

Education 201
History of Education in the U.S.
Winter, 2005
Tuesday-Thursday, 10:00-11:50, 313 Cubberley
3-5 course units

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Course Description

In this course we will examine some of the things that shaped the history of education in the United States, as part of an effort to understand how education came to take on its current forms and functions. This will mean asking questions that are intended to make familiar aspects of education strange, encouraging students to rethink its purposes and processes, its causes and effects. Among competing alternatives for carrying out education, which won out at various points along the way and why? What people and groups and social forces have shaped education at different times? How have the outcomes of education been distributed and how has this changed? What purposes and interests and structures from the past have become embedded within the complex form of American education today? What is the impact of this past on the present?

In part, the course is organized chronologically, moving from the colonial experience to the present, with special focus on three periods -- the invention of the common school system in the early nineteenth century, the emergence of progressive education reform in the early twentieth, and the special mix of developments since World War II. In part, the course is organized around themes, including the role of gender and race in education, the development of the high school and the university, and the emerging nature of school organization, curriculum, and teaching.

My approach in this course is to portray the history of American education as a story that is at core political. Education is a process by which societies seek to shape future members into a desirable form, and the result is an evolving institution that is both hugely consequential and highly normative. In the end, it comes down to a question of what kind of people you want children to become and what kind of society you want to create. In this class, therefore, I frame the history of American education as a story of competing goals. I focus on three goals that have been enduringly salient over the course of this history: democratic equality (making capable citizens, who can function effectively in a democratic society), social efficiency (making productive workers, whose human capital can spur economic growth), and social mobility (making opportunity for individuals, enabling them to secure their own social positions and move up the social ladder). These goals push schools in different directions and press for it to take different forms to match these directions. At the same time, the goals overlap in ways that can lead to important political alliances: for example, the first two see education as a public good, the third sees it as a private good; the second and third want schools to adapt to social inequality, whereas the first wants schools to struggle against inequality.

In keeping with the idea that education is a struggle among competing purposes, the course readings draw on a variety of perspectives on the history of this institution in the U.S. You will be reading the work of historians who understand this history in strikingly different ways, and you will be reading documents by some of the participants at the time who clashed over the direction education should take. However, although this is a course that draws on authors with a wide range of perspectives, it is nonetheless also inevitably a course with a point of view. Throughout this term, I will be making an argument about the nature of the problems facing education, one that is spelled out most clearly my book, *How to Succeed in School Without Really Learning*, which you will be reading during this class. The argument goes something like this: The history of American education is characterized by a competition over purposes, but it has come to be dominated increasingly by the pursuit of individual social mobility more than the effort to make productive workers or competent citizens. The roots of this orientation are in the market pressures and individualist ideology that characterize American life, and the result is an educational system that is increasingly seen as a private good more than a public good. The growing dominance of the social mobility goal leads to an escalating competition over educational credentials (since people need to run in order to stay in place in the educational competition for social position); it undercuts learning (since the point is to get ahead rather than get an education); it promotes social inefficiency (since schools expand well beyond social needs and resources); and it reinforces social inequality (since some people are in a better position than others to succeed in the competition for credentials).

Just because I make an argument in this course, however, does not mean that you have to buy that argument. As you will discover (and I will point out along the way), my own position on these issues is riddled with inconsistencies and logical gaps, and the authors in the course readings frequently contradict me as well as each other. The aim I have in trying to organize this course loosely around an argument is not to close down discussion of course issues but to open up such discussion. It is impossible to discuss an issue without starting with some kind of intellectual framework for understanding that topic, and the arguments that I and the various authors in the course raise are intended to provide just these kinds of frameworks. Your aim in this course, as in academic study more generally, should be to work on developing your own intellectual framework for approaching educational issues. You do this by trying on various frameworks that you come across in different readings and different courses, seeing which parts of these frameworks seem to work better than others in making sense of things (both because of their usefulness to you analytically and because of their compatibility with your own social values), and then constructing your own framework out of these pieces. This is an unending iterative process, in which you keep building, testing, and reconstructing this framework in the face of new theories and new data. My hope is that this course will prove helpful to you in trying to work through that process.

