

Education 250
Fixing Schools: Politics and Policy in American Education
Fall 2021
M, W: 1230-140PM; F: 110-210PM
Willis 114

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Office Hours: T: 10AM-12PM; F: 12-1PM; and by appointment

Course Description

How can we fix American public schools? This is the basic question that drives educational reformers. Embedded in this question are a number of additional questions: What is *broken* about our schools? How should they be repaired? And who should lead the fix?

This course will examine the two leading contemporary educational reform movements: accountability and school choice. Key topics include the teaching profession, standardized testing and philanthropy.

Course Readings

* All readings available in a course reader *

Course Requirements

<i>Assignment</i>	<i>Due Date</i>
Participation (15%)	Every class
Notes (20%)	Wednesday, October 13 & Wednesday, November 3 by 1159PM
In the News Small Group Presentation (15%)	Wednesdays, starting September 29
Critical Essay (20%)	Monday, November 1 by 1159PM
Group Project (30%)	Memo, Sunday, November 14 by 1159PM
	Presentations, Monday, November 15 and Wednesday, November 17

Course Outline (subject to minor revisions)**INTRODUCTIONS**

W, September 15

- Course Syllabus
- Bring to class a recent article about what's wrong with American schools

F, September 17

- 2021 PDK Poll of the Public's Attitudes Toward the Public Schools
- 2021 *Education Next* Survey of Public Opinion
- National Center for Education Statistics, *Condition of Education 2021 At a Glance*

[Subscribe](#) to Politico's "Weekly Education" newsletter

M, September 20

- David Labaree, "From Citizens to Consumers"
- Manfred Steger and Ravi Roy, "What's 'neo' about liberalism?"

W, September 22

- Labaree, "Organizational Resistance to Reform" (read pp.106-112 and 122-133; skim pp.113-121); and "Classroom Resistance to Reform"

THE TEACHING PROFESSION I: DEMOGRAPHICS, UNIONS & TEACHING IN A PANDEMIC

F, September 24

- Sylvia Allegretto and Lawrence Mishel, "Teacher pay penalty dips but persists in 2019" (read Introduction and Key Findings, skim the rest)
- Richard Ingersoll et al., "The Demographic Transformation of the Teaching Force in the United States"
- Frederick Hess, "Teachers and Teaching"

M, September 27

- Daniel DiSalvo and Michael Hartney, "Teachers Unions in the Post-Janus World"
- Richard Kahlenberg, "The History of Collective Bargaining Among Teachers"
- Explore AFT and NEA websites

W, September 29

- Teaching in a Pandemic: Readings TBD

In the News

ACCOUNTABILITY

F, October 1

- *A Nation at Risk* (1983) excerpt
- Jal Mehta, “Setting the Problem: The Deep Roots and Long Shadow of *A Nation at Risk*”

M, October 4

- Frederick M. Hess and Max Eden (eds.), *Every Student Succeeds Act*, Ch.1
- Daniel Koretz, “What Is a Test?” and “Cheating”
- Watch “The Education of Michelle Rhee,” PBS Frontline

W, October 6

- Aaron Churchill, “Bless the Tests”
- Hess and Eden, *Every Student Succeeds Act*, Chs.2-4
- Alfie Kohn, “Schooling Beyond Measure”
- Skim Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCA) Grade 6 Math and Reading

In the News

F, October 8

- Linda Darling-Hammond, “Inequality and School Resources”
- Daniel T. Willingham, “Why Does Family Wealth Affect Learning?”
- Listen to “Harper High School,” This American Life

CHOICE

M, October 11

- Chester E. Finn, Bruno V. Manno and Brandon L. Wright, *Charter Schools at the Crossroads*, Ch.1
- National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, “Who Manages Charter Schools?”
- National Center for Education Statistics, “Public School Charter Enrollment”
- Explore MN Department of Education Charter School [site](#)
- Skim Sample Charter Application



- Explore charter school websites

W, October 13

- Sarah R. Cohodes and Katharine S. Parham, “Charter Schools’ Effectiveness, Mechanisms and Competitive Influence”
- Diane Ravitch, “Bait and Switch: How Liberals Were Duped into Embracing School Choice” and “School Choice, Deregulation and Corruption”
- Andy Smarick, “The Systemic Innovations of Chartering”

In the News

Notes 1 due by 1159PM

F, October 15

No Class (Professor attending conference)

M, October 18

No Class (Midterm Break)

W, October 20

- Douglas N. Harris and Matthew F. Larsen, “What Effect Did the New Orleans School Reforms Have on Student Achievement, High School Graduation and College Outcomes?”
- Harris and Larsen, “What Schools Do Families Want?”
- Huriya Jabbar, “How do School Leaders Respond to Competition?”

