

Ed 399 Independent Study proposal on Race & Social Class in Higher Ed
by Danyelle Doldoorian and Brigit Rioual, last updated September 14, 2012
for Fall 2012 semester with Professor Jack Dougherty

Goals:

Race and social class have a profound impact on education. The achievement gap between races and social classes is prevalent. This topic has been studied extensively, and we have gained knowledge in this area in our previous Trinity courses in Educational Studies and Sociology. However, we have learned much about the effects of race and social class on secondary and elementary education (or vice versa in the case of social class) and not about their effects on higher education. This independent study is focused on exploring the role of race and social class in higher education admissions and student experiences, at Trinity and other small liberal arts colleges, based on our reading of secondary sources as well as qualitative and quantitative primary sources at Trinity.

Fri Sept 7th and 14th: Syllabus planning meetings

Unit One: Admissions and Financial Aid

Question: How do the admissions and financial aid processes described by Stevens at “The College” compare to those at Trinity? Make evidence-based claims about what elements are the same or different, and for those areas where it is unclear, describe what type of evidence would be needed. Max 2000 words, including citations.

The papers will be evaluated based on the insights of the claims/arguments and the persuasiveness of the supporting evidence. All sources must be cited using some type of citation system.

Read: Stevens, Mitchell L. *Creating a Class: College Admissions and the Education of Elites*. Harvard University Press, 2009.

Read: Trinity College, Admissions and Financial Aid Committee annual reports, 2010-12.

~~Fri Sept 28th~~: **Wed Oct 3rd**: discuss readings and paper ideas with Jack

Fri Oct 5th during meeting, start planning strategy for unit 2

Fri Oct ~~5th~~ **12th**: independent paper on question above due by end of day by email (25%);

Unit Two: Trinity source materials

Objective: Create a list of interesting researchable questions, with an annotated report of primary and secondary sources (qualitative and quantitative) that may be available to answer them, on race and social class in higher education at Trinity, drawing upon the Trinity Office of Institutional Research and Jack’s preliminary notes, for possible consideration in the Spring 2013 Higher Education in America course.

Thu Oct 18th at noon: collaborative report due via Google Docs (15%)

Fri Oct 19th at 8:45am: discuss report with Rachel Leventhal-Weiner

Unit Three: Student experiences of race and social class

Question: How do students from different social class and/or racial backgrounds experience higher education, in both the classroom and campus culture, at Trinity and comparable liberal arts colleges?

Read: Aries, Elizabeth. *Race and class matters at an elite college*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2008.

Read: FYSM Color & Money interviews with Trinity sophomores, 2008 and 2011.

Read: Selected Trinity items from the annotated report above.

Writing assignment: Compare and contrast the experiences of students from different social class and/or racial backgrounds described in Aries's book about Amherst with those described and found in the Trinity documents.

Fri Nov 9th Read Aries book and skim interviews by Nov 9th for meeting with Jack

Fri Nov 16th Complete a draft (for comments only) to discuss at meeting with Jack

Thu Nov 29th at noon - Independent paper (25%) due online

Unit 4: Analyzing source materials in higher education

Objective: Design an intellectually engaging curriculum project, featuring a qualitative and/or quantitative analysis exercise with Trinity source materials, for possible use by the Higher Education in America course in Spring 2013.

Fri Nov 30th Discussion about sources and ideas with Jack

Thur Dec 6th at noon: Draft of curriculum project (for comments only)

Fri Dec 7th Discussion with Rachel and Jack

Fri Dec 14th collaborative final draft of curriculum project (35%) by end of day online

How work will be evaluated:

Unit 1 and 3 analytical paper will be evaluated based on Ed 300/Ed400 criteria

Unit 2 annotated report will be evaluated on thoroughness, detail, and accuracy

Unit 4 curriculum project will be based on similar criteria for Ed 200 projects

Late work will be penalized ten percent for each 12 hour period overdue, with exceptions granted only for documented medical and family emergencies.

Notes about syllabus readings:

1. **Secondary Source Readings:**

Steinberg, Jacques. *The Gatekeepers: Inside the Admissions Process of a Premier College*. New York: Penguin Books, 2003. (I recommend reading either Steinberg 2003 or Stevens 2007, but not both, unless you specifically wish to compare their analyses.)

Jerome Karabel, *The Chosen: The Hidden History of Admission and Exclusion at Harvard, Yale, and Princeton*, 2005 (selected chapters) (I recommend that you compare selected chapters of Karabel 2005 with Peter Knapp's "Currents of Change" chapter on Trinity. I've also emailed him to ask about relevant archival source materials.)

Knapp, Peter. *Trinity College in the Twentieth Century: a History*. Hartford Conn.: Trinity College, 2000.

David O. Levine- "Discrimination in College Admissions."

<http://ed-share.educ.msu.edu/scan/ead/mabokela/document15.pdf>

(will be getting proper citation when we hear back from Dean Alford, as this is a source he used to use in his EDUC 315 course)

Levine's chapter appears in this edited volume, and may cover similar ground in less detail as Karabel 2005:

Goodchild, Lester F, Harold S Wechsler, and Association for the Study of Higher Education. *The history of higher education*. Needham Heights, MA: Simon & Schuster Custom Publ., 1997. <http://trincoll.worldcat.org/oclc/37477718>.

