Schools are the primary institution for instructing, training and socializing the next generation. School attendance or equivalent instruction is mandatory in this country, and the subjects and methods of instruction have been hotly debated. This course will explore sociological research and theories that are useful for examining the roles of educational institutions and practices in the United States. We will critically examine the place and role of schools and schooling in the wider society, both through a brief historical overview as well as modern perspectives and current debates on the role and function of schools. Class participants will investigate the ways in which schools reinforce, and/or challenge prevailing social, economic, and political relationships. Issues to be discussed include: the purpose of schooling, the structure and organization of schools, curriculum development, social reproduction, family/school relationships, and the role of teachers. The meaning of culture, race, ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status, disability, sexual orientation and identity will also inform our investigations into these topics. We will examine the school as a society within itself, with its own dominant system of values, ideology, and relationships of power and authority. We will also examine the interpersonal relationships within schools: the types of interaction that occur, and the opportunities for learning and development.

Course Requirements
This course requires you to complete each week’s reading before the week’s first class session, attend class, and participate in discussions and exercises. Attendance is required, and I will pass around a sign-IN sheet during each class session. In general, I do not excuse absences unless you have a serious problem. If such a problem occurs, you need to let me know.

During class sessions, you should feel free to ask questions, challenge ideas, and respond to me and to your classmates. I insist that participation be appropriate to the topic and respectful of everyone, but you are otherwise free to express your views. You need not agree with everything you read. You need not even understand all of the reading. Class discussions will, ideally, answer questions, foster critical engagement, and explore areas of disagreement. You are welcome to contact me between class sessions and during times outside my office hours. If you are working on an assignment or concerned about some aspect of the reading, please do not hesitate. You need not hesitate anyway. I usually check my email more than once a day, and I try to respond promptly. I’m on campus on a regular
basis on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays, and I'll be happy to make an appointment when I am available.

I will calculate grades as follows:
- Attendance and participation/presentations: 30 percent
- First (short) assignment: 5 percent
- Second AND third assignments: 20 percent each
- Take-home final/paper: 25 percent

Due dates are noted in the course outline. Instructions for assignments will be distributed in class.

**Written Assignments**

Final versions of written assignments are due in hard copy on the deadlines listed. Written work should be typed, double spaced, with margins on all four sides of the page. I expect hard copies, but please keep your electronic files for back-up until the semester is over.

Please be sure to refer specifically to the class readings. Please use the ASA style guidelines for references and citations.

**Articles**

Students should check news sites such as newspapers, magazines, the Internet, and radio, for articles and reports on issues relating to the sociology of education. If possible, please e-mail the article or information about the article to me in advance. If not, please be sure to notify me at the start of class. Please briefly present the main argument of the article in the context of the themes of the course and the article's source. These presentations will contribute to your class participation score.

**Student Accountability**

Accountability includes a number of classroom norms: class attendance and punctuality, timely submission of assignments, and attention to the class sessions without diversion from texting or web surfing. These elements of normative accountability will be part of your grade.

Recognizing that unanticipated problems do occur, I will consider occasional extensions for assignments if asked before the deadline passes. I do, however, review patterns of lateness and other elements of accountability. A pattern that violates these norms more than occasionally will result in a lower grade.

Please turn off phones and other devices during all class sessions. Texting in class is not only rude but also disruptive; please refrain from all electronic communication. I expect not to have to ask you again at any time during the semester. If I do have to ask, I will consider it a breach of accountability.
Laptops are emphatically discouraged and require permission for note taking. If I grant permission, laptop users must occupy the front rows of the classroom during each class session. Please think carefully before asking for permission to use a laptop in class. If several people seek permission, I will ban laptop use entirely.

***Please hand a printed hard copy AS WELL AS electronic copy of each paper. ***

**Academic Accommodations**

If you are a student who needs academic accommodation because of a documented disability, please contact me and present your letter of accommodation as soon as possible. Undergraduates and graduate students with questions about documenting a disability should contact the Director of Disabilities Services and Support Office of Academic Services, 6-3470. Letters of accommodation should be presented at the start of the semester to ensure provision of accommodations. Accommodations cannot be granted retroactively.

**Academic Integrity**

Academic integrity is central to the mission of educational excellence at Brandeis University. Each student is expected to turn in work completed independently, except when assignments specifically authorize collaborative effort. It is not acceptable to use words or ideas of another without proper acknowledgment of the source. This means that you must use footnotes and quotation marks to indicate the source of any phrases, sentences, paragraphs, or ideas in published volumes, on the Internet, or created by another student. Violations of university policies on academic integrity, available at http://www.brandeis.edu/studentaffairs/srcs/ai/index.html, may result in failure in the course or on the assignment, and could end in suspension from the University. If you are in doubt about the instructions for any assignment in this course, be sure to ask for clarification.

**Course Readings**

Class readings will be available on-line in Latte or as handouts in class. It will not be necessary to purchase any additional books.

**Course Outline**

PART 1: THE ROLE OF THE SCHOOL IN AMERICAN SOCIETY

WEEK 1: Introduction, Sociological Themes and Perspectives, the Origins of Public Schooling in the U.S.

