

Education 250
Fixing Schools: Politics and Policy in American Education
Spring 2019
M, W: 1230-140PM; F: 110-210PM
Willis 114

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Office Hours: T: 930-1130AM; W: 2-3PM; 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. With an emphasis on the nature of the teaching profession and the work of foundations, we will analyze the policy agendas of different reform groups, exploring the dynamic interactions among the many different stakeholders responsible for shaping American education.

Course Readings

Koretz, Daniel. *The Testing Charade: Pretending to Make Schools Better*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017.

Rusakoff, Dale. *The Prize: Who's in Charge of America's Schools?* New York: Houghton Mifflin, 2015.

* All additional readings will be available on Moodle *

Course Requirements

<i>Assignment</i>	<i>Due Date</i>
Participation (15%)	Every class
Blog Contributions (20%)	Weekly, starting Thursday, April 11
In the News Small Group Presentation (15%)	Variable dates, starting April 17
Critical Essay (20%)	Wednesday, May 15 by 1159PM
Group Project (30%)	Memo, Thursday, May 30 Presentations. Friday, May 31 and Monday, June 3

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

M, April 1

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

W, April 3

- 50th Annual PDK Poll of the Public's Attitudes Toward the Public Schools
- National Center for Education Statistics Condition of Education 2018 Highlights
- NAEP 2012 Trends

Subscribe to Politico's "Morning Education" email listserv

F, April 5

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

M, April 8

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

*** A PAUSE FOR THE THEATER OF PUBLIC POLICY ***

W, April 10

- Readings TBD

THE TEACHING PROFESSION I: DEMOGRAPHICS, UNIONS AND STRIKES

Thursday, April 11: Course Blog Opens

F, April 12

- NCES, "Characteristics of Public School Teachers in the United States," Selected Findings
- Sylvia Allegretto and Lawrence Mishel, "The teacher pay gap is wider than ever"
- Michael Hansen and Diana Quintero, "Teacher diversity gaps"
- Richard Ingersoll, Lisa Merrill and Daniel Stuckey, "Seven Trends: The Transformation of the Teaching Force"
- Frederick Hess, "Teachers and Teaching"

M, April 15

- Richard Kahlenberg, “The History of Collective Bargaining Among Teachers”
- Bradley D. Marianno and Katharine O. Strunk, “After *Janus*”
- Fordham Institute, “How Strong are U.S. Teacher Unions?” Foreword and Executive Summary
- Explore AFT and NEA websites

W, April 17

- Caitlin Emma, “Teachers Are Going on Strike in Trump’s America”
- Diane Ravitch, “Do Teachers Need Tenure and Seniority?”
- Sam Shumate, “Teachers Unions Should Stop Putting Seniority before Performance”
- “Teacher Strikes: 4 Common Questions”
- Examine Map—“Where Have There Been Teacher Strikes and Protests?”

In the News

ACCOUNTABILITY

F, April 19

- *A Nation at Risk* (1983) excerpt
- Jal Mehta, “Setting the Problem: The Deep Roots and Long Shadow of *A Nation at Risk*”
- Watch Joel Klein, “Priorities for a New School Year”

M, April 22

- Frederick M. Hess and Max Eden (eds.), *Every Student Succeeds Act*, Chs.1-4

In the News

W, April 24

- Aaron Churchill, “Bless the Tests”
- Alfie Kohn, “Schooling Beyond Measure”
- *Testing Charade*, Ch.2
- Skim New York Grade 4 Math and Language Arts Tests

F, April 26

- *Testing Charade*, Chs.1, 3, 4 & 6
- Watch “The Education of Michelle Rhee,” PBS Frontline



M, April 29

- Daniel T. Willingham, “Why Does Family Wealth Affect Learning?”
- Listen to “Harper High School,” This American Life

In the News

W, May 1

- Linda Darling-Hammond, “Inequality and School Resources”
- *Testing Charade*, Chs.8, 11 & 12

CHOICE

F, May 3

- *Charter Schools at the Crossroads*, Chs.1&2
- “By the Numbers: Charter Schools”
- Skim Sample School Charter
- Explore charter school websites

M, May 6

No Class (Midterm Break)

W, May 8

- *Charter Schools at the Crossroads*, Ch.3
- Diane Ravitch, “The Contradictions of Charters”
- Andy Smarick, “Urban Charter Schooling”

F, May 10

- Douglas N. Harris, “Good News for New Orleans”
- Harris and Matthew F. Larsen, “What Schools Do Families Want?”
- Huriya Jabbar, “How do School Leaders Respond to Competition?”

