

**Proseminar: Educational Theory and Practice (16:300:501)**

Fall 2013

Professor Thea Abu El-Haj

Class: Tuesday 4:50-7:30

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This course draws on the fields of anthropology, sociology, philosophy and history to ask several key questions about education. The course introduces central concepts in social theory and illustrates how these concepts can shape educational research. This course is organized around several key themes: What are the purposes of education? What is the relationship between social structure and agency? What is the relationship between individuals and social contexts in the learning process? How is education always interwoven with the production of identities? How do schools reflect particular types of cultural knowledge and practices? How are educational policies produced in broader sociopolitical contexts?

No one course can do justice to the breadth of issues addressed by the fields represented in this pro-seminar. The course is intended to introduce you to a range of approaches to educational research drawing on these disciplines, and to help you frame research in relation to broader theoretical concepts and frameworks.

<b>Week</b>		<b>Topic</b>	<b>Readings</b>
1		Introduction	
2	Purposes of Education	Social Reproduction	Bowles & Gintis Lomawaima & McCarty Durkheim
3		Democracy and Education	Gutmann Labaree Banks Carini
4		Institutional structures of schooling	Anyon Connell Oakes Gross
5		Constructing Intelligence	Gould Mehan (1992)
6	Socio-cultural theories of learning	Communities of Practice	Wenger Rubin
7		De-constructing theories of success and failure	Jencks & Phillips Varenne & McDermott Ladson-Billings Thomas & Stevenson Minow
8		Learning Identities	Wortham Cone Boaler
9	Theories of Power	Power/knowledge	Metro-Roland Ferguson Pascoe Foucault (rec)
10		Cultural Capital	Levinson Lareau Bourdieu (rec)
11	Educational Policy in an era of globalization Writing Groups	Globalization and migration	Suarez-Orozco Orellano Abu El-Haj Hall
12		Macro-processes and school reform	Lipman Mehta
13		Educational Policy for the 21 <sup>st</sup> century: Topics TBD	Erickson Carter & Welner
14		Educational Policy for the 21 <sup>st</sup> century: Topics TBD	Carter & Welner
15		Wrap-up session	

Books to buy are marked with an asterisk. I leave it to you to order them at your preferred store or online bookstore. All other readings are on electronic reserve in the library.

Week 1: Introduction (Sept. 3)

Week 2: Social Reproduction (September 10)

- 1) Durkheim, E. (2000). The nature of education. In B. Levinson (Ed.), *Schooling the symbolic animal: Social and cultural dimensions of education* (pp. 57-61). Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.
- 2) Bowles, S. & Gintis, H. (1976). *Schooling in capitalist America: Educational reform and the contradictions of economic life*. Chapters 3 & 4 (focus on pp. 53-56, 92-125, skim the rest).
- 3) Lomawaima, K. T. & McCarty, T. L. (2006). *To remain an Indian: Lessons from a century of Native American Education*. (Chapters 1, 2, 7&8). New York: Teachers College Record.

Week 3: Democracy and Education (September 17)

- 1) Gutmann, A. (1987/1999). *Democratic Education*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. Introduction and Chapters 1-2.
- 2) Labaree, D. F. (1997). Public good, private goods: The American struggle over educational goals. *American Educational Research Journal*, 34(1): 39-81.
- 3) Banks, J. A. (2008) Diversity, group identity and citizenship education in a global age. *Educational Researcher* 37 (3), 129-139.
- 4) Carini, P. (2001). *Starting strong: A different look at children, schools and standards*. Chapter 1, "Poets of our lives," pp. 19-52. New York: Teachers College Press.

Week 4: Producing student identities (September 24)

- 1) Anyon, J. (1980). "Social class and the hidden curriculum of work," *Journal of Education*, Vol. 162, 253-276.
- 2) Connell, R. (2000) *The Men and the Boys*. Berkeley: University of California Press. Chapter 9, pp. 148-176.
- 3) Oakes, J. (1985/2005). *Keeping track: How schools structure inequality*. New Haven: Yale University Press. Selected chapters.
- 4) \*Gross, J. (2011). Education and hegemony: The influence of Antonio Gramsci. In B. A. U. Levinson (Ed.), *Beyond critique: Exploring critical social theories and education*, pp. 51-79. Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers.

