

Sociology of Education

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Office Hours:
8-10 TR;
Lunch @ JRC, by arrangement;
or by appointment

Education seems to be in America the only commodity of which the customer tries to get as little he can for his money.

- Max Leon Forman

Required Books

in the order we'll read them:

- Stevens, Mitchell. *Creating a Class* (2009 or 2007), ISBN-10: 0674034945
- Attewell, Paul & David E. Lavin. *Passing the Torch* (2009), ISBN-10: 087154038X
- Carter, Prudence. *Keepin' It Real* (2007), ISBN-10: 0195325230
- Delpit, Lisa. *The Skin That We Speak* (2008), ISBN-10: 1595583505
- Rothstein, Richard. *Class and Schools* (2004), ISBN-10: 0807745561

Fall 2014
Grinnell College
4 credits
ARH 305

Aug 21-27, DAILY
10-11:20 & 2-3:20
Aug 29-Oct 17:
MWF 11-11:50 am

So what's this class about?

Welcome.

Educational opportunity has long been considered the lynchpin of mobility in the United States, and yet education paradoxically reproduces inequalities across generations. This course explores the sociological study of education, focusing on the crucial question of when and how schooling ameliorates or exacerbates inequalities. Education happens throughout our lifespans and across multiple institutions; in this course, we will focus primarily on *formal schooling* and on the K-16 years.

We will cover the following topics in some depth:

- Stratification, social mobility, and social reproduction

Readings

The core of our daily seminar discussions will be our readings, all of which are "primary texts" - real sociological research on education. Please come to each session having read the assigned material in advance, and ready to discuss. This means taking notes and preparing some questions and/or topics of discussion. Some of our

readings are more difficult than others. You will learn in this class how to read, understand, and respond to sociological journal articles, including quantitative ones, which might feel overwhelming at first. I'll guide you through it.

The journal articles are primarily available online, through the college's subscrip-

- Cultural dynamics of race, class, gender, and language
- Current topics: school choice, reform, testing, and accountability
- Current topics: post-secondary transitions

We will begin with post-secondary transitions (i.e., what happens after high school), by developing and carrying out a research project as a class. This project will let you put your sociological knowledge to work and give you insight in to real educational practices and outcomes.

Much education today is monumentally ineffective. All too often we are giving young people cut flowers when we should be teaching them to grow their own plants.

- John W. Gardner

tions. You will learn—quickly!—how to find and access these articles. Please ask immediately if you have trouble. Please also get your readings well in advance; a network outage or other computer problem is not a legitimate excuse for not having done the reading on time.

Assignments & Grading

Papers

You will write 3 short papers in this class:

1. A brief research note exploring the demographics of your own high school (300-600 words).
2. An educational autobiography, in which you analyze your own educational path in light of the sociological knowledge you have gained in the classroom. This will build on your demographics research note (1500-1800 words).
3. A research-based position paper that engages a controversial contemporary issue in education. You'll do a literature review and use the evidence you discover to make an argument about the contemporary educational issue (such as, Is single-sex education better? Do charter schools work?). You will work closely with me as you choose your topic, do your literature review, and develop your argument. You will do this assignment in multiple stages and drafts (final 1500-1800 words).

I am always happy to read drafts during office hours, well in advance of deadlines.

They say that we are better educated than our parents' generation. What they mean is that we go to school longer. They are not the same thing.

- Douglas Yates

Attendance & Participation

Attendance is required. Learning is about the interaction of minds and ideas in the classroom. Especially, since this course is structured around discussion and developing a research project together, it's critical that you attend class to support and receive the support of your group members. You have the option to use, without

penalty or question, **two "personal days"**. You might choose to save these for when you're sick; you might need to use them when you travel for athletics; you might wish to observe religious holidays; you might just want to go sledding or sleep in. You don't even have to tell me which. I suggest choosing carefully;

Educational research

We have the rare and exciting opportunity to continue data collection for an educational research project here in Grinnell this semester. Our class will develop, test, and administer interviews and surveys of the senior class.

