

## **Introduction to Social Studies**

Fall 2015

257:550:01

Dr. Beth Rubin

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Class held in:

### **I. Required Texts**

- Course readings available online on the course Sakai website.
- Walter C. Parker, *Social Studies Today* (Routledge, 2015).
- James Loewen, *Teaching What Really Happened* (Teachers College Press, 2010)

Please purchase the Parker and Loewen books right away. They are readily available through online retailers. We will be using them during the first weeks of class, so make sure you receive them by **9/3**.

### **II. The Purposes of the Course are to:**

- Explain the historical origins of Social Studies and its development relative to professional, political, and social forces in the United States.
- Understand different perspectives on the field of social studies today.
- Gain and strengthen skills of historical inquiry and analysis.
- Analyze the civic functions of social studies education.
- Consider the strengths and weaknesses of a global studies
- Consider how context, positionality and experience shape students' social studies learning
- Analyze the significance of the social and political context of the State of New Jersey on Social Studies education.

### **III. Course Overview**

#### **IV. Instructional Format**

A. The weekly whole-class meetings will include lectures, whole-group and small-group discussions of the readings, group activities, student presentations, and panels of guest speakers.

B. All students will play an active role in shaping weekly instruction through individual and group presentations, and discussion.

#### **V. Evaluation**

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

- Participation during class (see B) 10%
- Oral history 20%
- Weekly Reading Responses 20%
- New Jersey Project 30%
- Final Essay 20%

B. 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 small and large group discussions.

**I also ask that you do not keep a laptop open during class, as research has shown that laptop use decreases engagement in class discussion. Unless it is necessary due to a learning disability, please use a paper notebook for your class notes. You may use a laptop during small group discussions and activities if it helps facilitate the discussion/task.**

It is essential to complete the required readings before class discussion. Weekly attendance is mandatory. Students should contact the instructor in advance of any missed classes. Missing class, or excessive tardiness, may result in a grade reduction beyond the 10% value of the participation grade.

Students will work in groups during class and for the major project in this course. This will require students to work together in a responsible, respectful manner. Effective group work involves patience and flexibility as well as meeting deadlines and fulfilling personal commitments. For all group projects, students will be expected to divide work evenly. At the end of each project, each student will turn in a single-page evaluation of their group that explains who did which part and evaluates whether the group worked well together. In the event that students have concerns, they are welcome to email the instructor directly. The Instructor reserves the right to assign different individual grades for group projects in the event that one or more individuals do not complete their share of the assignment appropriately. The instructor may ask students whose work is exceptional for permission to use their work as an example to future classes.

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

**1.** 1 page single-spaced typed daily reflections on the reading, **due at the start of every class.** These brief essays offer you an opportunity to respond to aspects of the week's readings that puzzle, intrigue, or irk 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. You should refer to all of the week's readings in your musings. Finish each essay with a question for discussion.

These will be graded excellent (2), good (1), or not acceptable (0). An excellent essay demonstrates clear understanding of the readings and expresses an interesting opinion of them, such as a critical analysis, a comparison, the identification of a particular theme, the development of a new idea, etc. A good

essay demonstrates an adequate understanding of the readings. An unacceptable essay does not engage all the readings, misunderstands them, or is in some other way not what would reasonably be considered a good response. Submit these essays before class “Forum” space on our class Sakai site, under the appropriate topic. You will not be responsible for a reading response on the day your group is presenting to the class and turning in the research paper. You will be asked to read your essay aloud one time during the semester, in order to kick off class discussion.

2. Oral history of a social studies teacher. Described below. Due **10/29**.
3. Contemporary issues in New Jersey education: research paper and class presentation. For this assignment, students will form groups and tackle specific issues, problems, or questions related to teaching social studies in the State of New Jersey. Described below. **Due dates vary**.
4. A short, final essay (no more than 6 pages) that reflects your personal philosophy for teaching social studies. Consider class discussions, presentations and lectures, readings, and written assignments. This assignment is due to “assignments” **by noon, Sunday, December 13**.

#### 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.*

#### CRITERIA FOR JUDGING PRESENTATIONS

##### 1. *Clarity*

Is the point of the presentation clear? Are the various parts of the presentation clear in their relation to the main point? Are visuals easy to read? Is the speaker easy to follow?

*2. Interest*

Is the speaker interesting to listen to? Confident? Happy to be there? Is the subject matter interesting and relevant? Are examples vivid and engaging?

*3. Timing*

Does the presentation move along at the appropriate pace? Is it an appropriate length?

