Educational Studies 200:
Analyzing Schools
Tues 9:25-10:40am in Seabury 205
Fall 2011 Trinity College

Online assignments and updates:
http://moodle.trincoll.edu

Educational Studies Program:
http://www.trincoll.edu/Academics/Study/EducationalStudies/

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Office hours: T 3-4; W 10:30-12:30; R 11-12:30

Introduction:

analysis (noun, plural analyses; adjective analytical; verb analyze)
1. The separation of a whole into constituents with a view to its examination and interpretation.

This course introduces the study of schooling within an interdisciplinary framework. Drawing upon anthropology and sociology, we investigate the resources, structures, and social contexts that influence student opportunities and unequal outcomes in the United States and other countries. From psychology, we contrast different theories of learning, both in the abstract and in practice. Finally, using philosophical thinking, we investigate how competing educational goals should be resolved in a democratic society. The course also includes a community learning component, where students engage in participant-observation for three hours per week in nearby public elementary and secondary classrooms, and integrate first-hand experiences with discussions of course readings and writing assignments.

How to succeed in this course:
Attend each class session on time, bring relevant readings and notes, and participate regularly in discussions. Take the initiative by asking questions. If you don’t understand something, odds are that other students are puzzled, too. Go ahead and ask.

Make time to talk outside of class with your professors, advisors, and mentors. Email is the best way to ask me a quick question; schedule appointments for longer discussions.

Keep a calendar to manage your time and stay ahead of deadlines for all classes and obligations. (I use Google Calendar, synced between my computer & mobile device.)

If an illness or family emergency interferes with attending class, immediately inform your instructors and inquire about how to compensate for what you have missed.

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The instructor is assisted by TAs to help plan class sessions, facilitate small group discussions, and comment on (but do not grade) written assignments. Make an appointment with any of us to talk about improving your learning in the course.

**How your work will be evaluated:**

Four 4-page analysis papers to integrate theory and practice

- Paper 1: Theories of Learning
- Paper 2: Explaining Educational Inequality
- Paper 3: Teaching for Change
- Paper 4: Curriculum Design Proposal

Ten writing exercises to promote reflective thinking

A) Introduce yourself in letter/email to placement teacher
B) Observation skills in comparing two classroom videos
C) Reflect on first day at placement, with scanned contract
D) Identify and describe a rich example of student learning
E) Brainstorm plausible causes of educational inequality
F) View Puerto Rican Passages video and draw links
G) Reflect on parent-teacher-staff relationships
H) Brainstorm curriculum project ideas
I) Describe tension on individual freedom vs. civic virtue
J) Evaluate your own learning at school placement

Classroom Participant-Observation (evaluated by classroom teacher) =10
Curriculum Project - Oral Presentation (evaluated by coordinators) =10
Curriculum Project – Final Draft (evaluated by instructor) =20
Cumulative Final Exam =10

**NOTE:** Initially, the total number of points equals 110. When calculating the final grade, your lowest 10-point grade will be dropped, resulting in an adjusted total of 100 points.

In this course, outstanding work (90-100%) earns an A, good work (80-89%) earns a B, adequate work (70-79%) earns a C, and unsatisfactory work (69% or below) earns D/F.

Overdue assignments will be penalized 10% for every 12-hour period beyond the deadline, with exceptions granted only for documented medical or family emergencies.

Please notify the instructor during the first week of the course if you require any special accommodations (such as religious observances, learning disabilities, etc.).
**Sociology of the Classroom**

*Question: How do cultural beliefs, social organization, and political contradictions shape teacher-student interactions in the classroom?*

**Tue Sept 6  Introduction to Syllabus and School Placements**

Students will be assigned placements to serve as “participant-observers” with a classroom teacher for at least 8 three-hour sessions during the semester, or the equivalent of 24 total hours. “Participant-observation” is more than quietly watching; it involves active work in the classroom, such as one-on-one tutoring, working with small groups, preparing materials for a classroom project, and in some cases, planning and teaching a brief lesson.

The objectives of participant-observation are:
- To integrate first-hand experience with theoretical readings for analysis papers
- To develop meaningful relationships with students and teachers, and to deepen our understanding of the contexts around urban schooling
- To identify needs & resources, and gain practical experience, for curriculum design

A schedule of mandatory orientation sessions will be announced during the second week of the course. Students must complete a contract and schedule with their classroom teachers, who will evaluate their level of engagement, reliability, and demonstrated effort at the end of the semester.

**Thu Sept 8  Urban Education: Critiques of Hollywood and "The Crisis"**

Read:


Video excerpts in class:

Exercise A: Introduce yourself and your contribution to the classroom in a letter to your assigned teacher. Email to teacher, print copy to hand deliver, and post online by Monday Sept 19th at 6pm

**Tue Sept 13  Closely Observing Classrooms: International Comparisons**

Read:

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Videos to be assigned in class:

Exercise B: Sharpen your observation skills by comparing teacher-student interactions in two assigned classroom videos, due online by Friday Sept 16th at 3pm

**Thu Sept 15**  Contradictions of Reform and the Context of Hartford schools
Read:


Exercise C: Describe the first day at your school placement, draw connections to readings, and post online with a scanned copy of contract by Thur Sept 22nd at 6pm.

**Theories of Learning**
*Question: How do classical and contemporary theorists explain how people learn?*

**Tue Sept 20**  Classical Theory and Behaviorism

Exercise D: Describe a rich example of student learning from your placement, and post online by Tues Sept 27th at 9pm

**Thu Sept 22**  Constructivist Theories: Piaget, Dewey, and Vygotsky
Read:  Phillips and Soltis, *Perspectives on Learning*, chapters 5, 6, and page 98.