As a final project, you will produce a final product that will be presented to the Grinnell College and the Grinnell High School communities. The format of this final project is relatively open; for example, you may choose to write a formal research report; present a poster session of your findings; organize a panel discussion about your experience conducting the research; or some other option. We will discuss these at length together.

Assignments	Points	Due Date
• School Demographics (300-600 words)	5	Aug 25, morning
• Research-based position paper (1500-1800 words)	30, in parts	Topic & Bib: Sept 1 Annotated Bib: Sept 15 Early polished: Sept 22 Final draft: Oct 1
• Educational Autobiography	20	October 17
• Research activities	30, in parts	As needed; see schedule Final project: Dec 1
• "In the news" presentations	5	Twice, per sign-up
• Attendance & participation	10	Continuous
Total	100	

absences above this will be penalized at 3 points per absence. You don't, of course, have to use all of them.

Lively and respectful participation is expected from everyone; if you have concerns about this, please come talk to me for ideas about how to contribute.

Classroom Policies

Classroom Atmosphere.

Be respectful of me, of your classmates, of the College personnel and facilities. This means, at a minimum, turning off your cell phones and minimizing disruptive behavior in class, generally paying attention in class, arriving on time, and staying for the full class period.

Please choose your words carefully. The classroom must be a place in which everyone can participate. This means that every person must feel safe enough to express their opinions without fear of ridicule or intolerance. Remember that in good discussions, people critique ideas and not other people. The more heated the political issue we discuss, the more important it is to keep this in mind. It is normal to be or become emotionally connected to the concepts we discuss, and it is normal to have personal experiences related to those concepts. It is also normal for those experiences to be in conflict with the experiences of others in the room. For example, just as there will likely be someone in class who would prefer abortion not be legal, there will also likely be someone who has had an abortion. It's important to remember this diversity in our discussion so that we maximize, to the extent possible, the vibrancy and respectfulness of our intellectual inquiries.

He who opens a school door,
closes a prison.

- Victor Hugo

Academic Integrity.

Grinnell College takes academic honesty very seriously. Academic dishonesty includes (but is not limited to) such behavior as **quoting** or **paraphrasing** without complete citation, collaborating with others on assignments or exams without the explicit

permission of the instructor, submitting work for more than one course without the instructors' permission, and presenting another's work as your own. Penalties range from a failing grade for the assignment to permanent expulsion from the College,

depending on the severity of the offense. As an instructor, I am **obligated** to report all suspected violations to the Academic Honesty Subcommittee of the Committee on Academic Standing. In other words, as soon as I suspect it, it is entirely out of my hands.

Don't put me, or yourself, in this position. See the [full policy](#) for details. Please ask me if you have any questions.

Reasonable Accommodations.

Late Work. We will have a variety of assignments this term, some of which are highly date-dependent and some of which are not. Our nascent research project, for example, may entail some extremely hard and fast deadlines. I will be flexible where I can, and I entreat of you the same. For regular writing assignments, *I suggest that you begin your papers early enough to accommodate any last-minute emergencies.* As the saying goes, a failure to plan ahead on your part does not constitute an emergency on my part. I DO NOT ACCEPT LATE WORK.

Classroom Accessibility. Please come see me no later than the third class if you have special learning needs. I will work with you to make the classroom and the material accessible. The Academic Resource Centers (<http://www.grinnell.edu/academic/arc>) are fabulous resources for all students.

Unusual circumstances. You might face unusual circumstances that affect your attendance or your work this semester; these might include religious or athletic commitments, health or personal problems, or other things. Please contact me within the first three weeks of the semester if you would like to discuss a specific instance that applies to you. In the case of major emergencies, please talk to me as soon as you're able.

The chief wonder of education is that it does not ruin everybody concerned in it, teachers and taught.

- Henry Brooks Adams (1828-1918) U.S. historian and writer. The Education of Henry Adams.

Contacting me.

The best way to contact me is via **email**: devineau@grinnell.edu. Please read the syllabus thoroughly before emailing me with questions about the course. Don't email me an hour before class starts to ask me questions about the reading or exams; not only will I not have time to respond to you before class, but I will also know you put off the assignment until the last minute. You can expect me to respond to email every afternoon while I'm in my office. (i.e., I might not check email between 5 pm and the start of class the next morning ... plan ahead!)

