

Education 325A
Doctoral Proseminar 1
Fall, 2017
Thursday, 9:00-11:50, CERAS 204
3 units

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This course is the first in the proseminar sequence required for all first-year doctoral students in the Graduate School of Education. The three courses are organized around a series of six questions judged fundamental to the practice and study of education.

Part I, Fall Quarter	What is taught to whom? How is schooling organized?
Part II, Winter Quarter	How do people learn? How do teachers teach and how do they learn to teach?
Part III, Spring Quarter	How are educational systems organized? What are the roles of education in society?

Course Description

The aim of this class is to give first-year doctoral students in education a grounding in some of the big issues surrounding the social role and social practice of schooling, with special emphasis on teaching and learning in classrooms and on school organization. Each of you will soon be specializing in a particular component of the educational domain, but it will be helpful to you to be able to locate your own special area to broader themes and literatures in the field. A lot of the readings in the class are nodal pieces in the network of educational citations; these are works you need to become familiar with. This and the other proseminar classes should help you answer crucial questions about your own work. What is your study a case of? What larger issues does it resonate with? What does it contribute to the larger discourse about school and society?

In the first week we look at the backstory of schooling in the U.S. We explore its historical roots, the nature of its original mission, and how that mission evolved over time. And we also examine the conflicting mix of goals that we have imposed on schools and the various social functions they have accumulated over time.

In week two, we turn to the core practices of teaching and learning in classrooms. Included as issues such as: the distinctive characteristics of teaching as a professional practice;

the socialization of teachers and the incentives that shape the way teachers play their roles; and the grammar of schooling that both defines it and makes it resistant to change.

In week three, we look at the teacher-student relationship in the classroom and how this relationship is experienced by both parties. We also examine some of the ways that schools create winners and losers, how they both promote and ameliorate social differences.

In week four, we look at school organization from several perspectives: alternative ways of school organization and their implications for school outcomes; the loose coupling of the nested components of American schooling (classroom, school, school district, and state system) that make it different from other organizations; and the reasons that structural reforms often have little impact on teaching practice.

In week five, we look at the social and cultural pressures that shape school. This includes examining how the shared expectations of teachers, students, and parents reinforce our conception of what a “real school” is; the rampant formalism that runs through schooling, favoring process over content; and the organizational features of schooling that allow it to carry social functions that the organization of families does not allow.

In week six, we look at the role that race, class, and culture have in schooling. Among other things, this means examining the class and race factors that shape the kind of cultural knowledge and skill (cultural capital) schools value and try to teach; and the problem of attempting to teach this culture without at the same time demeaning or repressing other cultures.

In week seven, we look at the issue of cultural capital compared to other forms of capital. And then we consider two different theoretical perspectives on the social role of the school curriculum – the functionalist view that schools teach the knowledge and values that all adults need in order to function in a modern society; and the social reproduction view that schools teach different knowledge and values to students from different backgrounds, thus preparing them for stratified futures.

In week eight, we read a classic book by the political economist Albert Hirschman – *Exit, Voice, and Loyalty* – which explores the mechanisms by which different kinds of organizations correct for dysfunctional outcomes. He shows how market organizations are primarily responsive to exit, in which customers signal their dissatisfaction with a product by buying another one instead. On the other hand, political organizations are primarily responsive to voice, in which clients signal their dissatisfaction by directly voicing their complaint. From this view, low functioning schools can be seen as unhappy hybrids – political organizations that respond to voice but provoke dissatisfied customers to exit.

In week nine, we read another classic book by the political scientist and anthropologist James Scott – *Seeing Like a State*. Here he addresses the problems inherent in state-initiated efforts at social engineering. The issue is that such schemes too often involve an attempt by planners in the capital to impose a highly rationalized and universalistic model of social order on remote ecologies that are organic and particularistic. Which sounds a lot like what happens in school reform.

In week ten, we look at the role that educational researchers play in shaping educational policy, the nature of educational research as a practice, and the trajectory of academic careers in a stratified system of higher education.

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. (While I strongly encourage students to participate in discussions in class, 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.](#)”

Class Structure

Process for Handling Papers: Please submit all papers to the appropriate folder on the course Canvas website. Amanda Frye Leinhos, Quentin Sedlacek, and I will be commenting on and grading the papers for the class. By the end of the quarter, you will have received feedback from all of us. Quentin will be keeping track of who has graded what and will send your paper each week to the appropriate reader. Papers should be Word documents, single-spaced and left justified. Label reaction papers with your last name and the due date, e.g., Labaree 10-06-16. Label final paper or final exam with your last name and either Final Paper or Final Exam.