Eligibility

This class is open to doctoral students, master's students, and undergraduates. **All students who enroll in the class must take it for a letter grade.**

Course Requirements

The Importance of Critical Reading: You need to do more than read the required texts in this class; you need to read them critically. See the section at the end of the syllabus, "Guidelines for Critical Reading."

The Importance of Analytical Writing: The entire grade for this course depends on the quality of each student's work on the written assignments that are defined below. (I strongly encourage students to participate in discussions in class, but this participation is not graded.) One central purpose of the course is to encourage students to develop their skill at producing effective analytical writing. This skill is essential for anyone who wishes to be successful in meeting the requirements of academic study and who expects to have an impact in the intellectual and professional world of education. This course (like any course) is a good place to work on enhancing your abilities as a writer. See the section at the end of the syllabus, "Guidelines for Analytical Writing."

Critical Reaction Papers (50%): Write **four short reaction papers** dealing with the assigned readings for a particular week. In each of these papers you should provide a brief critical response to some significant issue encountered in the book or other assigned readings for a particular week. You are not being asked to summarize the argument of individual readings, although your discussion should reveal that you have understood what this argument is. Instead you should react to the reading(s) as a critical observer with a specific frame of reference (derived from the course, from your reading elsewhere, and/or from your own experience). You don't need to respond to a whole book or the whole array of readings for a particular week, although you do need to focus on something that cuts across two or more articles or chapters. Pick one **major issue** from the reading that grabs your attention and briefly develop it. (A focused discussion of one issue works better in a short paper like this than an effort to cover a number of different issues.) Feel free to make connections with other things you know, but be sure that you draw on the reading from that week for a substantial part of your evidence or ideas or examples. You will be evaluated on the basis of the thoughtfulness, depth of understanding, and analytical insight that is reflected in your paper. **These papers should be submitted by e-mail no later than 10:00 a.m. on Thursday of the week that the particular reading(s) are assigned. Late papers will receive a reduced grade (e.g., a B+ will turn into a B).** They should be at least **3 pages** in length double-spaced (**900 words**). They can run longer, if you wish, but this is not necessary or even necessarily desirable. If you write more than four reaction papers, I will count the four with the best grades. You can only do one paper on a particular week's readings.

I have two aims in asking you to write these reaction papers. First, they will encourage you to keep up with the reading and to come to class with some already-formulated thoughts about the issues for that week. You should come to every class with a set of questions and comments and issues that you developed while doing the week's readings, and you should be prepared to draw on these insights selectively in a constructive effort to help shape discussion in class. The critical reaction papers help facilitate this kind of preparation and thereby help promote an informed and broad-based discussion of the issues in class each week. (As I mentioned earlier, participation in such discussions is encouraged but not graded.) Second, these short papers will provide you, at the end of the term, with a set of elaborated notes on course issues and readings that should serve as a useful resource when you write your final paper, when you encounter related issues in your future work, or when you want to revisit some of the readings at a later point. You

may want to use these papers to write a running commentary on the issues in the course, with your individual papers building on each other from week to week. You may want to try out ideas in these papers that you will later develop in the final paper for the course. Also, you may want to use these papers as a way to hold an ongoing conversation with Lori and me about readings, schools, and history. Whatever you do in each of these papers, however, you should make sure that in some substantial way you are making a response to a significant aspect of the reading.

Please send these papers to Lori as e-mail attachments in the form of MS Word documents. We will be using Word's "tracking changes" function to record comments in the text. Lori will send papers back to you as e-mail attachments.

Final Paper (50%): You have **two options** for doing a final paper for this course: 1) write a **take-home final exam essay** in response to questions that I provide; or 2) write a **paper on any topic related to this course** (as long as Lori or I give advance approval for this topic). I explain these options below.

