

SOC 235 WI--Sociology of Education

(This is a Writing-Intensive course)

Prof. Elhum Haghghat-Sordellini, Ph.D.
(Pronounced as El-haam Ha-ge-gat Sor-de-lee-ni)

E-mail: elhum.haghghat@lehman.cuny.edu (e-mail is the best way to contact me)
My Office: Carman Hall, Room B062
Office phone: (718) 960-7863
Office Hours: Tuesdays 4:45-5:45 PM & by appointment

Textbooks¹

Sadovnik, Alan R. 2007. (ed.) Sociology of Education, A critical Reader. New York: Routledge. ISBN: 0-415-95497-5
Lareau, Annette. 2003. Unequal Childhoods: Class, Race, and Family Life. University of California Press. ISBN: 0520239504

Introduction

Welcome to "Sociology of Education." The goal of this course is to understand the relationship between education and society. Among many questions that we will be considering this semester are, why do some students seem to learn more and "get ahead" further than others do? What factors shape how schools are run, how schools are organized, and what curricular materials are taught? How do schools help to maintain and perpetuate social inequality, and how do the factors of race, class, and gender affect the educational experiences of students within schools and within classrooms? This course will offer an understanding of the role played by schools in society. We will discuss topics such as the organizational features of schools, education as an institution and its relations to other social institutions, the role of the school in social inequality.

Class activities will vary day to day, ranging from lectures to discussions. Students will be active participants in the course (by asking questions, raising issues, and otherwise contribute to an informed and substantive classroom discussion). I expect students to do all the readings on time. For the course to work, students need to read and think seriously about what they have been reading.

¹ The books are available at Lehman's bookstore. They could also be purchased from other sources such as amazon.com, borders.com, etc. ISBN numbers are included for easy searches on the internet. You could purchase them very cheap if you look for "used" instead of "new" books.

Keys to success in this course

You should be clear about basic practices that will and will not benefit you in this course. Sociology is a complex subject that will require your full attention all semester. Some students wrongly assume that this subject will be “easy.” I hope that sociology comes to you without any difficulty, but I know that most students will need to struggle with the materials just as much, if not more, than with other courses. So, be prepared, and work hard. Here are some basic suggestions:

- Read assignments on time: I prepare lectures and lead class discussions on the assumption that you already have understood the more elementary aspects of the readings.
- Attend class on a regular basis. There is no substitute for “being there,” and being attentive during class.
- Develop your own notes and other study aids: Other people’s notes cannot replace your own reflections on readings, class notes and lectures. Take notes as you read, during lectures, and at other times, as you re-assess what you have learned. You may wish to compare your notes with a number of other students, and discuss these comparisons in informal discussion groups; this is an excellent practice.

Policy on missed exams and projects

If you missed any of the tests, you MUST bring me a written note from an official such as a police report regarding an accident that you were involved that day, doctor’s note indicating that you were sick the same day of the test, and so forth. In other words, to be fair to the rest of the students, I would not be able to give you an extension or provide you with a make up test unless you have an absolutely good and reasonable excuse.

Please read carefully:

THERE IS ABSOLUELY NO EXTENSION FOR THE DUE DATES. THE WORK MUST BE SUBMITTED THE DAY IT IS INDICATED!
THERE ARE NO EXCEPTIONS!

Summary of requirements

Two tests (both multiple choice/true/false, short essay format)	
50 points each	100 points
Analytical paper	50 points
Projects/short essays—must do a minimum of 8 (12.5 points each)	100 points
11 short essays are given—you must do 8 essays or you could drop the lowest grade.	
Attendance and participation	25 points
	<hr/>
	275 (total points)

THERE IS NO EXTRA CREDIT WORK IN THIS COURSE.

Academic integrity: Lehman College as a higher education institution believes that academic honesty and integrity are fundamental to the mission of this institution and are binding upon all its members. Students are responsible for the honest completion and representation of their work, for the appropriate citation of sources and for respect of others' academic endeavors. Students who violate these standards are confronted and must accept the consequences of their actions. Included among the most rigorous sanctions for student academic misconduct is a lowered overall course grade, a failing grade in the course, disciplinary probation, and /or expulsion from the College.

