

History of American Education
Ben Justice

15:310:502

Fall, 2011

Thurs, 7:50-10:20

SC201

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Please note that this is a draft of the syllabus. There will be changes between now (April 5) and when the course begins (Sept 1). I will post a final draft during the summer on the course sakai, giving you ample time to purchase books and begin advance reading. We will definitely use the Urban and Wagoner book. I may add others, but I will do my best to keep costs low.

I. Required Texts

- Urban and Wagoner, *American Education: A History* third edition (2004).
- Other books TBA

In addition, weekly reading assignments will be posted on sakai in the resources folder.

II. Goals for the Course

- Understand the process of historical interpretation, and the relationship between interpreting the past and shaping the present.
- Identify, understand, and apply major arguments and authors in the historiography of American Education
- Understand the difference between ways of explaining, point of view, and units of analysis.
- Gain and strengthen skills of historical inquiry and analysis.
- Gain and strengthen skills in locating and interpreting primary source material.
- Understand major themes and events in the history of education in the United States.

III. Course Content

- A. We will analyze six main periods of growth and reform in the history of organized education in the United States: The Colonial Period, The Early Republic, The Common School Movement, the Progressive Era, the Civil Rights Movement, and the post Nation at Risk era of today.

- B. Within these periods, we will look at recurring themes, including identity (race, ethnicity, gender), social class, religion, and differing modes of school administration and reform.
- C. In each part of the course, we will identify and analyze the varying explanations that historians employ, and, in good post-modern fashion, their varying political implications. For example, how do we explain the spread of publicly funded common schools in the early 19th century? What was the impact of progressive reform on American public schools? Was Brown vs. Board of Education a success? Was there a golden age of public education? Are we in one now?

IV. Instructional Format

- A. The weekly whole-class meetings will include lectures, whole-group and small-group discussions of the readings, and analysis of primary sources.
- B. All students will play an active role in shaping weekly instruction through individual and group presentations and discussion. If you are interested, I invite you to help plan and co-teach one of the classes. Planning this may involve selecting an additional reading to provide another point of view or added information about the topic. This is voluntary. Contact me *in first few weeks of the course* if you are interested.

V. Evaluation

My philosophy of grading is that letter grades are marks that record your personal accomplishments. I do *not* use letter grades to rank or sort students. What this means is that I will set clear standards for you to meet (and when they are unclear, please tell me) and I will help you reach those standards. When I evaluate your work and find that you have not met those standards, I will tell you clearly what is missing and what has to be done. I offer you my help and another chance to meet those standards until *you* are satisfied, or until the course ends.

Late assignments will be accepted only if you have made prior arrangements. You may rewrite any paper. An exception is the final integrative essay where a late paper cannot be accepted at all since grades are to be turned in to the University a few days after the assignment is due. Due dates refer to the last day I will accept an assignment without prior arrangements. You are welcome to hand in assignments before their final due date!

- A. This course will be taken for a letter grade only. The letter grade will be calculated as follows:

• Participation during class	20%
• Weekly Reading Responses	20%
• Research Paper	40%
• Take Home Final Exam	20%

- C. Active participation in discussion is an essential part of learning in this class and hence of evaluating your work. Participation means listening as well as talking, monitoring your own contributions to a discussion, helping others develop their ideas,

and, of course, expressing your own thoughts in whole-group discussions, and as a member of your reading group. It is essential that you complete the required readings before you come to class.

D. Absence may make the heart grow fonder, but it makes it very difficult for me to plan our classes together. Please let me know in advance, if at all possible, when you will miss class. More than one absence, or frequent tardiness, may result in grade reduction beyond the 20% indicated above, and in extreme circumstances may result in failing the class. More importantly, missing class time will result in missed opportunities for you to learn.

