



## **Education Policy/ Sociology 648: Sociology of Education**

**Credits:** 3

**Canvas Course URL:** <https://canvas.wisc.edu/courses/107861>

### **Course Designations and Attributes**

Breadth - Social Science

Level – Advanced

L&S Credit - Counts as Liberal Arts and Science credit in L&S

Grad 50% - Counts toward 50% graduate coursework requirement

### **Meeting Time and Location**

Wednesdays 2:25-5:25

Social Sciences 4308

**Instructional Mode:** All face-to-face

**Specify how Credit Hours are met by the Course:** Traditional Carnegie Definition

### **Requisites**

Intro Soc course (C&E Soc 140, [SOC 181](#), C&E Soc 210, or C&E Soc 211) and C&E Soc 360, or declared in any School of Education program

### **INSTRUCTOR**

**Professor Jordan Conwell**

E-mail: [jaconwell@wisc.edu](mailto:jaconwell@wisc.edu)

Office: 235A Education Building

Office hours: Tuesdays, 2-4 p.m. (all by appointment; sign up at <http://conwell.youcanbook.me>)

### **OFFICIAL COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Educational institutions as social systems; role relationships, community contexts, relevant values and ideals, stratification, mobility, and recruitment to varied educational organizations, comparative educational systems

### **EXPANDED COURSE DESCRIPTION (UNOFFICIAL)**

This course uses a sociological lens to examine American schools and schooling, with a particular focus on social inequality and how class, race, and gender intersect in the experiences of students. In our focus on inequality in U.S. education, we will examine how schools and schooling relate to broader social structures, institutions, and practices. We will ask such questions as:

- What role do social forces outside of the educational system play in influencing educational processes (such as student learning) and outcomes (such as student achievement and advantage/disadvantage)?
- How are formal and informal relationships organized within schools, and what consequences for students' learning, identities, and futures does the social organization of schooling have?
- To what extent, and in what ways, do schools promote equal opportunity, and to what extent, and in what ways, do schools reproduce prevailing patterns of power, privilege, and hierarchy?
- How are inequalities related to social class, ethnicity, race, gender, and sexual orientation manifested in schools?

## **LEARNING OUTCOMES**

By the end of this course you will be able to:

- Articulate the relationship between education and social inequality along various dimensions;
- Apply critical thinking skills to your understanding of educational institutions and individual educational experiences;
- Read and evaluate scholarly research on education; and
- Effectively communicate what you learned about the sociology of education both orally and in writing.

## **GRADING**

Course grades will be assigned based on the University grading system (<https://grad.wisc.edu/documents/grading-system/>). Grades are not curved. While undergraduate and graduate students will complete different assessments (see below), the weighting of the grades will be the same for all students.

Attendance: 10%

In-Class Participation, Including Group Presentations: 10%

Midterm Examination: 35%

Final Examination: 45%

### *Attendance and Participation*

You are expected to attend every class session. I will take attendance at the beginning of each class. Please let me know within the first two weeks of the semester if you will be absent for

religious observances or if the due date for an assignment (see below) conflicts with a religious observance. ***Per university policy, absences for religious observances will be excused, and I will make accommodations for due dates that conflict with religious observances.***

For an absence other than a religious observance to be excused, I will need notification in writing from the relevant University personnel (e.g., coach or authorized athletic department personnel, dean, university health service, record of in-patient hospital admission, proof of mandatory military service obligation, etc.). ***Other than when it is informing me of a religious observance, e-mail or in-person notification from you, the student, will generally not be sufficient to excuse an absence. I also do not consider activities related to Greek life to be University-sanctioned, unless, prior to the event, I receive written notification from University personnel that you are excused from class in order to participate in said event.*** I understand that emergencies do happen, and these will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis. Unexcused absences will have a negative effect on your final grade (see above). You are responsible for acquiring notes and other materials for missed classes.

Please be on time and be ready to discuss the readings at the start of class. This means having the texts for that day in front of you, as well as your notes.

Participation will be assessed according to the following:

- Doing the reading
- Coming to class prepared to discuss the material in terms of your insights and questions. (This includes bringing the readings to class, as well as your notes.)
- Being respectful of your peers' feelings and ideas
- Listening carefully and responding thoughtfully
- Contributing to the dialogue (in small and large group discussions, as well as in group presentations) without excessive dominance or persistent silence
- Engaging critically with the material. This includes:
  - making connections between the text and other course readings or themes, including from other weeks;
  - connecting coursework from other classes, current events, or your own educational experiences; and
  - as you see fit, constructively and respectfully disagreeing with points of view presented by the instructor, authors of assigned readings, or your classmates.

