Educational Studies 309: Race, Class, and Educational Policy
Trinity College
Spring 2018

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McCook 312

Course Schedule: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10:50 AM-12:05 PM
Seabury S204

Office Hours: Tuesdays, 1:30-2:30 PM in The Cave
Thursdays, 3-5 PM in McCook 312
Or by appointment (email me and suggest a few times you are available)

Course Description
Educational inequities have been persistent in the U.S. educational system for decades. For as long as there have been inequities, though, scholars, educators, parents, community members, and others have sought to understand and challenge these injustices. In this course, we will explore the following questions: How do various scholars make sense of and explain educational inequalities? What role have educational policies played in the production and reproduction of inequalities? How do different policies attempt to address disparities? We will consider the intersections of race, class, gender, sexuality, immigrant status, and other categories of difference in the examination of educational inequity.

This semester, the course includes a Community Learning component. As a class, we will expand upon course readings by collaborating with community partner Robert Cotto on a research project to understand the experiences of students attending an urban, magnet, college preparation high school with a partnership with Trinity College. The school was developed as part of efforts to desegregate Connecticut schools. The project will focus on students’ experiences enrolling in college classes on a predominantly White campus. As part of this course, you will engage in qualitative data collection, which will include ethnographic interviews of high school students and participant observation in both college and high school classes. Based on our research, we will consider ways to improve the partnership between the magnet high school and Trinity College.

Over the course of the semester, you will be able to:
- Explain how and why race and class inequality exist and persist in U.S. schools
- Describe, analyze, and evaluate policy approaches to address educational inequality
- Explore approaches to and complexities of creating more equitable schools
- Engage in primary research on educational (in)equality
- Contribute to the body of literature on educational (in)equality
Course Requirements and Evaluation

Required Readings

Course Reader, which will include readings from Week 3 (February 6) and beyond.

More information about purchasing a Course Reader will be discussed in class. You are required to purchase a Course Reader. Please see me if this will be difficult for you. The required book is available at the bookstore and is on reserve at the library. If you have difficulty obtaining a copy, please come talk to me. Readings for Weeks 1-2 and some other course readings will be available on Moodle or online.

Read and reflect on all the assigned readings before class on the date they are listed on the syllabus. Come to class prepared to engage with the class in discussing the readings. Reading loads and difficulties will vary; it will be in your best interest to look ahead and budget your time accordingly. I encourage you to interpret the readings through your personal experiences and to attempt to understand them through the eyes of people unlike you. You should analyze the readings in relation to your experiences, other readings from class, and other scholarly literature you have read.

Course Evaluation

Class Participation = 10 points
Because this is a discussion-based seminar, your attendance and participation are essential, both for your learning and that of your classmates. Class begins on time and you are required to attend all classes from start to finish. If you know that you will be absent or will need to arrive late or leave early, please contact me in advance to arrange to make up work missed. More than one unexcused absence and/or more than two late arrivals or early departures will affect your grade, except in cases of documented medical or family emergencies. I encourage you to reserve your one allowed unexcused absence for cases of illness.

Your class participation will be evaluated based on your participation and contributions to learning in class. Please note that outstanding participation involves not only making thoughtful contributions in class (whether in large or small group discussions), but also leaving space for your classmates to share their opinions and perspectives and being a reflective listener.

Critical Reading Responses 3x10 = 30 points
Three times during the semester (once each during Units 2, 3, and 4), you will individually submit a response to the day’s reading (~2 pages each). Each critical reading response should contain the following components:

• Short summary (a few sentences) of the main thesis/argument of the reading
• Your critique and response to the reading(s). This component should be the bulk of the assignment.
• At least one question for discussion
Critical reading response assignments will be determined after the first class meeting, when students will be able to express preferences for their reading response dates. Critical reading responses are due at 8:00 AM the day of class and should be uploaded to Moodle. More information about this assignment will be distributed in class.

**Op-Ed Article**  
You will select an issue related to educational inequality and write an op-ed article that would be appropriate for publication the *Hartford Courant* (~700 words). If you are interested in writing an article intended for a different news outlet, please discuss with me first. The article may be about an issue that we have discussed and read about in class, but it does not need to be. You must draw on at least one academic text in your op-ed article. More information about this assignment will be distributed in class. Your op-ed is due on **Sunday, March 25 at 11:59 pm**.

