

Photography and History of American Education: Synopsis

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13927 Wednesday 1:10 PM - 4:10 pm, CR011 CAHILL, W

The advent of photography coincides with the formative period of American education since the latter half of the 19th century, when the kindergarten, common schools, high schools, normal schools and universities were first formed in American society. This was also the period when schools assumed the form of age-graded classes and when high schools and middle schools formed subject-matter departments. This period was also marked by struggles for racial integration of schools and equality of educational opportunity, and by political debates over state and local versus federal control of schools, matters that have become the subject of legislation in the period of increasing federal involvement in public schools since the 1950's. This history is politically interesting to Americans because it has shaped their lives and because it continues to express itself in current debates about education. It is also interesting as part of the history of American families and their identities in modern society. Photography has become part of this history and offers a unique way of looking into this past. In this course we will read Wayne J. Urban and Jennings L. Wagoner's *American Education: A History* (fourth edition) and several articles, including at least one about education and race in New Jersey and a few about photography. We will study archival photographs from *American Memory*, a website of the Library of Congress and learn to make interpretations of pictures as historical artifacts. Students will be required to write three short interpretive papers on photographs from *American Memory* and do a group presentation of pictures chosen to represent a theme in the history of education. There will also be several quizzes.