

Educational Studies 308: Cities, Suburbs, and Schools

Trinity College Fall 2008
Mondays 1:15-3:55pm Library Music & Media Seminar Room

Cities, Suburbs, and Schools website: <http://www.trincoll.edu/depts/educ/css>
and

Ed Studies web: <http://www.trincoll.edu/Academics/Study/EducationalStudies/>

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Office Hours: Tues 1-3pm, Thur 10:45am-Noon, and by appointment

Additional resource people for this seminar:

- Brittany Price '10, part-time teaching assistant for computer mapping exercise
- Jesse Wanzer '08, Cities, Suburbs, and Schools part-time research assistant
- Rachael Barlow, Social Sciences Data Coordinator (office in library, level A *new*)
- David Tatem, Academic Computing Specialist (office in library, level A)

Description: This upper-level undergraduate seminar operates as a team research workshop. First, we closely examine a noteworthy study on some aspect of cities, suburbs, and schooling in the United States. Next, we design and conduct a small-scale parallel research project to test whether the author's claims apply to the metropolitan Hartford area. Students develop three types of research skills: historical (interpreting archival source materials), qualitative (analyzing oral interviews and observational field notes), and quantitative (generating descriptive statistics and GIS computer maps from large datasets). For the community learning experience, the seminar partners with a local organization to develop the research study, present the findings, and discuss their significance.

In fall 2008, our seminar will consist of three units:

- a) Housing discrimination, including partnership with CT Fair Housing Center
- b) Sheff school desegregation remedy, including policy dialogue and computer mapping for various parties
- c) Public school choice tools for parents, including partnership with ConnCAN

Prerequisite: Ed 200 or Psyc 225 or the Cities Program or permission of instructor.

Readings to acquire:

- Susan Eaton, *The Children of Room E4* (Algonquin Press, 2007). Hardcover only.

Additional readings will be made available in seminar.

Assessment:

Exercises:

A) Home buying simulation	5
B) Housing discrimination tester report	5
C) Excel calculations and charts	5
D) ArcGIS computer mapping	5
E) SmartChoice website database entry	5
F) Conduct and transcribe parent interview at SmartChoice session (Dec 1-6th)	5

Special event:

attend one non-classtime event on our topic and write 2-page report that both describes what occurred and links it to course readings post on Blackboard within 2 days after event (see list of known events below; others will be announced during semester)	10
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Research papers (at end of each unit, approx 4-6 pages each):

1) Has Hartford-area housing discrimination changed or remained same? (historical and qualitative research skills)	10
2) What is working & what needs improvement with Sheff phase II remedy? (quantitative and qualitative skills)	20
3) How do parents actually use public school choice tools? (quantitative and qualitative skills)	20
OR Research proposal (for senior-level study related to CSS themes)	

Class participation (evaluated by peers):

- Discussion facilitator: organize an engaging, focused dialogue on assigned reading, with partner, for approximately 20 minutes of seminar prepare your ideas ahead of time and meet with instructor in advance	5
- Overall contribution to seminar	5

TOTAL 100

Be advised that adequate work (70-79%) earns a C, good work (80-89%) earns a B, and outstanding work (90-100%) earns an A in this class.

Your classmates and I expect your regular and prompt attendance at every session, since we rely upon our collective efforts to succeed in this team-based seminar.

The penalty for overdue assignments will be 10% for every 12-hour period beyond the deadline, with exceptions granted only for documented medical or family emergencies.

Please notify the instructor during the first week of the course if you require any special accommodations (such as religious observances, learning disabilities, etc.).

Schedule

Note: Since our seminar involves community partnerships with people whose calendars may change, the instructor reserves the right to modify our schedule at any time.

Sept 8

Introduction to syllabus and preview of community partnership research projects
Why are you here in this seminar, and what do you hope to learn?
Exercise A: Home buying simulation; Due via BB by Sunday, September 14th

Sept 15

Read: Douglas Massey and Nancy Denton, *American Apartheid: Segregation and the Making of the Underclass*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993, chapters 2-4.

Facilitators 1 & 2 _____; prep meeting _____

Read: "Confidential Report of a Survey in Hartford, Connecticut," Division of Research and Statistics, Home Owners' Loan Corporation, Washington DC, 1936 & 1937; and "Residential Security Map" for Hartford and West Hartford, 1937, from the National Archives. [View on Blackboard]

In seminar:

- discuss home buying simulation results
- maps of racial change and home affordability in metropolitan Hartford

Sept 22

Read: Jennifer Jellison Holme. "Buying Homes, Buying Schools: School Choice in the Social Construction of School Quality." *Harvard Educational Review* 72 (Summer 2002): 177-205.

Facilitators 3 & 4 _____; prep meeting _____

Christina Ramsay, Cintli Sanchez, Jesse Wanzer, and the Ed 308 seminar, "Shopping for Homes and Schools: A Qualitative Study of West Hartford, Connecticut." Cities, Suburbs, and Schools Research Project report, Trinity College, December 2006.
<<http://www.trincoll.edu/depts/educ/css>>

In seminar:

- historical source materials on housing discrimination in Hartford region, 1960s-70s
- Paper #1 assigned; Due on BB by Friday, October 10th

Sept 29

Read: CT Fair Housing Center website <<http://ctfairhousing.org/>> and selected reports (TBA)

In seminar:

- Housing discrimination tester training with Gloribel Gonzalez '08, Fair Housing Specialist, CT Fair Housing Center
- Exercise B assigned: due on date TBA after Trinity Days _____

Oct 6

(Trinity Day -- no class scheduled; work on paper #1 and read Susan Eaton's book)

Special event option: Wed, Oct 8th

You may attend and report on one of the following sessions at the New England Conference on Multicultural Education (NECME) at the Convention Center in Hartford; see announcement about scheduling details and free admission for Trinity students

--The Sheff Movement Coalition: Organizing Parents Across District Lines

-- 40 Years of Project Choice and Project Concern

-- Teacher Perceptions of Open Choice Students and Its Impact on Acclimation to the Suburban School Setting

Oct 13

Read: Susan Eaton, *The Children in Room E4* (2007).