Note: You are encouraged, but not required, to actually submit your op-ed to the *Hartford Courant*!

**Research Project**  
Over the course of the semester, you will collect and analyze data for a research project on the experience of high school students in a college preparation magnet school that partners with Trinity. The data you collect for this project will be shared with Professor Stefanie Wong, Professor Robert Cotto, and your classmates. Your work on the project will include various components which you will submit for evaluation.

**Ethics Training**  
You must complete a Trinity IRB approved Ethics Training and upload evidence of your completion to Moodle by **11:59 pm on Tuesday, January 30**. See this link for more information and details on completing a training [http://commons.trincoll.edu/irb/ethics-training/](http://commons.trincoll.edu/irb/ethics-training/). CITI training is recommended, but if you have previously completed the NIH training, that course is acceptable.

**Fieldnotes**  
Over the course of the semester, you will complete at least 4 observations (at least 2 observations of Trinity College classes, and at least 2 observations at HMTCA). You will individually write detailed fieldnotes after each observation. Each set of fieldnotes should be uploaded to our shared Google Drive folder **no later than one week after each observation**. One set of fieldnotes (at least 2-3 pages) must be uploaded to Moodle by **11:59 pm on Tuesday, February 27** so that I can provide feedback on them. One set of graded fieldnotes = 5 points  
All other fieldnotes together = 5 points

**Interview Transcript**  
You will conduct 1 interview of a high school student during Common Hour on either **Tuesday, April 5 or Thursday, April 7** (date will be confirmed soon). **Please save both dates until then.** You will audio record and transcribe the interview and upload it to both our shared Google Drive folder and Moodle by **Thursday, April 12 at 11:59 pm**.
Analytic Memo = 15 points
You will analyze your own fieldnotes and interview transcript and write a memo (3-4 pages) outlining at least one theme you see in the data. You may also analyze your classmates’ data, but you are not required to. You should connect your analysis to at least two academic texts (can be course readings, but do not need to be) in your memo. Please note that this memo may be shared with community partners. This assignment is due Tuesday, April 24 at 11:59 pm. More information about this assignment will be distributed in class.

Final Paper = 25 points
You have two options for your final paper.

Option 1: Primary Research Paper (10-12 pages)
If you select this option, you will write a paper that analyzes our research question using the data we collected as class. Your paper should include the following elements: problem/issue statement, thesis statement, reflection on researcher positionality, brief literature review, methods, findings, discussion, and implications for policy, practice, and/or future research. You may use part of your analytic memo within the paper, although you may find that you will need to edit or add to your earlier analysis.

Option 2: Secondary Research Paper/Literature Review (8-10 pages)
If you select this option, you will choose an issue related to educational inequality and conduct a literature review of the topic. The topic may be one that we discussed in class, but your paper should go beyond class readings and discussions.

More details about both options will be distributed in class. Regardless of which option you select, you must submit a brief prospectus (1-2 pages) detailing by Sunday, April 1 at 11:59 pm. The prospectus is worth 5 points of your final paper grade. The final paper is due on Friday, May 11 at 11:59 pm.

Grading Scale
The grading scale is as follows:
90 to 100% = A (outstanding work)
80 to 89% = B (good work)
70 to 79% = C (adequate work)
Below 70% = D or F (unsatisfactory work)

Each letter grade is divided into equal thirds for minus (-), regular, and plus (+) letter grades (e.g. 80 to 83.33 is a B-, 83.34 to 86.67 is a B, and 86.68 to 89.99 is a B+).

Academic Policies
Accessibility
Trinity College is committed to creating an inclusive and accessible learning environment consistent with the Americans with Disabilities Act. If you have approval for academic accommodations, please share your accommodation letter during the first two weeks of the
semester or a minimum of 10 days prior to needing your accommodations. You may choose to email me a PDF copy of your letter. If you do so, please copy Lori.Clapis@trincoll.edu on the email and be sure to meet with me privately to discuss implementation of your accommodations.

If you do not have a letter, but have a disability requiring academic accommodations, or have questions about applying for accommodations, please contact Lori Clapis, Coordinator of Accessibility Resources at 860-297-4025 or at Lori.Clapis@trincoll.edu.

