

**Sociology of Education**  
Sociology 202, Spring 2008  
Hamilton College  
Wednesdays and Fridays 2:30-3:45, Ben 201

*Instructor*

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Office Hours: Drop-in hours Tuesday 1-4; appointments available Tuesday and Thursday 10:30-11:30; Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday after 4; and other times if necessary.

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People have always been educated, but over the past few centuries, formal schooling has changed from the province of elites and clergymen to an institution that boys and girls enter as toddlers and exit as teenagers or adults—in other words, one of the institutions that affects our lives and our society most significantly. This course considers how education as an institution is structured and what its effects are in contemporary, historical, and comparative perspective. It examines education as a stratifying mechanism and how education plays a role in socialization and cultural transmission. A main focus will be the intersection of race, class, gender, and other forms of inequality within the educational system. The course will cover education from the earliest grades through graduate school, as well as contentious contemporary policy issues in education.

This course aims to provide students with the skills to understand the organization, stratification, and culture of educational systems and institutions. By the end of the course, students are expected to have improved their abilities in sociological analysis, developed their sociological writing and primary research skills, come to understand their own place within educational systems and hierarchies, and become able to use their skills and abilities to debate important contemporary policy issues related to education.

*Required Materials:*

Brint, Steven. 2006. *Schools and Societies*. Stanford University Press. (**Brint** on the syllabus).

Cookson, Peter and Caroline Hodges Persell. 1987. *Preparing for Power: America's Elite Boarding Schools*. Basic Books. (**Persell** on the syllabus).

Kozol, Jonathan. 2006. *The Shame of a Nation: The Restoration of Apartheid Schooling in America*. Three Rivers Press. (**Kozol** on the syllabus).

Oakes, Jeannie. 2005. *Keeping Track: How Schools Structure Inequality*. Yale University Press. (**Oakes** on the syllabus).

Sadker, Myra and David Sadker. 1995. *Failing at Fairness: How Our Schools Cheat Girls*. Scribner. (**Sadker** on the syllabus).

Stevens, Mitchell. 2007. *Creating a Class: Admissions and the Education of Elites*. Harvard University Press. (**Stevens** on the syllabus).

All course texts are available on reserve. Additional readings are available on e-reserve; these are indicated with an **E** on the syllabus.

Both the Oakes and Brint texts are available in earlier editions. If you choose to order an earlier edition, you should contact me about pages for reading assignments; you may also need to look into a classmates' book on occasion.

*Course Requirements:*

1. **PARTICIPATION (20%** of the course grade). You are expected to come to class prepared to discuss course readings and concepts and to be respectful of other classmates' contributions. If you are not comfortable speaking in class, then you are required to see me early in the semester to make alternative arrangements, such as email discussions or frequent office hours visits, to fulfill this component of the grade.
2. **CLASSWORK AND HOMEWORK (15%** of the course grade). Over the course of the semester, there will be several small assignments, such as reading quizzes, group assignments, or internet assignments. These assignments will generally not be graded, but I will check that you have completed them and will award points accordingly.
3. **TERM PROJECT (35%** of the course grade). The term project will constitute the largest portion of your course grade. There are two options for the term project:
  - a. **Service learning project.** In this option, which I strongly recommend to all students for whom it is practical, particularly those with an interest in primary or secondary education, inequality, or teaching careers, you will work with Utica public school students for 20 hours over the course of the semester. You will keep a journal of field notes—instructions will be distributed—recording what you experience in the school and connecting your observations to our course readings and discussions, and will write a 3-5 page paper at the conclusion of the semester on your choice of essay questions to be distributed, using your field notes as data.
  - b. **Archival research paper.** This option is recommended only for junior or senior sociology majors, those with a significant interest in the study of higher education, or those for whom the service learning project is logistically impossible. In this option, you will conduct original research into some aspect of Hamilton College using materials at the College archives. If you choose this option, you must meet with me prior to February 1<sup>st</sup> to discuss a topic; complete additional outside reading on archival research methods; turn in periodic assignments (to be distributed) to measure your progress on the paper; and complete a 10-15 page final paper based on your archival research and insights from the course. Depending on your paper topic, you should expect to spend a MINIMUM of 10-20 hours in the archives over the course of the semester.
4. **PERSONAL RESPONSE PAPERS (15%** of the course grade). At three designated points in the semester, you will write 2-3 page papers responding to a designated question in which you use your own life as source material for sociological analysis. These papers must be analytical in nature and include detailed connections to course readings and course concepts in order for you to earn a passing grade.
5. **FINAL (15%** of the course grade). The final assignment for the course will be an open-book final exam. This exam will consist of essay-style questions; later in the semester I will announce whether it will be an open-book in-class exam or a take-home exam.
6. **READING.** You are expected to complete all course readings prior to the class for which they are assigned. If I suspect that students are not completing the reading, I reserve the right to institute unannounced and/or regular reading quizzes and count them towards your final grade.