(1) Course Overview: What is Sociology of Education? **Friday, August 31**
   - Introduction to course
• Raising sociological questions: themes of the course

(2) Historical overview I: The Common School              Tuesday, September 4


WEEK 2: The Origins of Public Schooling in the U.S: Models of School Structures, Aims and Ideals of Education

(3) The Administrative Progressives: A Factory Model of Schooling              Friday Sept 7


Read: - A Walker in the City by Alfred Kazin pp. 5-51. Also read Gina Bellafante’s recent NYTImes book review of the book on Latte.


(4) John Dewey: A Democratic Model of Schooling              Tuesday, September 11


PAPER 1 DUE: Explain John Dewey’S quote, "Education is life."
PART 2: PERSPECTIVES ON THE STRUCTURE AND FUNCTION OF SCHOOLS

WEEK 3: Perspectives on the Aims and Ideals of Education

(5) Sociological Themes and Perspectives: on the Sorting Function of Schools  

Friday Sept 11


(6) Theoretical Perspectives on the Social Function of Schools  

Friday, Sept 21


WEEK 4: On Schooling and the Social Order: Social Class, Social Reproduction, Cultural Capital

(7) Privilege, Inclusion and Opportunity: Social Class, Social Reproduction, Cultural Capital I  

Tuesday, Sept 25


(8) Privilege, Inclusion and Opportunity: Social Class, Social Reproduction & Cultural Capital II  

Friday, Sept 28


WEEK 5: Privilege, Inclusion and Opportunity in Education II: The Tracking Debate, Language and Immigration

(9) On Schooling and the Social Order II: The Tracking Debate  Tuesday Oct 2


(10) Privilege, Inclusion, Opportunity: Language, Immigration, Cultural Legacy  Friday Oct 5


SECOND PAPER DUE @ NOON: For Topics see Latte

WEEK 6: Privilege, Inclusion and Opportunity in Education III: Gender, Sexual Orientation, Religion, Disability

(11) Privilege, Inclusion, Opportunity: Gender, Sexual Orientation  Friday Oct 12


Read: “Family forced out of Lexington, MA” ALSO read the “Opposition” segment of Wikipedia regarding the book *King & King*. 


(12) Privilege, Inclusion and Opportunity: Religion & Disability-Federal Regulations in Education  
**Tuesday, Oct 16**


OPTIONAL: “Why Education in Public Schools Should Include Religious Ideals” Ruyter & Merry. http://uva.academia.edu/MichaelMerry/Papers/833104/Why_education_in_public_schools_should_include_religious_ideas 2008

**WEEK 7: Busing and Racial Desegregation of Boston’s Schools**

(13) Case Study: Separate but Unequal? Busing and School Desegregation in Boston  
**Friday, Oct 19**


(14) Separate but Unequal? What Now? Critical Race Theory and Education


Note: In Latte, both these articles are scanned into one entry.


PART 3: TEACHING AND AUTHORITY IN EDUCATION

WEEK 8: Authority Patterns in Schools, Racial Exclusion, Cultural Dissonance

(15) Authority Patterns in Schools: Racial-Ethnic Exclusion  

Friday Oct 19


(16) Authority Patterns in Schools, Cultural Dissonance Between Students and Teachers  

Tues Oct 23


(17) Perspectives on the Transmission of Culture and Values: The Culture of the School
Friday Oct 26


Tuesday, Oct 30


OR


Paper 3 Due @ NOON: For Topics see LATTE


Friday Nov. 2


-Recent Articles on current debates in education (Articles to be selected from current news sources during the semester. Likely to relate to issues such as regulating school lunches, sex education, etc.

Tues Nov 6


(21) Perspectives on the Transmission of Culture and Values: Power and Authority  
Friday, Nov 9


(22) Homeschooling  
Tuesday Nov 13
Read: “Does Homeschooling Pose a threat to Public Education?”  

Read: “Why Are Public School Proponents So Afraid of Homeschool Kids?”  
http://buehlereducation.com/homeschool/indianasportsbill/

WEEK 12: Power & Authority, Classroom Roles & Relationships

(23) “Race to Nowhere” – Film we’ll watch in class  
Friday Nov 16

(24) Interactions Between Students, Student Culture  
Friday, Nov 30


WEEK 13: Interpersonal Relationships in Education: Relationships Between Teachers, Students & Parents

(25) Between Teachers and Students  
Tuesday Dec 4


(26) Between Parents and Teachers Friday, Dec 7


WEEK 14: IDEAS ON THE GROUND: Schools and Communities, Looking at Teachers in Action

(27) Between Communities and Schools Tuesday Dec 11


Summary of due dates:
3 Five- to Six-PAGE PAPERS
Due at the start of class on the following dates:
Paper 1: Tuesday, September 11th
Paper 2: Friday, October 5th
Paper 3: Tuesday, October 30th
Final due: Friday, December 14th @ NOON (since there is no class, please deliver to my office – Rabb 107)