1) Take-Home Final Exam: In class on **Thursday, March 3**, I will hand out a list of 5 or 6 possible final exam questions. These questions will ask you to analyze broad issues in the history of American education by drawing on required readings in this course. Pick one of these questions and write a persuasive analytical essay in response. You will have one week to write an answer. Be sure to follow the "Guidelines for Analytical Writing," which are found in a section at the end of this syllabus. These essays should be a **minimum of 12 pages** double-spaced (**3,500 words**). **All take-home final exams must be submitted to Lori by e-mail no later than 10:00 a.m. on Thursday, March 10. Late papers will receive a reduced grade (e.g., a B+ will turn into a B).**

2) Final Paper: Write a paper on an issue loosely related to this course. (See below for details about the content of this paper.) These papers should be a minimum of **15 pages** double-spaced (**4,500 words**). The only restriction on topic is that Lori or I must approve this topic in advance. A one-page **proposal** for this paper is due on **January 25**. If you turn in a **draft** by **February 24**, you will be permitted to revise the paper (after receiving my comments) and submit it for re-evaluation. **Please send proposals and papers to Lori as e-mail attachments in the form of MS Word documents.** She will send them back by the same route; we will use Word's tracking changes function to record comments in the text. Be sure to follow the "Guidelines for Analytical Writing," which are found in a section at the end of this syllabus. **All final papers must be submitted to Lori by e-mail no later than 10:00 a.m. on Thursday, March 10. Late papers will receive a reduced grade (e.g., a B+ will turn into a B).**

You don't need to think of this paper as a "history" paper. My aim in this course is not to turn you into historians of education. After all, most of you in the course are not here to become inducted into that cult. Instead, you're here to acquire a general historical framework to use in thinking about education issues in your own area of interest, whatever that might be. Through the short reaction papers, I get a good sense of your ability to wrestle with the historical content of this course. Therefore, when you come to the final paper, you are free to pursue your own interests, using the course as a springboard for these interests and not as a prison for confining them to the realm of educational history narrowly construed. You should be thinking about how you can use the paper to advance your own intellectual and professional agenda. What are you interested in exploring in

your program? What issues brought you here in the first place? What kinds of issues will you be exploring in your honor's thesis, master's thesis, qualifying paper, or doctoral dissertation? How can you configure this paper as an opportunity to examine some part of this larger agenda, in a way that will move you along intellectually and professionally? We are open to anything that is productive for you and that is loosely related to this course.

Consider some of the following possibilities for framing a final paper:

a) Write a paper on any issue related to the history of American education. The only constraint is that Lori or I need to approve your topic in advance. We can negotiate the details of purpose, focus, sources, audience, and so on. Feel free to use this paper as a way to develop your thinking about any course-relevant issue that interests you, to follow up on earlier work you have done in other classes, to carry out a pilot empirical study, to reflect on teaching or research work you have done, or to try out ideas (or analyze data) that you might want to explore later in a dissertation. If you get the permission of both instructors, you can combine this paper with one you are writing in another course and produce a single larger paper that meets both course requirements.

b) Write a proposal for a research study related to the history of education. You are not expected to carry out this study during this quarter but only to frame the issues, define a workable and worthy research question, and spell out the process of data gathering you will go through in order to answer it. This proposal could be for a pilot study or for a study leading to a thesis or dissertation. Advanced doctoral students can use this paper as an early version of their dissertation proposal for a topic related to reform.

c) Write a review essay on some issue related to the history of education, using two or three books -- from the reading list or elsewhere -- as the basis for the review. In what ways are these books helpful in developing a useful understanding of this issue? What can you learn about this issue by comparing and contrasting the approaches taken by these authors? What are the implications of the authors' analyses for the issue you have selected? Examine a number of examples of review essays before proceeding. Note that a review essay is not just a long book review. Instead, this is a genre which combines a review of several books with an essay about some of the key issues raised by the books but developed further by the essayist. The books provide a platform from which you can launch your own interpretation, synthesis, analysis, political program, and/or theoretical ruminations. However you are still held by the usual rhetorical norms: you need to persuade the reader of your credibility through careful argumentation, effective use of sources and evidence, and artful political-moral-emotional appeals. In such an essay you need to draw on appropriate sources outside the books that are the starting point of the review.

d) Write a synthesis paper -- an analytical essay in which you pull together ideas that emerged in this course. At minimum, this essay should draw upon at least two sets of readings assigned in the course. The point is to integrate your thinking about an issue that cuts across readings and perspectives, drawing upon authors read in the course (and other authors you have encountered elsewhere) along with your own professional experience. You can think of this as a take-home final exam, only in this case you write the question.