M, May 13

- *Charter Schools at the Crossroads*, Ch.10
- Additional Readings TBD

In the News

FOUNDATIONS AND PHILANTHROPY

W, May 15

- *The Prize*, Chs.1-3
- Sarah Reckhow and Jeffrey W. Snyder, “The Expanding Role of Philanthropy in Education Politics”
- Explore Foundation websites

F, May 17

- *The Prize*, Chs.4-8
- Joanne Barkan, “Big Philanthropy vs. Democracy: The Plutocrats Go to School”

Critical Essay due by 1159PM

M, May 20

- *The Prize*, Chs.9-12 and Conclusion
- John Arnold, “Attacks and Vitriol Will Not Deter Me from Supporting Fixes to Public Policy”
- Benjamin Soskis, “The Importance of Criticizing Philanthropy”

In the News

THE TEACHING PROFESSION II—PREPARATION, MEASUREMENT AND EVALUATION

W, May 22

- Doug Lemov, *Teach Like a Champion 2.0*, excerpts
- Listen to “Teaching Teachers,” American RadioWorks

F, May 24

- The Measures of Effective Teaching Project, “Ensuring Fair and Reliable Measures of Effective Teaching”
- Koretz, *Testing Charade*, Ch.9
- Thomas Dee and James Wyckoff, “A Lasting Impact”
- W. David Hibler and Jeffrey Aaron Snyder, “Teaching Matters: Observations on Teacher Evaluations”

Saturday, May 25: Course Blog Closes

M, May 27

- Andrew Hartman, “Teach for America: The Hidden Curriculum of Liberal Do-Gooders”
- Jack Schneider, “The Right Teachers: Teach for America”
- Rachel Smith, “Hallelujah, the Saviors are Here”
- Explore TFA website

In the News

W, May 29

Presentation Preparation

Thursday, May 30: Memo Due

F, May 31

Presentations

M, June 3

Presentations

W, June 5

- David Labaree, “The Limits of School Learning”
- Amanda Ripley, “The Case Against High School Sports”
- Watch *Two Million Minutes* trailer

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 “Morning Education” 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.



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

Blog Contributions, 20%

Weekly (starting on 4/11, ending on 5/25); posts by 5PM on Thursdays and comments by noon on Fridays

The purpose of these blog posts is twofold. First, they are designed to keep you thinking about the course materials. Second, they are intended to stimulate thoughtful discussion, both online and in class. Posts should be approximately 750 words in length. Comments should be around 250 words. I do not expect that your blog contributions will be finely polished but they should represent a serious engagement with the course materials. Posts and comments will be graded on a credit/no credit basis. Credit will be given to all posts that demonstrate you have read and thought critically about the course content. Credit will be given to all comments that offer a thoughtful response to your classmate’s post. Your grade will depend on the number of weeks that you satisfactorily post and comment. Seven weeks = A. Six = B+. 5 = C. Four or fewer = no credit for this portion of the course.

In the News Small Group Presentation, 15%

Variable dates, starting April 17

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.

Critical Essay (1,000 words), 20%

Wednesday, May 15 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 Thursday, May 30 by 1159PM

Presentations, Friday, May 31 and Monday, June 3

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, you should use the following four questions to guide your reading:

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 more on academic honesty at Carleton, including a helpful overview of citations, see: <http://apps.carleton.edu/campus/doc/honesty/>

Disability Services:

Carleton is committed to providing reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities. Students seeking accommodations should contact the Coordinator of Disability Services, Andy Christensen, at 222-4464 or anchrist@carleton.edu, to begin the process.

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