

GOVT 4000.01

The Politics of Unequal Education

Spring Semester 2014

Monday 10:10am - 12:35pm

145 McGraw Hall

Instructor

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White Hall 205

Overview

This course satisfies the Government Department's Senior Seminar requirement. Each week we will discuss various aspects of the U.S. Education system and the political decisions that influence education outcomes. In the final weeks of the course, we will incorporate some international perspectives into our discussions of the politics of unequal education.

Objectives:

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

- describe education conditions and how they vary.
- identify how political decisions influence education outcomes.
- evaluate the causes of education outcomes (both positive and negative).
- discuss controversial issues in a critical and constructive way.

Texts

- Suzanne Mettler. 2014. *Degrees of Inequality: How the Politics of Higher Education Sabotaged the American Dream*

Office Hours

- Wed. 2:00–4:30pm *and by appointment*
- You may sign up for office hours here: <http://www.wejoinin.com/sheets/qcrna>.

Evaluation

Your performance in this class will be assessed as follows:

Class Participation	20%
Synthesis Papers	20%
Reaction Papers	20%
Research Paper	40%

Synthesis Papers

To each class, bring a 1 to 2 page (double spaced) paper that synthesizes the readings. The paper needs a thesis statement and the readings should support the thesis statement.

Reaction Papers

Two reaction papers are due during the semester. These papers are 5 to 7 pages long (double spaced). The papers should make a novel argument based on the previous weeks' readings. This paper may largely relate to a single week or multiple weeks.

Research Paper

The research paper is a 15 to 20 page paper (double spaced) on any topic of your choosing that relates to the course. We will discuss details in the coming weeks.

Course Outline

Complete the day's reading before coming to class. Readings followed by (BB) are available on blackboard. I will assign additional readings throughout the course.

- Week 2
 - Mon. 1/27: Class Introduction
- Week 3
 - Mon. 2/3: Is “Unequal Education” a fair characterization?
 - * Bring/email two additional readings about unequal or equal education in the U.S.
 - * Rebecca Strauss. 2013. *NYT* “Schooling Ourselves in an Unequal America” (BB).
 - * Sean Reardon. 2013. *Educational Leadership*. “The Widening Income Achievement Gap.” (BB).

- * Julia Ryan. 2013. *The Atlantic*. “American Education Isn’t Mediocre–It’s Deeply Unequal” (BB).
- * Jonathan Kozol 2005. *The Shame of the Nation*: Introduction, Chapter 2, and Chapter 10. (BB).
- * Children’s Defense Fund. 2014. *The State of America’s Children*, p.1–41. (BB)
- * Peter Schrag. 1997. *The Atlantic*. “The Near-Myth of Our Failing Schools” (BB).
- * Paul Fahri. 2012. *American Journalism Review*. “Flunking the Test” (BB).

- Week 4

- Mon. 2/10: Segregated Schools

- * Milliken v. Bradley. 1974. “Syllabus” (p.717-720), “Opinion” (p.721-753), “Marshall Dissent” (p.781-815).
 - FYI: Additional information available here:
http://www.oyez.org/cases/1970-1979/1973/1973_73_434/
- * Baugh, Joyce A. 2011. *The Detroit School Busing Case*, Ch.7.
- * Orr, Marion and Hanes Walton, Jr. 2004. “Life on the Leading Edge of Democratic Reform: Student Perspectives on School Desegregation.”
- * Klarman, Michael J. 2011. “Has the Supreme Court Been More of a Friend or Foe to African Americans?”
- * Orfield, Kucsera, and Siegel-Hawley. 2012. *E Pluribus... Separation: Deepening Double Segregation for More Students*. “Executive Summary” (p.7-12), “Findings” (p.75-77), & “Recommendations” (p.77-82).
- * Rothstein, Richard. 2013. “Why Our Schools Are Segregated.” *Educational Leadership* 70(8): 50-55.
 - *Recommended*
 - Reardon, Sean F., Elena Tej Grewal, Demetra Kalogrides and Erica Greenberg. 2012. “Brown Fades: The End of Court-Ordered School Desegregation and the Resegregation of American Public Schools.” *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management* 31(4): 876-904.
 - Rahdert, Mark. 2004. “Obstacles and Wrong Turns on the Road from Brown: Milliken v. Bradley.” *Temple Political and Civil Rights Law Review*.