*4. Content*

Are the facts accurate? Are they appropriate? Are they sufficient?

*5. Logic*

Does the presentation make sense? Is the evidence appropriate and does it sufficiently support the speaker's argument? Is the argument coherent, comprehensive, and convincing?

**VI. Oral History of a Social Studies Teacher**

In this assignment, we will collectively explore the history and experience of teaching social studies through the eyes of social studies educators. As a class, we will determine research questions about social studies teaching as a discipline and a profession. We will create a draft research protocol for an interview with an experienced social studies teacher. Each class member will identify a social studies teacher, conduct an interview (recorded), and type up a transcript of that interview. In class on **10/29** we will read these transcripts, analyze them for themes, and come to some initial understandings about our research question. Interview transcript is due **10/29**.

**VII. Contemporary Issues in New Jersey Education: Research paper and presentation.**

For this assignment, students will form groups and tackle specific issues, problems, or questions related to teaching Social Studies in the State of New Jersey. Each group should choose one of the following, or may negotiate a substitute with their instructor:

- 1. A Tale of Two Cities.** *What is the impact of localism in on education in New Jersey?* Pick two near or adjacent school districts in New Jersey that highlight the social and economic stratification of education in the state. Draw on demographic, economic, and educational data as well as some site visits and conversations with teachers and students. How is schooling different (i.e. what opportunities are available to students, what are the conditions of teachers' work, etc...) in these two contexts? Why? What can be done? **10/15**
- 2. Abbott vs. Burke.** *How did New Jersey attempt to rectify the inequalities created by localism, and what have been the complexities and results?* Provide an overview of the origins, development, and current status of this landmark decision in New Jersey. What impact has this decision had on teaching and learning in New Jersey schools? I strongly suggest that (1) you do not get too bogged down in presenting every ruling, but rather focus on the major trends and issues, with a

few specific examples and (2) read Debora Yaffe's book, *Other People's Children*. **10/22**

- 3. NJ State Standards, Common Core and other standards.** *How are curriculum standards impacting education in New Jersey Schools? What is the Common Core and how is it being implemented in NJ schools? How does it differ from and interact with the NJ State Standards? What are NJ schools and teachers doing in order to implement the Common Core? How do social studies teachers use the Common Core and the NJ State Standards for Social Studies? What are the pros and cons of the Common Core? What are the implications for social studies? Speak with teachers and curriculum supervisors about the standards and how they are experiencing them.* **10/29**
- 4. PARCC, and other assessments.** *How are standardized assessments impacting education in New Jersey? What is the PARCC test and how is it being implemented? What do proponents and critics of the test say? Describe the "Opt Out" movement, including its scope and mission. What data has been generated by PARCC or other standardized tests in New Jersey? What do these data reveal about New Jersey schools, both in relation to each other and in relation to schools in other states? What are the implications of PARCC for social studies education, both in general and in New Jersey? Speak with teachers and parents (advocates and critics) about their experiences with the PARCC exam.* **11/5**
- 5. Urban School Reform: Spotlight on Newark NJ.** *What are the major conflicts in urban school reform and how does Newark demonstrate these conflicts? Examine the implementation of and resistance to school reform attempts in the Newark, New Jersey public school district. What challenges face this school district? What reforms have been proposed and implemented in the past few years? Who is for and who is against these reforms, and why? What has been the role of students and families? What impact does state control have over the district? What are the plans of the mayor and the superintendent, both of who are relatively new? What happened to the Facebook money? Visit sample schools and/or speak with staff and teachers.* **12/3**
- 6. Immigrant NJ:** *How are immigrants reshaping the state and its educational institutions? Explore the nationally significant (and contentious) issue of immigration through a focus on New Jersey. What is the history of New Jersey as an immigrant-rich state? What is the current state of immigrant to New Jersey? Where do recent immigrants come from, what are their numbers, where in the state are they settling? How has NJ public education responded to immigration? What challenges and benefits does immigrant present the schools? How have different districts responded? Speak with administrators, teachers and students in at least one of NJ's immigrant-rich school districts to help you to better understand this important issue.* **12/9**

- 7. Unions.** *What do teachers' unions do, and what challenges do they currently face?* As public school teachers, you will find that teachers unions play a large role in educational policy and practice in New Jersey. What are the major teachers unions in New Jersey? Are there patterns of membership? What do unions do? What are the chief arguments in favor and against teachers unions in the New Jersey press? What is the current status of unions in NJ, and what challenges do they face? Interview teacher union representatives. How do they see their work affecting the lives of children? Finally, what does your group think about unions?  
**12/9**

**All groups** should organize a 30-40 minute presentation to their classmates that includes handouts, powerpoints, or any other necessary instructional aids and hand in a group-written paper of approximately 20 pages, with an appendix including any handouts and a bibliography. Each student should also hand in a one or two paragraph description of who did what for the project, including any concerns that they have about participation. Groups should note that each presentation has a different due date.