When you email, please put the name of the course (e.g., "Intro") in the subject heading and include your full name in the email. I don't like to respond to email when I don't know who it's from. I welcome anonymous emails with suggestions, critiques, or comments about the course.

Website. I will post announcements and readings on PWeb; please check it frequently.

Office hours. I have office hours every week, as listed on the first page of this syllabus. Feel free to just drop by or to make an appointment ahead of time; if two or more people show up at the same time, those with appointments will be given priority. If my scheduled office hours conflict with your schedule, email me or see me in class to set up an alternate time. **Mornings** are my writing time; if my door is closed, either I'm engrossed or I'm not in.

Helpful Information

If you are having trouble in class, here are some steps you can take:

- Come to my office hours and talk about it!
- Seek out an ARC that will help with reading, writing, or time management
- Sign up for a Library Lab (one-on-one help)

The **Add/Drop Period** for Spring 2013 Courses ends Friday, February 8 for Regular Full-Semester Courses. Last day to withdraw from a course is Friday, April 5.

Connectivity problems will not be accepted as an excuse for not having the electronically-available reading done. I highly recommend that you save to disk and/or print out the online readings well ahead of time.

I reserve the right to make changes to this syllabus, as I see fit or necessary for the course.

The only thing that interferes with my learning is my education.

- Albert Einstein

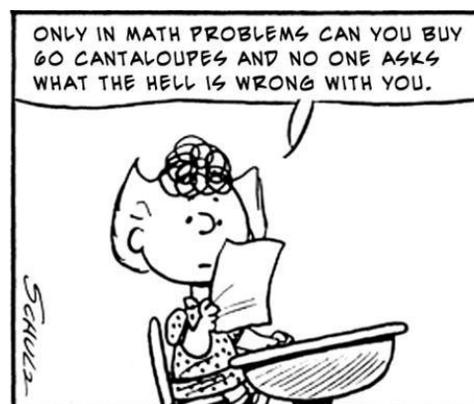
Grading Distribution

• 94 and up	A
• 90-93	A-
• 87-89	B+
• 84-86	B
• 80-83	B-
• 77-79	C+
• 70-76	C
• 60-69	D
• 59 and below	F

Paper formatting

Papers should be formatted in ASA style (see <http://web.grinnell.edu/courses/soc/CitationGuideSpecific.html>), including citations and bibliographic lists.

Papers without page numbers and a word count will not be graded. Your word processor will count the words for you; just put the count in brackets at the end of the paper, like I've done with this item. [53]



