

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON  
Departments of Educational Policy Studies, and Sociology

EPS/Sociology 908  
Spring, 2012

Professor Emeritus Michael Olneck  
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Office hours: Thursday, 2:30-4:30 p.m.,  
and by appointment.  
Room 208, Education Building

**Seminar in Sociology of Education: The Application of Sociological Theory,  
Concepts, and Research to Contemporary Education Policy**

**Course Description**

Education policy is increasingly at the center of social policy worldwide, and it represents an increasingly salient force in shaping education outcomes and experiences. This course will bring sociological perspectives to bear on the substance of education policies. We will ask such questions as “What sociological assumptions do current policies and policy proposals embody? Are those assumptions sound?,” and “What do sociological perspectives suggest about the feasibility and likely consequences of current policies and policy proposals?” Some of the topics will be selected in advance by the instructor; others will be dictated by student interest.

The seminar presupposes that students have taken an introductory course in sociology of education (*e.g.*, EPS/Sociology 648), or have otherwise acquired familiarity with basic literature in the field. It also presumes the ability to read and understand sources that include multivariate quantitative analyses at the level represented by *e.g.*, Sociology 361, Educational Psychology 761, and Public Affairs 819. Students who do not have this background should consult with Professor Olneck about supplementary source material to pursue.

**Course Format**

Seminar discussion, with considerable student responsibility for discussion leadership.

*To avoid distraction, computers may not be used during class. Please plan to take notes by hand.*

**Assignments, Examinations, and Grading**

The course requires consistent attendance, completion of assigned readings prior to class meetings, class participation, and responsibility for discussion leadership. It also requires an approximately 25-page seminar paper (exclusive of bibliography; 1" margins, double-spaced, 12-point font) applying sociological analysis to an education policy problem or issue.

Papers may entail original empirical research or secondary analysis of existing data sets, or it may rest on secondary sources. ***Students must have selected a paper topic, in consultation with Professor Olneck, by the end of the third week of the semester (i.e. by February 10<sup>th</sup>). Students must have submitted a tentative paper bibliography by the end of the ninth week of the semester (i.e. by March 23<sup>rd</sup>).*** The paper bibliography must identify one reading to be assigned to the class in conjunction with discussions of students' paper topics during the last five weeks of the course. ***The term papers will be due to Professor Olneck no later than 4:00 p.m. on Friday, May 18<sup>th</sup>.*** The term papers must be submitted on time. Except in cases of serious medical or other emergencies, papers submitted late will be docked one grade for each day late. "I haven't felt well lately," "I want to do the best job possible," "I have three other papers due," "I began work on the paper late," "I was studying for prelims.," "I had to go to a wedding or a conference," and the like, will not be considered emergencies.

Beginning with Week 3 (February 9<sup>th</sup>), two to three students will be asked to assume responsibility for initiating class discussions. The responsibility of these students will be to highlight ***briefly*** what is centrally important in each of the readings, to identify ***briefly*** ways in which readings may be related to one another, and to pose at least one question of clarification, and one question of argument or critique related to each reading that the group can address. The emphasis here is on initiating discussion, not making lengthy presentations. Students responsible for initiating class discussion should be sure to have coordinated their efforts with one another, and, if possible, with Professor Olneck, ***by no later than Wednesday afternoon***, and should e-mail the discussion questions to the class at [soc908-1-s12@lists.wisc.edu](mailto:soc908-1-s12@lists.wisc.edu) on Wednesday evening.

Weeks 13-16 (April 12, 19, 26<sup>\*</sup>; May 3, 10) will be devoted to discussions led by students about their paper topics and research to date, and will be accompanied by one reading per topic. The number of paper topics discussed during these weeks will range from two to three, depending upon final course enrollment. <sup>\*</sup>Note: The class meeting for April 26<sup>th</sup> will have to be rescheduled due to instructor's professional conflict.

Class preparation, engagement, participation, contribution, and discussion leadership will count toward 35 percent of your grade, and the seminar paper will count toward 65 percent of your grade.

## **Readings**

Students should purchase the following two books, which have been ordered at University Bookstore on State Street Mall: Anthony S. Bryk & Barbara Schneider, *Trust in Schools: A Core Resource for Improvement* (Russell Sage, 2005 [2002]), and James P. Spillane, *Standards Deviation: How Schools Misunderstand Education Policy* (Harvard University Press, 2006 [2004]). Heinz-Dieter Meyer & Brian Rowan (eds.), *The New Institutionalism in Education* (SUNY Press, 2007) is recommended for purchase, as well. These books will also be on 3-hour reserve at College Library, Helen C. White Hall, 600 N. Park Street.

