

## Sociology of Education

### Course Description:

This course is an advanced level in sociology of education. The course employs a sociological lens to scrutinize educational settings, with a particular focus on social inequality. It aims to provide an overview of the sociology of education literature, covering both historical and contemporary debates regarding roles schools play, the connections between schools and families, transitions from schools to workforces, as well as topics spanning different educational stages.

We will meet for 2 hours and 50 minutes each week. The course will be divided into two parts. In the first half, I will lecture, review assigned readings, and introduce supplemental materials to enrich course discussions. In the second half of the class, we will explore questions, puzzles, and extensions based on the readings. Active participation in class discussions is expected from each student to demonstrate your understanding of the readings and to exchange ideas with your peers.

The class readings reflect my expertise in the sociology of education, drawing heavily from scholars such as Annette Lareau, Paul Willis, Laura Hamilton, Mitch Steven, Jessica Calarco, James Coleman, Lucas, to name a few. Each week I will assign both quantitative and qualitative articles to illustrate how scholars approach the same topic using different methodological strategies. We will explore questions such as:

- What role do external social forces play in influencing educational processes and outcomes?
- How are schools similar and different from one another, and to what extent do school organizations shape our learning and teaching processes?
- How are formal and informal relationships within schools organized, and what consequences does the social organization of schooling have for students' learning, identities, and futures?
- How does the relationship between school and family perpetuate social inequality?
- How are inequalities related to social class, ethnicity, race, gender, and regional spaces manifested in educational settings?

### Course Objectives:

By the end of this class, you will be able to:

- Understand the basic theoretical frameworks and discern the differences between them that are frequently used in the sociology of education.
- Evaluate scholarly research on education.

- Apply course materials to your own research.
- Write a research article that engages with the discussion of the sociology of education.

### **Memos, Assignments, and Grading**

Grading will be based on your participation, assignments, and memos. Regular class attendance and active participation in class discussions are both essential and expected. I expect you to complete the readings. The more you read, the more you will generate your own puzzles. During class discussions, I expect you to speak specifically about the readings, rather than addressing other related topics. Pay attention to several aspects while reading literature: 1) How scholars frame their puzzles 2) How scholars build on existing literature and connect them 3) What answers do scholars provide? Your grade will be based on class participation, memos, peer reviews, and the final paper.

Attendance & Participation 30%

Memos 20%

Class Presentation and Peer Review 10%

Final Paper 40%

#### *Memo*

Each week, you will be required to write memos, which should be uploaded by midnight on Monday. Your memos should summarize the literature, clarify concepts, and highlight the main points you gathered from the literature. Each memo should be a one-page document covering these components. Please ensure your memos are specific and concise.

#### *Final Paper: Review Paper or Research Paper*

In this class, you will write a paper on topics related to the sociology of education. You can choose to write either a review paper or a research paper. Instead of writing a full proposal, my aim is for you to draft your first manuscript in this class, which can be revised for publication later.

1. The review paper will present an in-depth review rather than a broad one. You will focus on a concept, a debate, or unresolved puzzles in the literature. The entire paper will be a literature review, and you are expected to weave the literature together in your unique way. Think of the review paper as something akin to your preliminary exam paper. You are expected to demonstrate your deep understanding of the field.
2. The research paper will cover the fundamental elements of scholarly papers, such as introduction, literature review, method, findings, discussion, and conclusion. I want you to pay particular attention to the research findings, as this is the most crucial section to articulate your empirical findings to engage with the literature.

I will break down the term paper into smaller assignments to help you refine and shape your research topic. These assignments include:

1. **Research Topic:** Formulate your research question and identify the relevant literature that you will reference in the sociology of education field (one page).
2. **Research Outline:** You are expected to prepare an outline of your paper before writing it. In your outline, you should include thesis statements and sub-theses to structure your content. The outline should encompass all analytical sections in your paper.
3. **Final Paper:** Your final paper should be approximately 6000 words, single-spaced, written in a 12-point Times New Roman font.

### *Course Discussion*

I encourage you to actively participate in course discussions. Complete the readings. Listen to your classmates. Pose questions and provide answers.

## **Unit I: What is Sociology of Education, and Why Do We Need It?**

### **Week 1 Meet and Greet, Course Introduction**

\*Read the syllabus.

### **Week 2 Introduction to Sociology of Education**

Mehta, Jal, and Scott Davies. 2018. *Education in a new society: renewing the sociology of education*. Chicago; The University of Chicago Press. Introduction, Epilogue.

Barbara Schneider, "Sociology of Education: An Overview of the Field at the Turn of the Twenty-First Century". Pp. 193-226 in Maureen T. Hallinan et al., *Stability and Change in American Education: Structure, Process, and Outcomes*. Clinton Corners, N.Y.: Eliot Werner Publications, 2003

### **Week 3 Theoretical Perspectives**

\*TBD

## **Unit II: School and Socialization**

### **Week 4 Schooling and Socialization**

Bidwell, Charles E. 2001. "Analyzing Schools as Organizations: Long-Term Permanence and Short-Term Change." *Sociology of Education* 74:100-14.