**Intellectual Honesty and Plagiarism**

According to Trinity College policy, intellectual honesty “assumes that students do their own work and that they credit properly those upon whose work and thought they draw” (Trinity College Student Handbook, 2016). While we often draw upon the work of others, it is essential that any work presented as your own is indeed your own, no matter how big or small the assignment. Ideas and/or words that are not yours should always be appropriately cited.

Intellectual dishonesty and plagiarism in any form will not be tolerated in this class. Instances of academic dishonesty or plagiarism may result in assignment failure, course failure, referral to the Honor Council, and/or other consequences. If you are unsure about how to use another scholar’s work to support your own ideas without plagiarizing, please ask me.

**Academic Citations**

It is always important in academic writing to give credit to other people’s ideas. You are required to appropriately cite works in all assignments for this course, whether you quote them directly or draw on their ideas. You may use any citation style, as long as you use it consistently.

**Use of Electronics**

Unless you require accommodations or have otherwise received permission from me, use of electronics (phones, tablets, laptops, etc.) is not permitted during class time, as they can be a distraction to you or your classmates.

**Late Assignments**

Late assignments will be penalized with a 10% deduction for every 24-hour period beyond the deadline, with exceptions granted only for documented medical and family emergencies. Other extenuating circumstances should be discussed with the instructor and will be handled on an individual basis.

**Re-Writes and Extra Credit**

If the instructor warrants that a re-write of an assignment is appropriate, you will meet with the instructor to self-assess errors and review grading comments. The paper will be resubmitted on an agreed timeline for up to 90% of the assignment point value.

Extra credit assignments may be offered at the instructor’s discretion. An example of an extra credit assignment might include attending a lecture or community event and writing a reflection that connects to course readings and themes. Please see the instructor if you are interested in an extra credit assignment to receive approval.
How to Succeed in this Course

Come prepared to all classes. You should fully prepare for all classes. This includes arriving on time and ready to participate, completing all reading and/or other assignments prior to class, and bringing any necessary materials (such as readings and notes).

Actively engage in class. Reflect on and analyze the readings and your placement experiences and make thoughtful contributions in discussions. Listen respectfully when others are speaking or sharing.

Actively engage in research. Think deeply about our research question. Be present and observant during fieldwork. Follow through on commitments and plans with your participants. Above all, be a respectful and ethical researcher.

Make use of feedback. We all learn through receiving feedback about what we’re doing well and what we can improve on. Pay attention to my feedback on your assignments, especially early in the semester, and think about how you can incorporate suggestions into future work. Make the most of peer editing opportunities and the Writing Center.

Reach out when you need help. I encourage you to ask questions in class if you do not understand something. If you are confused, it’s likely that other students are, too. If you are more comfortable seeking assistance in a more private setting, feel free to ask me by sending an email (for quick questions), stopping by my office hours, or making an appointment. You should also use your classmates or other peers as a resource – sometimes just talking through confusion can help clarify things.

Course Schedule

Unit 1: Getting Situated
What do we mean when we say “educational inequality”? How can we think about these issues? How do these issues relate to the Hartford context?

Tue 1/23 Introduction to Course

Thur 1/25 Framing the Issues, Part 1


Tue 1/30 Framing the Issues, Part 2
Delpit, Lisa. (2012). “Multiplication is for White People”: Raising Expectations for Other People’s Children. Chapter 1, There is No Achievement Gap at Birth (pp. 3-25).


**ETHICS TRAINING DUE BY TUESDAY, JANUARY 30, 11:59 PM**

Thur 2/1 Overview of Research Methodology and Hartford School Context
** Guest Speaker in Class: Professor Robert Cotto **


Brief background on Sheff v. O’Neill: [https://www.aclu.org/cases/sheff-v-oneill](https://www.aclu.org/cases/sheff-v-oneill)


Background on Trinity/HMTCA partnership: [http://www.trincoll.edu/Academics/centers/urbaned/Pages/HMTCA.aspx](http://www.trincoll.edu/Academics/centers/urbaned/Pages/HMTCA.aspx)

**Unit 2: Understanding Educational Inequality**

What does educational inequality look like in schools? How does educational inequality map onto race, class, and other categories of difference? How do educational policies and practices produce, reproduce, and/or challenge inequality?

