SOC 104 Sociology of Education
Brandeis University, Spring 2019
Mondays and Wednesdays 5:00–6:20 p.m. in Olin Sang 124

Professor: Raquel Sáenz
E-mail: raquelsaenz@brandeis.edu
Office hours: 3:45-4:45pm, Mondays or by appointment
Office location: Pearlman 104

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course examines contemporary and cross-cultural perspectives on the significance of education in the United States. Informed by a range of theoretical approaches, this course introduces students to critical sociological inquiry and the urgent need for institutional and systemic change in the field of education. Sociology of Education considers questions such as: what is the purpose of schooling for self and society? What types of individuals do (and should) schools produce? How, and to what extent, do schools contribute to social equality (or inequality)? Are schools sites of liberation or social control? How do race, ethnicity, class, gender, sexuality, immigration and citizenship affect educational outcomes? How have the histories of settler colonialism, enslavement, economic exploitation, segregation and imprisonment impacted the contemporary social order?

Who has power to evaluate and restructure schooling? What does meaningful activism in the field of education entail? These and related questions are explored through readings, course discussions, creative methodologies, guest lectures, student-led research and critical analyses. This course is geared towards students interested in the issues of power, justice and social change in educational institutions and the wider society.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

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

• Understand and critique theoretical and conceptual approaches used by sociologists to explore education, equality and social change;

• Identify the relationship between individual educational experiences and wider structural inequality in a national and global context;
• Demonstrate an awareness of the educational policies and practices in need of reform;

• Decipher how related factors such as ethnicity, gender, sexuality, religion, language and culture are interwoven into the educational experiences of dominant and minoritized communities globally;

COURSE REQUIREMENTS  The following are core requirements for all students enrolled in the course:

I. ATTENDANCE Class attendance is mandatory. It is important that all students attend class sessions in order for all of us to discuss and decipher the course materials and lectures as a collegial community of learners. Attendance will be taken during each class period and students will be required to attend the entire class session to receive full credit. In case of illness or other legitimate reasons for absence, it is the student’s responsibility to inform Prof. Sáenz in advance. Every absence after two instructor-excused absences will result in the reduction of your overall grade by a third of a letter grade (e.g. an A becomes an A-, a B+ becomes a B, etc.). To earn full attendance credit, you must come to class prepared to discuss the readings assigned for that session and with the necessary materials, required books, articles, paper, and notes.

II. PARTICIPATION Active class participation is expected of all students. The dynamics of the class are contingent upon all those in the room. Active participation includes voicing critical questions about course materials, engaging in class discussions, working with peers in small-group discussions, and recording notes to be shared with the entire class. Class discussions will be held in both small and large formats, as well as other creative forms, to allow for multimodal means for engagement. Please be advised that texting, e-mailing and commenting on online media platforms of any sort (Facebook, Twitter, Yik Yak, and the like) will not be condoned during class. Students found doing this will be asked to leave and will lose 10% on their final assignment. Students are also encouraged to silence all cellphones before class begins.

III. INTEGRITY Because Brandeis University is a collegial community deeply committed to the free exchange of ideas, academic integrity is expected of all its
members. *Plagiarism is not at all acceptable.* Students who enroll in this class hereby agree to conduct themselves responsibly and are expected to participate in the creation of a welcoming space in which all students can discuss race, racism, sexism, poverty, identities, inequalities and related matters. To maintain a ‘safe space’ in the class, students are expected to challenge ideas and not the individuals; respectful disagreement is always welcome. This is a professional courtesy all are required to maintain. For more details on academic integrity, please refer to the University’s policy (http://www.brandeis.edu/studentlife/sdc/ai).

IV. ACADEMIC SUCCESS Success in this four-credit course is based on the expectation that students will spend a minimum of 9 hours of study time per week in preparation for class (readings, papers, preparation for discussion, etc.)