Readings

Books: We will be reading the following 6 books, which have been ordered through the Stanford Book Store. All are available in paper editions. One copy of each is on reserve at Cubberley Library:

Anderson, James D. (1988). *The education of blacks in the South, 1860-1935*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.

Kliebard, Herbert M. (1986). *The struggle for the American curriculum, 1893-1958*. New York: Routledge.

Labaree, David F. (1997). *How to succeed in school without really learning: The credentials race in American education*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Ravitch, Diane. (1983). *The troubled crusade: American education, 1945-1980*. New York: Basic.

Rury, John L. (2005). *Education and social change: Themes in the history of American education*, 2nd ed. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Tyack, David & Hansot, Elisabeth. (1990). *Learning together: A history of coeducation in American public schools*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

We will also be reading one other book, which is out of print. A PDF version of this book is available on the course web site. There is also a copy on reserve at Cubberley Library:

Katz, Michael B. (1987). *Reconstructing American education*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Other readings: A collection of other readings for the class are all available on the course web site, located on the L drive using the Stanford Novell system. To gain access to this site, please follow these instructions:

From you own computer, on campus or off:

Go to this web site: <http://webfolder.stanford.edu>

Click on Open Netstorage.

A Security Alert box will pop up; click Yes.

A login box will pop up:

Login: labaree

Password: suse2004

A NetStorage window will open.

Click on DriveL@LAB.

A lot of folders should appear; click on ED 201.

Within this folder is a folder for each week of the class.

The folder is read-only. You can download any of these documents, one at a time.

From a computer at a SUSE computer lab:

Login according to instructions at the site.

Click on My Computer.

The ED 201 folder can be found in the L drive.

Acknowledgments

I am grateful to my former colleague, Michael Sedlak, who developed a history of education class at Michigan State University using a variety of historical documents and accounts by historians. He turned these materials into electronic form and made them available to the students and also to me. Most of the optional documents and optional historical readings in the

ED 201 folder on the web are from his course; some of the required readings are also from this source. In addition, I have drawn upon a number of documents, books, and other texts used by David Tyack and Joy Williamson when they taught this course.

Course Outline

Below are the topics we will cover, week by week, with the readings for each week. All students are expected to read these texts in advance of the class for which they are assigned. These will include the six books that have been ordered for the class; they also include the Katz book (which is out of print) and a selection of articles, book chapters, and historical documents, all of which are available on the course's web site. In a separate handout, you will find a list optional readings designed to supplement the required texts, including both period documents and accounts by historians.

*** = Readings that are available in the ED 201 folder on the web.**

Week 1

Tu 1/4: Introduction to course

Th 1/6: History of American Education: A Story of Conflicting Goals

*Labaree: Introduction and chapter 1 (Public schools for private advantage)

*Rury: chapter 1 (Introduction)

Week 2

Tu 1/11: Origins of U.S. Public Education

*Rury: chapter 2 (Colonial origins)

*Katz, chapter 1 (Origins of public education)

*Massachusetts school law of 1647.

Th 1/13: Establishing Common Schools

Rury: chapter 3 (19th century)

*Kaestle, Carl F. (1983). The ideology of antebellum common school reform, chapter 5 in *Pillars of the Republic: Common Schools and American Society, 1780-1860*. New York: Hill & Wang.

*Bowles & Gintis: chapter 6 (Origins of mass public education)

Week 3

Tu 1/18: The Emerging Organizational Structure of the Common School System

*Katz: chapters 2 (Alternative models of American education) and 3 (How urban school systems became bureaucracies)

*Kaestle, The common school reform program, chapter 6.

Th 1/20: History of Teaching

*Sedlak, Michael W. (1989). Let us go and buy a schoolmaster. In Donald Warren (Ed.), *American teachers: Histories of a profession at work* (pp. 257-290). New York: Macmillan.

