Office hours are times that your professors reserve specifically for meeting with students. You do not need to sign up in advance. During office hours, we are each happy to answer your questions about class material or assignments, or offer academic advice or mentorship. Generally, we meet with each student for 15 minutes, so it’s helpful if you come with a clear sense of what you’d like to discuss so that we can make the most of our time together.

Prior to assignment deadlines, your TAs will also each hold office hours. They will share the times and locations closer to the dates.

Course Description

This course introduces the study of schooling within an interdisciplinary framework. From sociology and political science, we investigate the resources, structures, and social and political contexts influencing student opportunities and outcomes in the United States. From anthropology, we examine how classroom and school cultures shape experiences of teaching and learning. From psychology, we contrast theories of learning, both in the abstract and in practice. From philosophy, we examine competing educational goals and their underlying assumptions regarding human nature, justice, and democracy. In addition, a community learning component, where students observe and participate in nearby K–12 classrooms for three hours per week, will be integrated with course readings and written assignments.

Learning Objectives

Over the course of the semester, you will be able to:

- Identify and analyze issues that affect teaching and learning in schools
- Recognize various goals of schooling and the beliefs that underlie them, and consider ways to best achieve and balance them
- Explain how and why inequality persists in schools
- Apply concepts and theories in the educational literature to real world K–12 classrooms and schools
• Analyze and imagine possibilities for creating more just schools

The key goal of this course is to explore the central question: How can we best understand the practices, policies, and patterns in classrooms and schools in ways that enable us to create and sustain just, inclusive, effective, engaging, and pedagogically strong educational spaces?

Course Requirements

Course Readings
Readings will be posted as PDFs to our course Moodle site. Alternatively, for a fee of around $20 (exact amount TBD), I will provide printed copies of these readings throughout the semester. 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 discussing the readings. Reading loads and difficulties will vary; it will be in your best interest to look ahead and budget your time accordingly. You should analyze the readings in relation to your experiences, other readings from class, and other scholarly literature you have read. Readings may be subject to change.

School Placements in Hartford Public Schools
Clusters of students will be assigned to work with classroom teachers in different schools in Hartford. Students will work as participant observers with classroom teachers for at least eight 3–hour sessions (a total of 24 hours) over the course of the semester. The objectives are for Trinity students to:
  • Integrate theoretical readings with first-hand experiences in K–12 schools
  • Develop meaningful relationships with students and teachers, deepen understandings and reflections on the contexts of urban schools and the purposes of education, and assist teachers and students where appropriate
  • Identify potential resources and gain practical experience about teaching and curricula

Typically, participant observation is more than just quietly watching (although at times, it may involve just that). Most times, participant observation will include more active roles in the classroom, such as learning alongside students, one-on-one tutoring, working with small groups, preparing materials for a classroom project, and (in some cases) planning and teaching a brief lesson. If you are unable to make a scheduled session due to a documented medical or family issue, contact your classroom teacher as soon as possible to arrange an alternate time.

Prior to beginning your school placement, you must complete four pre-observation assignments, described under “Pre- and post-observation assignments” on p. 3 below.

Course Evaluation

You will be evaluated on the items listed below. More detailed information about assignments will be distributed in class. Unless told otherwise, please submit assignments on Moodle.

Class Attendance and Participation (Evaluated at mid-semester and end-of-semester; 10 x 2 = 20 points)
  “As a classroom community, our capacity to generate excitement is deeply affected by our interest in one another, in hearing one another’s voices, in recognizing one another’s presence.”
    bell hooks, Teaching to Transgress (1994), p. 8
Excellent class participation includes the following:

- **Attending all classes from start to finish.** More than two absences will affect your grade, except in cases of illness, religious observances, or family emergencies. Absences for these reasons may be made up through an alternative assignment. You must email me to receive permission to complete a makeup assignment. I encourage you to reserve your allowed absences for cases of illness.
  
  • If any student is required to isolate or quarantine due to a positive Covid-19 test or exposure to someone who tests positive, the entire class will meet virtually via Zoom. Please see the Academic Policies on p. 5 for more details.

- **Coming prepared to each class.** Come to each class having completed all required readings and assignments and with all necessary materials, such as readings and notes. Arrive on time and ready to engage.

- **Actively engaging in class discussions.** Make thoughtful and analytic contributions to small- and large-group discussions based on completed readings and assignments.