All other readings will be on electronic reserve. Electronic reserves are accessed by logging into MyUW, and clicking on the “Learning” tab, and, then, under that, clicking on the “Course Resources” tab. Next to each of the courses for which you are registered that have reserves, there will be a “Library/Reserves” link that will take you directly to the reserve reading for those courses, EPS/Sociology 908 included. Please print out the readings, so that you can under-line if you wish, make marginal notes, and, most importantly, have copies of the readings available during class.

*Please note that the Schneider, and Walters readings for Week 1 are to be completed by the time of the first class meeting.*

### **Special Accommodations**

I wish to fully include persons with disabilities in this course. Please let me know if you need any special accommodations in the curriculum, instruction, or assessments of this course to enable you to participate fully. I will try to maintain the confidentiality of the information you share with me. Students with special needs are encouraged to contact the McBurney Disability Resource Center, 905 University Avenue (263-2741), for information concerning campus disability-related policies and services.

### **Course Outline**

(Topics, readings, and schedule are subject to announced change by the instructor.)

#### **Week 1**      **Introduction**

(Jan. 26)

Barbara Schneider, “Sociology of Education: An Overview of the Field at the Turn of the Twenty-First Century.” Pp. 193-226 in Maureen T. Hallinan *et al.*, *Stability and Change in American Education: Structure, Process, and Outcomes*. Clinton Corners, N.Y.: Eliot Werner Publications, 2003.

Pamel Barnhouse Walters, “Betwixt and Between Discipline and Profession: A History of Sociology of Education.” Pp. 639-665 in Craig Calhoun (ed.), *Sociology in America: A History*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007.

#### **Recommended:**

Douglas Lee Lauen, & Karolyn Tyson, “Perspectives from the Disciplines: Sociological Contributions to Education Policy Research and Debates.” Pp. 71-82 in D. Plank, B. Schneider, & G. Sykes (eds.), *Handbook on Education Policy Research*. Washington, D.C.: American Educational Research Association, 2009.

Michael R. Olneck, “The State of the Field of Sociology of Education in the United States.” Unpublished paper, University of Wisconsin-Madison, October, 2011.

#### **Week 2**      **Perspectives on Policy and Practice**

(Feb. 2)

Janet A. Weiss, "Theoretical Foundations of Policy Intervention." Pp. 37-69 in H. George Frederickson, & Jocelyn Johnston (eds.), *Public Management Reform and Innovation: Research, Theory, and Application*. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1999.

James P. Spillane, Brian J. Reiser, & Todd Reimer. "Policy Implementation and Cognition: Reframing and Refocusing Implementation Research." *Review of Educational Research* 72 (2002): 387-431.

David K. Cohen, Susan L. Moffitt, & Simona Goldin, "Policy and Practice: The Dilemma." *American Journal of Education* 113 (2007): 515-548.

**Recommended:**

Richard F. Elmore, "Backward Mapping: Implementation Research and Policy Decisions." *Political Science Quarterly* 94 (1979-1980): 601-616.

Pamela Barnhouse Walters, "Toward a Theory of the Political Construction of Empty Spaces in Public Education." Pp. 53-85 in Maureen Hallinan (ed.), *Frontiers in Sociology of Education*. Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Springer, 2011.

**Week 3      Social Capital and Family-School Relationships**

(Feb. 9)

Joyce L. Epstein, "Attainable Goals? The Spirit and Letter of the No Child Left Behind Act on Parental Involvement." *Sociology of Education* 78 (2005): 179-182.

Erin McNamara Horvat, Elliot B. Weininger, & Annette Lareau, "From Social Ties to Social Capital: Class Differences in the Relations between Schools and Parent Networks." *American Educational Research Journal* 40 (2003): 319-351.

Robert K. Ream & Gregory J. Palardy. "Reexamining Social Class Differences in the Availability and the Educational Utility of Parental Social Capital." *American Educational Research Journal* 45 (2008): 238-273.

Stephen J. Ball, "Social Capital, Social Class, and Choice." Chapter 5 (pp. 79-110) in S. J. Ball, *Class Strategies and the Education Market: The Middle Classes and Social Advantage*. London, England: RoutledgeFalmer, 2003.

**Recommended:**

Alejandro Portes, "Social Capital: Its Origins and Applications in Modern Sociology." Pp. 1-24 in John Hagan (ed.) *Annual Review of Sociology* 24 (1998).

James S. Coleman, "Social Capital in the Creation of Human Capital." *American Journal of Sociology* 94(1988): S95-S120.