Labaree: chapter 7 (Career ladders and the early schoolteacher)

Week 4**Tu 1/25: Gender and Education**

Tyack and Hansot: read the whole book
 Rury: chapter 4 (Ethnicity, gender, and race)

Th 1/27: Gender and Education (cont.)

Proposal for final paper due on Thursday, January 27 (10:00 a.m.)

Week 5**Tu 2/1: Race and Education**

Anderson: read the whole book

Th 2/3: Race and Education (cont.)

* Angelou, Maya. (1970). *I know why the caged bird sings*, pp. 142-56. New York: Bantam.

Week 6**Tu 2/8: Progressive Education Reform**

Rury: chapter 5 (Progressive era)
 Kliebard: read the whole book
 *Labaree, David F. (Forthcoming, 2005). Progressivism, schools, and schools of education: An American romance. *Paedagogica Historica*.

Th 2/10: Issues in the History of the American School

In-class viewing of excerpts from PBS video, *School: The Story of American Public Education*

Week 7**Tu 2/15: Progressivism (cont.)**

*Bowles and Gintis: chapter 7 (Corporate capital and progressive education)
 Labaree: chapters 2 (Social meaning of student promotion and retention) and 5 (Carnegie cult of social efficiency)
 * Committee on Secondary School Studies. (1893). *Report of the Committee of Ten* Washington, D.C.: National Education Association.
 * Commission on the Reorganization of Secondary Education. (1918). *Cardinal principles of secondary education*. Washington, DC: National Education Association.

Th 2/17: The High School

Labaree, chapters 3 (Raising standards in the American high school) and 4 (The middle class and the high school)
 * Cohen, David K. & Neufeld, Barbara. (1981). The failure of high schools and the progress of education, *Daedalus* 110 (Summer): 69-89.

Week 8**Tu 2/22: no class****Th 2/24: Higher Education****Draft of final paper due on Thursday 2/24 at 10:00 a.m., if you want a chance to revise and resubmit***Trow, Martin. (1988). American higher education: Past, present, and future. *Educational Researcher*, 17 (3), 13-23).

*Bowles & Gintis: chapter 8 (Transformation of higher education and the emerging white-collar proletariat)

Labaree: chapters 8 (The rise of the community college) and 9 (The lowly status of education schools)

*Katz: chapter 6 (The moral crisis of the university)

Week 9**Tu 3/1: Education after World War II**

Rury: chapter 6 (Education in postwar America)

Ravitch: read the whole book

*Katz, chapter 5 (The politics of educational history)

Th 3/3: Education after World War II (cont.)**Final exam questions will be handed out in class on Thursday, 3/3****Week 10****Tu 3/8: Sorting, Credentialing, and the History of American Education**

Rury: Epilogue

Labaree: chapter 10 (Schooling consumers and consuming the school)

*Katz: chapter 4 (History and reform)

*Bowles & Gintis: chapter 9 (Capital accumulation, class conflict, and educational change)

Th 3/10: Summing Up**All final papers and take-home final exams must be submitted by e-mail no later than 10:00 a.m. on Thursday, March 10. Late papers will receive a reduced grade (e.g., a B+ will turn into a B).**

Guidelines for Critical Reading

Whenever you set out to do a critical reading of a particular text (a book, article, speech, proposal, conference paper), you need to use the following questions as a framework to guide you as you read:

1. What's the point? This is the analysis/interpretation issue: what is the author's angle?
2. Who says? This is the validity issue: On what (data, literature) are the claims based?
3. What's new? This is the value-added issue: What does the author contribute that we don't already know?
4. Who cares? This is the significance issue, the most important issue of all, the one that subsumes all the others: Is this work worth doing? Is the text worth reading? Does it contribute something important?

Guidelines for Analytical Writing

In writing papers for this (or any) course, keep in mind the following points. They apply in particular to the final exam essay and final paper, but most of the same concerns apply to critical reaction papers as well.