Plagiarism in papers such as direct copying from articles, internet sources and books in any shape or form will result in a grade of an F for the course and will be reported to the academic integrity committee of the college.

Class attendance and participation: No points will be deducted if you miss one class. If you miss more than one, for each missed class, you will lose 10 points. Please try to be on time for class. I will not count you present if you are more than 20 minutes late. To get full credit, you are expected to attend the class on a regular basis AND actively participate in class discussions.

Please note that if you miss a class, you do not need to e-mail or call me. I will not be able to help you with the missed material. You must be in contact with one of your classmates to find out what you had missed.

Respect for others opinion: Class discussion and participation is an important part of a student's learning experience during my classes. We will be discussing many issues regarding the topic of the day and I expect intelligent, informative class participation from each one of you. It is important to be respectable to each other's opinions and perspectives. I will not tolerate any "put downs," "foul language," and humiliation of your classmates and myself. **I reserve the right to dismiss students from the class if I see any disrespect toward any of my students and myself.**

CELL PHONES must be off at all times. No usage of blackberry, text messaging and any type of electronic communication is permitted in this class.

COURSE OUTLINE

The following outline is a tentative schedule of course progression. Specific instructions for upcoming readings and other assignments will be given during class. Students are responsible for all in-class announcements and changes.

List of short projects

chapter # & author title of the chapter	page #	Maximum points for the essay—each one is worth 12.5 points. There are 11 essays. You are required to do 8.	Due on
<p>Chapter 1. A. Sadvnick <u>Project related to chapter 1</u></p> <p><u>Title of the chapter: Theory & Research in the Sociology of Education</u> (Also, refer to notes I have posted on blackboard)</p> <p>Write an essay (three separate ones, at least two paragraphs for each), answer the following questions:</p> <p>1A) In general, what does the field of sociology of education entail?</p> <p>1B) How do functionalist and conflict theorists differ in their assessment of the role of schools in helping to change societies? Explain each theory separately and clearly, and then discuss the differences between the two. Lastly, explain how these theories explain the role of schools in societies.</p> <p>1C) How does symbolic interactionist theory differ in its focus from functionalist and conflict theory? (First, explain in detail what interactionist theory is and how it is used to explain schooling). Can symbolic interactionist theory compliment one or both of the other theories?</p>	<p>Page 3</p> <p>Read pages Xiii and xiv, Also pages 3-9, 11-13, 15-17</p>	<p>12.5 maximum points</p>	<p>Weeks 3-4</p>

<p>Chapter 5. R. Rist <u>Project related to chapter 5</u></p> <p><u>Title of the chapter: On Understanding the Processes of Schooling: The Contributions of Labeling Theory</u></p> <p>Write a comprehensive short essay. Be specific and clear. Your essay should be at least two paragraphs.</p> <p>Question related to this article:</p> <p>5) How does Rist describe labeling theory? Be specific and elaborate on his definition of labeling theory.</p>	<p>Starts at page 71</p>	<p>12.5 maximum points</p>	<p>Weeks 4-5</p>
<p>Chapter 6, P. Bourdieu <u>Project related to chapter 6</u></p> <p><u>Title of the chapter: The Forms of Capital</u></p> <p>Write a short essay (at least 3 paragraphs):</p> <p>Question related to this article:</p> <p>6) Explain in detail what cultural capital and social capital are. Refer to Annete Lareadu's book (the first and the last chapter on explanations of cultural capital also).</p>	<p>Starts on page 83</p>	<p>10 maximum points</p>	<p>Week 4-5</p>
<p>Chapter 8, John Meyer <u>Project related to chapter 8</u></p> <p><u>Title of the chapter: The Effects of Education as an Institution</u></p> <p>Write a short essay (at least 3-5 paragraphs): Questions related to this article:</p> <p>7) How does education affect society? 8) What is allocation theory? What are its limitations? 9) What is legitimation theory? What are its advantages?</p>			<p>No essay on this chapter</p>