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 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. It’s perfectly ok, even desirable, for you to draw on your own experience with schools, as long as you use this experience as a case in point in an analytical argument that is related to the reading.

Also keep in mind that these short papers can be more informal in style and structure than the final paper in the course, which should adhere more closely to academic norms for analytical writing. 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 approximately 1000 words in length. They can run longer, if you wish, but this is not necessary or even necessarily desirable. Reaction papers should be turned in no later than 9:00 a.m. on the class day for which the particular readings are assigned. All papers in this class must be submitted by e-mail. Save your paper as an MS Word document and upload it to Canvas. We will be using Word's "tracking changes" function to record comments in the text. Canvas will notify you when your paper is ready to pick up. If you turn in more than four papers, we will count the four with the highest grades. You will receive your paper back before the next class.

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 thoughts about the 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 us about the issues in the readings and in education. 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.

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 your section instructor gives advance approval for this topic). I explain these options below. Whichever option you pick, you should review the "Guidelines for Analytical Writing" near the end of this syllabus. All take-home final exams and final papers must be uploaded to Canvas no later than 5:00 p.m. on Monday, December 11.

1) **Take-Home Final Exam:** On Thursday, November 16, I will distribute a list of 3 or 4 final exam questions by email. These questions will ask you to analyze broad issues in the history of school reform by drawing on required readings in this course. Pick one of these questions and write a persuasive analytical essay in response. These essays should be a minimum of 3,000 words. They are due no later than Monday, December 11 at 5:00 p.m. Please upload them to Canvas.

2) **Final Paper:** If you choose option 2, 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 3,000 words. Basically, any topic that you and your section instructor agree on will be acceptable for this assignment. A one-page proposal for this paper is due on October 19. If you turn in a draft by Monday, November 20, you will be permitted to revise the paper (after receiving our comments) and submit it for re-evaluation. The final version of the paper is due no later than Monday, December 11 at 5:00 p.m. Please post your proposal and paper by the deadline to the appropriate folder on Canvas.

The focus of the final paper is wide open, to be negotiated between you and us via your paper proposal. Through the short reaction papers, we will get a good sense of your ability to wrestle with the readings in 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 pursuing these interests. 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 may you be exploring in your qualifying paper next year or eventually in a 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're open to anything that is productive for you and that is loosely related to this course. 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.

Readings

All of the readings for this class are available as PDFs on the web. This includes the full text of the two books assigned for the course, Hirschman and Scott. Readings can be found on the GSE Canvas system at <https://web.stanford.edu/group/canvas/discovery/>. All students enrolled in the class will receive an email from GSE IT telling you how to log in. IT support for any problems with the Canvas system is available at instructionalsupport@stanford.edu.

Course Outline

Below are the topics we will cover, week by week, with the readings for each week. All readings are available on Canvas. I will be sending out tips every week about how to approach that week's readings.

1) 9/28: Introduction: The Historical Roots and Competing Goals of the U.S. School System

- Labaree, David F. (1997). Public goods, private goods: The American struggle over educational goals. *American Educational Research Journal*, 34:1 (Spring), 39-81.
- Labaree, David F. (2010). Founding the American school system. In *Someone has to fail: The zero-sum game of public schooling* (pp. 42-79). Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

2) 10/5: The Problems of Teaching as a Practice

- Cohen, David K. (1988). Teaching practice: Plus que ça change. In Phillip W. Jackson (ed.), *Contributing to Educational change* (pp. 27-84). Berkeley: McCutchan.
- Lortie, Dan C. (1969). The balance of control and autonomy in elementary teaching. In Amatai Etzioni (Ed.), *The semi-professions and their organization. Teachers, nurses, social workers*. New York, 1-53.
- Tyack, David & Tobin, William. (1994). The "grammar" of schooling: Why has it been so hard to change? *American Educational Research Journal* 31: 3 (Autumn), 453-479.

3) 10/12: The Classroom, the Teacher-Student Relationship, and Tracking

- Jackson, Philip. (1990). The daily grind. *Life in classrooms* (pp. 33-50). New York: Teachers College Press.
- Waller, Willard. (1932/1965). The teacher-pupil relationship. In *The sociology of teaching* (pp. 189-211). New York: Wiley.
- Oakes, Jeannie. (1986). Keeping track, part 1: The policy and practice of curriculum inequality. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 68, 12-17.
- Fine, Michelle. (1986). Why urban adolescents drop into and out of public high school. *The Teachers College Record*, 87(3), 393-409.