**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. If you do not know how to cite sources, read the policy or ask me. Claims of ignorance *ex post facto* are not accepted.

**Course Outline**

Week	Topic	Assignment
9/3	Our social studies	<p>ONLINE CLASS</p> <p><b>Beginning at 7:40pm, please do the following:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Write about a memorable experience in a social studies or history class that occurred at any point in your education, including college. Write at least a page about this experience and give it a descriptive title. Post this page in the discussion thread of our Sakai site by 8:45.</li> </ul> <p><b>From 8:45-9:45:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Read and respond to as many of your peers' postings as you can comfortably accomplish in that time period (at least 10). In your responses, consider similarities, differences, and emerging themes in</li> </ul>

		the experiences of our class members.
9/10	Social studies history	<p><i>What is social studies? How has it changed over time? Why?</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chapter 1, Social Studies Education eC21, Parker, from Parker, <i>Social Studies Today</i>.</li> <li>Chapter 2, Social Studies and the Social Order, Stanley, from Parker, <i>SST</i>.</li> <li>Chapter 3, The Social Studies Wars, Now and Then, Evans, from Parker, <i>SST</i>.</li> </ol> <p><b>Reading Response 1</b></p>
9/17	The purpose of social studies	<p><i>What is the purpose of social studies? Transmission or transformation? Skills or content? Citizenship or historical understanding? Something else?</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduction, History as Weapon, from Loewen, <i>Teaching What Really Happened</i>.</li> <li>Chapter 1, The Tyranny of Coverage, from Loewen, <i>TWRH</i></li> <li>Willinsky, J. (1998) Chapter 5, History and the Rise of the West, from <i>Learning to Divide the World</i> (MN: University of Minnesota Press).</li> <li>Chapter 13, Should Social Studies Be Patriotic? Westheimer, from Parker, <i>SST</i>.</li> <li>Engle &amp; Ochoa "A Curriculum for Democratic Citizenship" (our apologies for copy quality)</li> </ol> <p><b>Reading Response 2</b></p>
9/24	Learning history and social studies	<p><i>How do students learn in history/social studies classrooms?</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wenger (1998) A social theory of learning, in <i>Communities of Practice</i> (Cambridge U Press)</li> <li>Chapter 8, Putting Bloom's Taxonomy to Rest, Case, from Parker, <i>SST</i>.</li> <li>Chapter 15, What Can Forest Gump Tell Us About Students' Historical Understandings?, Wineburg, Mosborg, Porat, from Parker, <i>SST</i>.</li> <li>Chapter 16, What Does it Mean to Think Historically, VanSledright, from Parker, <i>SST</i>.</li> <li>Chapter 17, Assessing Students' Historical Arguments, Monte-Sano, from Parker, <i>SST</i></li> <li>Chapter 18, What do Children Know About Cultural Universals? Brophy &amp; Alleman, from Parker, <i>SST</i>.</li> </ol> <p><b>Reading Response 3</b></p>
10/1	Social studies amid diversity and inequality	<p><i>How does inequality and diversity shape students' social studies experiences (and vice versa)?</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chapter 9, Education and Diversity, Banks, et al, from Parker, <i>SST</i></li> <li>Chapter 10, Isn't Culturally Responsible Instruction Just Good Teaching?, Au, from Parker, <i>SST</i>.</li> </ol>