<p>Chapter 10. R. Ingersoll <u>Project related to chapter 10</u></p> <p><u>Title of the chapter: Is there Really a Teacher Shortage?</u></p> <p>This essay should be at least 2 pages (single spaced or one page double-spaced).</p> <p>Question related to this article:</p> <p>10A) First, summarize in detail what this article entails. Explain the research question, the data sources that the author used to conduct his study, the variables, his conclusion and discussion of the topic. 10B) Second according to Ingersoll, explain this question: is there a teacher shortage? Be very clear and specific with your answer. Explain in detail what Ingersoll's explanation is. 10C) Third, based on his article, what policies would you implement to staff difficult districts in urban and rural areas? In other words, what changes would you make in schools if you were in charge to increase retention of teachers?</p>	<p>Starts on page 159</p>	<p>12.5 maximum points</p>	<p>Week 5-6</p>
<p>Chapter 16. K. Dougherty & G. Kienzl <u>Title of the chapter: It's Not Enough to Get Through the Open Door: Inequalities by Social Background in Transfer from Community Colleges to Four-Year Colleges</u></p> <p>Question related to this article:</p> <p>16) According to Dougherty and Kienzl, have community colleges provided significant opportunities for low-income and minority groups to transfer to four-year colleges? Be clear and specific. Describe what the authors' explanation is.</p>	<p>Starts on page 267</p>		<p>No essay on this chapter</p>

<p>Demographic Analysis--Education Attainment <u>Demographic project</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Educational Attainment of U.S. Population, a Demographic Analysis:</u></p> <p>1) Go to this website: http://www.census.gov/prod/2004pubs/p20-550.pdf 2) Read the article carefully and explain the main points of the following figures and tables. For each chart or table, list at least 2 or 3 main findings. List them line by line and in full sentences. 1) Figure 1 (p. 2) 2) Table A (P. 3) 3) Figure 3 (p. 5) 4) Figure 4 (p. 6) 5) Table C (p. 7)</p>	<p>Go to the website</p>	<p>12.5 maximum points</p>	<p>Week 6-7</p>
<p>Test 1</p>		<p>Test 1</p>	<p>Week 8</p>
<p>Chapter 19. A. Lareau <u>Project related to chapter 19</u></p> <p><u>Title of the chapter: Invisible Inequality: Social Class & Childrearing in Black & White Families</u></p> <p>Question related to this article: This essay should be at least 2 pages long (two pages if single spaced, one page if double spaced) 18) According to Lareau, how do working-class and middle class family childrearing practices differ? - How does Lareau utilizes the notion of cultural capital in her study? -Does she argue that working-class parents care less about their children's education? -Does she argue that one form of childrearing practice is better than the other? -Which types of childrearing points to a more powerful determinant of school achievement? -According to Lareau which one is a more powerful determinant of school achievement-- social class or race?</p>	<p>Starts on page 325</p>	<p>12.5 maximum points</p>	<p>Week 9-10</p>

<p>Chapter 20. J. Ogbu Project related to chapter 20</p> <p><u>Title of the chapter: Collective Identity & the Burden of Acting White in Black History, Community, and Education</u></p> <p>Question related to this article: This essay should be a minimum of one full page (single spaced or two pages if double spaced) 19) According to Ogbu, why do Black students achieve at lower levels than White students? Explain clearly and be specific</p>	<p>Starts on page 355</p>	<p>12.5 maximum points</p>	<p>Week 9-10</p>
<p>Chapter 21. J. Law Project related to chapter 21</p> <p><u>Title of the article: Burden of Acting Neither White Nor Black: Asian American Identities and Achievement in Urban Schools</u></p> <p>Question related to this article: [This essay should be at least 2 pages (double spaced) or one full page (if single spaced) 20) Does Lew's research support Ogbu's theory when applied to Asian American students? According to Lew, how do race and social class interact to explain Asian American student achievement? For this essay in addition to answering the above questions, make sure to explain the research question, her population that she is studying, her method of data collection, explanation of her literature review, her detailed discussion and conclusion of the study.</p>	<p>Starts on page 379</p>	<p>12.5 maximum points</p>	<p>Weeks 9-10</p>
<p>Grant, Linda. "Everyday Schooling and the Elaboration of Race-Gender Stratification." In Schools and Society, a Sociological Approach to Education. (Ed). Jeanne H. Ballantine and Joan Z. Spade. Thomson/Wadsworth Publishers.</p> <p>Questions related to this article:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) How did teachers respond differently to students based on race and gender? 2) What are the consequences of this differential attention and expectation for students' future? 3) How does this piece extend the arguments made by Annette Lareau (article 19) and John Ogbu (article 20)? 		<p>12.5 maximum points</p>	<p>Weeks 9-10</p>