Apple, M. W., & King, N. R. (1977). What Do Schools Teach? *Curriculum Inquiry*, 6(4), 341–358. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1179656>

Harvey, Peter Francis. 2022. "“Make Sure You Look Someone in the Eye”: Socialization and Classed Comportment in Two Elementary Schools." *American Journal of Sociology* 127(5):1417-59.

Supplemental:

Arum, Richard, Irene R. Beattie, and Karly Ford. 2015. *The structure of schooling: readings in the sociology of education*. Los Angeles: SAGE Publications, Inc.

Calarco, Jessica McCrory. 2014. "Coached for the Classroom: Parents’ Cultural Transmission and Children’s Reproduction of Educational Inequalities." *American Sociological Review* 79(5):1015-37.

### **Week 5 Tracking, Sorting, and Detracking**

Tyson, Karolyn. 2011. *Integration interrupted: tracking, black students, and acting White after Brown*. New York: Oxford University Press. Chapter TBD

Bowles, Samuel, and Herbert Gintis. 1976. *Schooling in capitalist America : educational reform and the contradictions of economic life*. New York: Basic Books. Chapter2

### **Week 6 Forms of Capital and Transmission of Advantages**

Bourdieu, Pierre. 1986. "The forms of capital." Pp. 241-58 in *Handbook of theory and research for the sociology of education*, edited by J Richardson. CT: Greenwood.

Lamont, Michele, and Annette Lareau. 1988. "Cultural capital: Allusions, gaps and glissandos in recent theoretical developments." *Sociological theory* 6(2):153-68.

Portes, Alejandro. 1998. "Social capital: Its origins and applications in modern sociology." *Annual Review of Sociology* 24(1):1-24.

Small, Mario Luis. 2017. *Someone to talk to*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Supplementary:

Downey, Douglas B., and Dennis J. Condron. 2016. "Fifty Years since the Coleman Report." *Sociology of Education* 89(3):207-20.

Burt, Ronald S. 2005. *Brokerage and closure: An introduction to social capital*: Oxford university press.

Portes, Alejandro. 2014. "Downsides of social capital." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America* 111(52):18407-08.

### **Week9: Cultural and Inequality**

Calarco, Jessica McCrory. 2018. *Negotiating opportunities: how the middle class secures advantages in school*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

## **Unit III: Educational Transitions and Higher Education**

### **Week 9 Postsecondary Transitions**

Grodsky, Eric, and Erika Jackson. 2009. "Social stratification in higher education." *Teachers college record* 111(10):2347-84.

Lucas, Samuel R. 2001. "Effectively Maintained Inequality: Education Transitions, Track Mobility, and Social Background Effects." *American Journal of Sociology* 106(6):1642-90.

Supplementary:

Gerber, Theodore P., and Sin Yi Cheung. 2008. "Horizontal Stratification in Postsecondary Education: Forms, Explanations, and Implications." *Annual Review of Sociology* 34(1):299-318.

Alon, S., and M. Tienda. 2007. "Diversity, opportunity, and the shifting meritocracy in higher education." *American Sociological Review* 72(4):487-511.

### **Week 10 Inequality in College**

Armstrong, Elizabeth A., and Laura T. Hamilton. 2013. *Paying for the party: how college maintains inequality*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press. Introduction, Ch5-8.

Abraham, Jack Anthony 2019. *The privileged poor: how elite colleges are failing disadvantaged students*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.

Supplementary:

Hamilton, Laura, Josipa Roksa, and Kelly Nielsen. 2018. "Providing a "Leg Up": Parental Involvement and Opportunity Hoarding in College." *Sociology of Education* 91(2):111-31.

### **Week 11: Universities as Organization**

Stevens, Mitchell L. 2007. *Creating a class: college admissions and the education of elites*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

Warikoo, Natasha Kumar. 2016. *The diversity bargain: and other dilemmas of race, admissions, and meritocracy at elite universities*. Chicago; London: The University of Chicago Press.

#### **Unit IV: School to Workforces**

##### **Week 12 Credential, Signaling, and Matching**

Rivera, Lauren A. 2012. "Hiring as Cultural Matching." *American Sociological Review* 77(6):999-1022.

Bills, D. B. 2003. "Credentials, signals, and screens: Explaining the relationship between schooling and job assignment." *Review of Educational Research* 73(4):441-69.

##### **Week 13 From School to Workforce**

Becker, Howard Saul. 1961. *Boys in white: student culture in medical school*. New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Books.[\*May subject to change]

#### **Unit X: Categorical Inequality**

##### **Week 14 Categorical Inequality**

Tyson, Karolyn, William Darity, and Domini R. Castellino. 2005. "It's Not "A Black Thing": Understanding the Burden of Acting White and Other Dilemmas of High Achievement." *American Sociological Review* 70(4):582-605.

##### **Week 15: Publishing Outlets and Presentation Styles**

I plan to invite speakers who have been published in prestigious international educational journals such as the *Sociology of Education*, *Comparative Education Review*, *AERJ*, *AJS & ASR*, and *Higher Education*. These guest lecturers will provide invaluable insights into the publishing world. The format could include individual presentations or a virtual panel discussion, focusing on effective strategies for publishing in these flagship journals.