## **REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS**

DiPrete, Thomas A. and Claudia Buchmann. 2013. *The Rise of Women: The Growing Gender Gap in Education and What It Means for American Schools*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Lareau, Annette. 2003. *Unequal Childhoods: Class, Race, and Family Life*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Lewis, Amanda E. and John B. Diamond. 2015. *Despite the Best Intentions: How Racial Inequality Thrives in Good Schools*. New York: Oxford University Press.

## **EXAMS, QUIZZES, PAPERS & OTHER MAJOR GRADED WORK**

Both undergraduate and graduate students will be assessed via 1) a midterm examination and 2) a final examination. The exams will cover cumulative material up to that point. Undergraduate and graduate students will take different levels of the exams. Both examinations will be take-home and open-everything (books, notes, outside references). The dates on which the exams will be distributed and on which they will be due are listed below.

Prior to or on the distribution dates, I will post onto the course Canvas page formatted Microsoft Word documents that contain the exam questions. Students will download the relevant version of the exam (undergraduate or graduate), type their responses into the formatted document, print the document, and turn it in.

All exams must be submitted in hard copy form – no exceptions. Exams should be turned into Dr. Conwell's mailbox in room 235 of the Education Building. Exams should be printed on white paper, double-sided, stapled, and retain the formatting with which students downloaded them from Canvas (12-point Times New Roman font, one-inch margins on all sides, page numbers bottom and centered, vertical page orientation, no marginal comments or tracked changes).

All citations (in-text and in reference list) must be in American Sociological Association (ASA) format (<https://guides.tricolib.brynmawr.edu/c.php?g=285714&p=1902489>). Please also follow ASA format regarding other grammatical and stylistic conventions, particularly for, but not limited to: bold text, underlining, italics, and numbers.

Late assignments will have their grades reduced by 10 percentage points for each day late. Since the due date for the final examination is after the official end of the final exam period, Dr. Conwell reserves the right to levy a larger penalty on late final examinations or to not accept them.

## **OTHER COURSE INFORMATION**

On December 5<sup>th</sup>, in lieu of class meeting in the afternoon, students will attend the sociologist of education Dr. Eve Ewing's public event in Madison that evening. Details of the event are TBD.

Students who have a *University-sanctioned* conflict that evening will attend one of the other events surrounding her visit, during the day of December 5th. Details of those events are also TBD.

Students who have *University-sanctioned* conflicts for all events surrounding Dr. Ewing's visit should inform Dr. Conwell of this circumstance at least two weeks prior to the events. The

student and Dr. Conwell will mutually agree to an alternative means of completing this course requirement.

## **RULES, RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES**

- See the Guide's [Rules, Rights and Responsibilities](#)

## **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

By enrolling in this course, each student assumes the responsibilities of an active participant in UW-Madison's community of scholars in which everyone's academic work and behavior are held to the highest academic integrity standards. Academic misconduct compromises the integrity of the university. Cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, and helping others commit these acts are examples of academic misconduct, which can result in disciplinary action. This includes but is not limited to failure on the assignment/course, disciplinary probation, or suspension. Substantial or repeated cases of misconduct will be forwarded to the Office of Student Conduct & Community Standards for additional review. For more information, refer to [studentconduct.wiscweb.wisc.edu/academic-integrity/](http://studentconduct.wiscweb.wisc.edu/academic-integrity/).

## **ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

**McBurney Disability Resource Center syllabus statement:** "The University of Wisconsin-Madison supports the right of all enrolled students to a full and equal educational opportunity. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Wisconsin State Statute (36.12), and UW-Madison policy (Faculty Document 1071) require that students with disabilities be reasonably accommodated in instruction and campus life. Reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities is a shared faculty and student responsibility. Students are expected to inform faculty [me] of their need for instructional accommodations by the end of the third week of the semester, or as soon as possible after a disability has been incurred or recognized. Faculty [I], will work either directly with the student [you] or in coordination with the McBurney Center to identify and provide reasonable instructional accommodations. Disability information, including instructional accommodations as part of a student's educational record, is confidential and protected under FERPA." <http://mcburney.wisc.edu/facstaffother/faculty/syllabus.php>

## **DIVERSITY & INCLUSION**

**Institutional statement on diversity:** "Diversity is a source of strength, creativity, and innovation for UW-Madison. We value the contributions of each person and respect the profound ways their identity, culture, background, experience, status, abilities, and opinion enrich the university community. We commit ourselves to the pursuit of excellence in teaching, research, outreach, and diversity as inextricably linked goals.