Nan Lin, "Inequality in Social Capital." *Contemporary Sociology* 29 (2000):785-795.

Sandra L Dika & Kusum Singh, "Applications of Social Capital in Educational Literature: A Critical Synthesis," *Review of Educational Research* 72 (Spring 2002): 31-60.

Adam Gamoran, Ruth N. Lopez Turley, Alyn Turner, & Rachel Fish, "Differences between Hispanic and Non-Hispanic Families in Social Capital and Child Development: First-Year Findings from an Experimental Study." Unpublished paper, University of Wisconsin-Madison, August, 2011.

Joyce Epstein, "'Research Meets Policy and Practice: How Are School Districts Addressing NCLB Requirements for Parental Involvement?'" Pp. 267-279 in Alan R. Sadovnik *et al.* (eds.), *No Child Left Behind and the Reduction of the Achievement Gap: Sociological Perspectives on Federal Educational Policy*. New York: Routledge, 2008.

#### **Week 4**      **Social Capital as Trust in Schools**

(Feb. 16)

Anthony S. Bryk, & Barbara Schneider, *Trust in Schools: A Core Resource for Improvement*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2002.

#### **Week 5 "New Institutionalism" and School Change**

(Feb. 23)

Brian Rowan & Cecil G. Miskel, "Institutional Theory and the Study of Educational Organizations." Chapter 17 (pp. 359-383) in J. Murphy & K. Seashore-Louis (eds.), *Handbook of Research on Educational Administration* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1999).

Brian Rowan, "The New Institutionalism and the Study of Educational Organizations: Changing Ideas in Changing Times." Chapter 2 (pp. 15-32) in Heinz-Dieter Meyer & Brian Rowan (editors), *The New Institutionalism in Education* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2006).

Patricia Burch, "Educational Policy and Practice From the Perspective of Institutional Theory: Crafting a Wider Lens." *Educational Researcher* 36 (2007): 84-95.

Tim Hallett, "The Myth Incarnate: Recoupling Processes, Turmoil, and Inhabited Institutions in an Urban Elementary School." *American Sociological Review* 75 (2010): 52-74.

#### **Recommended:**

James Spillane, & Patricia Burch, "The Institutional Environment and Instructional Practice: Changing Patterns of Guidance and Control in Public Education." Pp. 87-102 in Heinz-Dieter Meyer, & Brian Rowan (eds.), *The New Institutionalism in Education* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2006).

Cynthia E. Coburn, "The Role of Non-System Actors in the Relationship between Policy and Practice: The Case of Reading Instruction in California." *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis* 27(2005): 23-52.

#### **Week 6 Curricular Standards as a Means to Reform Teaching**

(March 1)

James P. Spillane, *Standards Deviations: How Schools Misunderstand Education Policy*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2004.

**Recommended:**

David K. Cohen, & Heather C. Hill, *Learning Policy: When State Education Reform Works*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001.

Cynthia E. Coburn, "Collective Sensemaking about Reading: How teachers Mediate reading Policy in their Professional Communities." *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 23 (2001):145-170.

Cynthia E. Coburn, "Beyond Decoupling: Rethinking the Relationship between the Institutional Environment and the Classroom." *Sociology of Education* 77 (2004): 211-244.

Cynthia E. Coburn, "Shaping Teacher Sensemaking: School Leaders and the Enactment of Reading Policy." *Educational Policy* 19 (2005): 476-509.

Brian Rowan, & Robert J. Miller, "Organizational Strategies for Promoting Instructional Change: Implementation Dynamics in Schools Working With Comprehensive School Reform Providers." *American Educational Research Journal* 44 (2007): 252-297.

Stephen J. Ball *et al.*, "Policy Actors: Doing Policy Work in Schools." *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education* 32 (2011): 625-639.

Linda Vallie, & Daria Buese, "The Changing Roles of Teachers in an Era of High-Stakes Accountability." *American Educational Research Journal* 44 (2007): 519-558.

**Week 7**      **School Choice / Marketization / Privatization**

(March 8)

Mark Schneider, Paul Teske, & Melissa Marschall, *Choosing Schools: Consumer Choice and the Quality of American Schools*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2000. Read Introduction (pp. 1-13 only), Chapter 1 "Reinventing the Governance Structure of Education: School Choice as Educational Reform" (pp. 21-38), Chapter 2, "Parent Behavior and the Demand Side of School Choice" (pp. 39-58).

Christopher Lubienski, "Public Schools in Marketized Environments: Shifting Incentives and Unintended Consequences of Competition-Based Educational Reforms." *American Journal of Education* 111 (2005): 464-486.

