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 class days, and I’ll be happy to make an appointment if those times do not work.

I will calculate grades as follows:
• Attendance and participation: 20 percent
• Article presentations: 15 percent
• First (short) assignment: 5 percent
• Second AND third assignments: 20 percent each
• Take-home final/paper: 20 percent

Due dates are noted in the course outline. Instructions for assignments will be distributed in class (also on Latte – see last block). I will include a grading rubric that clearly sets expectations.

Written Assignments

Final versions of written assignments are due on the deadlines listed.
Written work should be typed, double spaced, with 1-inch margins on all four sides of the page.

Please be sure to refer specifically to the class readings. Please use the ASA style guidelines for references and citations, I highly recommend that you meet with tutors at the writing center to develop a sound academic paper.

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

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. This is my contract with you regarding absences:

• All absences must be accompanied by a doctor’s note.
• Without a doctor’s note, each absence drops your attendance grade down by half a letter grade: So an A becomes an A- … to B+ … and so forth.
• You are considered late if I have started class. Three tardiness equals the same as an absence.
• FOR EACH CLASS, Be sure to check in with your TA to have you recorded as present.

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.

Community of Learners

I strive to create a supportive, stimulating and active class environment. This effort is in a huge part contingent on YOU to be not only a student in this class but rather assume the role of a teacher yourself. After all, our personal experiences contribute greatly to our understanding of theories, patterns, current events, etc. My pedagogy, therefore, is NOT rooted in a didactic/rote approach. Instead, I embrace experiential learning where students participate in the construction of knowledge.

This said, please be sure to be consciousness of how much “floor” time you take to express your ideas. Don’t go on and on; this puts pressure on me to cut you off.

I also expect you to build on what your peers have already said – if the thought is aired, don’t repeat … if the conversation has moved on then don’t redirect. Simple rule for class conversation is to be active and to think how each comment builds on the next.

For those of you who are quiet, shy or need time ruminate before you make a comment then I offer you the following option:

Individual Response – Hand-in (drop off at my office) an individual response to any of our class topics. While I expect you to participate and voice your ideas in class, I realize that this may be difficult for some of you. Use the individual response paragraph to tell me where your thinking is … this can be handed-in anonymously if you so prefer.

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**

*Introduction, Sociological Themes and Perspectives, the Origins of Public Schooling in the U.S.*

(1) **Course Overview: What is Sociology of Education?**  
**Thursday, August 29**
- Introduction to course
- Raising sociological questions: themes of the course

**NO CLASS**  
**Monday, September 2**

(2) **Introduction to class continued**  
**Wednesday, September 4**

**NO CLASS**  
**Thursday Sept 5**

(3) **Historical overview I: The Common School**  
**Monday Sept 9**


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

(4) **The Administrative Progressives: A Factory Model of Schooling**  
**Wednesday, September 11**


(5) **America Expands – Immigrants & Assimilation**  
**Thursday, September 12**
Socialization of Education 104

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.

**Will discuss questions about upcoming 1st paper**

(6) John Dewey: A Democratic Model of Schooling  Monday, September 16


**PAPER 1 DUE @ start of class: see Latte for instructions & topics**

**PART 2: PERSPECTIVES ON THE STRUCTURE AND FUNCTION OF SCHOOLS**

**Perspectives on the Aims and Ideals of Education**

(7) Sociological Themes and Perspectives: on the Sorting Function of Schools  Tuesday, Sept 17 (Brandeis Thursday!)