Tue 2/6 School Segregation and Desegregation, Part 1


Thur 2/8 School Segregation and Desegregation, Part 2

**Tue 2/13  School Funding**  


**Thur 2/15  School Choice**  
**Guest Speaker in Class: Professor Madeline Perez, University of St. Joseph**  


**Tue 2/20  NO CLASS – TRINITY DAYS**

**Thur 2/22  Poverty and Educational Inequality**


**Tue 2/27  Presenting Research to Non-Academic Audiences**  
**Guest Speaker in Class: Alvin Chang**  


Optional: additional articles by Alvin Chang: https://www.vox.com/authors/alvin. The following may be of particular interest:
- This cartoon explains how the rich got rich and the poor got poor: https://www.vox.com/2016/5/23/11704246/wealth-inequality-cartoon
- The Subtle Ways Colleges Discriminate Against Poor Students, Explained with a Cartoon: https://www.vox.com/platform/amp/2017/9/11/16270316/college-mobility-culture
- This Game Shows How College Admissions Discriminates Against the Poor: https://www.vox.com/policy-and-politics/2017/11/1/16526202/college-scholarship-tycoon-game

** Tues 2/27, 12:00-1:15 pm, Alvin Chang talk on digital storytelling and educational inequality (attendance not required)**

** ONE SET OF FIELDNOTES DUE BY TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 11:59 PM **

** Thur 3/1 ** School Cultures and Inequality, Part 1


** Tue 3/6 ** School Cultures and Inequality, Part 2


** Thur 3/8 ** Race, Gender, and the Criminalization of Black and Brown Youth
Unit 3: The Persistence of Inequality
How and why does educational inequality persist, even when we try to address it? What makes it so hard to challenge educational inequality?

Tue 3/20 The Persistence of Racial Achievement Disparities, Part 1
Lewis and Diamond (2015). Despite the Best Intentions, Prologue-Chapter 3 (pp. xiii-81).

Thur 3/22 The Persistence of Racial Achievement Disparities, Part 2
Lewis and Diamond (2015). Despite the Best Intentions, Chapters 4-6 (pp. 83-181).

** OP-ED ARTICLE DUE ON SUNDAY, MARCH 25 AT 11:59 PM**

Tue 3/27 Interviewing Skills

Review Interview Guide (on Moodle)

** Weds 3/28, Nikole Hannah-Jones Talk in New Haven (not required) **

Thur 3/29 Reinforcing Whiteness and Racism in Challenging Inequality

Delpit, Lisa. (2012). “Multiplication is for White People”: Raising Expectations for Other People’s Children. Chapter 6, “I don’t like it when they don’t say my name right”: Why “reforming” can’t mean “Whitening” (pp. 105-119).

** FINAL PAPER PROSPECTUS DUE ON SUNDAY, APRIL 1 AT 11:59 PM **

** INTERVIEWS WITH PARTICIPANTS ON APRIL 3 OR 5, COMMON HOUR **

Tue 4/3 Accountability & High Stakes Testing, Part 1


**Thur 4/5** Accountability & High Stakes Testing, Part 2


**Unit 4: Recent Educational Challenges, Reforms, and Opportunities**
*How do issues related to educational inequality change and/or persist over time? How can we work towards justice and equity in schools given shifting challenges?*

**Tue 4/10** Immigrant Students and Educational Policy


**Thur 4/12** Undocumented and DACAmented Students


** INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT DUE THURSDAY, APRIL 12 AT 11:59 PM **

**Tue 4/17** Ethnic Studies


**Thur 4/19 LGBTQ+ Students and Educational Policy**


**Tue 4/24 Neoliberalism, Markets, and Educational Policy**


**Final Analytic Memo Due Tuesday, April 24 at 11:59 PM**

**Thur 4/26 Radical Possibilities**

Anyon, Jean. (2005). Radical Possibilities: Public Policy, Urban Education, and a New Social Movement. Chapter 10, Putting Education at the Center, pp. 177-200


**Tue 5/1 Course Wrap Up**

**Final Paper Due Friday, May 11 at 11:59 PM**