Scott Davies, & Linda Quirke, "The Impact of Sector on School Organizations: The Logics of Markets and Institutions." *Sociology of Education* 80 (2007): 66-89.

Christopher Lubienski, Charisse Gulosino, & Peter Weitze, "School Choice and Competitive Incenti

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647.

**Recommended:**

Janet A. Weiss, “Policy Theories of School Choice.” *Social Science Quarterly* 79 (1998): 523-532.

**Week 8      Testing for Accountability: Schools and Classrooms**  
(March 15)

John Diamond, & James Spillane, “High-Stakes Accountability in Urban Elementary Schools: Challenging or Reproducing Inequality?” *Teachers College Record* 106 (2004): 1145-1176.

Katie Weitz White, & James E. Rosenbaum, “Inside the Black Box of Accountability: How High Stakes Accountability Alters School Culture and the Classification and Treatment of Students and Teachers.” Pp. 97-114 in Alan R. Sadovnik *et al.* (eds.), *No Child Left Behind and the Reduction of the Achievement Gap: Sociological Perspectives on Federal Educational Policy*. New York: Routledge, 2008.

Linda Valli, & Marilyn Chambliss, "Creating Classroom-Cultures: One Teacher, Two Lessons, and a High Stakes Test." *Anthropology & Education Quarterly* 38 (2007): 57-75.

Lesley A. Rex, & Matthew C. Nelson, "How Teachers' Professional Identities Position High-Stakes Test Preparation in Their Classrooms." *Teachers College Record* 106 (June, 2004): 1288-1331.

**Recommended:**

Jennifer A. O'Day, "Complexity, Accountability, and School Improvement." *Harvard Educational Review* 72 (2002): 293-329.

Meredith Phillips, & Jennifer Flashman, "How Did the Statewide Assessment and Accountability Policies of the 1990s Affect Instructional Quality in Low-Income Elementary Schools?" Chapter 3 (pp. 45-88) in A. Gamoran (ed.), *Standards-Based Reform and the Poverty Gap* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 2007).

Jennifer Booher-Jennings, "Below the Bubble: 'Educational Triage' and the Texas Accountability System," *American Educational Research Journal* 42 (2005): 231-268.

Maika Watanabe, "Tracking in the Era of High Stakes State Accountability Reform: Case Studies of Classroom Instruction in North Carolina." *Teachers College Record* 110 (2008): 489-534.

Linda Valli *et al.*, *Test Driven: High-Stakes Accountability in Elementary Schools*. New York: Teachers College Press, 2008.

Wayne Au, *Unequal By Design: High-Stakes Testing and the Standardization of Inequality*. New York: Routledge, 2009. Chapters 4-5.

**Week 9      Testing for Accountability: Political Economy Perspectives**  
(March 22)

Pauline Lipman, "Making the Global City, Making Inequality: Political Economy and Cultural Politics of Chicago School Policy." *American Educational Research Journal* 39 (2002): 379-419.

Pauline Lipman, "Cracking Down: Chicago School Policy and the Regulation of Black and Latino/a Youth." Pp. 81-101 in D. Gabbard & K.L. Saltman (eds.), *Education as Enforcement*. New York: Routledge, 2003.

David Hursh, "Assessing No Child Left Behind and the Rise of Neoliberal Education Policies." *American Educational Research Journal* 44 (2007): 493-518.

Mary Haywood Metz, "Symbolic Uses of the 'No Child Left Behind Act': Reaffirmation of Equality of Educational Opportunity or De-Legitimation of Public Schools." Pp. 343-358 in Alan R. Sadovnik *et al.* (eds.), *No Child Left Behind and the Reduction of the Achievement Gap: Sociological Perspectives on Federal Educational Policy*. New York:

Routledge, 2008.

**Recommended:**

Pauline Lipman, *High Stakes Education: Inequality, Globalization, and Urban School Reform*. New York: Routledge, 2004.

Wayne Au, *Unequal By Design: High-Stakes Testing and the Standardization of Inequality*. New York: Routledge, 2009. Chapters 1-3.

**Week 10**      **Can / Does Expanding Education Enrollment Advance Equality of Education Opportunity and Reduce Inequality?**  
(March 29)

Adrian E Raftery, & Michael Hout (1993). "Maximally Maintained Inequality: Expansion, Reform, and Opportunity in Irish Education 1921-75." *Sociology of Education* 66: (1993): 41-62.

Richard Arum, Adam Gamoran, & Yossi Shavit. "More Inclusion Than Diversion: Expansion, Differentiation, and Market Structure in Higher Education." Pp. 1-35 in Y. Shavit, R. Arum, A. Gamoran, with G. Menahem, *Stratification in Higher Education: A Comparative Study*. Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2007.

