

SOCIOLOGY 203: EDUCATION

“The purpose of education, finally, is to create in a person the ability to look at the world for himself, to make his own decisions, to say to himself that this is black or this is white, to decide for himself whether there is a God in heaven or not. To ask questions of the universe, and then learn to live with those questions, is the way he achieves his own identity. But no society is really anxious to have that kind of person around. What societies really, ideally, want is a citizenry which will simply obey the rules of society. If a society succeeds in this, that society is about to perish.”

-James Baldwin

The aim of this course is to provide an overview of sociological perspectives on the educational structure in the United States, patterns of educational attainment, and education policy. Most of our attention will focus on the United States, although we will make some comparisons to educational systems abroad. Through readings, lecture, and class discussion, we will analyze the goals and outcomes of schooling at the individual and institutional level.

After completing this course, you will have acquired the following skills:

- Have a basic understanding of the Sociology of Education subfield. By the end of the course, you should have a good sense of the primary questions asked by sociologists of education and the primary theoretical frameworks used to answer those questions.
- An ability to use theory to critically evaluate the educational structure and patterns of student outcomes.
- An ability to express, both orally and in writing, your personal thoughts related to the subject matter.

Required Materials

Arum, Richard, Irene R. Beattie, and Karly Ford. 2014. *The Structure of Schooling: Readings in the Sociology of Education* (3rd ed). Thousand Oakes, CA: Pine Forge Press. (ABF)

Khan, Shamus Rahman. 2011. *Privilege: The Making of an Adolescent Elite at St. Paul's School*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Other readings will be available through the course web page on Blackboard. These are marked as (BB) on the course schedule.

Grading and Evaluation

Your course grade is based upon in-class attendance and participation, reading group performance, two exams, and a final paper. Brief descriptions of each component of your grade are outlined below.

- 1) **Class attendance and participation:** The success of this class depends on the quality of our discussions—this is not a lecture class. You should be prepared to bring your insight and analysis to bear on the readings every day. *Missing class and being late to class will count against your grade.*

- 2) **Reading groups:** At the beginning of the semester, students will be assigned to reading groups with 5-6 members each. Groups will meet once a week at the beginning of class to discuss the reading assigned for that day. At these meetings, each of five roles will be rotated: discussion leader, passage master, creative connector, policy analyst, and reporter. When performing one of the first four roles, students will be responsible for uploading materials in preparation for class by the end of the day on the day before the reading group meets. Reporters will upload their materials by the next day at noon. Specific instructions for each role will be disseminated and discussed in class on Thursday, September 10th. Although the success or failure of these reading groups depends on the thoughtful participation of every group member, evaluations will be performed on an individual basis.

- 3) **Exams:** We will have one midterm exam covering the first half of class material and a comprehensive final exam. Exams must be taken during the class in which it is scheduled on the syllabus. If an emergency arises, notification along with documentation must be provided in order for the student to be allowed to sit for the exam at a later time; otherwise the exam will be graded as a “0”.

- 4) **Final paper:** This will be a 10-12 page research paper on a topic of your choice. Detailed information about this assignment will be disseminated in the first few weeks of class. A draft of the paper is due November 19, and will be worth 5% of your final grade. The term paper is due by 12 pm on Friday, December 18th. You must turn in one hard copy of the paper and one electronic copy. Late papers will be docked one letter grade per day late.

Grading summary

Attendance and class participation	5%
Reading groups/responses	15%
Midterm (10/26)	20%
Final exam (12/14)	25%
Final paper (due 12/18)	30%
Draft of final paper (due 11/19)	5%
Total	100%

Rules of the road

1. We start and end class on time
2. Silence your cell phones and store them out of sight during class
3. Be respectful of others. Refrain from side conversations and distracting behavior.
4. Check your email account regularly
5. Check Blackboard regularly

Academic Integrity

Hunter College regards acts of academic dishonesty (e.g., plagiarism, cheating on examinations, obtaining unfair advantage, and falsification of records and official documents) as serious offenses against the values of intellectual honesty. The College is committed to enforcing the CUNY Policy on Academic Integrity and will pursue cases of academic dishonesty according to the Hunter College Academic Integrity Procedures.

Classroom Climate

In this class, we will discuss controversial topics. Please keep in mind that the student body is diverse and refrain from making assumptions about who is or is not around you. We all have opinions, and it is okay to respectfully disagree with other people's comments. It is also okay to engage in passionate discussion. It is not acceptable to engage in actions that are hostile, derogatory, and/or disrespectful.

AccessABILITY

In compliance with the American Disability Act of 1990 (ADA) and with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Hunter College is committed to ensuring educational parity and accommodations for all students with documented disabilities and/or medical conditions. It is recommended that all students with documented disabilities (Emotional, Medical, Physical, and/or Learning) consult the Office of AccessABILITY, located in Room E1214B, to secure necessary academic accommodations. For further information and assistance, please call: (212) 772- 4857 or (212) 650-3230.

