

Education and the American Dream

Fall 2003

Political Science 4310, section 003
T/Th 2:30pm-3:45pm
Blegen Hall 155
Course code: 30112

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Course web page:

<http://www.polisci.umn.edu/courses/fall2003/4310/003/>

I. Introduction

What role does education play in American democracy? What role should it play? Does American education, particularly public education, live up to our hopes and expectations as democratic citizens? To fully understand what it means to be an American citizen one needs to examine the role of educational institutions in securing opportunity for all Americans and creating the democratic citizens of the future.

This course is intended as introduction to education politics and policy in the United States. It is designed for any student who might have an interest in exploring education, public policy, or American government. Topics will include equality of educational opportunity, educating democratic citizens, school finance, the role of political institutions in making educational policy, and efforts to reform and remake American education, including charter schools and private school vouchers. By the end of the course, students should have a basic understanding of the provision of education in the United States, including the ways in which education is governed and the institutions involved in that governance. Students should be able to critically reflect on the degree to which American education fulfills the sometimes-competing goals Americans have for our schools.

II. Required Texts

A course packet is required and available at the West Bank bookstore. A small number of additional readings will be provided during the semester.

III. Course structure and requirements

Format. The course will consist of a mixture of lecture, class discussion, and in-class activities.

Grades. Your final course grade will be based on three non-cumulative, in-class examinations, two 5-8 page papers, and 5 in-class assignments. Each of these components will weigh in the final grade as follows:

First exam	15 points
Second exam	15 points
Third exam	15 points
Written assignment 1	20 points
Written assignment 2	20 points
<u>In-class exercises</u>	<u>15 points</u>
Total	100 points

Each exam will be graded on a point scale, from 0-15. Each exam will consist of short answer questions. Each exam is non-cumulative and will be given in class. The third exam will be given on the last day of classes. The exams will test your comprehension of the material covered in the readings and lectures as well as understanding of the underlying concepts.

The written assignments will be graded from 0-20, according to the following scale:

A	19-20 points
A-	18 points
B+	17 points
B	16 points
B-	15 points
C	14 points
D	12 points

To calculate your final grade for the course, simply add up your points and convert to a letter grade using the following scale:

A: Achievement outstanding relative to the basic course requirements

A 93 points or more

A- 90-92 points

B: Achievement significantly above the basic course requirements

B+ 87-89 points

B 84-86

B- 80-83

C: Achievement meeting the basic course requirements

C+ 77-79 points

- C 74-76
 C- 70-73
 D: Achievement worthy of credit but below the basic course requirements
 D+ 66-69 points
 D 61-65
 F: Below 60 points

Students taking the course as Pol5310 will need to do an additional writing assignment, which will require approval.

Class participation. Please come to class having completed the assigned readings. Regular class attendance is expected, as it will contribute to our discussions and investigations over the course of the semester. Lecture and class discussion material will be on the exams. All of the readings in the syllabus are required. Lectures and readings will not always overlap, and material from the assigned readings may be included in the exams, whether or not I have discussed it in class.

IV. Course Policies

Academic Freedom and Responsibility. All of the work presented in this course is expected to be your own. I will follow the University's policies and procedures for academic integrity. Using information from a book, article, web page, another person, etc. without crediting the author is plagiarism. Quotations, paraphrased information, and use of others' ideas should be properly cited in your written assignments. If you have questions about citation, please contact the Professor or one of the TA's. More information is available at:

<http://www1.umn.edu/regents/policies/academic/StudentConduct.html>

Students with Disabilities. I will make every effort to accommodate the needs of students with disabilities. Please contact Disability Services (180 McNamara Alumni Center: 612-626-1333) to discuss your individual needs as early as possible in the semester. More information on disability services is available at

<http://disserv3.stu.umn.edu>

Late work and missed exams. Make-up exams are possible only in the case of emergencies or for University-approved functions. In both cases students will need to provide me with documentation (either a note from a physician or from your coach or faculty sponsor). If you must miss an exam for an approved function, you must contact me before the scheduled test time. The make-up exam questions may be different from the regular exam, though the format will be the same. Any late papers will be counted off 1 point per day late.

Please do not come to class after the scheduled start time. We have very little time for each class session, and streams of latecomers are disruptive to the rest of the students in the class.