C. The written work for the course will be as follows:

1. 2-3 page weekly reflections on the reading, due at the start of every class. These brief essays offer you an opportunity to respond to some aspect of the weeks reading that puzzles, intrigues, or irks you. Think of it as a conversation with yourself, or with me, as I will be reading them each week. You may use different approaches for different sets of readings, and creativity is always welcome. These can be as formal or informal as you like, so long as they are thoughtful. I will grade these as follows. An "A" is for a paper that not only identifies the main argument and significant details of the readings, but also offers some interesting comparison, interpretation, application, synthesis or alternative perspective. The grade "B" signifies that the paper identifies the main argument and significant details of the readings. Papers that do not address all readings or do not demonstrate understanding of the readings will not receive credit. Late papers will not receive credit without prior approval.
2. Research Paper which includes one of two options (see below). Should be approx. 12-15 pages (varies by number in group). **Due Friday, December 5.**
3. A short, final essay exam of two questions that reflects what we have looked at during the course. Consider class discussions, presentations and lectures, readings, and written assignments. Review your weekly 1-2 pagers. **The questions will be made available on sakai on Dec. 10 and are due, online, by Dec. 16 at 5pm.**

4.

NOTE: Papers that are handed in on time, show reasonable effort, but are not satisfactory to the student may be rewritten one time for a new grade.

CRITERIA FOR JUDGING WRITTEN WORK

1. *Completeness*

Are all parts of the assignment included?

2. *Accuracy*

Is what you say supported by evidence? Do you summarize main points clearly? Are you precise in use of statistics and quotes?

3. *Analysis*

Is your argument coherent, comprehensive, and convincing?

4. *Quality of writing*

Is your writing clear and succinct? Do you help the reader move easily from the beginning to the end of paper?

If you do not yet have a copy of Strunk and White's Elements of Style, I urge you to get it.

VI. Research Report

By the end of the third week all students should begin thinking about a project. I will not accept any project that has not been cleared with me first. I encourage you to work in pairs on this assignment, although students may work in groups of three or singly in some cases.

Pick one of two topics...

Either:

(1) Write a literature review of a particular topic or question that interests you. (Advanced graduate students may find this very helpful for dissertation development.) Generate a bibliography of at least ten books or articles on your subject, read or skim them, and write an essay that reviews the literature. Consider what the evidence is, what the varying arguments are, and how these have changed over time. You should run this idea by Ben *before* you get to work.

Or:

(2) Conduct a historical research project of your own in the history of education. Begin by asking a historically relevant question, then locate sources that help you answer the question, and finally, commit to doing the research and writing the paper. You must check with Ben before you get started on a particular project.

VII. Academic Integrity

The university requires me to explicitly state what you already know, or certainly should know: Passing other people's writing off as your own, or even passing other people's ideas off as your own, on any assignment large or small, is stealing. If you plagiarize or cheat you will fail this class. You will face stern consequences from the GSE, and worst of all, you will cheapen the good work that we all strive to do at Rutgers. If you have questions about this ask me. Or go to the following website: <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/integrity.shtml#I> Most cheating happens when people are in over their heads. If you are in such a situation, ask for help.

OVERVIEW OF COURSE

Introduction

September 1: Introduction to the course and to each other. What are the purposes of the course? Why does the history of education matter? What is education? What is history? Education and Utopia. The imperial origins of American educational idealism.

Readings due for today:

Benjamin Justice, "Utopian Dreams" (in sakai resources)

Sept 8: NO CLASS (Monday classes meet today. Don't ask why. They just do.)

Sept 15: Colonial Education in America. What patterns of colonial education developed among Europeans in the British American colonies? What patterns developed between Indians and Europeans? Our case study will be the Praying Indians of Massachusetts.

Readings due for today:

Urban and Wagoner, Chapters 1,2

~~Readings on Praying Indians TBA~~

Sept 22: Education in a Revolutionary Society. What tensions existed, according to Tyack, in the educational philosophy of the revolutionary generation? Can you see these in Benjamin Rush's essay? How were early common schools the "pillars of the republic?" What were they like in reality, and how did they, or did they not meet the rhetorical claims of the revolutionaries? How, if at all, does analysis of the revolutionary generation bear on today?

Readings due today:

- Urban and Wagoner, Chapter 3.
- Carl Kaestle, Chapter 1 of Pillars
- ~~Primary source documents TBA. Essays on education.~~

Sept 29: Configurations of Schooling in the Early Republic.

Kim Tolley on Academies

Nancy Beadie on the formation of common schools and social capital.