In the News

FOUNDATIONS AND PHILANTHROPY

F, October 22

- Michael Q. McShane and Jenn Hatfield, “The Backlash Against ‘Reform’ Philanthropy”
- Sarah Reckhow and Jeffrey W. Snyder, “The Expanding Role of Philanthropy in Education Politics”
- Dale Russakoff, “Schooled”

M, October 25

- John Arnold, “Attacks and Vitriol Will Not Deter Me from Supporting Fixes to Public Policy”
- Explore Foundation websites

Foundations Mini-Presentations

THE TEACHING PROFESSION II—PREPARATION, MEASUREMENT AND EVALUATION

W, October 27

- Doug Lemov, *Teach Like a Champion 2.0*, excerpts
- Listen to “Who Wants to be a Teacher?”, American Public Media

In the News

F, October 29

- “Feedback for Better Teaching,” MET Project
- Daniel Koretz, “Evaluating Teachers”
- W. David Hibler and Jeffrey Aaron Snyder, “Teaching Matters: Observations on Teacher Evaluations”

M, November 1

- Alicia Gerry and Lindsay Weixler, “Do students perceive their teachers and schools more positively when more of their teachers look like them?”
- Seth Gershenson and Nicholas Papageorge, “The Power of Teacher Expectations”

Critical Essay due by 1159PM

W, November 3

- Andrew Hartman, “Teach for America: The Hidden Curriculum of Liberal Do-Gooders”
- Rachel Smith, “Hallelujah, the Saviors are Here”
- Additional Readings TBD
- Explore TFA website

In the News

Notes 2 due by 1159PM

GROUP PROJECT

F, November 5

- Readings TBD

M, November 8

Groupwork

W, November 10

Groupwork

F, November 12

Groupwork

Sunday, November 14: Memo Due

M, November 15

Presentations

W, November 17

Presentations

F, November 19

- Readings TBD

Course Assignments and Grading

Participation, 15%

“Be Prepared.” The Scout motto sums up the crux of participation. Because this course places a premium on classroom and small-group discussions, students are expected to come to every class on time with the assigned readings completed, ready to participate meaningfully in all class activities. In addition to the assigned texts on the syllabus, I expect that each of you will spend at least a half hour every week reading up on the most recent developments in the world of educational policy and reform. (Pay attention to the Politico emails and explore the *In the News* links on our Moodle site.) Speaking up, while important, is not the only hallmark of participation. Active listening and engaging with others’ ideas respectfully are also key components of participation. *Air-time* is less important than the relevance and sincerity of your contributions.

Please *power-down* your electronic devices—laptops, cell-phones, etc.—before the start of class. Classroom recordings of any kind are not permitted in this class.



"Before I read about my summer vacation, I'd like to ask that all pagers, beepers, and cell phones be turned off."

In the News Small Group Presentation, 15%

Wednesdays, starting September 29

Working in small groups, prepare a twenty-minute presentation that introduces the class to a recent development pertaining to the week's main topic. (See the In the News links available on Moodle.) Prepare a class handout of approximately 250-words that highlights the key points of your presentation and includes a short bibliography with a minimum of five sources. All groups will meet with me in advance to discuss their ideas and plans. All groups should also practice their presentations before class.

Notes, 20%

Wednesday, October 13 & Wednesday, November 3 by 1159PM

Submit your notes on our course readings. I will look for evidence of careful, critical reading that distills and analyzes key points, poses thoughtful questions and draws meaningful connections among different materials. Notes will be graded on a ✓ + (exceeds expectations) and ✓ (meets expectations) basis.

Notes	Grade
1. ✓ + and 2. ✓ +	A
1. ✓ + and 2. ✓/ 1. ✓ and 2. ✓ +	B
1. ✓ and 2. ✓	C
Anything less than two "checks"	No Credit

Critical Essay (1,000 words), 20%

Monday, November 1 by 1159PM

The goal of this essay is to present a critical analysis of one of the course texts we have read before the due date. (Please see the Guidelines for Critical Reading below.) Choose a text that you think has one or more significant shortcomings. Your essay should explain how and why the author's analysis falls short.

Group Project (2,000 word memo and presentation), 30%

Memo due Sunday, November 14

Presentations, Monday, November 15 and Wednesday, November 17

The Fine Print

Attendance:

Given the importance that all Educational Studies classes place on learning with peers through classroom discussions, students are expected to come to every class session. After two unexcused absences from class, each subsequent absence will result in the lowering of your course grade by a third (e.g. from an A to an A-).

Guidelines for Written Assignments:

1. All written assignments should be double-spaced and written in 12-point *Times* font
2. Include a word-count at the top of each assignment
3. Use a standard format (APA, Chicago, etc.) for all citations
4. Submit all of your assignments using the dropboxes on Moodle
5. No late assignments will be accepted without prior approval from the instructor

Guidelines for Critical Reading:

As a critical reader of a particular text, the following four questions are essential:

1. What are the author's main claims? This is the analysis issue—what is the author's angle?
2. Who says? This is the validity issue—what is the author's evidence?
3. What's new? This is the value-added issue—what does the author contribute that we don't already know?
4. Who cares? This is the significance issue—is the text worth reading?

Academic Honesty:

Sharing ideas with friends is central to the academic enterprise at Carleton. So too is availing yourself of the ever-expanding universe of print and digital resources available through the Libe. In your written work, of course, it is imperative that the words you present as your own are in fact original to you. When you borrow somebody else's ideas or words, make sure to cite the original author. For information on plagiarism, see: <https://www.carleton.edu/writing/plagiarism/>

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:

Carleton College is committed to providing equitable access to learning opportunities for all students. The Office of Accessibility Resources (Henry House, 107 Union Street) is the campus office that collaborates with students who have disabilities to provide and/or arrange reasonable accommodations. If you have, or think you may have, a disability (e.g., mental health, attentional, learning, autism spectrum disorders, chronic health, traumatic brain injury and concussions, vision, hearing, mobility, or speech impairments), please contact OAR@carleton.edu or call Sam Thayer ('10), Director of the Office of Accessibility Resources (x4464), to arrange a confidential discussion regarding equitable access and reasonable accommodations.

Images Credits:

“How to Fix America's Schools”: *Time*, 12/8/2008; “Before I read”: Danny Shanahan, *New Yorker*, 9/11/2000.