Video excerpts in class:
*First Graders Divide 62 by 5* (TC Press, 1999).

**Tue Sept 27**  Constructivist Theories: Bruner
Read: Phillips and Soltis, *Perspectives on Learning*, chapter 7

Assign: Paper #1 on applying learning theory to classroom, due Tue Oct 4 in class
Thu Sept 29  Making Sense of Theories; Special Needs & Second Language Learners
Read:
Phillips and Soltis, *Perspectives on Learning*, page 107-08

Kate McEachern, “Regular Classroom Teachers’ Perceptions of Mainstreaming: One Year After Full-Inclusion.” Senior Research Project, Educational Studies Program, Trinity College, Fall 2006.


**Explaining Educational Inequality**

Question: How do different theories attempt to explain racial, social class, and gender gaps in educational achievement?

Tue Oct 4  Analyzing Achievement Gaps
In class: Standardized test score data from SAT, NAEP, and CMT

Exercise E: Brainstorm plausible causes of inequality, due by Wed Oct 5 at 9pm

Thu Oct 6  School Finance Inequality and the Economics of Education
Read:


In class: Data on education, race, and social class in metropolitan Hartford

Tue Oct 11  Trinity Days  no regularly scheduled classes

Thu Oct 13  Curricular Tracking, Social Capital, and Cultural Capital


Exercise F: View documentary video, *Puerto Rican Passages* (Connecticut Public Television, 1995) and draw links to placement, due online by Monday Oct 17th at 9pm
Tue Oct 18  Cultural Discontinuities and Oppositional Identities
Read:
Lynn A. Vogt et.al., “Explaining School Failure, Producing School Success: Two Cases.”
*Anthropology and Education Quarterly* 18 (December 1987): 276-286.


Assign Paper #2: Applying theories of inequality to placement, due Tues Oct 25 in class

Thu Oct 20  The Social Psychology of Stereotype Threat
Read:


In class: Video excerpt with Claude Steele, *Secrets of the SAT* (PBS Frontline, 1999).
See full interview with Claude Steele at:

Tue Oct 25  Gender Bias in Classrooms

Video in class: *Failing in Fairness* (NBC Dateline, February 8, 1994).

**Teaching for Change with Curriculum Design**

*Question: How can educators challenge inequalities at the school and classroom levels? How can we connect richer learning objectives, activities, and assessment to promote social change?*

Thu Oct 27  Introduction to Curriculum Projects; Cooperative Learning

In class: In class: Curriculum project guidelines; mid-semester course evaluation

Exercise G: Reflect on parent-teacher-staff relationships, due Wed Nov 2nd at 9pm
Tue Nov 1  Multiculturalism in the Classroom


View video before class: Michelle Fine et. al., Off-Track: Classroom Privilege for All (Teachers College Press, 1998).


Assign Paper #3: Justify which school-based change strategies are most or least appropriate for your placement, due in class Tues Nov 8th

Thu Nov 3  Multiculturalism and Family-School Connections


Tue Nov 8  Curriculum Standards and Defining Learning Objectives


summary of Bloom’s Taxonomy http://www.trincoll.edu/depts/educ/resources/bloom.htm

summary of Howard Gardner’s theory of Multiple Intelligences http://www.pbs.org/wnet/gperf/education/ed_mi_overview.html


Exercise H: Brainstorm curriculum project ideas, due Wed Nov 9th at 9pm
Thu Nov 10  Inquiry-Oriented Learning Activities
Read: Sam Wineburg, Daisy Martin, and Chauncey Monte-Sano. *Reading Like a Historian: Teaching Literacy in Middle and High School History Classrooms.* Teachers College Press, 2011, introduction and chapter 1, "Did Pocahontas Rescue John Smith?"


Assign Paper #4: Curriculum Project Proposals, due online Sat Nov 19th at 6pm

Tue Nov 15  Designing Richer Assessments of Learning


Thu Nov 17  Reshaping Teachers’ Work


“Pathways to Teaching” on the Ed Studies website [http://www.trincoll.edu/Academics/Study/EducationalStudies/](http://www.trincoll.edu/Academics/Study/EducationalStudies/)

Mon & Tue Nov 21-22  Appointments to review curriculum project proposals
Date & time & location _________________________

Thu Nov 24  Thanksgiving break -- no class
**Philosophy of Education and the Purpose of Schooling**

*Questions: What is the purpose of education? What is worth learning? How should debates over these issues be resolved in a democratic society?*

**Tue Nov 29**  
Individual Freedom and Civic Virtue in Public Education  
Read: Amy Gutmann, “Democratic Education in Difficult Times.” *Teachers College Record* 92 (Fall 1990): 7-20.  


Exercise I: Describe a tension over individual freedom and civic virtue at your placement (or the It’s Elementary video), and draw a connection to Gutmann. Due by Thu Dec 1st at 9pm.

**Thu Dec 1**  
Curriculum project presentation planning and advice  
Exercise J: Evaluate your own learning at your school placement, post online and bring a printout to discuss in class on Thu Dec 8th

**Tue Dec 6**  
Competing Views on Liberatory/Progressive Education  
Read to prepare for a three-way debate in class:  

**Thu Dec 8**  
In class: Discuss student evaluations of learning at placements; Course wrap-up; Review for final exam

**Dec 6 - 14th**  
Curriculum project presentations TBA  
Presentations, to be evaluated by the Hartford school coordinators, most likely will be scheduled on two afternoons from 4-6pm during the last week of classes or review period. You must attend one of the two sessions, dates TBA.  
_____________________ OR ___________________  

**Fri Dec 16**  
Curriculum Project final paper and presentation due online by 4pm

**Wed Dec 21 at 9am (or earlier during finals week, if class reaches consensus)**  
Final exam, short essay responses