(8) Durkheim continued ….  Wednesday, September 18

NO CLASS  Thursday, September 19

(9) Theoretical Perspectives on the Social Function of Schools  Monday, Sept. 23


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

(10) Privilege, Inclusion and Opportunity: Social Class, Social Reproduction, Cultural Capital I  Wednesday, September 25


NO CLASS Thursday, September 26

(11) Bowles & Gintis continued … Monday, September 30

(12) Privilege, Inclusion and Opportunity: Social Class, Social Reproduction & Cultural Capital II Wednesday, October 2


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

(13) On Schooling and the Social Order II: The Tracking Debate Thursday, October 3


(14) Tracking debate continued … Monday, October 7

(15) Privilege, Inclusion, Opportunity: Language, Immigration, Cultural Legacy Wednesday, October 9


**second paper due next time!**

(16) Immigrants and Education continued … Thursday, October 10


SECOND PAPER DUE @ start of class: For Topics see Latte
Privilege, Inclusion and Opportunity in Education III: Gender, Sexual Orientation, Religion, Disability

(17) Privilege, Inclusion, Opportunity: Sexual Orientation & Gender

Wednesday, October 16


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

OPTIONAL: -Webpage of Project 10East, a program for LGBT support in high schools. [http://www.project10east.org/about/main.php](http://www.project10east.org/about/main.php).


(18) Privilege, Inclusion, Opportunity: continued (Gender)

Thursday, October 17


-“How Schools Shortchange Girls” – the AAUW Report pp. 35-54.

(19) Privilege, Inclusion and Opportunity: Disability-Federal Regulations & Religion in Education

Monday, October 21


(20) Privilege, Inclusion and Opportunity continued .. (Religion)

Wednesday, October 23


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_ideals](http://uva.academia.edu/MichaelMerry/Papers/833104/Why_education_in_public_schools_should_include_religious_ideals) 2008

Busing and Racial Desegregation of Boston’s Schools

(21) Case Study: Separate but Unequal? Busing and School Desegregation in Boston

Thursday, October 24


(22) Desegregation continued … Monday, October 28


(23) Separate but Unequal? What Now? Critical Race Theory and Education Wednesday, October 30


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


PART 3: TEACHING AND AUTHORITY IN EDUCATION

Authority Patterns in Schools, Racial Exclusion, Cultural Dissonance

(24) Authority Patterns in Schools: Racial-Ethnic Exclusion Thursday, October 31


(25) Authority Patterns in Schools, Cultural Dissonance Between Students and Teachers Monday, November 4


**Transmission of Norms and Values: What Gets Taught in School and Who Decides? PART I**

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

*Wednesday, November 6*


** Will discuss upcoming paper **

(27) The Textbook Industry & Curricular Standards Debates  

*Thursday, November 7*


(28) Curriculum debates continued …  

*Monday, November 11*


OR


**Paper 3 Due @ start of class: See topics on LATTE**

**Transmission of Norms and Values: What Gets Taught in School and Who Decides? PART II**

(29) The Panopticon: Are Schools Going Too Far?  

*Wednesday, November 13*


(30) Are Schools Going Too Far? (continued ….)  

*Thursday, November 14*


ALSO find and bring in other 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.*

(31) Standardization Debate/Market Approaches to Education Reform  

*Monday, November 18*
Sociology of Education 104


**What Gets Taught in School? Who Decides? PART III**

(32) Perspectives on the Transmission of Culture and Values: Power and Authority

**Wednesday, November 20**


(33) Homeschooling

**Thursday, November 21**

Read: “Does Homeschooling Pose a threat to Public Education?”

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

**Power & Authority, Classroom Roles & Relationships**

(34) “Race to Nowhere” –

**Monday, November 25**

WATCH FILM BEFORE CLASS …
DISCUSSION IN CLASS …

NO CLASS

**WEDNESDAY & THURSDAY NOV 27/28**

(35) Interactions Between Students, Student Culture

**Monday, December 2**


**Interpersonal Relationships in Education: Relationships Between Teachers, Students & Parents**
(36) Between Teachers and Students  Wednesday, December 4


(37) Between Parents and Teachers continued…  Thursday, December 5


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

(38) Between Communities and Schools  Monday, December 9


Watch Detachment (on Latte). We will discuss in class.


Summary of due dates:
Due at the start of class on the following dates:
Paper 1: Monday, September 16th
Paper 2: Thursday, October 10th
Paper 3: Monday, November 11th
Final due: Friday, December 13th @ NOON (since there is no class, please deliver to my office – Rabb 107)