Week 5: Constructing intelligence (October 1)

- 1) \* Gould, S. J. (1996). *The mismeasure of man*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company.
- 2) Mehan, H. (2000). Beneath the skin and between the ears: A case study in the politics of representation. In B. Levinson et al. (Eds.), *Schooling the symbolic animal: Social and cultural dimensions of education* (259-279). Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, Inc.

**Due: Topic for final project**

Week 6: Communities of Practice (October 8)

- 1) Wenger, E. (1998). *Communities of practice: Learning, meaning and identity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Selected Chapters
  - 2) Rubin, B. C. (2003). Unpacking detracking: When progressive pedagogy meets students' social worlds. *American Educational Research Journal* 40 (2): 539-573.
- Recommended*
- 3) Oakes, J. (1985/2005). *Keeping track: How schools structure inequality*. New Haven: Yale University Press. Selected chapters.

Week 7: De-constructing theories of success and failure (October 15)

- 1) Jencks, C. & Phillips, M. (1998). The Black-White test score gap: An introduction. In C. Jencks & M. Phillips (Eds.). *The Black-White test score gap*. Washington: Brookings Institution Press. 1-51
- 2) Varenne, H. & McDermott, R. (1998). In *Successful failure: The school America builds*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press. Chapter 6 (pp. 131-156.)
- 3) Ladson-Billings, G. (2006). From the achievement gap to the education debt: Understanding achievement in U. S. schools. *Educational Researcher* 35 (7): 3-12.
- 4) Minow, M. (1990). *Making all the difference: Inclusion, exclusion, and American Law*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press. Chapter 1
- 5) Thomas, D. E. & Stevenson, H. (2009). Gender risks and education: The particular classroom challenges for urban low-income African American boys. *Review of Research in Education* 33, 160-180.

**Due: First set of annotated response papers due no later than this date.**

Week 8: Learning Identities (October 22)

- 1) Wortham, S. (2006). *Learning identity: The joint emergence of social identification and academic learning*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press. (Chapters 1-55, Ch 5)
- 2) Cone, J. (2006). Detracked ninth grade English: Apprenticeship for the work and world of high school and beyond. *Theory into Practice*, 45(1), 55-63
- 3) Boaler, J. (2006). How a detracked mathematics approach promoted respect, responsibility and high achievement. *Theory into Practice*, 45(1),40-46

**Reference list for final project due.**

Week 9: Power/Knowledge (October 29)

- 1) \*Metro-Roland, D. (2011). Knowledge, power and the care of the self: The many faces of Michel Foucault in Education Research. In B. A. U. Levinson (Ed.), *Beyond critique: Exploring critical social theories and education*, pp. 139-170). Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers.
  - 2) Ferguson, A. A. (2001). *Bad boys: Public schools in the making of Black masculinity*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press. Chapters 1 & 3.
  - 3) Pascoe, C.J. (2007). *Dude you're a fag: Masculinity and sexuality in high school*. Berkeley: University of California Press. Chapters 1-3, 6.
- Recommended*

- 4) Foucault, M. (1977). *Power/knowledge: Selected interviews and other writings*. (Chapter 6, pp. 109-133). New York: Pantheon Books.

Week 10: Cultural Capital (November 5)

- 1) \*Levinson, B. A. U. (2011). Symbolic domination and the reproduction of inequality: Pierre Bourdieu and practice theory. In B. A. U. Levinson (Ed.), *Beyond critique: Exploring critical social theories and education*, pp. 113-138). Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers.
- 2) \*Lareau, A. (2003). *Unequal Childhoods: Class, race and family life*. Berkeley: University of California Press. (Chapters to be shared between class members)  
*Recommended:*
- 3) Bourdieu, P. (1993). Structures, habitus, practices. In C. Lemert (Ed.), *Social theory: the multicultural and classic readings*, pp. 479-485. Boulder: Westview Press.

Week 11: Globalization and immigration (November 12)

- 1) Suarez-Orozco, M. M. (2001). Globalization, immigration, and education: The research agenda. *Harvard Educational Review* 71 (3), 345-365.
- 2) Orellano, M. F. (2001). The work kids do: Mexican and Central American immigrant children's contributions to households and schools in California. *Harvard Educational Review* 71 (3), 366-389.
- 3) Abu El-Haj, T. (2007). "I was born here, but my home it's not here": Educating for democratic citizenship in an era of transnational migration and global conflict. *Harvard Educational Review*, 77 (3): 285-316.
- 4) Hall K. D. (2002). *Lives in translation: Sikh youth as British citizens*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press. Chapters 1, 3 & 7.