<p>Chapter 25. Dauglas Lauen Project related to chapter 25</p> <p><u>Title: False Promises: The School Choice Provisions in No Child Left Behind</u></p> <p>Question related to this article: The essay should be at least 2-3 paragraphs: 25) For this essay, discuss the policies behind school reform: According to Lauden, what are the arguments in favor and against public and private school choice? Does he argue that parents should have the right to send their children to a school of their choice? How does school choice affects children’s education from lower classes and other disadvantaged backgrounds?</p>	Starts on page 461	12.5 maximum points	Week 11-12
<p>Chapter 26. D. Berliner Project related to chapter 26</p> <p><u>Title: Our Impoverished View of Educational Reform</u></p> <p>Question related to this article: The essay should be at least 2-3 paragraphs: 26) For this essay, discuss the policies behind school reform: According to Berlinger, can school reform succeed in eliminating the achievement gaps in the United States? Why or why not? Do schools have the potential of reducing these gaps?</p>	Starts on page 487	12.5 maximum points	Week 11-12
Analytical paper is due today			Week 14
Wrap up session-last day of class			Week 15
TEST 2		Test 2	Week 16

LIST OF FILMS:

Films that we will be viewing during the semester:

- 1) "Beyond Brown, Pursuing the Promise. 2004."
- 2) "Secrets of SAT-Frontline. 2000."
- 3) "Stupid in America, How we cheat our Kids. ABC, 20/20. 2002."

Frequently Asked questions

1) Can I turn in my project late or get an extension?

The answer is absolutely NOT. I have a responsibility to be fair to other students. Everyone has a busy life. Time management is the key to survive a busy life that you and I have. If you wait until the last minute to finish the work, chances are something will go wrong with your computer, printer, family life, work, etc. Please plan ahead and have your work printed out at least a day ahead. The projects must be handed in the day that is due.

2) Are there any extra credits for this course?

No extra credit work is given for this course.

3) If I miss class, can I e-mail you and you will be able to tell me what I had missed?

I am sorry that I cannot cover two and a half hours of class in one e-mail. What we cover every class is listed in your syllabus. You should also be in touch with a classmate in any of such cases.

4) If for some reason class is cancelled (i.e. thunderstorm, snow, etc.) how would I know?

I will e-mail your Lehman account as soon as a decision is made and will also place a note on Blackboard under "announcements."

5) If I am not able to make it to class, what should I do with my assignment?

If you need to leave any work during the semester that is due the same day or days before it is due (I do not accept late papers), please slip your paper under my office door (Carman Hall, B062). Make sure your name and my name is on the paper. Please do not leave anything in my mailbox in the main office. Sometimes mail gets mixed up and is placed in the wrong mailbox. The safest place to leave anything for me is under my office door. Carman Hall is open as early as 6:00 AM and as late as 11:00 PM even on weekends.