- **Listening and respond to others with respect.** Make space for others to share their perspectives and opinions in class discussions. Listen attentively and respectfully. If you disagree with something someone has said, do so graciously, respectfully, and with evidence to support your counterargument. Be open to learning from others’ experiences, perspectives, and interpretations.

Once during the semester, you will work with one or two classmates to prepare shared reading notes and discussion questions for class. You will sign up for these dates in advance. On the days when you are responsible for preparing these notes and questions, I will expect you to serve as a “resident expert” on the day’s readings and to take a leadership role in the discussion.

You will self-evaluate your participation at mid-semester and at the end of the semester, to reflect on your strengths and on how you can improve. I will take into account your self-evaluation when determining your grade, and I will discuss with you individually if my assessment differs from your own.

**Hartford Classroom Participant Observation**

**Pre- and post-observation assignments** = 12 points

1) Hartford Public Schools Volunteer Application – **due Sunday, Sept. 19** (2 points)
2) Mandated Reporter Training – **due Sunday, Sept. 19** (4 points)
3) Email introduction to classroom teacher – **due Sunday, Sept. 26** (2 points)
4) Email schedule agreement with classroom teacher – **due Sunday, Oct. 3** (2 points)
5) Thank you to classroom teacher – **due Tuesday, Dec. 7** (2 points)

**Reflection journal** = 10 points

After each 3–hour participant observation at your school placement, you will write a brief reflection (1–2 single-spaced pages) on the session. Ideally, this reflection should be written as soon as possible after your participant observation. These reflections are not intended to be formal pieces of writing, but are primarily designed to allow you to process your participant observation experiences and consider connections to course themes.

You will not have space in each reflection to describe all 3 hours of your observation in detail. Rather, you might choose to focus on overall impressions, a particular instance or example that sparked your thinking, or a question that arose during the day’s participant observation.
At least 4 of the 8 reflections should include a connection to a course reading. At the end of the semester, you will write a final reflection and evaluation on what you learned at your school placement (3–4 single-spaced pages).

You will submit one reflection journal that includes a connection to a course reading on Thursday, Oct. 7, at 11:59 PM to receive feedback (worth 2 out of 10 points for the complete journal). The complete journal (8 reflections + final reflection) is due on Thursday, Dec. 9, at 11:59 PM.

**Evaluation by classroom teacher** = 10 points
At the end of the semester, your classroom teacher will evaluate you based on your level of engagement, reliability, and effort demonstrated.

**Three Analysis Papers** (4–5 double-spaced pages each) 3x10 = 30 points
Analysis papers allow you to illustrate your understanding of course readings and themes, support claims with evidence and examples, and integrate theory and practice. All Analysis Papers should be uploaded to Moodle by 11:59 PM on the date they are due. If you visit the Writing Center for support on an Analysis Paper, you will receive extra credit (0.5 points).

1) Social and Cultural Contexts of Schooling – due Thursday, Sept. 30, 11:59 PM
2) Theories of Learning – due Thursday, Oct. 14, 11:59 PM
3) Explaining Educational Inequality – due Thursday, Nov. 11, 11:59 PM

**Curriculum Project**
Individually or in pairs, you will design a plan for how you would teach a thematic unit (4–5 lessons) to a group of students similar to those in your classroom placement. The purpose of the curriculum project is for you to creatively apply the concepts and themes we have discussed this semester to a curriculum that could be taught. If you visit the Writing Center for support on your Curriculum Project paper, you will receive extra credit (0.5 points).

**Curriculum project proposal** = 10 points
In up to 2 double-spaced pages, describe your initial ideas for a thematic unit. Include an introduction to the unit, the context of the classroom/school, at least 3 learning objectives (“Students will be able to…”), and at least 3 learning activities (what will students do?). If you are working with a partner, submit one proposal together. Due Thursday, Dec. 2, at 11:59 PM.

**Curriculum project paper** = 20 points
The written paper (8–10 double-spaced pages) is due on Tuesday, Dec. 21, at 11:59 PM. If you work in a pair, you will submit one paper together and include a brief evaluation of your collaboration process.