Course Outline

Th (8/27) Introduction to the course

Theoretical and Historical Perspectives

M (8/31) Lauen and Tyson, "Perspectives from the Disciplines" (BB)
Mills, "The Sociological Imagination. Chapter 1: The Promise" (BB)

Th (9/3) Weber, "The 'Rationalization' of Education and Training" (ABF pp. 14-16)
Sorokin, "Social and Cultural Mobility" (ABF pp. 17-20)

M (9/7) NO CLASS—Labor Day

Th (9/10) Turner, "Sponsored and Contest Mobility & the School System" (ABF pp. 21-32)
Haller and Portes, "Status Attainment Process" (ABF pp. 33-41)
Reading group assignments & scheduling

M (9/14) NO CLASS

Th (9/17) Durkheim, "The First Element of Morality: Spirit of Discipline" (ABF pp. 69-76)
Bowles, Gintis, and Meyer, "The Long Shadow of Work" (ABF pp. 101-115)
Reading group meeting

Stratification Between Schools

M (9/21) Coleman et al., "Equality of Educational Opportunity..." (ABF pp. 136-152)

Orfield, Kucsera, and Siegel-Hawley, "E Pluribus...Separation: Deepening Double Segregation for More Students" (ABF pp. 181-222)

Reading group meeting

- Th (9/24) Jencks and Brown, "The Effects of High Schools on Students" (ABF pp. 153-180)
Entwisle, Alexander, and Olson, "The Nature of Schooling" (ABF pp. 223-233)
Topics for final paper due

Stratification Within Schools

- M (9/28) Tyson, "Desegregation without Integration: Tracking, Black Students, and Acting White After Brown" (ABF pp. 234-258)
Oakes, "The Distribution of Knowledge" (ABF pp. 259-267)
Reading group meeting

Human, Cultural, and Social Capital

- Th (10/1) Becker, "Human Capital" (ABF pp. 42-43)
Coleman and Hoffer, "Schools, Families, and Communities" (ABF pp. 60-68)
- M (10/5) Class meets in Hunter College Library (East building), room 114
No reading
- Th (10/8) Lamont and Lareau, "Cultural Capital: Allusions, Gaps, and Glissandos in Recent Theoretical Developments" (ABF pp. 44-59)
Calarco, "'I Need Help!': Social Class and Children's Help-Seeking in Elementary School" (BB)
Reading group meeting
- M (10/12) NO CLASS

Social Class and Race

- Th (10/15) Willis, "Learning to Labor" (ABF pp. 318-335)
Lareau, "Invisible Inequality: Social Class and Childrearing in Black Families and White Families" (ABF pp. 336-355)
Bettie, "Exceptions to the Rule: Upwardly Mobile White and Mexican American High School Girls" (ABF pp. 356-365)
- M (10/19) Fordham and Ogbu, "Black Students' School Success: Coping With the 'Burden of Acting White'" (ABF pp. 366-372)
Tyson, Castellino, and Darity, "It's Not 'a Black Thing': Understanding the Burden of Acting White and Other Dilemmas..." (ABF pp. 373-386)
Carter, "Straddling Boundaries: Identity, Culture, and School" (ABF pp. 387-404)

Reading group meeting

Th (10/22) Perry, “Shades of White: White Kids and Racial Identity...” (ABF pp. 437-453)
Portes and Zhou: “The New Second Generation: Segmented Assimilation and Its Variants” (ABF pp. 454-461)

M (10/26) **Midterm exam**

How to Write a Sociology Paper

Th (10/29) ASA style guide (BB)
Jones, Quinn, & Brown, Writing for Sociology* (BB)
**Skim chapters 1, 2, and 6. Read chapters 3-5*

Gender and Sexuality

M (11/2) Thorne, “Boys and Girls Together...But Mostly Apart” (ABF pp. 462-469)
Pascoe, “Notes on a Sociology of Bullying: Young Men’s Homophobia as Gender Socialization” (ABF pp. 509-519)
Reading group meeting

Th (11/5) López, “Rewriting Race and Gender High School Lessons: Second-Generation Dominicans in New York City” (ABF pp. 481-489)
Ispa-Landa, “Gender, Race, and Justifications for Group Exclusion: Urban Black Students Bussed to Affluent Suburban Schools” (ABF pp. 490-508)

Student Behavior and Adolescent Subculture

M (11/9) Coleman, “The Adolescent Culture” (ABF pp. 523-535)
Ito et al., “Hanging Out, Messing Around, and Geeking Out” (ABF pp. 536-566)
Reading group meeting

Th (11/12) Kimmel and Mahler, “Adolescent Masculinity, Homophobia, and Violence: Random School Shootings, 1982-2001” (ABF pp. 582-597)
Hamilton and Armstrong, “The (Mis)Education of Monica and Karen” (ABF pp. 598-603)

The Organizational Environment

M (11/16) Rosenbaum and Binder, “Do Employers Really Need More Educated Youth?” (ABF pp. 624-633)
Meyer, “The Effects of Education as an Institution” (ABF pp. 634-649)
Brint and Karabel, “Community Colleges & the American...” (ABF pp. 650-659)

Th (11/19) Arum, “Judging School Discipline: A Crisis of Moral Authority” (ABF pp. 660-685)

Stevens, "Creating a Class: College Admissions and the Education of Elites"
(ABF pp. 686-693)
Rough draft of final paper due

Bringing It Together: Elite Schools, Elite Culture

M (11/23) Khan, "Privilege: The Making of an Adolescent Elite at St. Paul's School," pp. 1-113
Reading group meeting

Th (11/26) NO CLASS

M (11/30) Khan, "Privilege: The Making of an Adolescent Elite at St. Paul's School," pp. 114-199
Reading group meeting

Education Policy and School Reform

Th (12/3) Tyack and Tobin, "The "Grammar" of Schooling: Why Has It Been So Hard to Change?" (BB)

M (12/7) Portes, "English-Only Triumphs, But the Costs Are High" (ABF pp. 728-732)
Jennings, "School Choice or Schools' Choice?: Managing in an Era of Accountability" (ABF pp. 733-755)
Reading group meeting

Th (12/10) Roksa and Arum, "The State of Undergraduate Learning" (ABF pp. 756-762)

M (12/14) **Final Exam**

Final paper due: Friday, December 18, 2015 at noon