Peter Schmidt, *Color and Money: How Rich White Kids Are Winning the War Over College Affirmative Action*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007. As an ed policy journalist for the Chronicle of Higher Education, he argues that the University of Michigan court cases over race-based admissions are a distraction from the more important class privileges of wealthy white students. He spoke with my FYSM by conference call.

Mitchell Stevens, *Creating a Class: College Admissions and the Education of Elites*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2007. Sociologist of higher education who spent a year doing an ethnographic study of admissions & financial aid process at a small liberal arts college similar to Trinity. He also spoke with my FY students by conference call.

Ball, Stephen J, Diane Reay, and David Miriam. "'Ethnic Choosing': Minority Ethnic Students, Social Class and Higher Education Choice." *Race, Ethnicity and Education* 5, no. 4 (2002): 333–357.

See the abstract and decide whether it is relevant:

There is now a considerable body of research on the issue of minority ethnic access to higher education. There is much less work done on minority ethnic students' experiences of higher education and almost none on how such students choose the higher education

institution they attend. This article draws upon an Economic and Social Research Council funded study of student choice of higher education and concentrates on the analysis of a subsample of 65 minority ethnic students. Two main findings are reported. First, the processes, concerns, resources and outcomes of 'choosing' differ among the minority ethnic students in relation to social class. Class differences are more apparent and significant than minority ethnic similarities. Second, for a large minority of these students, 25 of the 65, the 'ethnic mix' of higher education institutions is one factor, among others, that influences their choice. 'Ethnic mix' is examined and discussed in the article in relation to ethnic identity.

Chang, Mitchell J, Daria Witt-Sandis, and Kenji Hakuta. "The Dynamics of Race in Higher Education: An Examination of the Evidence." *Equity & Excellence in Education* 32, no. 2 (1999): 12–16.

[See abstract below. This is a 4-page summary of a longer report. Decide if the report is relevant:](#)

Synthesizes and interprets information from the forthcoming report on race and higher education "Compelling Interests: Examining the Evidence on Racial Dynamics in Colleges and Universities" to be published by Teachers College Press. Reviews four misconceptions about affirmative action and college admission. Research demonstrates the continuing need for interventions to address past and current effects of racial discrimination.

~~Andrew Roberts. *The Thinking Student's Guide to College: 75 Tips for Getting a Better Education*. University Of Chicago Press, 2010.~~ [A good read, but not relevant content for this independent study.](#)

Preparing for Power: America's Elite Boarding Schools by Persell and Cookson (1985) http://books.google.com/books/about/Preparing_for_Power.html?id=LMo1jbNuUMoC (selected chapters) [Most of this book is about secondary-level boarding schools, not higher education. There is one relevant chapter, "Vital link: prep schools and higher education," but I suspect that the article below \(also dated 1985\) may be very similar. You should compare the two and decide which, if either, is worth discussing.](#)

Chartering and Bartering: Elite Education and Social Reproduction by Persell and Cookson (1985) <http://www.jstor.org/stable/800556>

[See the latter portion of the abstract:](#) The transmission of privilege is central to the reproduction of an elite class. There has been recurrent speculation about elite school influence within the structure of educational opportunity, but few researchers have had access to these schools. Based on interviews and observations at 42 private boarding schools, and on student questionnaires and school records from a sample of these schools, we find that elite boarding schools confer special "status rights." Moreover, social networks between the schools' college advisors and the admissions officers of elite colleges enable the former to lobby successfully for their students, thereby facilitating the passage of privilege.

[If you're looking for qualitative studies of social class differences, consider Stuber 2011 or Aries 2008 \(who focuses on race and social class\). I know both authors because we brought them to campus when I](#)

assigned students to read their work.

Stuber, Jenny M. *Inside the College Gates: How Class and Culture Matter in Higher Education*. Lexington Books, 2011. see synopsis here <http://trincoll.worldcat.org/oclc/707023059>
I have scanned images of the most relevant chapters if you wish to read them.

Aries, Elizabeth. *Race and class matters at an elite college*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2008.

"In *Race and Class Matters at an Elite College*, Elizabeth Aries provides a rare glimpse into the challenges faced by black and white college students from widely different class backgrounds as they come to live together as freshmen. Based on an intensive study Aries conducted with 58 students at Amherst College during the 2005-2006 academic year, this book offers a uniquely personal look at the day-to-day thoughts and feelings of students as they experience racial and economic diversity firsthand, some for the first time. Through online questionnaires and face-to-face interviews, Aries followed four groups of students throughout their first year of college: affluent whites, affluent blacks, less financially advantaged whites from families with more limited education, and less financially advantaged blacks from the same background. Drawing heavily on the voices of these freshmen, Aries chronicles what they learned from racial and class diversity - and what colleges might do to help their students learn more."--Publisher's description.

Trinity Office of Institutional Research and Planning (IRP reports)

As we discussed last spring, I would like you to explore whether Trinity's IRP reports confirm, disprove, or raise new questions that differ from the secondary source readings you select from above. To access the OIR reports, you need to log into their website using Trinity credentials.

<http://www.trincoll.edu/AboutTrinity/offices/InstitutionalResearchPlanning/Pages/default.aspx>

Here's a handful of report titles that caught my eye, and you should consider skimming them to decide which ones deserve closer attention:

IR10-05 2009 CHAS Campus Climate Survey Report

IR08-05 Admitted Students 1993-2007

IR08-07 Report on the 2007 Sophomore Survey

and so forth. . .