Sigal Alon, "The Evolution of Class Inequality in Higher Education: Competition, Exclusion, and Adaptation." *American Sociological Review* 74 (2009): 731-55.

Fabian T. Pfeffer, "Persistent Inequality in Educational Attainment and Its Institutional Context." *European Sociological Review* 24 (2008): 543-565.

**Recommended:**

Hans-Peter Blossfeld, & Yossi Shavit, "Persisting Barriers: Changes in Educational Opportunities in Thirteen Countries." Chapter 1 (pp. 1-23) in Yossi Shavit, & Hans-Peter Blossfeld (eds.), *Persistent Inequality: Changing Educational Attainment in Thirteen Countries*. Boulder: Westview Press, 1993.

Richard Breen, Ruud Luijkx, Walter Müller, & Reinhard Pollak, "Non-Persistent Inequality in Educational Attainment: Evidence from Eight European Countries." *American Journal of Sociology*, 114 (2009): 1475-1521.

Theodore Gerber, & Sin Yi Cheung, "Horizontal Stratification in Postsecondary Education: Forms, Explanations, and Implications." *Annual Review of Sociolog.* 34 (2008): 299-318.

Eric Grodsky, "Social Stratification in Higher Education." *Teachers College Record* 111 (2009): 2347-2384.

Samuel R. Lucas, "Stratification Theory, Socioeconomic Background, and Educational Attainment: A Formal Analysis." *Rationality and Society* 21

(2009) : 459-511.

Herman G. Van de Werfhorst, & Jonathan J. B. Mijs, "Achievement inequality and the institutional structure of educational systems: A comparative perspective." *Annual Review of Sociology* 36 (2010): 407-428.

Michael N. Bastedo, & Ozan Jaquette, "Running in Place: Low-Income Students and the Dynamics of Higher Education Stratification." *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis* 33 (2011): 318-339.

**Week 11**      **No Class -Spring Break**

(April 5)

**Week 12**      **Can / Does Expanding Education Enrollment Advance Equality of Economic Opportunity and Reduce Inequality?**

(April 12)

Phillip Brown, "The Opportunity Trap." Cardiff Working Paper 32. Cardiff University, Wales, 2003.

Herman G. Van de Werfhorst, Herman G., "Credential Inflation and Educational Strategies: A Comparison of the United States and the Netherlands." *Research in Social Stratification and Mobility* 27 (2009) : 269-284 .

Florencia Torche, "Is a College Degree Still the Great Equalizer? Intergenerational Mobility across Levels of Schooling in the United States." *American Journal of Sociology* 117 (2011): 763-807.

Thijs Bol, & Herman G. van de Werfhorst. "How Education Became Positional: Educational Expansion and Labor Market Outcomes in 30 Countries. University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands, December, 2011.

**Recommended:**

Jutta Allmendinger, "Educational Systems and Labor Market Outcomes." *European Sociological Review* 5 (1989): 231-250.

Carol Axtell Ray, Roslyn Arlin Mickelson. "Restructuring Students for Restructured Work: The Economy, School Reform, and Non-College-Bound Youth." *Sociology of Education* 66 (1993): 1-20.

Ross D. Boylan, "The Effect of the Number of Diplomas on Their Value." *Sociology of Education* 66 (1993): 206-221.

Ryan Wells, "Education's Effect on Income Inequality: An Economic Globalisation Perspective." *Globalisation, Societies and Education* 4 (2006): 371-391.

Richard Breen, & Ruud Luijkx. 2007. "Social Mobility and Education: A Comparative Analysis of Period and Cohort Trends in Britain and Germany." Pp. 102-124 in Stefani Scherer *et al.* (eds.), *From Origin to Destination*. Frankfurt: Campus Verlag, 2007.

Kimberly A. Goyette, "College for Some to College for All: Social Background, Occupational expectations, and Educational Expectations Over Time." *Social Science Research* 37 (2008): 461-484.

Paul Attewell, & David E. Lavin, *Passing the Torch: Does Higher Education for the Disadvantaged Pay Off Across the Generations?* New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2007.

James Rosenbaum. *Beyond College For All: Career Paths for the Forgotten Half.* New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2001.

**Weeks 13 - 16 Student's Paper Presentations, with Pre-Assigned Accompanying Reading**

(April 12, 19, 26<sup>\*</sup>; May 3, 10). <sup>\*</sup>Note: The class meeting for April 26<sup>th</sup> will have to be rescheduled due to instructor's professional conflict.