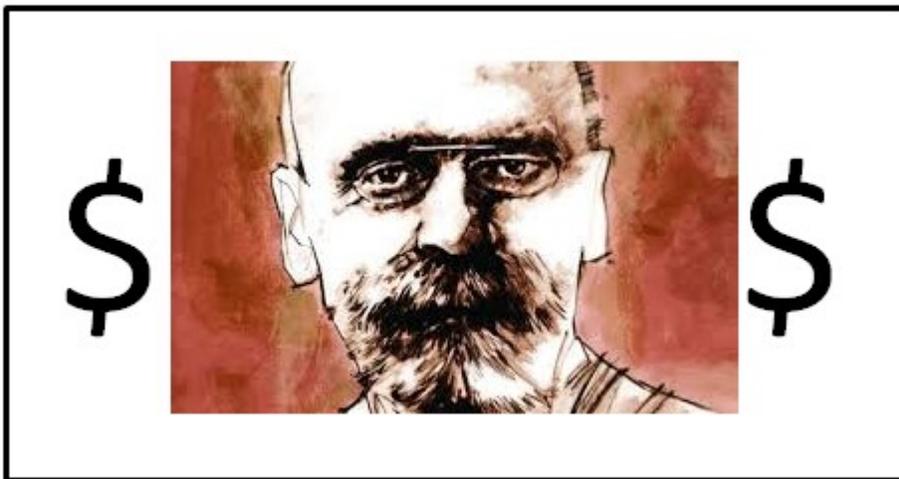
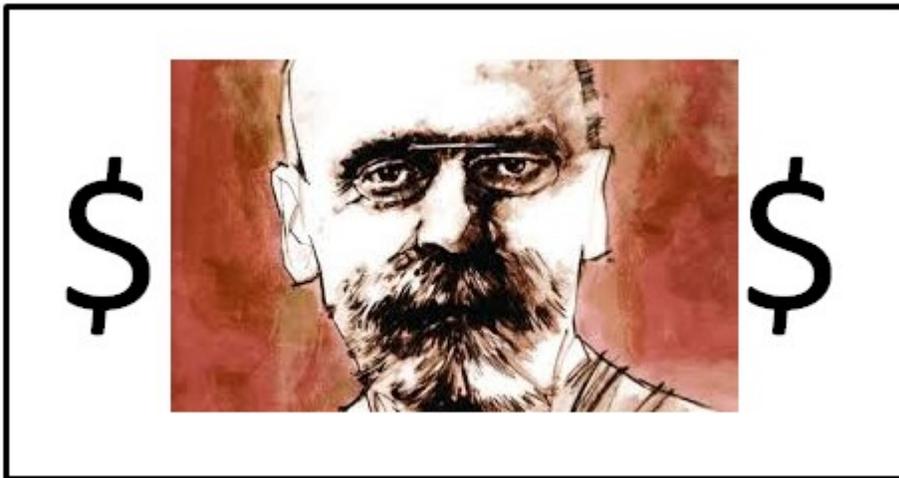
(Found online without attribution)

Durkheim Dollars

I DO NOT ACCEPT LATE WORK.

But sometimes things come up that prevent you from working how you'd intended to work, or writing when you intended to write. Prioritizing and making hard decisions about your time is a learned skill, one you can practice in this class. Namely, you have access to TWO "Durkheim Dollars" to use – or not – as you like. Each gives you one 24 hour extension on a paper, or if saved, ½ extra credit point on your final course grade. You can use them both together, separately, or not at all.

Choose wisely; spending a Durkheim Dollar is the ONLY way to submit a paper late in this class.



To redeem, cut out, write your name, and attach to your late paper.

Day	Date	Reading	Assignments
I. Current topics: Post-secondary transitions			
R	8/21 morning	Clark, Burton R. 1960. "The "Cooling-Out" Function in Higher Education." <i>American Journal of Sociology</i> 65(6): 569-576.	IRB must be complete
R	8/21 afternoon	Domina, Thurston; AnneMarie Conley, and George Farkas. 2011. "The Link between Educational Expectations and Effort in the College-for-all Era." <i>Sociology of Education</i> 84: 93-112.	
F	8/22 morning	Rosenbaum, James E. 2011. "The Complexities of College for All: Beyond Fairy-tale Dreams." <i>Sociology of Education</i> 84:113-117.	
F	8/22 afternoon	Stevens, Mitchell L. 2007. <i>Creating a Class: College Admissions and the Education of Elites</i> . Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. Intro (4p), Ch 1 (25p)	
M	8/25 morning	Stevens, <i>Creating a Class: Ch 8 (25p), Ch 4 (45p), Ch 5 (44p)</i>	School Demographics paper - 5%
M	8/25 afternoon	Stevens, <i>Creating a Class: Ch 6 (44p)</i>	
T	8/26 morning	Devine-Eller, Audrey. Selection TBA.	
T	8/26 afternoon	Devine-Eller, Audrey. Selection TBA.	
II. Stratification, social mobility and social reproduction			
W	8/27 morning	Attewell, Paul A. and David E. Lavin. 2007. <i>Passing the torch : does higher education for the disadvantaged pay off across the generations?. New York: Russell Sage Foundation. Chs 1,2,3 (56p)</i>	
W	8/27 afternoon	Attewell, Ch 7 (32p)	
F	29-Aug	Listen to Geoffrey Canada on NPR's Fresh Air, http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=94576366 (36 minutes) <hr/> Attewell, Ch 8 (16p)	
M	1-Sep	Buchmann, Claudia, Dennis Condron, and Vincent Roscigno. 2010. "Shadow Education, American Style: Test Preparation, the SAT, and College Enrollment." <i>Social Forces</i> 89: 2: 435-461.	Position paper topic and bibliography - 5%
W	3-Sep	Goldrick-Rab 2006. "Following Their Every Move: An Investigation of Social-Class Differences in College Pathways." <i>Sociology of Education</i> 79(January): 61-79.	
F	5-Sep	Downey, Douglas B., Paul T. von Hippel, and Beckett A. Broh. 2004. "Are Schools the Great Equalizer? Cognitive Inequality during the Summer Months and the School Year." <i>American Sociological Review</i> 69: 5: 613-35.	
M	8-Sep	Lareau, Annette. 2002. "Invisible Inequality: Social Class and Childrearing in Black Families and White Families." <i>American Sociological Review</i> 67(5): 747-776.	
W	10-Sep	Bourdieu, Pierre and Jean-Claude Passeron. 1990 [1977]. <i>Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture</i> . London: Sage Publications. Selections.	