**GRADED REQUIREMENTS**

- Class Participation: 15%
- Discussion Leader: 20%
- Creative Critical Analysis: 20%
- Global Education Presentation: 20%
- Final Paper: 25%

Paper Format
All written assignments should use the following formatting guidelines:
- Name, assignment, and date in the top right-hand corner
- Page numbers on every page
- Double-spaced
- One-inch margins on all sides
- Times New Roman, 12pt
- Use the following file name format to save your paper: *FirstName_SOE.doc*
- Consistent use of APA, MLA or ASA style reference

**Grading**
Don’t go here…

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Score Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>95 – 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90 – 94.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>85 – 89.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>82 – 84.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80 – 81.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>75 – 79.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>72 – 74.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70 – 71.99</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Written assignments will be graded using the following criteria:

- All assignment guidelines addressed
- Academic writing basis of coherence and readability (flow, grammar, spelling errors)
- Content (quality/original ideas, examples, connections to teaching praxis)
- In-depth analyses/responses (critical reflections challenging/supporting the readings, providing personal examples, etc.)
- All papers should cite in APA, MLA or ASA format (use the following website if you are unsure what this means: https://owl.purdue.edu/)

NOTE: Extensions are not allowed unless the instructor considers it necessary. In that case, late assignments will be subject to ONE LOWER GRADE (i.e. a B grade reduces to a C, etc.). Late assignments must be submitted within 48 hours after the original due date on Latte and via e-mail in order to receive credit. E-mails should be sent to raquelysaenz@gmail.com.

Participation (15%)
Participation is an ongoing requirement for class. This includes both attending class and contributing to in-class discussions, including discussions led by your peers. Your presence is expected as your voices, opinions, and experiences are vital to the course.

Discussion leader (20%)
For each class, a small group of discussion leaders will be chosen (1-2 people). All presentations should be approximately 30 minutes. This can be done in a group, discussing the articles as a whole, or by separating the articles so that each person leads a part of the discussion. The discussion leader should also find pieces of the article that
might be confusing or need further explanation and provide a brief overview of these pieces (short video clips or other resources can be used). A creative source (song, poem, visual art piece, etc.) should also be used that represents or reflects the central topics in one or more of the articles from that day. No powerpoint or handout is needed, but come prepared to lead a critical discussion, interrogating the positionality and central arguments of the author. Discussions can be lead in any form (fish bowl, small groups, large group, and other creative forms). A one page summary of your discussion group plan will be due by 11:59pm on January 22.

Creative Critical Analysis (15%)

*Gallery walk on Wednesday 3/6*

The goal of this assignment is to reflect on the social, economic, political, and emotional contexts that relate education in the United States and globally. Based on the topics covered in class (or a topic of your own choosing approved by the professor), your piece should be a creative analysis of a current issue in the educational context of the United States or another country (e.g. the impact of Eurocentric curriculum, heteropatriarchy in the school system, imposed gender norms in preschool, etc.). Ideally, this piece will lead into your final paper. This piece can be done in any creative format (i.e. short fictional story, collage, photomontage, painting, poem, play, image sculpture, etc.). *If the piece is not written, one page should be included as an artist statement describing the ideas behind the piece.* There will be a gallery walk to present these pieces.

Global Education Presentation (15%)

*Presentation on Monday 4/10 and 4/15*

The goal of this assignment is to work in a group of 3-4 students to develop a 20-25 min. presentation on the educational structure and social issues related to education in a country outside the United States. You will frame the presentation by presenting briefly on the geographic location of the country, languages spoken, and ethnic groups. Your group will present on the origins of public education, historical and current socio-political issues that have impacted education, and issues of educational equity. You will include a one page handout (double-sided) with a bibliography that includes at least 3 scholarly
A one page summary of your Global Education Presentation plan will be due by 11:59pm on February 11. Questions to consider are the following:

- How is the education system structured? (consider tracking, age that school begins, courses that students take, etc.)
- How did colonization impact the development of public education? How has education shifted in a postcolonial context? (if applicable)
- How has educational equity or inequity emerged? (considering an intersectional lens for different ethnic/racial groups, gender, and sexuality)
- What educational issues are making news currently?
- How have youth pushed back against the existing structures?