## Course Schedule

Wednesday, January 23	<i>Introduction to the Course</i>
Friday, January 25	<i>What is education? What are schools?</i> ♦Brint, “Schools as Social Institutions,” (1-30) ♦Brint, “Teaching and Learning in Comparative Perspective” (222-252)
Wednesday, January 30	<i>Historical and Cross-National Comparisons</i> ♦Brint, “Schooling in the Industrialized World,” (31-67) ♦Brint, “Schooling in the Developing World,” (68-96) ♦Sadker, “Through the Back Door” (15-41) ♦Oakes, “Unlocking the Tradition” (15-39)
Friday, February 1	<i>Early Childhood Education</i> ♦Wrigley & Dreby, “Fatalities and the Organization of Child Care in the United States,” <i>American Sociological Review</i> 70:5, 729-757 ♦Entswile & Alexander, “Winter Setback,” <i>American Sociological Review</i> 59:3, 446-460 ♦Alexander <i>et al.</i> , “Lasting Consequences of the Summer Setback,” <i>American Sociological Review</i> 72:2, 167-180
Wednesday, February 6	<i>Elementary Schooling</i> ♦Sadker, “Hidden Lessons” (1-14) ♦Sadker, “Missing in Interaction” (42-76) ♦Sadker, “The Miseducation of Boys” (197-225)
Friday, February 8	<b>Class Cancelled</b> Film Screening TBA—I am Promise
Wednesday, February 13	<i>Elementary Schooling</i> ♦Kozol, pages 1-186
Friday, February 15	<i>Elementary Schooling</i> ♦Kozol, pages 186-321 ***Personal Response Paper #1 Due: Early Grades

- Wednesday, February 20** *Intermediate Schooling*
- ♦Sadker, “The Self-Esteem Slide” (77-98)
  - ♦Hu, “Middle School Manages Distractions of Adolescence;” Gootman, “For Teachers, Middle School is Test of Wills;” Gootman, “Taking Middle Schoolers out of the Middle;” Gootman, “Trying to Find Solutions in Chaotic Middle Schools,” *New York Times*. All four articles are available for download from: [topics.nytimes.com/top/news/education/series/thecriticalyears/](http://topics.nytimes.com/top/news/education/series/thecriticalyears/)
- Friday, February 22** **Class Cancelled**
- Wednesday, February 27** *Schooling and Opportunity*
- ♦Brint, “Schools and Socialization” (132-161)
  - ♦Brint, “Schools and Social Selection: Opportunity” (162-188)
  - ♦Brint, “Schools and Social Selection: Inequality” (189-222)
- Friday, February 29** *Schooling and Opportunity*
- ♦Suzuki, “Asian Americans as ‘Model Minority;” *Change* 21: 13-19 **E**
  - ♦Logan, “Choosing Segregation,” available for download at: [mumford.albany.edu/census/SchoolPop/SPReport/page1.html](http://mumford.albany.edu/census/SchoolPop/SPReport/page1.html)
  - ♦Ainsworth-Darnell & Downey, “Assessing the Oppositional Culture Explanation,” *American Sociological Review* 63: 536-553 **E**
  - ♦Lareau, “Social Class Differences in Family-School Relationships,” *Sociology of Education* 60: 73-85 **E**
- Wednesday, March 5** *The American Dream at Groton* showing
- Friday, March 7** *High School*
- ♦Persell, “Privilege and the Importance of Elite Education” (13-30)
  - ♦Persell, “Rousseau’s Children” (31-48)
  - ♦Persell, “The Chosen Ones” (49-72)
  - ♦Persell, “Cultural Capital” (73-93)
  - ♦Persell, “Academic Climates” (94-107)
- Wednesday, March 12** *High School*
- ♦Sadker, “High School” (99-135)
  - ♦Persell, “The Prep Crucible” (124-145)
  - ♦Persell, “The Student Underlife” (146-168)
  - ♦Oakes, “Introduction” (1-14)
- \*\*\*Personal Response Paper #2 Due: High School
- Friday, March 14** **Class Cancelled**