		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Chapter 11, Silence on Gays and Lesbians in the Social Studies Curriculum, Thornton, from Parker, <i>Social Studies Today</i>.</li> <li>4. Chapter 12, Race, Gender, and the Teaching and Learning of National History, Epstein &amp; Shiller, from Parker, <i>SST</i></li> <li>5. Rubin (2007). “‘There’s still not justice’: Youth civic identity development amid distinct school and community contexts. <i>Teachers College Record</i>, 109(2), 449-481.</li> </ol> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Reading Response 4</b></p>
<b>10/8</b>	Doing History	<p><i>What is “doing history,” and should students engage in it?</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <a href="http://www.oralhistory.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/2013-1411_Oral_History_ClassroomGuide_Update_V2.pdf">http://www.oralhistory.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/2013-1411_Oral_History_ClassroomGuide_Update_V2.pdf</a></li> <li>2. Whitman (2000). Teaching students how to be historians: An oral history project for the secondary school classroom, <i>The History Teacher</i> 33, 4:469-481.</li> <li>3. Chapter 4, Doing History, from Loewen, <i>TWRH</i></li> </ol> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Reading Response 5 (consider questions about social studies teaching)</b></p>
<b>10/15</b>	Teaching the History of the United States	<p><i>How do and how should we teach the most difficult topics in US history?</i></p> <p>Everyone reads:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Chapter 3, Historiography, from Loewen, <i>TWRH</i></li> <li>2. Read one of the following (assigned in class) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Chapter 7, The \$24 Myth, from Loewen, <i>TWRH</i></li> <li>b. Chapter 8, Teaching Slavery, from Loewen, <i>TWRH</i></li> <li>c. Chapter 9, Why Did the South Secede? From <i>TWRH</i></li> <li>d. Chapter 10, The Nadir, from Loewen, <i>TWRH</i></li> </ol> </li> </ol> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Reading Response 6</b> <b>Group 1: Tale of Two Cities</b></p>
<b>10/22</b>	Teaching and Learning Civics and Citizenship	<p><i>What kind of civic learning does and should take place in social studies classrooms?</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Chapter 20, High Quality Civic Education, Kahne &amp; Middaugh, from Parker, <i>SST</i>.</li> <li>2. Chapter 21, Action Civics in the Classroom, Levinson, from Parker, <i>SST</i></li> <li>3. Chapter 22, Civic Identity Development in the U.S. History Course, Rubin, from Parker, <i>SST</i>.</li> <li>4. Chapter 14, Building the Civic Potential of Immigrant Youth, Obenchain &amp; Callahan, from Parker, <i>SST</i>.</li> </ol> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Reading Response 7</b> <b>Group 2: Abbott vs. Burke</b></p>
<b>10/29</b>	Constructing our own Interpretations	<p><i>What do we learn from constructing our own interpretations of the past?</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Chapter 4, Why Don’t More History Teacher Engage Students in Interpretation?, Barton &amp; Levstik, from Parker, <i>SST</i>.</li> </ol>

		<p><b>Oral history presentations and transcripts</b>  <b>Group 3: State Standards and Common Core</b></p>
11/5	Teaching the World	<p><i>How do, can and should we teach world history?</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chapter 24, The Two World Histories, Dunn, from Parker, <i>SST</i>.</li> <li>Chapters 5, How and When Did People Get Here, from Loewen, <i>TWRH</i></li> <li>Chapter 6, Why Did Europe Win, from Loewen, <i>TWRH</i></li> <li>Willinsky, J. (1998) Chapter 6, Geographies of difference, from <i>Learning to Divide the World</i> (MN: University of Minnesota Press).</li> </ol> <p><b>Reading Response 8</b>  <b>Group 4: PARCC</b></p>
11/12	Teaching to Change the World	<p><i>How can we teach for global awareness and engagement?</i>  Guest Speaker - Dr. William Fernekes  Human rights Education readings, TBA</p> <p><b>Reading Response 9</b></p>
11/19	Standardization and Assessment	<p><i>How do standards and assessments impact social studies teaching and learning?</i>  Guest Speakers - Edison Social Studies Supervisors</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chapter 2, Expecting Excellence, from Loewen, <i>TWRH</i></li> <li>Chapter 5, High Stakes Testing: How are Social Studies Teachers Responding?, Grant, from Parker, <i>SST</i></li> <li>Chapter 6, Authentic Intellectual Work: Common Standards for Teaching Social Studies, King, et al, from Parker, <i>SST</i></li> </ol> <p><b>Reading Response 10</b></p>
12/3	Learning to Teach Social Studies	<p><i>How do we construct social studies curricula and pedagogies so our students can have meaningful social studies experiences?</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chapter 7, Achieving Authentic Pedagogy: Plan Units, Not Lessons, Saye, from Parker, <i>SST</i>.</li> <li>“What is backward design?” Wiggins and McTighe, <i>Understanding by design</i>.</li> <li>Rubin, (2012) Chapters 1 and 2 (Introduction and Essentially different), <i>Making Citizens</i>.</li> </ol> <p><b>Reading Response 11</b>  <b>Groups 5 Urban School Reform</b></p>
12/9	Last Day	<p><i>What have we learned? What do we still need to know?</i></p> <p><b>Group 6: Immigrant New Jersey</b>  <b>Group 7: Unions</b></p>