

## SOC/SPI 228: Schooled: Education, Opportunity, and Inequality

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Office Hours: Calendly

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What is the role of schools in modern society? What do schools teach students, in addition to reading, writing, and arithmetic? Is schooling different than an education? Who succeeds in school, and why? How do schools reproduce, interrupt, or legitimate the social order?

In this course, you will apply sociological perspectives to the study of education. We will study the role of schooling in stratification and socialization processes; examine how students' experiences vary by class, race, and gender; consider variation in the experiences of students in schools by place; and study how schools affect social mobility.

By the end of this course, you will be able to:

- Apply the multiple theoretical frameworks that scholars have used to describe the role of education in society and how educational institutions differentially affect students' experiences.
- Critically read and synthesize theoretical and empirical research articles.
- Reconsider your own educational experience through multiple lenses.

*Course Philosophy.* Because professors think about teaching, learning, and evaluating students in diverse ways, let me say a few words about my own philosophy.

*Engage with us.* Engage with the content and the course team. By engage, we mean more than attending and participating in all classes and precepts (which we, of course, expect)! While this is a lecture class, it will be interactive, and there will be some time in each lecture where you talk to your peers and with the class as a whole. Beyond class time, we highly encourage you to come to Prof. Jennings and your preceptor's office hours at least once during the semester. We will post office hour schedules and sign-ups on Canvas.

*Engage with your peers.* By design, in this course, we have students from across all 4 years at Princeton. Based on my teaching experiences, I know that you are surrounded by peers who a) are fascinating people, b) likely had different pre-Princeton experiences with education than you, and c) are majoring (or planning to major) in many different departments. Make a point of getting to know your peers.

*Your peers are your teammates.* For me, being a professor is more like being a coach of a team sport than a judge in a zero-sum contest. That means that my objective is to get you all over the "goal" line successfully, while also supporting and pushing each of you to do your best work individually.

*Adjust your lens.* We encourage you to think about grades as developmental feedback, not a “sorting hat,” or as a reward or punishment. In this class, grading is “standards-based.” What that means is that everyone can succeed by meeting the standard for a given grade, rather than grades being a scarce commodity. Try to think of grades as a signal of where you are in a learning trajectory, not a portal into your soul. Our goal is to help you improve and ultimately meet a very high-performance standard that sets you up for success in your JP, senior thesis and beyond.

### **Course Requirements and Grading:**

<u>Assignment</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Reading Responses (9)	27%
Paper 1 (Midterm paper)	25%
Final paper proposal	3%
Paper 2 (Final paper)	35%
Participation	10%

Assignment of grades: A (93.5 and above), A- (90-<93.5), B+ (86.5-<90), B (83.5-<86.5), B- (80-<83.5), C+ (76.5-<80), C ((73.5-<76.5), C- (70-<73.5).

**Papers:** You will receive detailed directions for your papers well in advance of their due date, as well as the rubric on which they will be evaluated. In this class, we will conduct grading blindly (for your papers, not your reading responses), so please upload your paper without your name in the document and with your Tiger ID number as your document title.

**Reading responses (400 words):** Reading responses provide us with the opportunity to process what we have read, read our peers’ work, and generate questions for discussion in advance of class. In the 9 weeks you have responses due, we will post one or more prompts to which you will respond. We are evaluating these for engagement and completion, not assigning letter grades. If you write a complete, polished response following the guidelines set out here, you will receive full credit each week.

Your responses should incorporate all readings, but we are not looking for summaries. We want you to make an argument in response to the prompt, to critically analyze what you have read, and to identify common themes or tensions across the readings. These are due on Monday nights at 11:59p. Your first reading response is due in Week 3 (February 12<sup>th</sup>).

**Lateness Policy:** We hope we don’t need to go here! But here is the policy: For each 24 hours a piece of work is late, 10% of the total number of points available will be deducted.

**Participation:** We expect you to attend *all* lectures and precepts. Happily, this is not a class where you will be anonymous. If you are sick, please send Prof. Jennings and your preceptor an email. Participation refers to active engagement with the material and with your peers, not simply talking. Listening to your peers is a key dimension of participation. In the same way, responding to and building upon their ideas is also important. We also appreciate that people

have many ways of contributing; responding to your peers' reading responses is another way to participate.

**Office hours:** Office hours are both an opportunity to talk about class content and assignments, and an opportunity for us to get to know each other. I strongly encourage all of you to visit my office hours at least once during the semester and to come to your preceptors' office hours as well.

**AI/ChatGPT:** Educational institutions consistently have greeted new technology with confusion, fear, and resistance. Before ChatGPT, educators worried about the effects of calculators, applications like spell check, or crowdsourced information via Wikipedia. New technology alters the knowledge and capabilities needed to lead flourishing lives, affecting not only the labor market, but our participation in the collective enterprise of democratic deliberation. AI is already transforming our world, remaking many jobs and leading to higher returns to skills not easily duplicated by AI, such as those taught in this course. With that preamble, here is our course policy:

- You can use ChatGPT as a *resource*, but you cannot directly copy sentences from ChatGPT into your own work. As with any source, when someone copies verbatim or omits a citation without acknowledging its contribution to one's thinking, we call that academic dishonesty. The same is true with ChatGPT. If you choose to use it, treat it as a *starting point* for your original thinking and writing, not a substitute.
- Your baseline assumption should be that ChatGPT's information is incorrect. I have identified a number of education policy-related errors in testing it myself. Confirm ChatGPT-provided information with secondary sources. Ultimately, you are responsible for its mistakes.
- If you do choose to use AI/ChatGPT tools, you should include a statement at the bottom of your assignment explaining how you used it.