**Grading Scale**
The total number of possible points in this course is 112. When calculating your final grade, your lowest 10-point grade (Mid-Semester or End-of-Semester Participation, or one Analysis Paper, or Evaluation by Classroom Teacher) will be dropped, resulting in an adjusted total of 102 points. If you do not submit a 10-point assignment at all (i.e., you receive a 0), you forfeit the right to drop your lowest 10-point grade, and your grade will be calculated based on a total of 112 points.
Revised 09.27.21

Your final course grade will be calculated by dividing the total points earned by the total points possible.

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+).

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**Academic Policies**

**Face Mask Requirement**
Per Trinity College policy, you are required to wear a face mask in the classroom, from the beginning to the end of class. Masks must cover your nose and mouth completely. There are no exceptions to this policy. You may not remove your mask to eat or drink during class; therefore, please plan ahead.

At times, it may be difficult to hear one another with our masks on. Therefore, please do your best to speak loudly and clearly during class discussions.

**Accomodations for Students in Isolation or Quarantine**
If any student must isolate or quarantine, our entire class will meet virtually via Zoom, and I will distribute a Zoom meeting link in advance. Although not ideal, meeting virtually as an entire class is much more effective and inclusive than a “hybrid” format, where some students are in-person while others are virtual. In addition, a virtual class maintains the confidentiality of isolated or quarantined students.

If you are in isolation or quarantine, and feeling healthy, you are required to attend virtual class sessions. Excused absences from a virtual class session are only permitted if you are ill and provide documentation from the health center.

**Use of Electronics**
You may bring a laptop to class only for the purposes of accessing electronic copies of course readings and to take notes. Please refrain from using your laptop or phone for non-class-related purposes. At any point in the semester, I reserve the right to disallow laptop use if students are using them for non-class purposes.

**Late Assignments**
You are each entitled to two 36-hour extensions, no questions asked. You may use these extensions for any assignment. When you submit the assignment on Moodle, please note in the comment box that you are using the extension. Other than the use of these extensions, late assignments will be penalized with a 10% deduction for every 1 to 24-hour period beyond the deadline. Exceptions will be granted only for documented family or medical emergencies.

**Re-Writes and Extra Credit**
If I recommend that you re-write an assignment, you will meet me to self-assess errors and review grading comments. We will discuss and determine a resubmission deadline for up to 90% of the assignment point value.
I may offer extra credit assignments; examples might include attending a lecture or community event and writing a reflection that connects to course readings and themes. Please see me if you are interested in an extra credit assignment to receive approval.

**Accessibility**
Trinity College is committed to creating an inclusive and accessible learning environment consistent with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Like many things, the need for disability accommodations and the process for arranging them may be altered by the Covid-19 changes we are experiencing and the safety protocols currently in place. Students with disabilities who may need some accommodation in order to fully participate in this class are urged to contact the Student Accessibility Resource Center, as soon as possible, to explore what arrangements need to be made to assure access.

If you have approval for academic accommodations, please notify me by the end of week two of classes. For those students with accommodations approved after the start of the semester, a minimum of 10 days’ notice is required. Please be sure to meet with me privately to discuss implementation. Student Accessibility Resources can be reached by emailing Lori.Clapis@trincoll.edu or SARC@trincoll.edu.

**Intellectual Honesty**
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.

You may use any citation style (e.g., APA, Chicago, MLA), as long as you do so consistently. If you have any questions about how to cite another author’s work appropriately, or how to draw upon another author’s work without plagiarizing, please ask me.

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.

**Asking for Assistance or Clarification**
I am usually happy to assist you and answer questions on anything related to course readings or assignments. However, part of being a successful college student is learning how to problem-solve on your own. So, before you ask me for assistance or clarification, please first consult at least three sources: (1) the course syllabus and Moodle site; (2) a teaching assistant; (3) a classmate. If you still do not find the answer to your question after consulting these three sources, feel free to ask me!

**Helpful Things to Know**
(Adapted with thanks to Dr. Eve Ewing)

**Trinity College Writing Center.** We are all developing as writers and thinkers (myself included), and we all improve through receiving feedback. For assistance and feedback on your writing, at any stage, consider scheduling an appointment with a Writing Associate at Trinity’s Writing Center. If you visit the Writing Center for support on an Analysis Paper or Curriculum Project paper, you will receive extra credit (0.5 point).
Trinity College Library. Our librarians are amazing and eager to help you identify sources for research projects or other assignments. Although you can make an appointment with any librarian, Rob Walsh, our social science librarian, has particular expertise in the library sources relevant to our class. You can email him at Robert.Walsh@trincoll.edu or make an appointment on the library website.