I will respect and follow University policies regarding sexual harassment, and I expect all students in the course to do the same. The Regents' policy on sexual harassment can be found on the web at

(<http://www1.umn.edu/regents/policies/humanresources/SexHarassment.html>).

University resources. Students who feel they might benefit from test-taking services should contact the University Learning and Academic Skills Center at 109 Eddy Hall, East Bank (612-624-3323) or on the web at (<http://www.ucs.umn.edu/lasc/>).

This class will use writing assignments. The Student Writing Center has TA's and ESL specialists to help with your writing skills. The Writing Center is at 306 B Lind Hall, East Bank (612-625-1893) or on the web at (<http://swc.umn.edu.html>).

V. Weekly Schedule and Assigned Readings

Week 1: An educational crisis

9/2: No readings

9/4: Jonathan Kozol *Savage Inequalities*, Chapter 4 (Begins on page 1 of the packet).

A Nation at Risk (Begins on page 23 of the packet).

Week 2: The purposes of schooling

9/9: David Tyack. 1974. *The One Best System*, pp. 13-27 and 39-59 (Begins on page 41 of the packet).

9/11: Amy Gutmann. 1987. *Democratic Education*, Chapter 2 (Begins on page 78 of the packet).

Week 3: Education and democratic citizenship

9/16: David Easton and Robert Hess. 1962. "The Child's Political World." *Midwest Journal of Political Science* 6(3): 229-246. (Begins on page 41 of the packet).

9/18: No readings

Week 4: Opportunity, tracking, and the meritocracy

9/23: Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis. 1976. *Schooling in Capitalist America*, Chapter 4, pp. 102-124. (Begins on page 90 of the packet).

9/25: Jeannie Oakes. 1985. *Keeping Track*, Chapters 1 and 10, pp. 1-14 and 191-213. (Begins on page 102 of the packet).

Week 5: Making education policy

9/30: TBA

*Exam #1 in class Thursday, October 2***Week 6: Education and equality of opportunity***No Class Tuesday, October 7*10/9: *Plessy v. Ferguson* (Begins on page 122 of the packet).*Brown v. Board of Education I* (Begins on page 126 of the packet).*Brown v. Board of Education II* (handout)**Week 7: Education and equality of opportunity (continued)**10/14: Jennifer Hochschild. *The New American Dilemma*, Chapters 1 & 2, pp.1-34. (Begins on page 133 of the packet).*Griffin v. County School Board* (handout)*Green v. County School Board* (handout)10/16: *Milliken v. Bradley* (Begins on page 151 of the packet).*Freeman v. Pitts* (Begins on page 158 of the packet).*Missouri v. Jenkins* (Begins on page 164 of the packet).**Week 8: Money and educational opportunity**10/21: Gary Burtless, ed. *Does Money Matter?* Chapter 1. (Begins on page 170 of the packet).*No class Thursday, October 23***Week 9: The nuts and bolts of school finance**

10/28: Economics of school finance, continued (handout).

10/30: TBA

Assignment #1 due in class Thursday, October 30

Week 10: School finance reform

11/4: *San Antonio v. Rodriguez* (Begins on page 192 of the packet).

Exam #2, in class Thursday, November 6

Week 11: Reform I: School choice and charter schools

11/11: John Chubb and Terry Moe. 1990. *Politics, Markets, and America's Schools*, Chapter 1, pp. 1-25.

11/13 Jeffrey Henig. *Rethinking School Choice*, Chapter 8, pp. 174-195.

Week 12: Reform II: Vouchers and interdistrict remedies

11/18: *Zelman v. Simmons-Harris*. (handout).

11/20: Interdistrict remedies in Indianapolis, IN and Hartford, CT. (handout)

Week 13: Reform III: Systemic school reform

11/25: *Rose v. Council* (Begins on page 203 of the packet).

The Kentucky Education Reform Act Citizen's Handbook. 1994. (Begins on page 208 of the packet).

Assignment #2 due in class Tuesday, November 25

No class Thursday, November 27

Week 14: No Child Left Behind

12/2: Title I. (Begins on page 262 of the packet).

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. (Begins on page 276 of the packet).

12/4: No reading

Week 15: Looking forward

12/9: TBA

Noncumulative Exam #3 in class Thursday, December 11