Oct 6: The common school reform movement. What was the common school movement? What explanations do historians offer for why it happened? What kind of evidence do they use? How did the rhetoric of the common school match up to practice?

Readings due today:

Urban and Wagoner, Chapter 4

Timothy Smith, "Protestant Schooling and American Nationality, 1800-1850," *Journal of American History* 53:4 (March, 1967), 679-695 ~~or something by Tyack~~

~~Something by Moss on race~~

Primary source for today: something by Horace Mann...

October 13: *Tonight's session will be conducted online via sakai.* Reconstruction. How have recent historians revised our understanding of Reconstruction? What, or who, were the main agents of change? Of resistance to change? What were the legacies of Reconstruction?

Readings due today:
Urban and Wagoner, Chapter 5
something by Anderson
Primary sources: something by/from Butchart

October 20: Religious Diversity and the Public School. To what degree was religious diversity compatible with the idea of public school? How do Fraser and Justice differ in their interpretations? What kinds of evidence do they use? How did the issue of religion in public schools differ between the antebellum and post bellum eras?

Readings due today:

- Fraser, Chapters 1-3 (pp. 9-65)
- Justice, Chapters 1,4,8,9 (reader)
- Primary documents inc. Thos. Nast cartoons

October 27: Higher Education in the 19th century.

Readings due today:
~~from Geiger, *The American College in the 19th Century*, and others TBA~~

Please Note: Attached to your reading response due today, please include a 1-2 page description of your proposed research project that includes (1) the question you hope to answer (2) a list of the 5-10 most relevant secondary sources on the subject, and (3) a preliminary list of primary sources. Tonight we will discuss your project ideas.

November 3: *Was there a Progressive movement in education?* How do you know? According to Bowles and Gintis, and Tyack what shaped the school reforms of the early 10th century? What evidence do they use to construct their arguments and what role does theory play in their analyses?

READINGS:

- Urban and Wagoner, chapter 7.
- William Reese HEQ article on 19th c. origins of progressive pedagogy
- David Tyack, "Administrative Progressives" from *One Best System*. (Course Reader)
- Primary Sources: Stanley Zhem, "Nomenclature for Slow Learners," and visual evidence to be distributed during class.

Nov 10: *What were the public school legacies of progressivism?* How much did progressive reforms alter school and classroom practice? How do you know? What can you learn about schools from visual evidence? How, and why, do Cuban and Ravitch disagree, and what implications do their arguments have for the politics of school reform today?

READINGS:

- Diane Ravitch, "The Rise and Fall of Progressive Education" in *The Troubled Crusade*. (Course Reader).
- Larry Cuban, "Behind the Classroom Door in Three Cities," from *How Teachers Taught (1890-1990)*. (pages 1-20, 46-114.)
- Primary Sources: slide show during class.

November 17: To what degree was there a new politics of educational reform in the Civil Rights Era? How did it compare with reform in the progressive era? What changes in education can be attributed to the influence of social movements? To what extent did new groups gain what they wanted? On what analyses and evaluations do Ravitch and Tyack/Hansot agree and differ? Why?

Readings due today:

- Diane Ravitch, "The New Politics of Education," from *The Troubled Crusade*. (sakai)
- David Tyack and Elisabeth Hansot, "Protest Movements and Social Justice," from *Managers of Virtue*. (sakai)

Note that our next session is on a Tuesday.

November 22: Desegregation and Resegregation.

READINGS: something on brown legacy

TBA

*****Note that this is a Tuesday. Do not ask why. It just is.*****

Nov. 24. No class. Happy Thanksgiving.

Dec. 1: American Higher Education in the twentieth century: cycles and trends

Readings TBA, probably: Thelin and Justice, When the Army got Progressive

December 9: American education since 1980. How can we think like historians when speaking about recent changes? What factors characterized American education at the end of the 20th century and the start of the 21st? Looking back at the long view, what interpretive claims can we make about American education? What historiographical claims can we make?

Readings:

TBA=likely a paperback book

class primary documents will include long-term data on mass and higher education in the United States.

December 16: final exam essays due (distributed December 10 online).