The University of Wisconsin-Madison fulfills its public mission by creating a welcoming and inclusive community for people from every background – people who as students, faculty, and staff serve Wisconsin and the world.” <https://diversity.wisc.edu/>

## **COURSE READINGS**

Course readings (other than those in required texts) will be made available on the course’s Canvas site. On the left side of the screen, you should see two menus. On the rightmost of these two menus, click on “Files.” The readings are in the folder called “Readings,” which is sub-divided by weeks.

Topics, readings, and dates are subject to announced change by instructor.

\* These readings are recommended for graduate students only (i.e., strongest graduate student responses to exam questions will show, to a reasonable and relevant extent, evidence of engagement with these readings).

+ Excerpts of these texts will be made available on Canvas, but graduate students should strongly consider purchasing the texts for their personal reference libraries.

### **Week 1 (9/5): Meet and Greet**

### **Week 2 (9/12): Puzzles, Points of View, and An Early Study (From Wisconsin!)**

Bronfenbrenner, Urie. 1977. “Toward an Experimental Ecology of Human Development.” *American Psychologist*: 513-531. Read pp. 513-519.

\*Graduate students: read entire article

Landry, Bart. 2007. “The Theory of Intersectional Analysis. Pp. 1-15 in *Race, Gender, and Class: Theory and Methods of Analysis*, edited by Bart Landry. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, Inc.

Shields, Liam, Anne Newman, and Debra Satz. 2017. “Equality of Educational Opportunity.” In *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Summer 2017 Edition), edited by Edward N. Zalta (<https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/equal-ed-opportunity/>).

Sewell, William H., Archie O. Haller, and Murray A. Straus. 1957. “Social Status and Educational and Occupational Aspiration.” *American Sociological Review* 22(1):67-73.

### **Week 3 (9/19): Coleman and (Social) Capital**

Coleman, James S., et al. 1966. *Equality of Educational Opportunity*. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office. Read pp. 1-34.

\*Read pp. 290 (beginning with header for section 3.2) through 325.

Coleman, James S. 1987. "Families and Schools." *Educational Researcher* 13(6):32-38.

Bourdieu Pierre. 1985. "Forms of Capital." In *Handbook of Theory for the Sociology of Education*, edited by John G. Richardson. Santa Barbara, CA: Greenwood Press. Read through second paragraph on p. 243 and then section on "Social Capital.")

Half of students will read:

Horvat, Erin McNamara, Elliot B Weininger, and Annette Lareau. 2003. "From Social Ties to Social Capital: Class Differences in the Relations Between Schools and Parent Networks." *American Educational Research Journal* 40(2):319-351.

Other half of students will read:

Posey, Linn. 2012. "Middle- and Upper-Middle-Class Action for Urban Public Schools: Promise or Paradox?" *Teachers College Record* 114:1-43.

\*Portes, Alejandro. 1998. "Social Capital. Its Origins and Applications in Modern Sociology." *Annual Review of Sociology* 24:1-24.

**Week 4 (9/27): Class and (Cultural) Capital, Part I**

Bourdieu Pierre. 1985. "Forms of Capital." In *Handbook of Theory for the Sociology of Education*, edited by John G. Richardson. Santa Barbara, CA: Greenwood Press. Read section on "Cultural Capital."

Lareau, Annette. 2003. *Unequal Childhoods: Class, Race, and Family Life*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press. Chapters TBD.

\* + Reardon, Sean F. 2011. "The Widening Academic Achievement Gap Between the Rich and the Poor: New Evidence and Possible Explanations." Pp. 91–116 in *Whither Opportunity? Rising Inequality, Schools, and Children's Life Chances*, edited by G. J. Duncan and R. J. Murnane. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

**Week 5 (10/3): Class and (Cultural) Capital, Part II**

Lareau, Annette. 2003. *Unequal Childhoods: Class, Race, and Family Life*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press. Chapters TBD.

Students will be put into groups, and each group will be assigned one of the following:

Bowles, Samuel and Herbert Gintis. 2011. "Beyond the Educational Frontier: The Great American Dream Freeze." Pp. 91-100 in *The Structure of Schooling: Readings in the Sociology of Education*, edited by Richard Arum and Irene R. Beattie. Los Angeles, CA: Sage Publications.

Anyon, Jean. 2006. "Social Class, School Knowledge, and Hidden Curriculum." Pp. 37-45 in *Ideology, Curriculum, and the New Sociology of Education*, edited by Lois Weis, Cameron McCarthy, and Greg Dimitriadis. New York: Routledge.