4) 10/19: The Organization of the School

- Katz, Michael. (1971). Alternative proposals for American education: The nineteenth century. In *Class, Bureaucracy, and Schools* (pp. 3-55). New York: Praeger.
- Weick, Karl. (1976). Educational organizations as loosely-coupled systems. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 21, 1-19.
- Cuban, Larry. (2013). Why so many structural changes in schools and so little reform in teaching practice? *Inside the black box of classroom practice: Change without reform in American education* (pp. 155-187). Cambridge: Harvard Education Press.
- Proposal due for final paper

5) 10/26: Expectations and the Roots of the Stability of the School as an Organization

- Metz, Mary H. (1990). Real school: A universal drama amid disparate experience. In Douglas E. Mitchell & Margaret E. Goertz (Eds.), *Education Politics for the New Century* (pp. 75-91). New York: Falmer.
- Meyer, John W. & Rowan, Brian. (1983). The structure of educational organizations. In *Organizational environments: Ritual and rationality* (pp. 71-97), edited by John W. Meyer and William R. Scott. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Parsons, Talcott. (1959). The school as a social system: Some of its functions in American society. In *Social structure and personality* (pp. 129-154). New York: Free Press.
- Labaree, David F. (2014). Schooling in the United States: Historical analyses. In D.C. Phillips (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of educational theory and philosophy* (pp. 740-43). Sage Publications: Thousand Oaks, CA.

6) 11/2: Class, Race, and Culture in the School

- Bernstein, Basil. (1977). Social class, language and socialization. In Jerome Karabel & A. H. Halsey (eds.), *Power and ideology in education* (pp. 473-486). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Ladson-Billings, G. (1998). Just what is critical race theory and what's it doing in a nice field like education? *International journal of qualitative studies in education*, 11(1), 7-24.
- Delpit, Lisa. (1995). The silenced dialogue. In *Other people's children* (pp. 21-47). New York: New Press.
- Recommended: The Problem We All Live With, Parts 1 and 2. (2015). This American Life Podcast. <http://www.thisamericanlife.org/radio-archives/episode/562/the-problem-we-all-live-with>.

7) 11/9: Cultural Difference and the School Curriculum

- Bourdieu, Pierre. (1986). The forms of capital. In John G. Richardson (ed.), *Handbook of theory and research for the sociology of education* (pp. 241-258). New York: Greenwood.
- Dreeben, Robert. (1968). The contribution of schooling to the learning of norms: Independence, achievement, universalism, and specificity. In *On what is learned in school* (pp. 63-90). Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.
- Anyon, Jean. (1981). Social class and school knowledge. *Curriculum Inquiry*, 11, 3-42.

8) 11/16: Schools as Political and Market Entities

- Hirschman, Albert O. (2006). *Exit, voice, and loyalty: Responses to decline in firms, organizations, and states*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Chubb, John E. & Moe, Terry M. (1988). Politics, markets, and the organization of schools. *American Political Science Review*, 82:4 (December), 1065-1087.
- Final exam questions distributed

11/20: Final paper drafts due (if you want a chance to revise and resubmit)

11/23: No class, Thanksgiving break

9) 11/30: The Problem of School Reform – Imposing a Rationalized Vision on the Ecology of the Classroom; Schooling and the Meritocracy

Scott, James. (1999). *Seeing like a state*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
Introduction, chapters 1-2 and 9-10.

McClay, William M. (2016). A distant elite: How meritocracy went wrong. *The Hedgehog Review* 18:2 (Summer). http://www.iasc-culture.org/THR/THR_article_2016_Summer_McClay.php

10) 12/7: The Role of Researchers in Educational Policy and the Prospects for New Researchers in the University

Cohen, David K. & Garet, Michael S. (1975). Reforming educational policy with applied social research. *Harvard Educational Review*, 45, 17-43.

Weber, Max. (1919/1958). Science as a vocation. In H. H. Gerth & C. Wright Mills, *From Max Weber* (pp. 129-156). New York: Oxford University Press.

Labaree, David F. (2012). Sermon on educational research. *Bildungsgeschichte: International Journal for the Historiography of Education*, 2:1, 78-87.

12/11: Final papers and final exams due 5 pm

Guidelines for Critical Reading

As a critical reader of a particular text (a book, article, speech, proposal), 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 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?

If this is the way critical readers are going to approach a text, then as an analytical writer you need to guide readers toward the desired answers to each of these questions.

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 paper or take-home exam for this class. Many of the same concerns apply to critical reaction papers as well, but these short papers can be more informal than the final paper.

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.

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., (Ravitch, 2000, 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.