Week 12: Processes of globalization and school reform (November 19)

- 1) \* Lipman, P. (2003). *High-stakes education: Inequality, globalization and urban school reform*. New York: Routledge.
- 2) Mehta, J. (2013). *The allure of order: High hopes, dashed expectations, and the troubled quest to remake American schooling*. New York: Oxford University Press.

**DRAFT OF FINAL PAPER DUE TO YOUR WRITING PARTNER FRIDAY  
NOVEMBER 22. READ AND RESPOND TO YOUR PARTNER BY TUESDAY  
NOVEMBER 26.**

**NO CLASS TUESDAY NOVEMBER 26.**

Week 13: Education policy for the 21<sup>st</sup> century: Topics to be Determined (December 3)

- 1) Erickson, F. (April 29, 2013). Scaling down: A modest proposal for practice-based policy research in teaching. Paper delivered at AERA, San Francisco.
- 2) \* Carter, P. L. & Welner, K. G. (2013). *Closing the opportunity gap: What America must do to give every child an even chance.*

**Due: Final Paper due December 6 (5pm)**

Week 14: Education policy for the 21<sup>st</sup> century: Topics to be Determined (December 10)

- 1) \* Carter, P. L. & Welner, K. G. (2013). *Closing the opportunity gap: What America must do to give every child an even chance.*

**Due: Full set of response papers and second set of annotations**

Week 15: Wrap up Session

### **Course Guidelines/Expectations:**

A successful class will depend on every member of the group being actively engaged as both learners and teachers. It is my assumption that each of us has valuable perspectives and experiences that will inform our collective, developing knowledge.

**Class attendance is a requirement.** Students are expected to be on time and prepared for class. If, for extraordinary reasons, you are unable to attend class one week, please let me know. In general, inconsistent attendance will result in a significantly lower grade. Missing a significant number of classes will result in no credit for the course.

**This class is a discussion-oriented seminar, and learning in this class will require your active participation.** For this class to be effective, all students must come prepared to discuss the week's assigned readings. Response papers (see below) are intended to help you think about the issues raised in the readings ahead of class time. This seminar requires a high degree of independence, responsibility, and intellectual resourcefulness (ability to search out and make connections across theory, practice, sites, ideas, people) in all of your work. There are many ways to participate in class; actively listening, asking questions, commenting on the thoughts of others, or discussing tentative, speculative ideas are valued as much as stating original, completely formed thoughts.

**All assignments are required to pass this course.** An "A" assignment is an exceptional one. It is not an assignment that merely meets the requirements outlined in the syllabus. All written work is graded on thoroughness, quality of analysis, level of support from data and/or research literature, organization and clarity. A final A grade will be assigned for an overall grade point average of 3.70 or greater.

**Students are expected to turn in all work on time.** If you need an extension, be sure to ask for it *before* the due date. Extensions will only be granted for legitimate reasons. Late papers, for which you have not been granted an extension, will be subject to a grade penalty. When an extension has not been granted, grades on assignments will be lowered one grade for each day they are late (i.e. 4.0 to 3.7 to 3.3 etc.) No papers will be accepted more than one week from the due date.

**Email will be my primary mode of communication with you. You should check your Rutgers email regularly (or have it forwarded to the account you do check).**

**Please turn off all cell phones and beepers at the beginning of class. We will negotiate together a computer/tablet policy for this class that maintains the integrity of our face-to-face discussion. Students are expected act professionally and refrain from checking email, surfing the internet, and so forth during our class.**

**Anyone with a learning difference needing accommodations of any kind should contact me as soon as possible.**

It is very important that you let me know if you have questions about the concepts being discussed during the course. Feel free to use e-mail to pose questions if raising them in class is difficult.

