

EFND 2030

Schools in U.S. Society

Section 24-415
Spring Semester, 2006
Tuesday/Thursday
12:30-1:45, SLC Room 148

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Introduction

All of you have had several years of schooling. You have spent over 2000 days of your life in the classroom. You have devoted countless hours to your studies. You have stayed up late preparing for tests or finishing papers. You have stressed over grades. You have cursed and praised your teachers. Judging by the fact that you are at the University of Georgia, you have been mostly successful in navigating the difficulties of formal education. Now, what was the point?

Why did you have to do it all? What was the purpose of all that schooling? Why did your schools look and operate the way that they did? What are you now educated to do and to be? Was it worth it?

The answers to these questions can be found at the intersection of philosophy, history, psychology, sociology, and anthropology. All of these disciplines are combined into a single field called Social Foundations of Education.

An awareness of Social Foundations is essential to your being an effective educator. There are ideas at work in every part of the school day—even in the physical structure of the buildings—and it is vital that you are conscious of their source, their shape, and their impact. Throughout the course of this semester, our class will explore those ideas together, and Gail, Minjung, and I will work to help you become the sort of teacher that you want to be.

Readings

Required Course Texts: There are three required books for this course:

- *American Education, Twelfth Edition* by Joel Spring (McGraw-Hill, 2005)
- *Deculturalization and the Struggle for Equality* by Joel Spring (McGraw-Hill, 2004)
- *Horace's Compromise; The Dilemma of the American High School* by TheodoreSizer (Mariner Books, 2004)

In selecting the books, this department has followed the guidelines recently published by the Georgia Board of Regents regarding cost and use of books.

Supplemental Readings: In addition to the required texts, we will be supplying you with several book chapters, articles, and excerpts that are to be completed before class. Each reading is available on WebCT and/or in Room 232 of the Aderhold building. The readings will include articles from several major newspapers and magazines and excerpts from the following articles and books:

- *The Manufactured Crisis* by David Berliner and Bruce Biddle
- *The Child and the Curriculum* by John Dewey
- *Cultural Literacy* by E.D. Hirsch
- "Why Traditional Education is More Progressive" by E.D. Hirsch
- *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* by Paulo Freire
- "Taproots for a New Century" by David B. Ackerman
- *The Big Picture* by Dennis Littky
- *The Students Are Watching* by Theodore and Nancy
- *Will Standards Save Public Education* by Deborah Meier
- *Shame of the Nation* by Jonathan Kozol
- "Doing School" by Denise Clark Pope
- *Letters to the Next President* edited by Carl Glickman
- *A Nation at Risk* by The National Commission on Excellence in Education

This is just a partial listing of all that we will be reading together. This course is dependent upon your doing a great deal of reading and reflecting. While you will never be asked to do more than is possible, we do have very high expectations.

Additional Resources: In addition to what is listed above, you should strive to remain abreast of what's happening in the world of education. In addition to the major newspapers, magazines, and networks, you should consult periodicals like *Social Education*, *Phi Delta Kappa*, and the *Harvard Educational Review*. The web sites of Education Week (www.edweek.org), the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (www.ascd.org), the Georgia Department of Education (www.doe.k12.ga.us), and the Georgia Professional Standards Commission (www.gapsc.org) may also be helpful. If you have never followed politics or the news, now is the time to start.

Class Requirements

Assignments: This semester, you will complete the following assignments, in addition to the midterm and final exam. Further instructions for each assignment will be given in class:

1. A formal essay in which you assess several aspects of your own schooling.
2. An informal system of keeping track of the readings.
3. A formal essay that reviews a book of your choice OR a formal research paper on a relevant issue in education.
4. A series of semi-formal writings related to your educational philosophy.

School Assessment: Your own experience as a student should be the starting point for every line of thinking in this class. Thus, your first assignment in EFND 2030 is a formal essay in which you will assess your own schooling. As a matter of course, turning in this paper should not be the end of your considering your past. As we progress in this class and as you advance beyond this class, you must constantly think and re-think the principles we address in light of your experience as a student. If you think about the issues we confront on only a superficial level, if you detach them from your own lived experience, you will compromise your ability to become a high-quality teacher.

Reading Management: With all that you have to read in this class—and every other class—it is important that you keep track of it all. Thus, on three occasions throughout the semester, you will submit a document or set of documents that demonstrate the way that you are managing the reading. There is no set format, but what you turn in should include short summaries, reflections, and key quotations from each of the class readings. This assignment should be submitted electronically.

Book Review or Issue Paper: Because there is so much good information out there about education, you will be asked to write a paper on a book that you think sounds interesting or an issue that you believe to be relevant. This course is a broad overview; you should use this assignment to personalize it.

