Race, Class, and Educational Policy
Educational Studies (EDUC) 309
Trinity College
Fall 2021 | Tue/Thu 1:30–2:45pm | Seabury Hall S204

Professor: Elise Castillo, Ph.D. (she/her)
Office: McCook 318
Email: Elise.Castillo@trincoll.edu (I aim to return emails within 24 hours, except on Saturdays)

Office Hours

Tue, 3:00–4:00pm; Wed, 10:00am–12:00pm; And by appointment (Email me and suggest a few times)

My office hours are times that I reserve specifically for meeting with my students. You do not need to sign up in advance. During office hours, I am happy to answer your questions about class material or assignments or offer academic advice or mentorship. Generally, I 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.

Course Description

In this upper-level undergraduate seminar, our primary goal is to work collaboratively to research and analyze race, class, and educational policy. We will closely read studies by other authors and conduct our own collaborative research project. We will explore the following questions: How do various scholars make sense of and explain race, class, and educational inequity? What role have educational policies played in the production and reproduction of racial and socioeconomic inequities? How do policies attempt to address and remedy these inequities?

For the Community Learning component of this course, we will interview public school teachers in Connecticut to address the following research questions: To what extent are Connecticut public school teachers incorporating the histories and experiences of people of color in the curriculum? What is working well, and what, if any, challenges do they face? We will present study findings to public school teachers at nearby Hartford Public Schools to help them design ethnic studies courses, specifically in Black, Latinx, and Puerto Rican studies, which, per state policy, all Connecticut public high schools are required to offer beginning fall 2022.

Learning Objectives

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

- Explain how and why race and class inequity exist and persist in U.S. schools
- Describe, analyze, and evaluate policy approaches to addressing educational inequity
- Engage in primary research on educational (in)equity
- Employ credible evidence and analysis to craft persuasive oral and written arguments
**Course Materials**

The following book is required and available at the Trinity College library course reserves or to purchase at the Trinity College bookstore:


Additional readings will be posted as PDFs to our course Moodle site. Alternatively, for a fee of around $15 (exact amount TBD), I will provide printed copies of these readings throughout the semester. Readings may be subject to change.

**Course Assignments and Evaluation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>Points Possible</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>Every class</td>
<td>10 x 2 = 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Short Essays (~500 words each)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short essay #1</td>
<td>Sunday, Sept. 26, 11:59pm ET</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short essay #2</td>
<td>Sunday, Oct. 10, 11:59pm ET</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short essay #3</td>
<td>Sunday, Dec. 5, 11:59pm ET</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short essay #4</td>
<td>Tue., Dec. 14, beginning of class</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Research Project</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CITI ethics training</td>
<td>Sunday, Sept. 12, 11:59pm ET</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview transcript</td>
<td>Sunday, Oct. 17, 11:59pm ET</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Draft presentation slide</td>
<td>Thurs., Oct. 21, beginning of class</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation evaluation</td>
<td>Thurs., Oct. 28, beginning of class</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpreting interviews essay</td>
<td>Sunday, Oct. 31, 11:59pm ET</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research-Based Op-Ed Essay</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First draft</td>
<td>Sunday, Nov. 14, 11:59pm ET</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer review</td>
<td>Tue., Nov. 16, 11:59pm ET</td>
<td>5 x 2 = 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final draft</td>
<td>Sunday, Nov. 21, 11:59pm ET</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Optional submission to CT Mirror</td>
<td>Sunday, Dec. 5, 11:59pm ET</td>
<td>2 (extra credit)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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+).
Class Attendance and Participation

“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. 4 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.

Up to three times during the semester, I will require each of you to co-lead a class discussion question. More information about leading discussions will be distributed in class.

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 your self-evaluations into account when determining your grade, and I will discuss with you individually if my assessment differs from your own.

**Four Short Essays**

Throughout the semester, you will write short essays (around 500 words each) reflecting on the readings and on your learning. Essay prompts will be distributed in class in advance of each due date.

**Class Research Project**

We will conduct a collaborative interview-based research project, conducting interviews with Connecticut public school teachers to examine the extent to which they are incorporating ethnic studies into their curricula, what is working well, and what, if any, challenges they are facing. The goal of this project is to strengthen your qualitative research skills, connect empirical research with existing scholarship, and develop policy recommendations based on the study’s findings. Additional assignment details will be distributed in class.

**Research-Based Op-Ed Essay**

The goal of this assignment is to apply your own research-based perspective to a topic related to race, class, and educational policy that is currently impacting Connecticut residents. An op-ed is short (usually
no more than 1,000 words), but it can be challenging to write a clear and coherent argument in such limited space. You will prepare a (1) first draft; (2) peer review of classmates’ first drafts; and (3) final draft. Additional assignment details will be distributed in class.

For optional extra credit (2 points), you may submit your final draft for publication in *The Connecticut Mirror*, a nonprofit, nonpartisan news site focused on state policy and politics. This extra credit option entails sharing your final draft with a *Mirror* editor for additional feedback, revising your draft, and submitting it for publication via the *Mirror’s* online submission platform.

**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.

**Accommodations 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**
I recommend that you bring a laptop to class, but **only** to access electronic copies of course readings, take notes, and participate in collaborative activities. Please refrain from using your laptop or phone for non-class-related purposes. Please let me know if you need to borrow a laptop.

**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.

**Excused Absences and Making Up Work**
Please notify me during the first week of the course if you require any scheduling accommodations for religious observances. If granted an excused absence from class for religious observances or documented family or medical emergencies, please write a short essay (~500 words) reflecting on the day’s readings and submit it to me no later than 7 days after the date of the missed class. Please also
communicate with me as soon as possible if you have any questions about what you missed. This is to ensure that you do not fall behind in the course material.