Collins, Randall. 1971. "Functional and Conflict Theories of Educational Stratification." *American Sociological Review* 36(6):1002-1019.

#### **Week 6 (10/10): The Rise of Women, Part I**

DiPrete, Thomas A. and Claudia Buchmann. 2013. *The Rise of Women: The Growing Gender Gap in Education and What It Means for American Schools*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation. Chapters TBD.

#### ***MIDTERM QUESTIONS DISTRIBUTED***

#### **Week 7 (10/17): The Rise of Women, Part II**

DiPrete, Thomas A. and Claudia Buchmann. 2013. *The Rise of Women: The Growing Gender Gap in Education and What It Means for American Schools*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation. Chapters TBD.

#### **Week 8 (10/24): NO CLASS – MIDTERM DUE BY NOON ON THIS DAY**

#### **Week 9 (10/31): In Other News, During the Rise**

Students will be put into groups, and each group will be assigned one of the following:

Bettie, Julie. 2010. "Exceptions to the Rule: Upwardly Mobile White and Mexican American High School Girls." *Gender & Society* 16(3):403-422.

Morris, Edward W. 2008. "'Rednecks,' 'Rutters,' and 'Rithmetic': Social Class, Masculinity, and Schooling in a Rural Context." *Gender & Society* 22(6):728-751.



Gansen, Heidi M. 2017. "Reproducing (and Disputing) Heteronormativity: Gendered Sexual Socialization in Preschool Classrooms." *Sociology of Education* 90(3):255-272.

Ispa-Landa, Simone. 2013. "Gender, Race, and Justifications for Group Exclusion: Urban Black Students Bussed to Affluent Suburban Schools." *Sociology of Education* 86(3):218-233.

### **Week 10 (11/7): Races and Places, Part I: Do Schools Reproduce Inequality?**

Roscigno, Vincent J. 2000. "Family/ School Inequality and African-American/ Hispanic Achievement." *Social Problems* 47(2):266-290.

Downey, Douglas B., Paul T. Von Hippel, Beckett A. Broh. 2004. "Are Schools the Great Equalizer? Cognitive Inequality during the Summer Months and the School Year." *American Sociological Review* 69(5):613-635.

\*Kao, Grace, and Jennifer S. Thompson. 2003. "Racial and Ethnic Stratification in Educational Achievement and Attainment." *Annual Review of Sociology* 29:417-442.

### **Week 11 (11/14): *Despite the Best Intentions***

Lewis, Amanda E. and John B. Diamond. 2015. *Despite the Best Intentions: How Racial Inequality Thrives in Good Schools*. New York: Oxford University Press.

### **Week 12 (11/21): Race and Places, Part II: Discipline, Perceptions of Criminality, and the School-to-Prison Pipeline**

Gregory, Anne, Russell J. Skiba, and Pedro A. Noguera. 2010. "The Achievement Gap and the Discipline Gap: Two Sides of the Same Coin?" *Educational Researcher* 39(1):59-68.

Wald, Johanna, and Daniel J. Losen. 2003. "Defining and Redirecting a School-to-Prison Pipeline." *New Directions for Youth Development* 99:9-15.

+ Shedd, Carla. 2015. *Unequal City: Race, Schools, and Perceptions of Injustice*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation. Chapters TBD.

\*Galster, George and Partick Sharkey. 2017. "Spatial Foundations of Inequality: A Conceptual Model and Empirical Overview." *RSF: Russell Sage Foundation Journal of the Social Sciences* 3(2):1-33.

### **Week 13 (11/28): Returns to Schooling**

+ Rivera, Lauren. 2015. *Pedigree: How Elite Students Get Elite Jobs*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. Chapters TBD.

Quadlin, Natasha. 2018. "The Mark of a Woman's Record: Gender and Academic Performance in Hiring." *American Sociological Review* 83(2):331-360.

***FINAL EXAM QUESTIONS DISTRIBUTED***

**Week 14 (12/5): Dr. Eve Ewing Visits Madison**

Visit Dr. Ewing's website: <http://eveewing.com>

+Ewing, Eve L. 2018. *Ghosts in the Schoolyard: Racism and School Closings on Chicago's South Side*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press. Chapters TBD for undergraduates.

\*Read entire book (will be available on Canvas)

**Week 15 (12/12): Summa**

Reading TBD.

***FINAL EXAM DUE BY NOON BY FRIDAY, DECEMBER 21<sup>st</sup>.***