SESSION II 6:30am to 9:00pm Student presentations of articles related to final papers.		1. Upload your PowerPoint slides into Sakai/Resources/Article Presentation PowerPoint Slides by 3:30pm before class starts. 2. Completed hard copy of Article Presentation Rubric due in class.
HAPPY THANKSGIVING!			
Week 13 November 30	Writers workshop		Hard copy of rough draft of final paper due in class.
Week 14 December 7	SESSION I 4:00 pm to 6:30am SESSION II 6:30am to 9:00pm Final project presentations		1. Upload your presentation into Sakai Resources/Final Presentation PowerPoint Slides by 3:30pm before class. 2. Hardcopy of completed final

DRAFT

Week	Theoretical frameworks	Readings	Assignments DUE
Week 15 December 14	Final papers due online in drop box at midnight.		presentation rubric due in class.