

TE 991
Issues in Urban Education

Spring 2005
107 Erickson Hall
5:10-8:00 pm, Thursdays

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Course Overview

The issues confronting urban public schools are inextricably linked to the social, economic and political conditions present within the urban environment. Too often, research efforts and educational reform efforts have overlooked these connections and the problems confronting schools have been addressed without adequate consideration of the social, cultural, and historical contexts.

As the course begins, we will theorize the urban with respect to its social, economic, cultural and ecological foundations.

- *What frameworks might be used to analyze urban processes and outcomes?*
- *What is the relationship between economic structures and urban life?*
- *To what extent are urban spaces expressions of social (and socio-economic) relations?*

The course will then take a sociohistorical perspective to explore the ways in which schools have been influenced by changes in the urban environment.

- *In what ways can we conceptualize urban education and studies of urban educational practices and reform?*
- *What have been the developmental trajectories of urban schooling in the United States?*

- *Historically, what conflicts have arisen as urban schools have developed? How have these conflicts been resolved and who has benefited from these resolutions?*

Finally, the course will examine how researchers, leaders, and activists can respond to the conditions and issues that exist there.

- *How are current issues in urban education embedded in social, historical, cultural, economic, and political contexts?*

Course Topics and Schedule

Date	Topic	Reading	Other?/Due Dates
1/13	Theorizing the Urban: Popular Culture		
1/20	Theorizing the Urban Structural Perspectives	Giddens readings on structure-agency duality	
1/27	Structural Perspectives: The case of urban poverty	Wilson, Intro, Ch. 1, 2	
2/3	Structural perspectives: Urban Schools	Noguera Ch. 1 & 2	Project Proposal
2/10	Theorizing the Urban: Cultural Perspectives	Bourdieu, Logic of practice; Forms of capital	
2/17	Cultural perspectives	Rosaldo, Intro, Ch. 1, 4, 9 (epilogue)	
2/24	Cultural perspectives Urban schools	Noguera Ch. 3&4	
3/3	Historical perspectives	Introductory readings from Tyack, Anyon, Mirel	
3/10	SPRING BREAK – No class meeting		
3/17	Historical	Mirel (through	Midterm

	perspectives: The case of Detroit	1945)	progress report
3/24	Detroit continued	Post-1945	
3/31	Ecological perspectives		
4/7	The future of urban education	Anyon, Ch. 8	Selected annotated bibliography
4/14	AERA – No class meeting		
4/21	The future of urban education	Noguera Ch.5-7	
4/28	The future of urban education Works in Progress Conference	No reading	Handouts to accompany presentation
5/5	The future of urban education Works in Progress Conference	No reading	Presentation Handouts

Course Activities

Class Readings and Class Discussion:

Meaningful class discussion is a crucial part of the learning experience for students and instructors. Because we expect everyone to complete the class readings and come prepared for discussion, we will not have reading responses. This will give more time for individual writing projects. As such, preparing for class discussions will rely on students and instructors thinking deeply about assigned readings—developing defensible interpretations, negotiating meanings, and drawing connections to other works, concepts, or phenomena.

ANGEL Discussions:

We will use ANGEL to help us follow up on class discussions, make connections between class readings or discussions, and provide a

means for requesting specific kinds of feedback on students' work. This medium will allow us to extend our instructional time beyond the limits of our six-week course. We hope that the conversations in class will generate sufficient interest in the issues of social theory and urban education, that no requirement for individual participation will be necessary. We consider this participation as one of many important forms of participation in the course.

Anchoring a Discussion:

During several of the class sessions, we will ask a small group to anchor a discussion over a set of readings. What this means is that the group in charge will come with a set of activities and questions to get the class involved in the readings for the session. Activities and discussions should last about two hours.

Writing Groups:

Linking our own questions to the multiple perspectives on urban education issues that we will consider in the course is critical to helping us consider how our own work is embedded in social-historical contexts. In addition to exploring social theory and urban education, we think that this course provides an ideal space to work on academic writing. As the final assignment is designed to provide optimal flexibility, we hope that everyone in the class will be able to find a writing product that will work for them over the fifteen weeks of the course. To help in this process, we want to devote time in class once a week for students to get together in small groups according to stage of graduate school and/or interests. The idea of these groups is for students to work together—brainstorming, sharing drafts, and eliciting critical, yet constructive feedback from a small group of peers.

Textual Products:

We want the writing assignments that emerge from the course to be valuable products for everyone involved. Given that students are at different stages of their graduate work and have different interests, this means that there will be a great deal of flexibility in creating projects that make sense for a fifteen-week period and for your particular stage of graduate school. Our thinking is that everyone will develop some piece that will utilize course themes and readings to push your work forward. Our hope is that these pieces can also be used either for the comprehensive exam option 2 portfolio, for

progress toward completion of the dissertation, or for “capital” in the academy. Here are some ideas to get the ball rolling:

- An article for a peer-reviewed journal
- A draft of a dissertation proposal
- A draft of a proposal for a dissertation fellowship
- A focused literature review
- A proposal for a conference
- A write-up of a pilot study, practicum, or a section of a dissertation chapter
- A research design for a pilot study, practicum, or dissertation
- An annotated syllabus for a course to be taught at the undergraduate or graduate level

Works in Progress Conference

During the final two class sessions, we would like to give everyone a chance to share their ongoing or prospective work as it relates to the issues of the course. For “academic capital” purposes, we can give this conference a real name (Works in Progress is merely a title-filler). You should plan to give a 10-15 minute talk showing how your work intersects with the issues of social theory and urban education that are central to this course. You should also plan to distribute a handout (front and back side of a page) for your colleagues in the class.

Course Texts

Required:

Mirel, J. (1993). *The Rise and Fall of an Urban School System: Detroit, 1907-81*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.

Noguera, P. (2003). *City Schools and the American Dream: Reclaiming the Promise of Public Education*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Rosaldo, R. (1993). *Culture and truth: The remaking of social analysis*. Boston: Beacon Press.

Williams, W. J. (1996). *When Work Disappears: The World of the New Urban Poor*. New York: Vintage.

The following texts are optional.

Anyon, J. (1997). *Ghetto Schooling: A Political Economy of Urban Education Reform*. New York: Teacher's College Press.

Bourdieu, P. (1992). *The Logic of Practice*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Davis, M. (1990). *City of Quartz: Excavating the Future in Los Angeles*. New York: Vintage.

Steinberg, S and Kincheloe, J. (Eds). (2004). *19 Urban Questions: Teaching in the City*. New York: Peter Lang.

Tyack, D. (1974). *The One Best System: A History of American Urban Education*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Grading

Given the different stages that students are at different stages of their graduate careers, grading for the course cannot neatly be defined. Course grades will be based on a combination of class participation, final presentation, and your individual project. Since individual projects will vary in their scope and level of writing challenge, the relative weights of these course activities will also vary by individual.