

University of Georgia
College of Education
Social Foundations of Education
EFND: 7120 Sociological Theories of Education
Spring 2006

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Office Hours: Mon 2:30 to 4pm and by appointment

Course Description

The tension between human agency and social structure is a common theme in social research. People do not always control the material circumstances of their lives, the choices they make, the social parameters of their existence. This tension is clearly evident when we examine formal education from a sociological perspective. In this course we will undertake a critical analysis of the intersections of identity, schooling and society, within social institutions including the family, the economy, and the polity. Student's research interests and their work experiences will provide part of the focus for our collective inquiry as we grapple with political crosscurrents in education and schooling practices.

Education and schooling practices, the persistence of class and racial stratification, are often viewed as the rubric under which inequities in American society persists. We will examine how sociological theorists critique the U.S. social order. Social theorist use different theory construction and evaluation principles to explain individuals in various social settings. One particular context we will study is the relationship between American schools and society and the role both play in mediating stratification on the one hand, and democratic ideals, on the other.

Course Objectives:

Study how citizens become socialized into society; schools.

Examine how single-cause theories (e.g., class) are inadequate for explaining life chances, schooling success and failure.

Critique how education and school structures, school culture and pedagogical practices are influenced and shaped by American culture.

Examine the role of social institutions outside of school, (e.g. family, religion, peers) play in shaping formal and informal definitions of the sociology of knowledge.

Required Texts and Readings

These books can be purchased from the UGA bookstore and the Off Campus Bookstores on Baxter Street. Additional articles will be placed on reserve.

Texts:

1. Dewey, J. (1938). *Experience and education*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
2. Lemert, C. (2001). *Social things: An introduction to the sociological life (2nd ed.)*. New York: Rowman & Littlefield Pub. Inc.
3. McLaren, P. 2003. *Life in schools (4th ed.)*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Attendance Policy:

Roll will be taken each day. You are allowed one unexcused absence. Additional absences will **NOT** be excused unless there is a documented medical emergency. Any student who knows that he/she will miss or be late for more than one class should drop the course immediately. Students who are not in attendance for any part of the class period (coming to class late or leaving early) will be regarded as absent unless permission has been granted prior to class. If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to obtain the missed notes and assignments. Persistent tardiness will result in a reduction (5 pts) from the final grade.

Course Requirements:

This course will require a substantial amount of reading and class discussion and therefore absences will greatly diminish your understanding of the reading material covered in this course. Students are expected to read the material and be prepared to participate in class discussions. No student will be allowed to sit and “watch” other students participate. I will call on students who do not join in on the class discussion. Proper referencing of sources should be used. See guidelines for APA style of writing (American Psychological Association). Please be sure that the printer has a cartridge and please print with a font-size of 12pt.

Be sure that you use the page-number feature in your word-processing program and the spell check. Papers are to be proof-read and will be returned without a grade if it has not been proof-read. Evidence of plagiarism will be grounds for dismissal from class, a failing grade for the course, and referral to the administration for disciplinary action. Do your own thinking and writing. If you plan to use someone else’s thoughts, please cite them as a reference. Refer to the APA manual for instructions.

There will be up to several short assignments that focus on research and writing. These will include looking up information on websites and other academic resource locations. The combined assignments will total 15% of your grade. I will be looking for the following: web searches that show an in-depth search was conducted, resources such as articles, movies, books that add value to the overall themes of the class, presentation of material that build on class presentations.

There midterm examination will be held in class. Exam material will be come from class discussions, readings and guest presentations.

Students will be assigned to conduct one class lead. This means that you will cover the information and organize how the information will be delivered. You can be as creative as you would like. I will assist you and work with you on this assignment.

The final exam will be in the form of a written paper. The topics for your paper will be discussed later in the semester. You will respond to a question or questions you have about a topic. Papers are to include assigned readings as well as prior reading acquired from previous classes.

Grade Distribution

As much as possible, I will follow the class outline in chronological order as a reference point for class discussions. However, I may make changes in the assignments and grade distribution if necessary but will allow you enough time to make necessary adjustments.

Definition of Terms – These consists of short assignments 15% (on-going)

Class Lead 20%

Midterm Exam 35%

Final Exam 25%

Class Participation 5%

Course Outline:

The course schedule is on-line.