Educational Philosophy: One of the most important things Gail, Minjung, and I hope that you gain from your time in this class is a solid sense of why we have schools and what that means for you. Over the course of the semester, we will be working with you to ensure that you are pulling together a coherent philosophy of education that, if necessary, will become a part of your job portfolio. The philosophy will be written in three pieces, and further instructions for each step will be given as we draw near to the due dates.

Examinations: There will be two formal examinations: a mid-term exam and a final exam. Both will be essay, and both will be taken home. In the examinations, you will be expected to synthesize their readings and their learning from the course.

Key Dates

Tuesday, 1/10/06—First day of class
Monday, 1/9/06 to Thursday, 1/12/06—Drop/Add
Thursday, 1/31/06—School Assessment paper due in class
Thursday, 2/2/06—Reading Management I due by start of class (submit electronically)
Tuesday, 2/7/06—Educational Philosophy Part I due in class
Thursday, 2/23/06—Educational Philosophy Part II due in class
Thursday, 3/2/06—Midterm due in class
Tuesday, 3/7/06—Midterm withdrawal deadline
Thursday, 3/9/06—Reading Management II due by start of class (submit electronically)
Monday, 3/13/06 to Friday, 3/17/06—Spring Break; no class
Thursday, 3/23/06—Educational Philosophy Part III due in class
Thursday, 3/30/06—Independent Reading/Issue paper due in class
Thursday, 4/13/06—Reading Management III due by start of class (submit electronically)
Thursday, 5/4/06—Final Exam due at 3:00 in SLC 148

Tentative Sequence of Topics

A good class will confront issues as they arise and deal with any difficulties that present themselves. Thus, we have designed this syllabus to be flexible. The class will work out due dates and specific reading assignments together.

Introduction/Background: syllabus, introductions, reflecting on our own schooling, developing a critical eye and a “double-track mind.”

The current state of American schooling: the standards and accountability movement, testing, the No Child Left Behind Act, traditionalism vs. progressivism.

Modern-day challenges and issues: Small schools, projects, relationships, poverty and inequality, integration, multicultural education, certification, unions, and school law.

Assessment

Grading: All grading is done by Gail, Minjung, and me, in close consultation with our colleagues in this department and in the College of Education at large. If ever you are unhappy with a grade, you should contact one of us immediately in order that we may address the issue together.

Course Evaluation: Final grades will be based on our assessment of your ability to communicate, to think clearly and critically, and to integrate knowledge as demonstrated in writing assignments and examinations. Grades will be weighted as follows:

Reading Management—15%	School Assessment Paper—17%
Independent Reading/Issue paper—17%	Midterm—13%
Educational Philosophy—10%	Final Exam—25%
	Miscellaneous—3%

Final Considerations

Attendance: This course is designed for people who come to class; the discussion and dialogue process is central to your intellectual growth. Absences will be reflected in your depth and breadth of understanding of the issues we confront which will in turn be reflected in your grades, even though absences are not a specific part of the grading scheme. If you miss class, you should contact Gail, Minjung, or me immediately, or else expect to be contacted by one of us.

The Larger Picture: Most arguments about school are actually arguments about society. When you hear policymakers or parents describe what should be happening in school, they are basically describing what they believe should be happening in society. You should keep this in mind as you consider questions of schooling in this class. Do not just think about what will make a good school; think about what will make a good society. The two are deeply intertwined and ultimately inseparable.

Office Hours: The department of Workforce Education, Leadership, and Social Foundations is located off campus, in the River's Crossing building. Because it can be exceedingly difficult to get to that building, I will be holding my office hours in the SLC. On Tuesdays and Thursday, from 11:00 to 12:00 and from 2:00 to 3:00, I will be sitting at a table on the second floor, near Jittery Joe's, doing work. If you would like to come to talk to me about any issue, you can do it then. I am also willing to meet with you at any time by appointment. If you need to speak with me about anything relating to this class, I urge you to contact me.

Writing: Anyone contemplating teaching should be a proficient, graceful writer, and your success in this class is based on your ability to express yourself via writing. Students who have difficulties with writing are urged to make use of the expertise at the University's Learning Center—132 Milledge Hall. The phone number is 542-8455.

An Obligatory Note on Plagiarism and Cheating: Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty are extremely grave ethical violations. All students are to be aware of the University Academic Honesty Policy. In this course, any instance of academic dishonesty *will result in referral to the administration for disciplinary action in accordance with university policies*. If you are unclear on what is contained in the code, you should consult the web site of the Office of the Vice President for Instruction: (www.uga.edu/ovpi).

Problems: We have been hired to promote your intellectual and ethical growth; do not let any questions, anxieties or problems fester without my knowledge. We are committed to ensuring that you get the most out of this class that you can. Good luck!