Introduction to Education: Examining Critical Issues in Public Schooling for Social and Educational Justice

Instructor: Paula M. Carbone, Ph.D.  
Meeting Time: MW 8:30-9:50  
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Course Overview

This course examines the underpinnings of educational theory and practice from sociological, political, and policy perspectives for the purpose of understanding the complexities of education. Educational change will be examined from historical and contemporary perspectives, with emphasis on the promise of current efforts. The course is designed to address the inequities of education from a social analysis perspective, and evaluate educational settings and their relationship to society in order to suggest theoretical and empirically based action grounded in social and educational justice.

Course Learning Outcomes

The course is designed to strengthen your ability to:
1. Describe the critical issues and explain their historical and contemporary impact on educational processes in US public schools.
2. Critically examine the critical issues in US public schooling and the relationship of varied perspectives in advancing or limiting social and educational justice.
3. Analyze an authentic educational context and apply theory to describe implications for change.

Course Requirements

Fieldwork: A total of six fieldwork observations will take place in a local K-12 school. Observations will take place in lieu of class time at regular intervals in the semester – weeks 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, & 13. Fieldwork will be focused by the cumulative units of study and course readings, which frame critical issues in education. Each fieldwork observation will be structured with guiding questions, observations protocols, and summary, evaluative reports integrating the course readings.

Fieldwork Log: Students will submit a 2-3 page observation log after each fieldwork observation. The log should describe concrete details observed, such as environment (classroom set up, behavior noted) and analysis of the descriptions. A two- to three paragraph synthesis should be included with each log explicitly applying the readings to the observation.

Midterm: Discuss the importance of race, social and economic status, linguistic heritage and gender and its relationship with social and educational justice. Minimum of 15 pages.

Final: Explain why things are “they way they are” in your fieldwork observation site, focusing on the relationship of the institution, student outcomes, and the community. Identify the opportunities and constraints for social and educational justice, and propose change to address any identified constraints, synthesizing the course readings, class discussions, fieldwork observation notes, and relevant outside sources. The focus of the paper Minimum of 15 pages.

Attendance: One excused absence is allowed for the term.

Textbooks and other materials

Required Reading:
Readings for each class should be completed before class time.  
All course readings not in the required text are available in ARES.
**Recommended Reading (Not required for purchase):**

**Class Participation**

Bi-weekly seminars will use protocols for equity in participation and to promote depth and complexity in discussion; additionally, students will take an active role in facilitating discussions. Students are expected to stay current in the readings, fieldwork, and actively participate in seminar discussions by summarizing, synthesizing, and critically evaluating course readings for in-depth discussion during class time.

**Grading**

Class Attendance – 10%
Fieldwork Observations – 25%
Fieldwork Logs – 15%
Midterm – 25%
Final – 25%
Grades assigned:  A = 94+; A- = 90-93; B+ = 87-89; B = 84-86; B- = 80-83; C+ = 77-79; C = 74-76; C- = 70-73; D+ = 67-69; D = 64-66; D- = 60-63; F = 59 and below.

**Academic Accommodations**

The University of Southern California is committed to full compliance with the Rehabilitation Act (Section 504) and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). As part of the implementation of this law, the university will continue to provide reasonable accommodation for academically qualified candidates with disabilities so that they can participate fully in the university’s educational programs and activities. Although USC is not required by law to change the “fundamental nature or essential curricular components of its programs in order to accommodate the needs of disabled candidates,” the university will provide reasonable academic accommodation. It is the specific responsibility of the university administration and all faculty serving in a teaching capacity to ensure the university’s compliance with this policy.

Any candidate requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The phone number for DSP is (213) 740-0776. The email address is: ability@usc.edu. The website for DSP has additional information regarding accommodations and requests (www.usc.edu/disability).

**Incompletes**

IN – incomplete (work not completed because of documented illness or some other major emergency occurring after the twelfth week of a traditional semester – 4th week of a 6-week class; arrangements for the IN and its removal should be initiated by the student and agreed to by the instructor prior to the final exam); IX – lapsed incomplete.

**Conditions for Removing a Grade of Incomplete.** If an IN is assigned as the student’s grade, the instructor will fill out the Incomplete (IN) Completion form which will specify to the student and to the department the work remaining to be done, the procedures for its completion, the grade in the course to date and the weight to be assigned to the work remaining to be done when computing the final grade. A student may remove the IN by completing only the portion of required work not finished as a result of documented illness or emergency occurring after the twelfth week of the semester. Previously graded work may not be repeated for credit. It is not possible to remove an IN by re-registering for the course, even within the designated time.

**Time Limit for Removal of an Incomplete.** One calendar year is allowed to remove an IN. Individual academic units may have more stringent policies regarding these time limits. If the IN is not removed within the designated time, the
course is considered “lapsed,” the grade is changed to an “IX” and it will be calculated into the grade point average as 0 points. Courses offered on a Credit/No Credit basis or taken on a Pass/No Pass basis for which a mark of Incomplete is assigned will be lapsed with a mark of NC or NP and will not be calculated into the grade point average.

### Academic Integrity

SCampus, the USC student guidebook contains the Student Conduct Code and information on Academic Integrity. It is the student’s responsibility to be familiar with and abide by these guidelines, which are found at [http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/SJACS/docs/GradIntegrity.pdf](http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/SJACS/docs/GradIntegrity.pdf). A summary of behaviors violating University standards can be also found at: [http://www.usc.edu/dept/publications/SCAMPUS/gov/behavior.html](http://www.usc.edu/dept/publications/SCAMPUS/gov/behavior.html).
Week 1: Historical Perspectives of Education in the US
Required Readings:
Part III: The politics of pluralism: Nineteenth century patterns, pp, 78-124

Week 2: Structural Inequities, part 1
Required Readings:
“Some Functions of Schooling” and "Inside the System: The Character of Urban Schools" Pp. 72-77, 177-198, 229-254

Week 3: Structural Inequities, part 2

Week 4: Capital and Power
Part 1, Chapters 5-7: Human, Cultural, and Social Capital, (Bordieu) pp. 46-77.
Noguera, P. (2001). Transforming urban schools through investments in social capital. 105-112

Week 5: Legislating Change and Unintended Consequences
Chapter 10, pp. 172-187.
Chapter 3. Enacting Goals 2000 and Reauthorizing ESEA, pp. 56-84
Chapter 7. Implementing and Debating NCLB, pp. 171-207
Week 6: Unequal Educational Opportunity
Chapter 1: Theories of reproduction and resistance in the new sociology of education, pp. 3-46.

Week 7: Whose Standard is It? Reform as Standardization

Week 8: Critical Race Theory
Part IV: Looking Inward.

Week 9: Teachers and Students – Relationships for Optimal Learning
Chapter 3: embracing change, pp. 35-44.
Chapter 12: confronting class in the classroom, pp. 177-191.
Week 10: Pedagogies for Equity
Chapters 2 & 3, pp. 71-124.

Week 11: Digital Technology and Flattened Hierarchies
Chapter 1: Why video games are good for your soul, pp. 7-12
Chapter 7: Why study games now? pp. 83-86
Chapter 8: Affinity spaces, pp. 87-103.

Week 12: The Purpose of Schooling
Chapter 7: The democratic conception in education, pp. 81-100
Chapter 8: Aims in education, pp. 100-111.
Chapter 1: Theories of reproduction and resistance in the new sociology of education, pp. 3-46.


**Week 15: Applying Social Analysis to Education**

Student presentations of self-selected articles supporting their final. Peer reviews of arguments, evidence, and feasibility of suggested changes to address observed constraints in fieldwork.