**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; it can be found online at <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/>

## ASSIGNMENTS

1. **Reading Response Papers, Discussion and Annotation** (2 single-spaced pages, plus annotations; 45% of your final grade). You will write **10** reading response papers over the course of the semester. (**All 10 papers and 8 peer responses, see below, are required for a passing grade in this course.**) Writing is not just a means to communicate fully formed ideas; it can be used to get underneath key arguments, raise questions and ponder new ideas and connections. The response papers are intended in this second way. These papers should directly address the readings for the week, attempting to summarize the underlying arguments and to draw out key themes and connections across the texts. This means that although you must work to summarize key arguments succinctly, these papers are more than simple summaries or book reports. In these papers, you will explore key issues or questions about the readings, address the relationship between the different texts and draw these texts into conversation with your personal and professional educational experiences.

These papers are intended to give you a chance to think deeply about the readings before you come to class, to offer me insight into your understanding of the readings, and to initiate a conversation with your peers. To that end, you will be assigned to writing groups. **Before our class**, you will read your writing group peers' papers and respond to them on a discussion board. In order to have enough time for people to respond to the other papers, **your response papers are due by 8pm Sunday night on the Sakai website**. Since the aim of these papers is to help me address your questions, and to have you engage each other in a discussion, **late papers will not be accepted** and cannot be counted toward your 10 required pieces.

**You are required to respond to your writing group at least 8 times over the course of the semester. Your responses are intended as a space for beginning a discussion about the materials (raising questions; commenting on cross-cutting themes, and so forth) before our class period.**

*Note:* If you find yourself spending enormous amounts of time writing these papers, you are doing more than necessary. Please talk with me so that I can help you strategize.

In these papers and discussions, I will be looking for evidence that you are reading and thinking critically about the assigned texts and that you are drawing connections across texts. Rest assured that this does not mean that I expect you to understand the texts thoroughly the first time around. These papers are exploratory by nature and are the place for you to raise questions, ask for clarification and/or be speculative about the texts. Although I do expect you to pay reasonable attention to writing style and mechanics, the weekly papers are not intended to be polished.

During the semester I will give you feedback on one of these papers to be sure you are on the right track.

### **Annotations**

Twice, over the course of the semester, you will revisit your response papers and annotate them to reflect your growing understanding of the texts and the issues at hand. These annotations create the opportunity to demonstrate the depth and development of your thinking about the specific theoretical concepts and educational issues. Be sure to

reference particular ideas and how your understanding of these changed as a consequence of further readings and discussion in class and with your peers. **Your annotated papers are due twice over the course of the semester; after you have completed the first 5, and at the end of the semester.** I will give you feedback on your first set of annotations.

2. **Final Project** (45 % of your final grade)

For this project, you will take a key theoretical framework, investigate the literature surrounding this framework (theory and research); and use it to (re) frame a research topic in your area of interest. For example, you might consider how an understanding of communities of practice; cultural capital; or globalization offers a conceptual framework for shaping a research project in your field. The goals of this assignment are to: gain a deeper understanding of one theoretical framework, and to learn to frame a clear argument and rationale for new research. More details on this project will be posted on Sakai.

**A topic for this project is due Week 5. A reference list is due Week 8. A draft of your final project is due the Friday before Thanksgiving. (Your writing group will read and give feedback on these drafts.) The final project is due on December 6.**

3. **Leading Seminar Discussion** (10% of your final grade). You will be responsible for planning and leading one of our educational policy seminar discussions (in collaboration with peers). The week that you lead discussion, you will **not** write a response paper. Instead you will choose a topic in contemporary educational policy; assign readings (including chapters from the assigned book) that offer different perspectives on these policies and that help us assess these arguments; and lead a discussion that directs your classmates' attention to 1) key concepts 2) overarching arguments 3) research findings and 4) critical assessments of the policy under discussion that week. You will also be responsible for writing and implementing a lesson plan for the seminar. **You will touch base with me the week before your lesson for feedback on your plans.** You should read your peers' response papers in preparation for leading the class discussion and reference these in the discussion. Criteria for evaluation will include demonstrated critical assessment of the policy issues, as well as the quality of additional readings assigned, lesson plan, and implementation.

4. **Class participation.**

This is a discussion-oriented seminar. Students must do reading assignments on a weekly basis and participate fully in course activities. Students are expected to attend all classes and to be responsible and constructive participants in class. **Outstanding or weak participation in the course will be taken into account in your final grade.**