1. Pick an important issue: Make sure that your analysis meets the "so what" test. Why should anyone care about this topic, anyway? Pick an issue or issues that matters and that you really care about.
2. Keep focused: Don't lose track of the point you are trying to make and make sure the reader knows where you are heading and why. If you are writing a final exam essay, be sure to answer the question. If the question has several parts, cover them all. Don't stray from the main analytical focus defined by the question.
3. Aim for clarity: Don't assume that the reader knows what you're talking about; it's your job to make your points clearly. In part this means keeping focused and avoiding distracting clutter. But in part it means that you need to make more than elliptical references to concepts and sources or to professional experience. When referring to readings (from the course or elsewhere), explain who said what and why this point is pertinent to the issue at hand. When drawing on your own experiences or observations, set the context so the reader can understand what you mean. Proceed as though you were writing for an educated person who is neither a member of this class nor a professional colleague, someone who has not read the material you are referring to.
4. Provide analysis: A good paper is more than a catalogue of facts, concepts, experiences, or references; it is more than a description of the content of a set of readings; it is more than an expression of your educational values or an announcement of your prescription for what ails education. A good paper is a logical and coherent analysis of the issues raised within your chosen area of focus. This means that your paper should aim to explain rather than describe. If you give examples, be sure to tell the reader what they mean in the context of your analysis. Make sure the reader understands the connection between the various points in your paper.
5. Provide depth, insight, and connections: The best papers are ones that go beyond making obvious points, superficial comparisons, and simplistic assertions. They dig below the surface of the issue at hand, demonstrating a deeper level of understanding and an ability to make

interesting connections.

6. Support your analysis with evidence: You need to do more than simply state your ideas, however informed and useful these may be. You also need to provide evidence that reassures the reader that you know what you are talking about, thus providing a foundation for your argument. Evidence comes in part from the academic literature, whether encountered in this course or elsewhere. Evidence can also come from your own experience. Remember that you are trying to accomplish two things with the use of evidence. First, you are saying that it is not just you making this assertion but that authoritative sources and solid evidence back you up. Second, you are supplying a degree of specificity and detail, which helps to flesh out an otherwise skeletal argument.

7. Draw on course materials (this applies primarily to reaction papers, not the final paper). Your paper should give evidence that you are taking this course. You do not need to agree with any of the readings or presentations, but your paper should show you have considered the course materials thoughtfully.

8. Recognize complexity and acknowledge multiple viewpoints. The issues in the history of American education are not simple, and your paper should not propose simple solutions to complex problems. It should not reduce issues to either/or, black/white, good/bad. Your paper should give evidence that you understand and appreciate more than one perspective on an issue. This does not mean you should be wishy-washy. Instead, you should aim to make a clear point by showing that you have considered alternate views.

9. Challenge assumptions. The paper should show that you have learned something by doing this paper. There should be evidence that you have been open to changing your mind.

10. Do not overuse quotation: In a short paper, long quotations (more than a sentence or two in length) are generally not appropriate. Even in longer papers, quotations should be used sparingly unless they constitute a primary form of data for your analysis. In general, your paper is more effective if written primarily in your own words, using ideas from the literature but framing them in your own way in order to serve your own analytical purposes. However, selective use of quotations can be very useful as a way of capturing the author's tone or conveying a particularly aptly phrased point.

11. Cite your sources: You need to identify for the reader where particular ideas or examples come from. This can be done through in-text citation: Give the author's last name, publication year, and (in the case of quotations) page number in parentheses at the end of the sentence or paragraph where the idea is presented -- e.g., (Kliebard, 1986, p. 22); provide the full citations in a list of references at the end of the paper. You can also identify sources with footnotes or endnotes: Give the full citation for the first reference to a text and a short citation for subsequent citations to the same text. (For critical reaction papers, you only need to give the short cite for items from the course reading; other sources require full citations.) Note that citing a source is not sufficient to fulfill the requirement to provide evidence for your argument. As spelled out in #6 above, you need to transmit to the reader some of the substance of what appears in the source cited, so the reader can understand the connection with the point you are making and can have some meat to chew on. The best analytical writing provides a real feel for the material and not just a list of assertions and citations. Depth, insight, and connections count for more than

a superficial collection of glancing references. In other words, don't just mention an array of sources without drawing substantive points and examples from these sources; and don't draw on ideas from such sources without identifying the ones you used.