Comparing Major Theoretical Perspectives

	FUNCTIONALIST	CONFLICT	INTERACTIONIST
VIEW OF SOCIETY	Stable, well integrated	Characterized by tension and struggle between groups	Active in influencing and affecting everyday social interaction
LEVEL OF ANALYSIS EMPHASIZED	Macro	Macro	Micro analysis as a way of understanding the larger macro phenomena
KEY CONCEPTS	Manifest functions Latent functions Dysfunction	Inequality Capitalism Stratification	Symbols Nonverbal communication Face-to face
VIEW OF INDIVIDUAL	People are socialized to perform societal functions	People are shaped by power, coercion, and authority	People manipulate symbols and create their social world through interaction
VIEW OF SOCIAL ORDER	Maintained through cooperation and consensus	Maintained through force and coercion	Maintained by shared understanding of everyday behavior
VIEW OF SOCIAL CHANGE	Predictable, reinforcing	Change takes place all the time and may have positive consequences	Reflected in people's social positions and their communications with others
PROponents	Emile Durkheim Talcott Parsons Robert Merton	Karl Marx C. Wright Mills W.E.B. Du Bois	George Herbert Mead Charles Horton Cooley Erving Goffman

Institution of Education as an example

Functionalist perspective: Education provides social benefits

Manifest functions of schools

- Teaching of knowledge and skills
- Cultural transmission of values such as individualism, competition, and patriotism
- Social integration of students-helping to mold students into a more or less cohesive unit
- Gate-keeping-determining who will enter what occupations, tracking-sorting students into different educational programs on the basis of real or perceived abilities, and social placement-funneling people into various positions
- Promoting personal change through critical thinking
- Mainstreaming- incorporating people with disabilities into regular social activities
- Replacing family functions (e.g. child care and sex education)

Latent functions of schools

- Plays the role of a babysitter
- People become part of social networks through schools
- Help to stabilize employment (keeping unskilled individuals out of the labor force)

Conflict perspective: Education helps maintain social inequality

- The educational system is a tool used by those in the controlling sector of society to maintain their dominance.
- The hidden curriculum is unwritten rules of behavior and attitude taught in school in addition to the formal curriculum (e.g., obedience to authority, conformity to cultural norms).
- Values/work habits taught to help students “prepare for life” are merely devices to teach the middle and lower classes to support the capitalist class. In other words, the purpose of this hidden curriculum is to perpetuate existing social inequalities that are to teach the middle and lower classes to support society’s elite.
- Public schools are largely financed by local property taxes; there are rich and poor school districts. Unequal funding works against minorities and the poor.
- The educational system’s agreement with the status quo perpetuates society’s prevailing inequalities. The U.S. educational system promotes Capitalism and maintains existing social inequalities.
- Regardless of ability, children of the wealthy are usually placed in college-bound tracks and children of the poor in vocational tracks. The educational system helps pass privilege (or lack thereof) across generations.

Human, Cultural and Social Capital

Human Capital: The concept of human capital refers to investment in education, training and skills to increase productivity and better occupational and educational outcomes. Schools are the main social institution for creating and maintaining human capital.

Cultural Capital: Based on studies and available statistics we know students from working class backgrounds are not as successful in school as their middle class counterparts. Why is there a strong tendency from working class children to end up in working class jobs?

Clue: Social reproduction theory (the work of sociologists Bowles and Gintis for example) originating from conflict theory, states that the process of production in a capitalist and stratified system, not only reproduces commodities but also capitalist relations are produced and reproduced (the relations between the upper class and the lower class is reproduced from one generation to another).

Cultural capital is often used as an explanatory variable to explain how socio-economic status (social class) influences life chances and outcomes. This perspective indicates that the children of the dominant class learn through their socialization different cultural knowledge, skills, linguistic patterns, styles of interactions, taste, etc. These so-called cultural knowledge of the dominant class places them in a more advantaged position in the society since society values those norms, values, life styles more than the norms, values and lifestyles of the working class. Reading books, visiting museums and libraries, attending concerts are examples of how these cultural practices could contribute to higher level of cultural capital. Schools and other institutions contribute to reproduction of inequality by emphasizing and developing curriculums that reflects more of the practices and cultural norms of the higher classes than the lower classes. Therefore, children from the higher classes are more equipped to succeed in schools than children from the lower classes. In other words, social class positions, norms and values related to class becomes a form of cultural capital.