**Wednesday, April 2**

*Transitions*

- ♦Persell, “The Vital Link,” (167-189)
- ♦Oakes, “Vocational Education” (150-171)
- ♦Damaske, “‘Unmarketable’ Students of Color: Network Building at a Low-Status University Career Center” (Sarah Knapp Damaske ’99)

**Friday, April 4**

*Tracking*

- ♦Oakes, “The Search for Equity” (191-213)
- ♦Oakes, “The Tracking Wars” (214-260)
- ♦The Templeton National Report on Acceleration (available for download at <http://www.nationdeceived.org/NDv1.pdf>; pages 1-53)

**Wednesday, April 9**

*Higher Education*

- ♦Stevens, “A School in a Garden” (5-30)
- ♦Stevens, “Numbers” (31-52)
- ♦Stevens, “Travel” (52-94)
- ♦Stevens, “Sports,” (95-139)
- ♦Dougherty, “The Debate Deepened,” *The Contradictory College* (15-40) E
- ♦Sadker, “Higher Education” (161-185 ONLY)

**Friday, April 11**

*Higher Education*

- ♦Stevens, “Race,” (140-183)
- ♦Stevens, “Decisions,” (184-227)
- ♦Stevens, “Yield,” (228-241)
- ♦Stevens, “The Aristocracy of Merit,” (242-266)

**Wednesday, April 16**

*Guest Lecture:* Ghislain Potriquet, University of Paris  
Language Policy and Education

**Friday, April 18**

**Film Screening**—Shattering the Silences

- ♦Gose, “The Professoriate is Increasingly Diverse, but That Didn’t Happen By Accident;” Bollag, “Gay Professors Face Less Discrimination, but Many Still Fight for Benefits;” and Anderson, “8 Crucial Steps to Increase Diversity;” all from *Chronicle of Higher Education* 09/28/2007

**Wednesday, April 23**

*Post-graduate Education*

- ♦Sadker, “Higher Education,” (185-196 ONLY)
- ♦Granfield, “Making it by Faking It,” *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 20:3, 331-351 E
- ♦Guinier, “Lessons and Challenges of *Becoming Gentlemen*,” *Review of Law and Social Change* 24:7, 1-16 E
- ♦Nyquist, Jody. “The Ph.D.,” *Change*, 34:6, 12-20 E

♦Bousqut. "The Waste Product of Graduate Education." *Social Text* 20:1, 81-104 **E**  
\*\*\*Personal Response Paper #3 Due: College

**Wednesday, April 23**

*Curriculum and Educational Content*

- ♦Brint, "Schools and Cultural Transmission" (97-131)
- ♦Binder, "Introduction to Afrocentrism and Creationism," *Contentious Curricula* (1-28) **E**
- ♦Yamane, "Multiculturalism," *Student Movements for Multiculturalism*, (127-146) **E**
- ♦Oakes, "The Distribution of Knowledge," (61-92)

**Friday, April 25**

*Standardized Testing*

- ♦Steele, "Thin Ice: 'Stereotype Threat' and Black College Students," *Atlantic Monthly* (44-47) **E**
- ♦Sadker, "Test Drive" (126-160)
- ♦Jenks and Phillips, "The Black-White Test Score Gap," pages 1-54 in *The Black-White Test Score Gap*
- ♦Fischer *et al.*, "Understanding Intelligence," pages 22-54 in *Inequality by Design*

