

EDUC 391 (Spring 2013)

Professor Robert Hampel

School Reform, Past and Present

213-B Willard Hall

Tuesday and Thursday, 11—12:15

831-1651

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Schools are always changing—a little bit. Americans like to make bold proposals to revamp elementary and secondary schools, but change is usually slow and shallow. Traditional practices are hard to dislodge. Exploring the reasons for that gap between grand aspirations and modest results is the central task of the colloquium.

Books: The paperback books can be purchased in the campus bookstore or elsewhere, and a copy of each book is on reserve in Morris Library. There are several other short readings that I will distribute or place on reserve in Morris.

Kopp, **One Day, All Children...** (Public Affairs, 2001)

Stigler and Hiebert, **The Teaching Gap** (The Free Press, 1999)

Tyack and Cuban, **Tinkering toward Utopia** (Harvard University Press, 1995)

Zimmerman, **Small Wonder** (Yale University Press, 2009)

Office Hours: Whenever the door is open feel free to drop in, or email me to schedule an appointment. I will always be available in the hour before class, and also on M and W from 2 to 3:30.

Accommodations: If you have a documented disability that affects your work, please let me know (for more information on UD's services, see www.udel.edu/DSS). For athletes who will miss classes for scheduled competitions, send me a list of the dates when you will be absent.

Academic honesty: Be sure you have read the UD policies (www.udel.edu/stuguide/11-12/code.html). Avoid plagiarism and never submit the same paper for more than one class.

Assignments: On the following pages you will find the discussion topics, readings, and dates for the papers you will write.

Writing Fellow: Mel Allen will hold conferences with everyone several times this spring. She can help you improve your writing, from planning a paper to revising full drafts. Mel is not a TA, so she will not critique the substance of your essays. Her email is melallen@udel.edu.

2/5 Tu—Introductions & course overview

Thurs—Excerpts from Delaware’s *Race to the Top* application (online) A3-12, A39-54, D2-4, and D29-35

2/12 Long term trends: did American schools improve in the 20th century?

Tu--Tyack and Cuban, Tinkering toward Utopia, Chs. 1-2

Thurs—Group reports on long term trends in IQ, SAT scores, high school graduation rates, and other indicators of change over time

2/19 Why is the pace of change usually slow?

Tu--Tyack and Cuban, Tinkering, Ch. 4

Thurs—documentary films on the American high school

2/26 Why are reforms adapted rather than adopted?

Tu--Tyack and Cuban, Tinkering, Ch. 3

Thurs--David Cohen, “A Revolution in One Classroom”; Jean Morris, “Diary of a Beginning Teacher”

3/5 Behind the classroom doors in the 1980s

Tu—Powell et. al., The Shopping Mall High School, Ch. 1 (Morris Reserve)

Thurs—Mall, Ch. 3 and 198--232 (Morris Reserve)

3/12 The origins of the current era of school reform

Tu—*A Nation At Risk* (1983) Guest: Dr. Steve Godowsky

Thurs--Critics of *A Nation At Risk* (to be distributed)

3/19 The solution is better teachers (Teach for America)

Tu—Wendy Kopp, One Day, All Children...Chs. 1-5

Thurs—Kopp, Chs. 6-11 and New York Times interview, July 5, 2009

SPRING BREAK

4/2 The solution is better teaching (What can we learn from other countries?)

Tu—Stigler and Hiebert, The Teaching Gap Chs. 1-5

Thurs—Stigler and Hiebert, The Teaching Gap, Chs. 6-10. Guest: Professor Hiebert

4/9 The solution is technological

Tu— Tyack and Cuban, Tinkering, 109-top 114, 121-126.

Th—The current enthusiasm for online learning (Reading to be announced)

4/16 The solution is restructuring (Make schools smaller)

Tu—Small schools in New York City (reading to be announced)

Thurs--Jonathan Zimmerman, Small Wonder Chs. 1, 4, 5.

4/23 The solution is marketplace competition (through school choice)

Tu—Tyack and Cuban, Tinkering, 114-120, 126-133; Milton Freedman (handout).

Guest: Greg Meece, Newark Charter School

Thurs-- Choice legislation and regulations in Delaware (handouts)

Movie: Waiting for Superman

4/30 Discussion and analysis of your papers

Tu—Content (Read classmates papers)

Thurs—Style (Read classmates papers)

5/6 The relevance of K-12 school reform to higher education

Tu—Selections from Academically Adrift (Morris reserve)

Thurs—UD materials

5/13 Tu-- Coaching on the final paper; review of the semester

ASSIGNMENTS

2/7/2013 Write a 600 to 700 word editorial (check the op-ed page of the New York Times or the “Commentary” section of Education Week if you aren’t familiar with this genre) on how to improve American schools.

Describe the kind of school you are addressing (urban? elementary?), why you see those schools falling short, what it would take to improve those schools, and what evidence would convince parents, taxpayers, and policymakers that your changes had worked.

Do NOT use EDUC 391 texts for this exercise. Sit down and meditate on what you believe. That is why we are doing this assignment at the start of the semester. It will not be graded, but you will meet with our Writing Fellow to discuss your prose after you submit the paper.

3/1/2013 Revise and expand your editorial in light of what you have learned from our readings and discussions. 4 to 5 pages. (25%)

3/15/2013 What shortcomings of the shopping mall high school would *A Nation At Risk* address most directly? Indirectly? Not at all? 4 to 5 page paper (15%)

3/22/2013 Proposal for your term paper (2 pages). You will apply the five weeks of readings on “solutions” to an aspect of your senior year in high school. What reform strategies were already evident (and were they working well?) What reform strategies had not yet been tried but should have been used? For your evidence, draw on documents available online (each school district usually posts A LOT of information), documents you saved (yearbooks, newspapers, your own papers), and interviews (with at least one parent and one educator from your district).

4/26/2013: Papers due. Post on Sakai. Approximate length: 10 pages (40%)

5/19/2013 Rewrite and expand the editorial once again, using the material from 3/20—4/26 and insights from at least 3 term papers by your classmates. 7 to 8 pages. (20%)

Class Attendance and Participation: Insightful contributions to our discussions will be considered in the calculation of the final grade (for instance, if you are on or near the borderline between two grades, class participation will determine which grade you receive). If you cannot attend class, please send me an email.