Social capital: Social capital consists of relationships between adult family members and children. Presence of adults is not sufficient but some degree of intergenerational communication and commitment is required. Social capital is the capacity of a family to "invest" in support, show interest and care for children. Just being present does not count but being actively involved in a child's life whether it is the parents, grandparents, godparents, friends, neighbors matters the most. Social capital is an investment in the productivity of others, in this case productively and welfare of the children. Social capital extends beyond the home and goes as far as the neighborhood, community, and schools. Schools and communities could offer a high degree of social capital. Social capital in schools is indicated by a high degree of interconnectedness between students, parents and teachers. Social capital could therefore be on a family level or it could be on an institution level (school, church, community).

*****Note: Also read Appendix B (p.275) from Annette Lareau's book titled "Understanding the Work of Pierre Bourdieu."

Table of Contents for Lareau's book

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Helpful tips (related to your book analysis)

The word **analysis** just means a close examination of something, its parts, and their relations. A **book analysis** is where you get a chance to take apart your book and examine the different sections of its text. A book analysis answers questions such as, what was the main focus of the book? How was the book written? Why was it written? Did it make its point? How do the parts of the text fit together?

Write what the book is about without retelling the story. You assume the reader of your essay has already read the book and you are providing an explanation. Book analysis should not be a summary but an "analysis" of the book.

You should have three things in your essay: An introduction, a body, and a conclusion.

Introduction: The introduction is where you assert your idea on what the book is about; i.e. social and cultural capital and how they relate to the author's research, gender differences on classrooms and how it is reflected in the book, etc.

Body: The body is where you provide evidence of your assertion. You write that: in this chapter this happened and it demonstrates the idea asserted. In this part of the book, this happens because of that and this shows the assertion made. Pick several recurring themes from the book and emphasize on those specific themes throughout your paper. For example, "language use" is one important theme in the book. Other recurring themes are "concerted cultivated," "accomplishment of natural growth," "social capital," "cultural capital," etc.

Conclusion: In the conclusion you can agree with or even disagree with the author. Maybe the author is illustrating an idea that is not convincing. Whether you are agreeing or disagreeing with the author, you **MUST** have a convincing argument and your argument has to be laid out clearly and concisely.

Keep the following questions in mind when writing your book analysis:

1. General information about the book: a) who wrote the book? B) What's the title of the book? c) Who published the book? d) Where was the book published? e) What year was the book published?
 2. What is the purpose, argument, or main focus of the book?
 3. What are the major themes and points of the book?
 4. How do these themes come together in the book?
 5. What are your personal thoughts about the text?
 6. Why do you think the author wrote the book?
 7. What is the most important sentence, paragraph, or point made in the book?
 8. Did the book accomplish what it set out to do?
 9. How does the book relate to other course material that we have covered throughout the course? How can you synthesize Lareau's research to works of other scholars such as Ogbu and Grant?
- You cannot go wrong if you answer these questions completely and thoroughly. Again, remember to emphasize the most on major themes of the book.

NOTE: Plagiarism in papers such as direct copying from articles, internet sources and books in any shape or form will result in a grade of an F for the course and will be reported to the academic integrity committee of the college.

Book Analysis on Annette Lareau's book

Start reading Lareau's book as soon as possible. Take careful notes and soon after start working on your book analysis.

First try: Write a summary focusing on 3-5 themes. The paper should be in a form of an essay and should have an introduction about what the book's main themes are. Then include several sections with each theme listed and explained in detail. We will discuss in class what themes to list. (3-5 pages minimum, typed, single spaced)

Second revision: Convert your paper from a summary report to an analytical paper. I will be commenting on your essay and will give you feedback if you hand in a draft EARLY enough during the semester. We will discuss the details in class. (5 pages minimum, single spaced)

Throughout your paper, you should refer to selective page numbers from the book.

Note: Your paper must be typed, single spaced, stapled together with a cover page. It should be a minimum of 5 pages typed excluding the cover page. The cover page should include your name, course information, title of the paper.

You also need to include a reference page.