Facilitators 5 & 6 _____; prep meeting _____

Read: Joel Best, *More Damned Lies and Statistics: How Numbers Confuse Public Issues* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), chapter 2.

In seminar:

- Debate on reform strategies: housing and schooling

- Exercise C on Excel calculations and charts assigned; Due by Friday, Oct 17th via BB

Oct 20

Read: Jack Dougherty, Jesse Wanzer, and Christina Ramsay, *Missing the Goal: A Visual Guide to Sheff vs. O'Neill School Desegregation, June 2007*. Cities, Suburbs, and Schools Research Project at Trinity College. <<http://www.trincoll.edu/depts/educ/css>>

Read: Sheff v O'Neill, Stipulation and Proposed Order, Superior Court at Hartford, April 4, 2008 [revised proposal for Sheff II Remedy].

Read: Mark Monmonier. *How to Lie with Maps, second edition*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996, chapter 3 excerpts.

In seminar:

- Exercise D on ArcGIS computer mapping; Due by Friday, Oct 24th via BB

Oct 27

Read: Erica Frankenberg, *Project Choice Campaign: Improving and Expanding Hartford's Project Choice Program* (Washington, DC: Poverty & Race Research Action Council <<http://www.prrac.org>>, September 2007).

Read: Erin Dillon, *Plotting School Choice: The Challenges of Crossing District Lines*. Education Sector Reports <www.educationsector.org>, August 2008.

Facilitators 7 & 8 _____; prep meeting _____

In seminar: discussion with guests Renita Satchell (Project Choice) and Phil Tegeler (Sheff Movement)

Nov 3

Read: Alex Johnston and Tori Truscheit, *The State of Connecticut Public Education: A 2008 Report Card for Connecticut Public Schools*. ConnCAN <www.conncan.org>, Oct 2008.

Review: ConnCAN (Connecticut Coalition for Achievement Now) website
<<http://www.conncan.org>>

In seminar: discussion with guests from ConnCAN: Marc Magee, Tori Truscheit, and others

Exercise E: SmartChoice database entry tasks assigned

Nov 10

Read: NAACP Legal Defense and Education Fund, Inc. and the Civil Rights Project. *Still Looking to the Future: Voluntary K-12 School Integration: A Manual for Parents, Educators, and Advocates*. 2008. [*See entire report on-line via BB link; focus on chapter 4 handout about the 2007 US Supreme Court rulings on Seattle & Louisville cases*]

Read: Emily Bazelon, "The Next Kind of Integration." *The New York Times Magazine*, July 20, 2008.

Facilitators 11 & 12 _____ prep meeting _____

In seminar: additional guests involved with Sheff II remedy (pending)

- Paper #2 assigned; Due Monday, Nov 17th in seminar

**For additional Excel / ArcGIS support, see Jack or email: brittany.price@trincoll.edu

Nov 17

In seminar:

- preview of SmartChoice website beta version

- discussion with guests from Regional School Choice Office (RSCO): Chris Leone, Webster Brooks, Shola Freeman (2-3pm)

- draft presentation of school choice mapping data by Brittany Price

Nov 24

Read: Jack Buckley and Mark Schneider, "Shopping for Schools on the Internet Using DCSchoolSearch.com" (chapter 5) and "What Do Parents Want from Schools? It Depends on How You Ask" (chapter 6), in *Charter Schools: Hope or Hype?* Princeton University Press, 2007.

Facilitators 9 & 10 _____ prep meeting _____

Conference call with author Jack Buckley

Preparation for previewing SmartChoice to parent groups and interviewing/observing them about their search strategies and challenges; clarify interview guide and IRB
- exercise F: conduct and transcribe parent interview assigned; Due AFTER Dec 6th

Dec 1 Tentative: in place of regular seminar this week, teams will present SmartChoice website at two different parent focus groups (with ConnCAN) and collect data

Dec 8

In seminar:

- share data from the SmartChoice parent interviews and brainstorm claims & evidence
- resources on how to construct a research proposal
- peer evaluations on overall contribution to seminar

- Assign paper #3 DUE Wed Dec 17th via BB --- choose to write either A or B:

a) SmartChoice research study:

How do Hartford-area parents actually use public school choice tools, and how does this compare to what Buckley and Schneider found in Washington DC?

b) Design and write a research proposal for a senior-level project on any topic related to this seminar on cities, suburbs, and schools, to be evaluated on these criteria:

- Does the author pose a thought-provoking, researchable question (or hypothesis) and explain its significance?
- Does the author connect the question to the existing research literature (secondary sources) and move beyond into new territory?
- Does the author identify the most appropriate primary sources and research methods for this study?
- Is the author's proposal well organized, and does it include sufficient background for audiences unfamiliar with the topic? Does the author cite sources in an acceptable format so that future readers may easily locate them?