12. Take care in the quality of your prose: A paper that is written in a clear and effective style makes a more convincing argument than one written in a murky manner, even when both writers start with the same basic understanding of the issues. However, writing that is confusing usually signals confusion in a person's thinking. After all, one key purpose of writing is to put down your ideas in a way that permits you and others to reflect on them critically, to see if they stand up to analysis. So you should take the time to reflect on your own ideas on paper and revise them as needed. You may want to take advantage of the opportunity in this course to submit a draft of the final paper, revise it in light of comments, and then resubmit the revised version. This, after all, is the way writers normally proceed. Outside of the artificial world of the classroom, writers never turn in their first draft as their final statement on a subject.

Reference Books on Research, Writing, and Making Arguments

I recommend the following books to all doctoral students. They can be a big help in thinking about research, writing, and making arguments. These books have been ordered as recommended readings and are available on the course shelf in the textbook section of the Stanford bookstore (also in the trade book section under style manuals). They are also on reserve at Cubberley Library:

Wayne C. Booth et al. (2003). *The Craft of Research* (2nd ed.). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Howard S. Becker. (1998). *Tricks of the Trade: How to Think About Your Research While You're Doing It*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Joseph M. Williams. (1995). *Style: Toward Clarity and Grace*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Anthony Weston. (2001). *A Rulebook for Arguments* (3rd ed.). Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing.

The *Booth* book provides a smart and systematic account of how to carry out research from beginning to end. He starts with the problem of how to conceptualize a study and formulate a question, then moves on to a discussion of how to deal with all the succeeding steps in the research process: dealing with data, using scholarly sources, constructing valid claims based on data, formulating persuasive arguments, representing data, organizing research reports, revising and refocusing arguments, and so on. This is a wonderfully rich resource for anyone who wants to do research and write about it. He manages to be both quite explicit (the difference between a research problem and a research question; how to use quotations in academic writing) while always emphasizing the intellectual work that research entails.

The *Becker* book focuses on "tricks of the trade" in doing research. What he means by this is not the technical tricks but the intellectual tricks that allow researchers to make sense of their data – by asking productive questions, adopting fruitful angles for analysis, employing logical strategies, and avoiding common mental traps. In separate chapters he focuses on imagery (metaphors, images of how things work as a starting place for research efforts), sampling (data as a mechanism for persuasion, validity, representativeness), concepts (uses of theory, approaches to conceptualizing what you see), and logic (considering the full range of possibilities, looking for

what's missing). He provides some wonderful examples of "how to think about research while you're doing it" (in the words of the subtitle), drawing heavily on his own research experience. Tricks include such things as treating the exception as the rule, looking for the case that would upset your theory, and exploring the assumptions behind the observation that "nothing is happening."

The book by *Williams* is the best book there is on the issue of how to write in a clear, concise, effective, and graceful manner. It's better than the old standby in this category – Strunk and White's *Elements of Style* – because it goes beyond simply stating a principle and providing an example. As Williams puts it on the opening page, "I want to do more than just urge writers to 'Omit Needless Words' or 'Be clear.' Telling me to 'Be clear' is like telling me to 'Hit the ball squarely.' I know that. What I don't know is how to do it. To explain how to write clearly, I have to go beyond platitudes." This is exactly what he does. He provides a wonderfully illuminating course on the basic principles of good writing, along with a rich array of examples both before and after the application of these principles. This is great stuff that can help any of us clean up our prose.

The *Weston* book is the clearest and most usable manual available to help scholars make effective arguments. The author is a philosopher who has an uncanny ability to provide the lay reader with a concise and understandable outline of the basic rules for constructing arguments that work. In it he walks the reader through the minefield of fallacies that so frequently destroy the most earnest attempts to make claims and support them. His rules are easy to follow and his examples are quite helpful in showing what good and bad arguments look like in practice. The first part of the book focuses on the problem of creating effective short arguments; the second part extends this to the process of writing arguments that extend over a full-length paper or book. This short book is a must read for all of us who are in the business of trying to write in a manner that is both logical and persuasive.