Sociology of Education-Hunter College

SOC. 203 Prof. Daniel M. Bronstein
Spring 2025 db1003@hunter.cuny.edu
T/F 11:30-12:45
Office Hrs: T/F By Appointments by schedule

I. About the Course: This class will examine contemporary education through the lens of Sociological Theory. Education includes schooling as well as other social institutions, media, popular culture, and the family. Topics to be discussed include inequality and social stratification, the politics of knowledge, school reform and privatization, college admissions and affirmative action. Throughout the course, you will be encouraged to cultivate the sociological imagination, viewing educational issues in their historical, social, and political contexts, and in their relationships to other social phenomena.

- How do social scientists approach the study of education?
- What can educational systems tell us about a particular group or society?
- Why is it important to study education within the socio-historical context in which it is produced and reconfigured?

Course Learning Outcomes: Upon successful completion of the course students will be able

to:

- Apply sociological approach to Education.
- Understand the centrality of education to everyday life.
- Understand how various societal factors, including gender, sexuality, politics, economics and race and ethnicity impact the educational experience.
- Cultivate respectful interpersonal discourse on sensitive topics.
- Cultivate critical reading and text analysis.

II. How Does this Course Work?

Course Structure: Lectures are supplemented by readings and some written assignments due the day that the reading assignment is due. In other words, please have read and please submit by the day of the assignment.

Individual assignments should be emailed directly to instructor at db1003@Hunter.Cuny.Edu. Students can expect individual feedback from instructor within a day or so, via Hunter email. You will also need access to Hunter email and Blackboard.

Technical Issues:

For assistance with any technical questions please see this link to student Services: https://ww2.hunter.cuny.edu/students/

III. Class Conduct

We will be learning from our texts and from each other, thus bringing us into contact with varied - - and conflicting - - perspectives on education and societal structure at large. Mutual respect and sensitivity are required for class particularly since discussion is an essential component of class. At the same time, openness is crucial to making our conversations truly substantive. Your participation in class discussions and out of class activities - - based on mutual respect -- is critical. In other words, you should come to these discussions prepared and with an open mind.

Attendance & Class Structure:

You are both student and teacher in this class. Thus, your attendance is imperative. Absences on account of illness, family emergencies or jury duty will be excused w/proper documentation (e.g., a doctor's note). While class session will revolve around readings from the UC, some sessions will also utilize additional readings to be distributed and other forms of media.

IV. Course Requirements and Grades:

- Readings & Class participation – 25%
- Midterm – 20%
- T**e**rm Paper – 25% (inclusive of presentation)
- **IMPORTANT NOTE: Final papers should be handed in on or before the due date. Late papers will receive grade reductions**.
- Cumulative Final – 30%

V. Required Text

Lareau, *Unequal Childhoods: Class, Race and Family Life.* (U. Of Cal. Press, 2nd edition '11)

PLEASE NOTE: Periodically, I will also be bringing in additional readings.

Reading Strategy:

Identify the main argument (s) of each text. Devise at least one question for discussion. This can be a *clarifying question* (about something that was unclear to you), an *interpretive question* (about what the author means), or a *response question* (soliciting others' ideas about the text).

VI. Paper Guidelines:

Focusing on a debatable issue in education, you will gather evidence via research, you will report on a particular topic. This can be an opinion paper but view it more as a report. This is not a personal narrative. In sum:

- **In conjunction with instructor, students are required to devise a paper topic.**
- **Students will submit a paper proposal on 2/28/25 Each proposal must include the following:**
  - A topic discussing contemporary education in the USA.
  - An articulation of the relevance of the topic

- A listing of at least three academic sources. By" academic," we mean, books and or articles, and not website sources.
- Students will introduce paper topic w/class in 5 min. presentations.
- Students will have the option of submitting detailed outline for feedback.
- Each paper should be no less than 7 and no more than 12 pages.

Important Additional Information:

Hunter College Policy on Academic Integrity "Hunter College regards acts of academic dishonesty (e.g., plagiarism, cheating on examinations, obtaining unfair advantage, and falsification of records and official documents) as serious offenses against the values of intellectual honesty. The College is committed to enforcing the CUNY Policy on Academic Integrity and will pursue cases of academic dishonesty according to the Hunter College Academic