Day	Date	Reading	Assignments
III. Cultural dynamics of race, class, gender, and language in education			
F	12-Sep	Fine, Michelle. 1991. <i>Framing dropouts: notes on the politics of an urban public high school</i> . Albany, N.Y: State University of New York Press. Selections TBA.	
M	15-Sep	Gaztambide-Fernández, Rubén. 2011. "Bullshit as resistance: justifying unearned privilege among students at an elite boarding school." <i>International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education</i> 24: 5: 581-6. <hr/> Carter, Prudence. 2005. <i>Keepin' It Real: School Success Beyond Black and White</i> . Oxford: Oxford University Press. Preface & Intro (24 pgs).	Position paper annotated bibliography - 10%
W	17-Sep	Carter, Ch 1 & 2 (58 pgs).	
F	19-Sep	Carter, Ch 5 & 6 (38 pgs).	
M	22-Sep	Delpit, Lisa and Joanne Kilgour Dowdy, eds. 2002. <i>The Skin that We Speak: Thoughts on Language and Culture in the Classroom</i> . New York: The New Press. Ch 8.	Position paper first draft - 10%
W	24-Sep	Delpit & Dowdy Ch 9	
F	26-Sep	Delpit & Dowdy Ch TBA	
M	29-Sep	Stevens, Mitchell L. 2008. "Culture & Education." <i>The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science</i> 619:97-113.	
W	1-Oct	Extra Day	Position paper revised draft - 5%
IV. Current topics: school choice, reform, testing, and accountability			
F	3-Oct	Booher-Jennings, Jennifer. 2005. "Below the Bubble: "Educational Triage" and the Texas Accountability System." <i>American Educational Research Journal</i> 42: 2: 231-68. <hr/> Oakes, Jeannie. 2008. "Keeping Track: Structuring Equality and Inequality in an Era of Accountability." <i>Teachers College Record</i> 110(3): 700-712.	
M	6-Oct	Attewell, Paul. "The Winner-Take-All High School: Organizational Adaptations to Educational Stratification." <i>Sociology of Education</i> 74(4):267-295.	
W	8-Oct	Rothstein, Richard. 2004. <i>Class and Schools: Using social, economic, and educational reform to close the black-white achievement gap</i> . Washington, DC: Economic Policy Institute. Intro, Ch 2, 5, Conclusion (36p).	
F	10-Oct	Rothstein, Ch 5 & Conclusion (21p).	
M	13-Oct	Film in class: <i>Waiting for Superman</i> (2010), 111 mins (prepare to stay 10 mins late)	
W	15-Oct	Film in class: <i>Waiting for Superman</i> (2010), 111 mins	
F	17-Oct	Before class: Watch <i>The Inconvenient Truth</i> behind <i>Waiting for Superman</i> (2011), 69 mins: http://vimeo.com/41994760	Educational Autobiography - 20%
Fall break! No more regular class meetings. We will check in regularly though!			
M	1-Dec	Practice presentation session (TENTATIVE)	Final research product - 15%
W	3-Dec	Public presentation, 4:15 pm (TENTATIVE, location TBA)	