- Week 5

- Mon. 2/17: No Class (February Break)

- Week 6

– Mon. 2/24: Charter Schools

- * Frequently Asked Questions About Public, Charter Schools (<http://uncommonschoools.org/faq-what-is-charter-school>).
- * Angrist et al. 2011. *Student Achievement in Massachusetts' Charter Schools*. (Note: Read the equations and statistical tables but do not stress about them.)
- * Orfield and Frankenburg. 2013. *Educational Delusions*, Ch.6 (A Segregating Choice?) and Conclusion (A Theory of Choice with Equity). (Ebook available through Cornell's library: <http://lib.myilibrary.com/Open.aspx?id=417281>).
- * CREDO. 2013. *National Charter School Study: Executive Summary*
- * Simons. 2014. "The Student-Led Backlash Against New Orleans's Charter Schools." *The Atlantic*
- * "A bad deal for D.C. charter schools." *Washington Post*.
- * Find an article or information about a charter school near where you are from. If there are no charter schools from where you are from, find an article or information that might explain why.
 - **Highly Recommended:** *The Lottery* (<http://www.thelotteryfilm.com/>)

• Week 7

– Mon. 3/3: *The First Year*

- * About KIPP (<http://www.kipp.org/about-kipp>)
- * KIPP on 60 Minutes (14 minute video) (<http://www.kipp.org/index.cfm?furl=/press-center/multimedia-archive/kipp-v>)
- * Mathews, Jay. 2009. *Work Hard. Be Nice*. (Select Pages).
- * KIPP: 2012 Report Card (p.1-29 and "Philadelphia, PA"–under Local Results section).
- * Rubinstein, Gary. 2012. "My Visit to KIPP." (<http://garyrubinstein.teachforum.org/2012/11/14/my-visit-to-kipp/>).
- * Kahlenberg, Richard. 2011. "Myths and Realities about KIPP." (<http://voices.washingtonpost.com/answer-sheet/charter-schools/myths-and-re>)
- * Nichols-Barrer et al. 2011. "Student Selection, Attrition, and Replacement in KIPP Middle Schools."
 - **Highly Recommended:** Click on a few of these videos: <http://www.kipp.org/kippvideos> (I especially like, "A Message of Holiday Cheer From our KIPPsters")
 - **Recommended:** Angrist et. al. 2012. "Who Benefits from KIPP."

• Week 8

- Mon. 3/10: KIPP Charter Schools and School Leadership: Marc Mannella, CEO KIPP Philadelphia Charter Schools

- * Reaction Paper 1 Due

- Week 9

- Mon. 3/17: School Funding

- * Sutton, Jeffrey S. 2008. “San Antonio Independent School District v. Rodriguez and Its Aftermath.”
 - * Baker, Bruce D. and Sean P. Corcoran. 2012. “The Stealth Inequalities of School Funding.”
 - * Biddle, Bruce J. and David C. Berliner. 2002. “A Research Synthesis: Unequal School Funding in the United States.”
 - * Fiske, Edward B. and Helen F. Ladd. 2010. “The Dutch Experience with Weighted Student Funding.”
 - * Hanushek, Eric A. and Alfred A. Lindseth. 2009. *Schoolhouses, Courthouses, and Statehouses*. (Chapters 7 & 8).
 - * Guthrie, James W. and Arthur Peng. 2010. “The Phony Funding Crisis.”
 - * Gerhardt, Deborah R. 2014. “Pay Our Teachers or Lose Your Job.”

- Week 10

- Mon. 3/24: Teach For America

- * About TFA: (<http://www.teachforamerica.org/our-organization>).
 - * Jeremy Beard (my TFA Program Director in Baltimore) on his TFA experience: (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KKdFwN1aa0I>).
 - * Kopp, Wendy. 2001. *One Day, All Children*. (Select Pages).
 - * Rubinstein, Gary. 2011. “Why I did TFA, and why you shouldn’t.”
 - * Royal, Camika. 2012. “Please stop using the phrase ‘Achievement Gap’.”
 - * Royal, Camika. 2013. “I Won’t Say ‘Don’t Join Teach For America’ (Yet).”
 - * Strauss, Valerie. 2014. “This took Teach For America 24 years to figure out?”
 - * Matthews, Dylan. 2013. “Teach for America is a deeply divisive program. It also works.”
 - * Students Resisting TFA:
 - About: <http://studentsresistingtfa.k12newsnetwork.com/>
 - Demands: <http://studentsresistingtfa.k12newsnetwork.com/about/our-demand>
 - * *TFA has been in the news a lot lately. I encourage you to seek out additional articles (positive or negative).*

- SPRING BREAK

- Week 11

- Mon. 4/7: Teachers Unions

- * Moe, Terry. *Special Interest: Teachers Unions and America's Public Schools*. (Ch.1, Ch.6, pgs.275–297, & pgs.340–341).
 - * Frymer, Paul. 2012. “Review Symposium: Teachers Unions and Public Education.”
 - * Swenson, Peter A. 2012. “Review Symposium: Teachers Unions and Public Education.”
 - * Find an article about teachers unions from where you went to high school. If there are no local teachers unions, find an article about a national teachers union (any country).