Hunter College Policy on Sexual Misconduct "In compliance with the CUNY Policy on Sexual Misconduct, Hunter College reaffirms the prohibition of any sexual misconduct, which includes sexual violence, sexual harassment, and gender-based harassment retaliation against students, employees, or visitors, as well as certain intimate relationships. Students who have experienced any form of sexual violence on or off campus (including CUNY-sponsored trips and events) are entitled to the rights outlined

in the Bill of Rights for Hunter College. a. Sexual Violence: Students are strongly encouraged to immediately report the incident by calling 911, contacting NYPD Special Victims Division Hotline (646-610-7272) or their local police precinct, or contacting the College's Public Safety Office (212-772-4444). b. All Other Forms of Sexual Misconduct: Students are also encouraged to contact the College's Title IX Campus Coordinator, Dean John Rose (jtrose@hunter.cuny.edu or 212-650-3262) or Colleen Barry (colleen.barry@hunter.cuny.edu or 212-772-4534) and seek complimentary services through the Counseling and Wellness Services Office, Hunter East 1123. CUNY Policy on Sexual Misconduct Link: https://www.cuny.edu/wp-content/uploads/si

ADA Policy" In compliance with the American Disability Act of 1990 (ADA) and with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Hunter College is committed to ensuring educational parity and accommodations for all students with documented disabilities and/or medical conditions. It is recommended that all students with documented disabilities (Emotional, Medical, Physical, and/or Learning) consult the Office of AccessABILITY, located in Room E1214B, to secure necessary academic accommodations. For further information and assistance, please call: (212) 772-4857 or (212) 650-3230."

Names and Personal Pronouns

I affirm all forms of gender expression and

identities. If you prefer to be called a different name than what is on the class roster, please let me know. Feel free to correct me on your gender pronoun or if you don't use a gender pronoun. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me.

LECTURE OUTLINE AND READINGS

Session #1: 1/28/25: Lecture: Introductions: A discussion of class structure and creating a learning community.

#2: 1/31: Lecture & Discussion: (L&D): Reading: **TBA-See BS Announcements.**

1st Writing Assignment due. Please briefly respond to the question "What is the purpose of education?" Please email your responses to me db1003@hunter.edu.

#3: 2/4: L&D: Reading: **TBA-See BS.**

#4: 2/7: L&D: Reading: Chapter 1 *Unequal Childhoods* & examine Appendix C Tables pp. 365-375.

*Be prepared to analyze the author's worldview and methodology.

#5: 2/11: L&D: Setting and Family. Readings: Ch. 2, pp. 35-7 & Ch. 3.

*Be prepared to discuss the significance of community and family structure to individual learning

2nd Written assignment due.

#6: 2/14: L&D: The interface between learning and the "extracurricular. Reading: Ch. 4.

*We will also explain the process for your topic proposal outline, presentations, and the final paper.

#7. 2/18: L&D: Watch Your Mouth: Adult Supervision and Language Readings: Ch. 5, p. 107 & Ch. 6. Also, be prepared to discuss child rearing and discuss the interface between learning and family language.

#8: 2/21: L&D: Language and Learning Pt. II. Reading: Ch. 7.

#9: 2/25: L&D: Parental Patterns Pt. I. Reading: Ch. 8

3rd Writing assignment due.

#10 2/28: L&D: Parental Patterns Pt. II. Reading: Ch. 9

***Proposal Due.**

#11: 3/4: L&D: Teachers or Parents? Reading: Ch. 10.

#12 A: 3/7: L&D: Fear, Punishment and Learning. Reading: Ch. 11.

4th Written assignment due.

#12B: 3/11: Paper discussion.

#13: 3/18: L&D: Fear, Punishment and Learning. Reading: Ch. 11.

#14: 3/21: L&D: How much does class matter? Reading Ch. 12. *Be prepared to share your views in reference to reading.

#15: 3/25: Midterm Review session

#16: 3/28: Midterm TO BE SUBMITTED TO ME VIA EMAIL. *DUE BY 11:59 PM*

#17: 4/1: Paper Topic Presentations

#18: 4/4: Presentations

#19: 4/8: Presentations

#20: 4/11: L&D: New Economies, Older Children. Reading: pp. 261-62 & Ch. 13.

SPRING BREAK

#21: 4/25: L&D: The view from the field. Reading: Ch. 14.

#22: 4/29: L&D: Evaluating and applying the results. Reading: Ch. 15, Afterword and Appendix A, pp. 333-360 & compare results of Appendixes C & D.

5th OPTIONAL Writing assignment due: Students can submit detailed outline including introduction (at least one paragraph).

#23: 5/2: Discussion: Special Assignment: "Rock and Roll High School" & "School of Rock."

#24: 5/6: L&D: Race and Higher Education in 21st century America. (Readings to be distributed).

#25: 5/9: L&D: Charter Schools (Readings to

be distributed).

#26 5/9 The pandemic and transformation of education in the US. (Readings to be distributed).

#27 5/13: Review Session

Final Paper Due by 11:59 PM

5/20 FINAL EXAMS DUE via email by 11:59 PM *

PLEASE NOTE: Assignment Schedule may be subject to some adjustment depending on class progress and/or other unforeseen factors.