**Wednesday, April 30**

*Educational Reforms*

- ♦Brint, "School Reform," (253-282)
- ♦Stevens, "Inside Home Education," *Kingdom of Children*, (10-29) **E**
- ♦Cookson, "The Varieties of School Choice," *School Choice* (38-70) **E**

**Friday, May 2**

*Educational Reforms Continued*

- ♦Bowen & Bok, "Informing the Debate," *The Shape of the River*, (256-274) **E**
  - ♦Sadker, "Different Voices, Different Schools" (226-250)
  - ♦Karen, "No Child Left Behind?," *Sociology of Education* 78: 165-182 **E**
  - ♦Connor, "The Conflict Within," *Disability & Society* 22:1, 63-77 **E**
- \*\*\*Term Paper Due

**Wednesday, May 7**

**Make-Up Day/Special Topics**

**Friday, May 9**

**Final Class/Review Session**

## Course Policies and Resources

### *Attendance and Participation*

You are expected to attend all class meetings. If you must miss class for a legitimate reason, such as illness, a family emergency, religious observance, or required attendance at intercollegiate athletic competition, it is your responsibility to let me know in advance or as soon as possible afterwards. Any time you miss class, you should get notes from another student and you should come see me during my office hours. Repeated absences may result in a grade penalty.

The participation grade in this course is designed to measure the extent to which you are an engaged and active thinker and contributor to the class as a whole. Therefore, students who earn full credit for participation will attend class, contribute to class discussions, and meet with me privately at least once during the semester. Please remember that some of the issues we discuss in this course may be emotional and/or controversial. Respectful course participation means arguing with ideas rather than attacking people. Finally, if you are a person who has difficulty speaking in class, it is your responsibility to find another way to demonstrate your engagement with the material, such as email conversations or coming to office hours more frequently; I also encourage you to go to the Oral Communication Center to work on your skills and confidence so that you can improve your participation.

In addition, all assignments are due at the start of class on the assigned due date. If you can not attend class on the day an assignment is due, please make your best effort to turn it in ahead of time: the assignment must be turned in to my mailbox in the sociology department before noon. If you will be away from campus or have spontaneous printer problems, you may email your paper to me before noon; please save all emailed documents as \*.doc, \*.rtf, \*.html, or \*.pdf files (pay particular attention to this if you use Office 2007, as the default file type for your program is incompatible with campus computers). If you don't know how to do this, instructions are available on the ITS website—just go to <http://www.hamilton.edu/college/its/> and search for “Office 2007”. If you do not receive an email from me stating that I have received and opened your paper, it has not been submitted and will be considered late.

I am always open to reviewing and reconsidering your grade on any written work you complete in this course. If you can't read my handwriting on a comment or if you think I have made a math error, come see me and I am happy to take care of it. If you have a more substantial complaint or dispute, you should write a short memo explaining what you believe to be the problem and give it to me with your graded assignment. I will then review your assignment and your memo. Be aware that you may receive no change in grade or a decrease in grade; grade improvements are not guaranteed. If you have questions about these policies or if you want to discuss any of your assignments before or after they are due, please see me in office hours. In addition, please note that this syllabus is provisional and subject to change at any time.

### *Academic Integrity*

I expect all students to adhere to the Hamilton College Honor Code. All violations will be reported; please be aware that I have caught and penalized many students in the past.

Offenses against academic integrity include, but are not limited to:

- ↳ Submitting work that does not use proper attribution of all sources, whether print, internet, or simply a conversation with a classmate or friend. Proper attribution includes a correctly formatted citation and bibliographic entry every time you use an idea that did not come entirely from your own head, whether you quote directly, paraphrase, or merely draw on a text. All standard citation formats are acceptable in this course (such as MLA, Chicago, APA, etc.) though you need to be internally consistent. For those who are not familiar with a particular citation format, here are two links for the citation format used by the American Sociological Association: [http://www.skidmore.edu/academics/sociology/resources/writing\\_citation.html](http://www.skidmore.edu/academics/sociology/resources/writing_citation.html) and <http://www.calstatela.edu/library/bi/rsalina/asa.styleguide.html>.
- ↳ Copying work from other students or writing papers as a joint effort, unless specifically directed to do so. This does not prohibit you from discussing assignments with your peers, but the product of your work must be your own. In addition, you may not submit papers written for other courses without my prior approval.
- ↳ Purchasing your papers from a web source, hiring someone to write your papers for you, submitting papers written by other individuals, or downloading or copying all or part of your paper from a website. Be aware that it is easier to detect this sort of dishonesty than you might think and many students have been caught.