Student Technology Assistants. The Student Technology Assistants (STA) work with Trinity’s Research, Instruction, and Technology (RIT) staff to provide remote assistance and support regarding your technology needs, including using Zoom and Moodle. Contact the STAs at sta-help@trincoll.edu, drop by their virtual help desk (https://trincoll.zoom.us/my/sta.helpdesk), or read more on their website.

SensusAccess File Converter. If you wish, you may convert course readings in PDF form into alternative formats, including audio files. In doing so, you can listen to the reading while following along with the written text. Trinity’s RIT website includes additional details on the SuccessAccess File Converter.

Title IX Resources and Mandated Reporting. As a faculty member, I am considered a “Responsible Employee.” This means that if you disclose to me instances of sexual assault, sexual harassment, other sexual misconduct, dating violence, domestic violence, or stalking, I am required to share this information with Trinity’s Title IX Coordinator or Deputy Coordinator. See Trinity’s Title IX website for additional information.

If you need to talk to someone who will maintain confidentiality, you can reach out to “Privileged Employees” at the following places:
- Spiritual and Religious Life, Trinity College Chapel, (860) 297-2013
  The Reverend Marcus G. Halley
- Counseling Center: 135 Allen Street, (860) 297-2415
  Randolph M. Lee, Ph.D., Director
  Kristine Kennan, Psy.D., Associated Director
  [After business hours, call to receive an available counselor’s phone number]

In addition, the following “Confidential Employees” are required to report basic information about alleged incidents, but will not disclose names or other details that may reveal individuals’ identities, unless there is imminent harm to the campus or person/s disclosing.
- The Health Center: Wheaton Hall 1st Floor, (860) 297-2018
  Martha Burke O’Brien, Director
  All non-student staff
- Women & Gender Resource Action Center (WGRAC), Mather Hall, 2nd Floor, (860) 297-2408
  Laura Lockwood, Director
  All non-student staff
- Queer Resource Center (QRC), 114 Crescent Street, (860) 987-6273
  Carrie Robinson, Director
  All non-student staff

Mental Health. Many of us face issues with our mental health over the course of our lives. Sometimes, being a student can create or exacerbate these issues. In addition, it is common to experience additional anxiety due to the pandemic and other national and global events. If you are struggling, your mental
health is suffering, or you just need someone to talk to, I encourage you to make an appointment with the Counseling and Wellness Center, or call (860) 297-2415. These services are free and confidential.

**Learning During the Pandemic.** We are still navigating numerous uncertainties and challenges amid the Covid-19 pandemic. My goal is to support you in doing the best work you can in light of these uncertainties and challenges. I encourage you to prioritize your health and wellness, which are far more important than the grades you get in this class or any class. If you are finding it difficult to balance your health and wellness with your work in this class, please let me know. It’s okay to ask for help.

I ask that you be patient with me if the challenges to the semester force me to make last-minute changes. I will do my best to communicate any changes clearly and with as much notice as possible. Finally, please be patient with your peers as well as we all navigate this semester together.

**Course Schedule**

*Note: All readings should be read BEFORE class on the date they are listed.*

**UNIT 1: Social, Cultural, and Political Contexts of Schooling**

How do the social, cultural, and political contexts of schooling (cultural beliefs, social organization, political tensions, etc.) impact teaching and learning? What social, cultural, and political values are reflected in different approaches to education?

**Thursday, September 9: Course Introduction**

**Tuesday, September 14: The Context of Urban Education**


**Thursday, September 16: The Context of Hartford Public Schools**


**Tuesday, September 21: Education and Socialization, Part 1**

de Marrais, K., and LeCompte, M. (1999). Excerpt from Ch. 2: The social organization of schooling (pp. 43–52) and Excerpts from Ch. 6: What is taught in schools (pp. 222–228, 236–247). In The Way Schools Work: A Sociological Analysis of Education. New York: Longman. [24]

**Thursday, September 23: Education and Socialization, Part 2**


** Email introduction to classroom teacher due SUNDAY, SEPT. 26, AT 11:59 PM

UNIT 2: Theories of Learning
How do different theories explain how people learn? How do these theories shape teaching and learning practices in schools and classrooms?