Final Paper (25%)

Due 5/3 for seniors and 5/10 for other students by 11:59pm

Based on the topics covered in class (or a topic of your own choosing approved by the professor), analyze a current issue in the educational context of the United States or another country (e.g. the impact of Eurocentric curriculum, heteropatriarchy in the school system, imposed gender norms, etc.). The paper should be 10-15 pages. Work will be evaluated on the basis of: depth of analysis (40%), clarity in the presentation of ideas (40%) and grammar/punctuation/spelling (20%). Ideally you will be building on the topic that you chose for your creative piece. The following elements must be included:

- Describe the problem
- Analyze the origins of the problem and historical precedents. Be critical of the data that you find. Critique each study, noting the potential pitfalls (often studies are done in ways that do not reflect the complexity of a structural problem).
- Include at least 5 scholarly articles.

RELATED COURSE POLICIES

Assignments:

All papers should be emailed to Prof. Sáenz at raquelsaenz@brandeis.edu.
Computer Usage:

Laptops, i-Pads or other relevant electronic devices are allowed, but only for accessing the assigned course readings on LATTE. Use of electronic devices for any other purpose is strictly prohibited; violations will not be excused. Any violation of this policy will result in the prohibition of your electronic device for future use in the classroom during the course.

Disability Services:

If you are a student who needs academic accommodations because of a documented disability, please contact me and present your letter of accommodation as soon as possible. If you have questions about documenting a disability or requesting academic accommodations, you should contact Beth Rodgers-Kay in Academic Services (x6-3470 or brodgers@brandeis.edu.) Letters of accommodation should be presented at the start of the semester to ensure provision of accommodations, and absolutely before the day of an exam or test. Accommodations cannot be granted retroactively.

COURSE SCHEDULE

January 16: Overview & Introductions

PART I: REFLEXIVITY BEFORE RESEARCH: INVITATION TO CRITICAL SOCIOLOGICAL INQUIRY

January 21: NO CLASS

January 22: BRANDEIS MONDAY| No formal class| Develop Discussion Plan

January 23: The Utility of Sociology in the Study of Education


**January 28: Critiques of Privilege, Power & Personhood?**


**PART II: SELECTIVITY, SEGREGATION & SCHOOLING**

**January 30: Historical Perspectives on Education & Equality**


**February 4: Jim Crow Era Education**


**February 6: Colonial Education**


**February 11: No formal class| Meet with Global Education Group**

**February 13: Criminalization of Youth of Color; Guest Speaker: Thai Small, Director of Diploma Plus**


February 18: NO CLASS

February 20: NO CLASS

**February 25: Sociological Theories on Social Stratification**


**February 27: Critical Race Theories of Education**


**March 4: Intersectionality Theory**


**March 6: CREATIVE CRITICAL ANALYSIS GALLERY WALK**

**PART III: EDUCATIONAL INEQUALITY IN SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS**

**March 11: Dynamics of Family and Community Relations**


**March 13: Class, Codes & Control in Schools**


**March 18: Tracking & the Reproduction of Privilege**


**March 20: Immigrants, Refugees, and Educational Systems**


**March 25: Assimilation vs. Cultural Maintenance**


March 27: *Gender Differences in Schooling & Success*


April 1: *Teaching the Taboo: Sexuality in Schools*


PART IV: FROM ANALYSIS TO ACTIVISM?: SOCIOLOGY OF EDUCATION REFORM

April 3: *Queer Pedagogies*


April 8: No formal class| Meet with Global Education Group

INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION WEEK

April 10: GLOBAL EDUCATION PRESENTATIONS I
April 15: GLOBAL EDUCATION PRESENTATIONS II

April 17: Paulo Freire and the legacy of Critical Pedagogy


April 22: NO CLASS

April 24: NO CLASS

April 29: Culturally Relevant and Sustaining Pedagogies; Guest Speakers: Diploma Plus Student Advisory Board


Ladson-Billings, G. “The (R)Evolution Will Not Be Standardized: Teacher Education, Hip Hop Pedagogy, and Culturally Relevant Pedagogy 2.0.” In

May 1: Teaching for Resistance and Liberation