### *Information Technology*

You are expected to check your email regularly for any notice I may send out. Though I reserve the possibility of using Blackboard on some occasions, I will primarily use the website associated with this course, with which you should familiarize yourself. It contains an updated syllabus, course assignments, question for the analytical response papers, and links to other resources. The website is available at <http://academics.hamilton.edu/sociology/marthur/classes.html>

### *Students with Disabilities*

If you are a person with a physical, neurological, psychological, medical, learning, or other type of disability and will need accommodations of any kind to ensure your success in this course, please come speak with me as soon as possible after the start of the semester so that we can develop an individual plan. For more information about disability student services, contact Allen Harrison in the Dean of Students' office at [aharriso@hamilton.edu](mailto:aharriso@hamilton.edu).

### *Writing Center*

All students are encouraged to make use of the writing center for all of the writing assignments you complete this semester, at any stage in the writing process. Information about the Writing Center's services and hours, along with useful information on writing style and on improving your writing, is available on the Writing Center's website at <http://www.hamilton.edu/writing/>. If English is not your first language, I particularly encourage you to make use of the Writing Center and the ESOL program so that your grade in this course will fully reflect your sociological skills.

### *Support Services*

Some of the issues that we discuss in this course will be troubling. While I am always happy to meet with you in office hours to process emotional as well as intellectual issues raised by the course, there may be times when it is more helpful to speak to someone with training in emotional and mental health. If you feel like you would benefit from such assistance, I encourage you to make an appointment with the Counseling Center at x4340. More information about the Counseling Center's services, staff, and confidentiality policies is available on the Counseling Center's website at [http://www.hamilton.edu/college/counseling\\_center/](http://www.hamilton.edu/college/counseling_center/).

### *Service Learning Support*

Information about the Hamilton College Service Learning Program is available on the Levitt Center website at: [http://www.hamilton.edu/levitt/service\\_learning\\_home.html](http://www.hamilton.edu/levitt/service_learning_home.html); you can also always email Chrystal Pridemore at [cpridemo@hamilton.edu](mailto:cpridemo@hamilton.edu) for information and resources. Our course will be participating in the Inner City Youth Education Project, along with other Hamilton College courses this spring. Students who choose the service learning option will be expected to complete at least 20 hours of service during the course of the semester. Transportation will be provided by according to a set schedule, though you are welcome to use your own transportation if it is available. For more information about the service learning project, please see the project assignment handout, available on the course website.

### *College Archives*

Information about the Hamilton College Archives is available on the library website at: [http://www.hamilton.edu/library/library\\_collections/archives.html](http://www.hamilton.edu/library/library_collections/archives.html). Be sure to familiarize yourself with Archives policies before going to the Archives the first time, especially those about handling and photocopying materials. A research application is also available online; you should be sure to let the Archives staff know when you are coming in and what your research topic will be via email at [AskArch@hamilton.edu](mailto:AskArch@hamilton.edu). The general Archives hours are 9:00-12:00 in the morning Mondays through Fridays, and you should make every effort to schedule your visits to the Archives during those hours. If your schedule absolutely forbids visits during those times, consider choosing the Service Learning project instead, or work with other students in the course to choose consolidated research times that will work for the Archives staff in the afternoons. Be aware that Archives are generally not open during weekend or evening hours. Do remember that I must authorize archival projects in advance, and that you will be expected to complete additional reading on and discussion of archival research techniques before entering the archives. These readings may include Jennifer Platt's 1981 essay, in two parts, "Evidence and Proof in Documentary Research" (*Sociological Review* 29: 31-66); James Mahoney's 2003 chapter "Strategies of Casual Assessment in Comparative Historical Analysis" (pages 337-372 in Mahoney and Rueschemeyer, *Comparative Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences*, Cambridge University Press); and selections from various research methods textbooks. Exact assignments will be made in early February.