** Tuesday, September 28: Classical Theory and Behaviorism

** Thursday, September 30: Constructivist Theories, Part 1: Piaget, Dewey, and Vygotsky

** Analysis Paper 1 due THURSDAY, SEPT. 30, AT 11:59 PM
** Email schedule agreement with classroom teacher due SUNDAY, OCT. 3, AT 11:59 PM

** Tuesday, October 5: Constructivist Theories, Part 2: Bruner

UNIT 3: Explaining Educational Inequality
How do different theorists and scholars explain disparities in educational opportunities, experiences, and outcomes? How and why do these disparities map on to categories of difference (class, race, gender, sexual orientation, immigrant status, language, etc.)? How do different theorists and scholars explain the possibilities for interrupting educational inequality?

** Thursday, October 7: Inequality Across Schools: The Opportunity Gap and Segregation

Listen to podcast (58 minutes), *The Problem We All Live With, Part One.* (2015, July 31). *This American Life*. Transcript available here.

** One reflection journal entry due THURSDAY, OCT. 7, AT 11:59 PM

** Tuesday, October 12: No class – Trinity Days!

** Thursday, October 14: Inequality Within Schools: Tracking
**Analysis Paper 2 due THURSDAY, OCT. 14, AT 11:59 PM**

**Tuesday, October 19: Social Class Inequality: Social Reproduction Theories**


**Thursday, October 21: Gender and Sexuality: Schools as Gendering & Heteronormative Institutions**


**Tuesday, October 26: Race and Educational Disparities, Part 1: Implicit Bias & Racism in Schools**


**Thursday, October 28: Race and Educational Disparities, Part 2: Policing and School Discipline**


**Tuesday, November 2: Immigrant Students, Emergent Bilinguals, and Inequality**


**Thursday, November 4: Students with Special Needs and Inequality**


Rizga, K. (2019, December 30). What school could be if it were designed for kids with autism. *The Atlantic.*

**UNIT 4: Teaching for Change**

How can educators challenge inequalities at the school and classroom level? What assumptions and understandings about learning, equity, knowledge, and justice do these approaches reflect?

**Tuesday, November 9: Ethnic Studies**

** Thursday, November 11: Multicultural Education and Culturally Relevant Pedagogy **


** Analysis Paper 3 due THURSDAY, NOV. 11, AT 11:59 PM **

** Tuesday, November 16: School-Based Reform **


** Thursday, November 18: Family, Community, and School Connections **


** Tuesday, November 23 and Thursday, November 25: No class – Thanksgiving break **

UNIT 5: Curriculum Design
How can educators design lessons, units, and curricula in ways that challenge inequality and link rich learning objectives, activities, and evaluation components?

** Tuesday, November 30: Objectives for Student Learning **

Browse Connecticut Core Standards ➔ Materials for Teachers, especially for the subject area(s) you are considering for your Curriculum Project.

** Thursday, December 2: Teaching Activities and Resources **

Read one of the following:


** Curriculum project proposal due THURSDAY, DEC. 2, AT 11:59 PM.

Tuesday, December 7: Evaluating Student Learning

DePaul University Teaching Commons. Rubrics.
Read: “Rubrics,” “Types of Rubrics,” “Creating Rubrics,” and “Evaluating Rubrics.”

Listen to: 1A Podcast. (2020, August 11). Making the grade: How should we assess students during a pandemic?

** Thank you to classroom teacher due TUESDAY, DEC. 7, by the end of class

UNIT 6: Philosophy of Education
What is the purpose of education and schooling? What is worth learning? How should debates over these issues be resolved in a democratic society?

Thursday, December 9: Conflicting Aims of Public Education


** Complete reflection journal (8 entries + reflection) due THURSDAY, DEC. 9, AT 11:59 PM

Tuesday, December 14: Education for Democracy
Listen to Have You Heard Podcast (2020), “Politics in the Zoom Room.”


Tuesday, December 21:
** Curriculum project written paper due TUESDAY, DEC. 21, AT 11:59 PM
** If you worked in a pair: Collaboration evaluation due TUESDAY, DEC. 21, AT 11:59 PM
Acknowledgements

This syllabus was adapted from prior EDUC 200 syllabi from Drs. Stefanie Wong, Andrea Dymness, and Jack Dougherty.

Some of the statements on this syllabus were inspired by or adapted from statements on the syllabi of other scholars, including Drs. Jessica Calarco, Eve Ewing, and Stefanie Wong.