**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 two sources: (1) the course syllabus and Moodle site; (2) 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 your Interpreting Interviews Essay or Final Op-Ed, 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 a virtual 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
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

Unit 1: Framing the Issues: Race, Class, and Urban Educational Inequality

Thursday, September 9: Course introduction and overview

***CITI Ethics Training: Due Sunday, September 12, 11:59pm (Upload your certificate to Moodle.)

Tuesday, September 14: How do scholars define and make sense of race and class?


Thursday, September 16: How do scholars define and make sense of racism and antiracism?


Tuesday, September 21: How have policies shaped educational inequity and segregation in Hartford?

Thursday, September 23: How do urban planning policies impact educational inequity?

***Short Essay #1: Due Sunday, September 26, 11:59pm

Unit 2: Race, Class, and Curriculum Policies

Tuesday, September 28: How do scholars explain the value of ethnic studies and teaching about race?


Optional: (Re-)Watch Precious Knowledge (2011). Dos Vatos Productions, Inc.

Thursday, September 30: What are the political and policy barriers to teaching about race?

Listen to first 30 minutes: Klein, E. (2021, July 30). What’s Really Behind the 1619 Backlash? An Interview with Nikole Hannah-Jones and Ta-Nahisi Coates. The Ezra Klein Show.

Stout, C., & LeMee, G. L. (2021, July 22). Efforts to restrict teaching about racism and bias have multiplied across the U.S. Chalkbeat


Tuesday, October 5: What are the possibilities for, and constraints to, teaching about race in Connecticut public schools?
Guest Speakers: TBD

Asmelash, L., & Sturla, A. (2020, Dec. 9). Connecticut will become the first state to require high schools to offer Black and Latino studies in fall 2022. CNN.


Belsha, K. (2021, August 4). “They’ll know more than I ever knew”: More states move to require lessons on Native American history and culture. Chalkbeat.
Unit 3: Class Research Project

Research Questions:
To what extent are Connecticut public school teachers incorporating the histories and experiences of people of color in the curriculum? What is working well, and what, if any, challenges do they face?

Thursday, October 7: Why and how do researchers conduct interviews?
Seidman, I. (2019). Ch. 1: Why interview? (pp. 1–13) and Ch. 6: Technique isn’t everything, but it is a lot (pp. 85–100). In Interviewing as Qualitative Research: A Guide for Researchers in Education and the Social Sciences (5th Ed.). Teachers College Press.

***Short Essay #2: Due Sunday, October 10, 11:59pm

Tuesday, October 12: Class will not meet – Trinity Days!

Thursday, October 14: How do our positionalities as researchers shape the interview process?

***Edited interview transcript: Due Sunday, October 17, 11:59pm

Tuesday, October 19: What themes emerged from our interviews? Analyzing interview data
Read all of your classmates’ interview transcripts prior to class.

Thursday, October 21: What arguments can we make based on our interview evidence?

***Draft presentation slide and talking points: Due Thursday, October 21, by the beginning of class

In class: Revise presentation slides and rehearse presentations

Tuesday, October 26: What recommendations can we make based on our interview evidence?
Readings TBD

Prior to and in class: Finalize presentation slides

Thursday, October 28: Public presentation of our findings in class

Guest evaluators from Hartford Public Schools will score your presentations based on two criteria: How insightful is the claim and interpretation? How persuasive is the evidence?

***Interpreting interviews essay: Due Sunday, October 31, 11:59pm

Unit 4: Writing About Race, Class, and Educational Policy for Public Audiences

Tuesday, November 2: How can we communicate persuasive policy arguments to public audiences?
Guest Speaker: Harriet Jones, The Connecticut Mirror


Optional: Additional CT Viewpoints articles by Trinity students

**Thursday, November 4:** How can we support our policy arguments with credible evidence?

Huynh, K. (2021, Mar. 31). I didn’t learn about Asian American history in high school. We can’t fail another generation of students. *Chalkbeat.*

Dunson, C. (2021, Jul. 19). We need to meet the needs of Black civics students like me. *Chalkbeat.*

Finn, J. (2021, Aug. 4). My students thrived last year because they weren’t policed. *Chalkbeat.*

**Unit 5: How Race and Class Shape the Educational Policymaking Process**

**Tuesday, November 9:** What “counts” as educational policy?

**Thursday, November 11:**

***Op-Ed First Draft: Due Sunday, Nov. 14, 11:59pm***

**Tuesday, November 16:**

***Op-Ed Peer Reviews: Due Tuesday, Nov. 16, by the beginning of class (1:30pm)***

**Thursday, November 18:**

***Op-Ed Final Draft (and peer evaluation if you worked in a pair): Due Sunday, November 21, 11:59pm***

**Tuesday, November 23 and Thursday, November 25:** Class will not meet – Thanksgiving

**Tuesday, November 30:**

**Thursday, December 2:**

***Short Essay #3: Due Sunday, December 5, 11:59pm***
***Optional Op-Ed Submission to The Connecticut Mirror: Due Sunday, December 5, 11:59pm***

**Tuesday, December 7:**

**Unit 6: Student-Nominated Readings and Course Wrap-Up**

**Thursday, December 9:**
Student-nominated readings TBD

**Tuesday, December 14:**
Student-nominated readings TBD

***Short Essay #4: Due Tuesday, December 14, at the beginning of class; be prepared to discuss***