- Week 12

- Mon. 4/14: Higher Education: Suzanne Mettler, Clinton Rossiter Professor of Government

- * Mettler, Suzanne. 2014. *Degrees of Inequality: How the Politics of Higher Education Sabotaged the American Dream* (PURCHASE)
 - Read: Introduction, Ch.1 (Creating Degrees of Inequality), Ch.2 (Diminishing Returns), ch.3 (“Unscrupulous Profiteers”), Ch.6 (How Money Talks), and Ch.7 (Restoring the Public Purposes of Higher Ed)
 - * Higher Education Panel (<http://vimeo.com/20471715>):
 - Watch from 1:00–1:07, which includes a few questions from the moderator (E.J. Dionne) and then responses by the former president of Amherst College (Tony Marx) and the Founder and President of the Posse Foundation (Deborah Bial).
 - * Pan, June. 2011. “[Exit the President: A Commitment to Financial Aid Amidst Recession](#).”
 - * Supiano, Beckie. 2011. “[Only 5 Colleges Do Well by Low-Income Students, Report Says](#).”
 - Recommended: [Priced Out: How the Wrong Financial-Aid Policies Hurt Low-Income Students](#) 2011.
 - * Fyten, David. 2009. “[A Test of Convention](#).”
 - * Fyten, David. 2009. “[Ensuring Accessibility](#).”
 - Recommended: [Huffington Post](#). 2012. “[SAT, ACT No Longer Required For Admission](#)”

- Week 13

- Mon. 4/21: Prison Education: Rob Scott, Executive Director of Cornell's Prison Education Program

- * Pollack, Ricki. 1979. "The ABCs of Prison Education."
 - * Coley, Richard J. and Paul E. Barton. 2006. "Locked Up and Locked Out: An Educational Perspective on the U.S. Prison Population"
 - * Davis, Bozick, Steele, Saunders, & Miles. 2013. "Evaluating the Effectiveness of Correctional Education" (Summary)
 - *Recommended*: Full Rand Report
 - * Keller, Bill. 2014. "College for Criminals."
 - * "Governor Cuomo Launches Initiative to Provide College Classes in New York Prison"
 - * "NY Senators Opposed Expanding College for Inmates"
 - * "Hell No to Attica University: No Free College for Education Convicts"
 - * "In Which Gov. Cuomo's Prison Education Plan Is Demolished By Selfishness" (Daily Kos)
 - * Skorton, David and Glenn Altschuler. 2013. "College Behind Bars: How Educating Prisoners Pays Off."
 - * "In Support of College Education in Prisons." *The Cornell Daily Sun*.
 - * *Familiarize yourself with CPEP*: <http://cpep.cornell.edu/>

- Week 14

- Mon. 4/28: Education Reform in Cuba

- * Kozol, Jonathan. 1978. *Children of the Revolution* (PURCHASE)
 - READ: Preface, Author's Introduction, Part One, Part Three OR Part Four, Epilogue, and Historical Timeline.
 - * Francis, Jenny. 2009. "Cuba tops the class in UN development report." *green left Weekly*.
 - OPTIONAL: "Human Development Report 2013"
 - * Sánchez, Yoani. 2012. "Cuba's Schools Are Failing Its Children."
 - * Sánchez, Yoani. 2011. "When Learning Turns to Dust."
 - OPTIONAL: Yoani Sánchez' Blog

- Week 15

- Mon. 5/5: The Political Economy of Education Outcomes

- * Reaction Paper 2 Due

- Wednesday, May 14, 5:00pm - Research Paper Due

Students with Disabilities

Please give me your Student Disability Services (SDS) accommodation letter early in the semester so that I have adequate time to arrange your approved academic modifications. Meeting with me in my office hours will help ensure confidentiality. If you need an immediate accommodation for equal access, please speak with me after class or send an email message to me and/or SDS at sds.cu@cornell.edu. If the need arises for additional accommodations during the semester, please contact SDS.

Academic Integrity

Each student in this course is expected to abide by the Cornell University Code of Academic Integrity (<http://cuinfo.cornell.edu/Academic/AIC.html>). Any work submitted by a student in this course for academic credit will be the student's own work.

Turnitin Policy

Students agree that by taking this course all required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to Turnitin.com for the detection of plagiarism. All submitted papers will be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers. Use of Turnitin.com service is subject to the Usage Policy posted on the Turnitin.com site.