**Week 1: What is the role of schools in modern society? What do schools teach students, in addition to reading, writing, and arithmetic? How do schools reproduce, interrupt, or legitimate the social order?**

Westover, Tara. 2018. *Educated*. Part 1. Pages 1-150. [purchase book – at Labyrinth or elsewhere, or electronic copy]

Parsons, Talcott. 1964. “The School Class as a Social System: Some of Its Functions in American Society.” Pp. 129-154 in *Social Structure and Personality*. New York: The Free Press.

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**Week 2: Is schooling different than education?**

Westover, Tara. 2018. *Educated*. Parts 2 and 3. Pages 151-328.

Collins, Randall. 1971. “[Functional and Conflict Theories of Educational Stratification](#).” *American Sociological Review* 36:1002-1019.

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**Week 3: To what extent, and how, does family background matter in family life and in schools? Part I**

Lareau, Annette. 2003. *Unequal Childhoods: Class, Race, and Family Life*. Introduction, Parts 1 and 2. (pages 1-161) and Appendix B: Theory: Understanding the Work of Pierre Bourdieu. (361-371)

Bowles, Samuel and Herbert Gintis. 1976. *Schooling in Capitalist America: Educational Reform and the Contradictions of Economic Life*. New York: Basic Books. (p. 102-124)

*Reading Response due, Monday 11:59p*

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**Week 4: To what extent, and how, does family background matter in family life and in schools? Part II**

Lareau, Annette. 2003. *Unequal Childhoods: Class, Race, and Family Life*. Part 3 and Chapter 13. (pages 162-311)

Calarco, Jessica. 2019. Chapter 6: Social Class and Student-Teacher Interactions. Pages 96-109 in *Education and Society: An Introduction to the Key Issues in the Sociology of Education*.

*Reading Response due, Monday 11:59p*

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#### **Week 4: How do immigrant students experience growing up in American schools?**

Gonzales, Roberto G. 2015. *Lives in Limbo: Undocumented and Coming of Age in America*. University of California Press. Chapters 2-7 (35-175).

Lee, Jennifer, and Min Zhou. 2014. "The Success Frame and Achievement Paradox: The Costs and Consequences for Asian Americans." *Race and Social Problems* 6: 38-55

*Reading Response due, Monday 11:59p*

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#### **Week 5: How do schooling experiences vary by student gender and sexuality? Part 1**

DiPrete, Thomas A., and Claudia Buchmann. 2013. *The Rise of Women: The Growing Gender Gap in Education and What It Means for American Schools*. Russell Sage Foundation. Chapters 1 (1-24), Chapters 4 & 5 (77-115).

Morris, Edmund. *Learning the Hard Way: Masculinity, Place, and the Gender Gap in Education. Introduction and Chapters 1-4.*

*Reading Response due, Monday 11:59p*

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#### **Week 6: How do schooling experiences vary by student gender and sexuality? Part 2**

Pascoe, C.J. 2012. *Dude, You're a Fag: Masculinity and Sexuality in High School*. Pages 1-155.

Mittleman, Joel. 2022. "Intersecting the Academic Gender Gap: The Education of Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual America." *American Sociological Review* 87(2): 303-335

*No reading response; Midterm paper due Friday, 11:59p.*

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#### **Week 7: Between-School Differences: Urban Schools**

Fine, Michelle. 1987. "Silencing in Public Schools." *Language Arts* 64(2): 157-174.

Nolan, Kathleen. 2011. *Police in the Hallways: Discipline in an Urban School*. Introduction and Chapters 1-3 (pages 1-72) and Chapter 5 (95-115).

*No Reading Response Due*

### **Week 8: Between-School Differences: Rural Schools**

Edin, Kathryn, Luke Schaefer, and Timothy Nelson. 2023. *The Injustice of Place*. Chapters 2 and 3. (39-93)

Carr, Patrick and Maria Kefalas. 2009. *Hollowing Out the Middle: The Rural Brain Drain and What It Means for America*. (Introduction, Chapter 1: The Achievers, Chapter 2: The Stayers (1-85))

*Reading Response due, Monday 11:59p [Will address Weeks 7 & 8]*

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### **Week 9: Between-School Differences: Suburban Schools**

Warikoo, Natasha. 2022. *Race at the Top: Asian Americans and Whites in Pursuit of the American Dream in Suburban High Schools*. University of Chicago Press: Introduction, Chapters 1-2

Herold, Benjamin. 2024. *Disillusioned: Five Families and the Unraveling of America's Suburbs*. Selected chapters.

*Reading Response due, Monday 11:59p*

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### **Week 10: Between-School Differences: Private Schools**

Khan, Shamus. 2011. *Privilege: The Making of an Adolescent Elite at St. Paul's School*. Introduction and Chapters 1-3 (Pages 10-124).

*Reading Response due, Monday 11:59p*

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### **Week 11: Between-School Differences: Schools Outside the US**

Chiang, Yi-Lin. 2022. *Study Gods: How the New Chinese Elite Prepare for Global Competition*. Princeton University Press. Pages 1-128.

*Reading Response due, Monday 11:59p*

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### **Week 12: Wild Card/Wrap Up**

*Final Response (Course Take-Homes) Due, Monday 11:59p*