

SOCIOLOGY 4BB3E: Sociology of Higher Education

Fall, 2015
Class Time: Tuesdays, 7-10pm
Class Location TSH B129

Instructor: Roger Pizarro Milian
Office Hours: Tuesdays, 5:30-6:30pm
Office Location: 607
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This course is meant to be an intensive introduction to the sociology of education, with a specific emphasis on issues and empirical trends occurring at the tertiary or post-secondary level. By taking this course, students will become familiar with 1) major theoretical perspectives used within the sub-discipline, 2) some of the important characteristics of the recent evolution of higher education, 3) the organizational structure of higher education systems, 4) important aspects of the internal structure of educational organizations and 5) other important empirical trends. It is my expectation that this course will prepare students to undertake graduate level studies in the sociology of education. **Students should be aware that this course will entail a very heavy reading load.**

Evaluation:

Seminar Participation: 10%
Article Presentation: 10%
Weekly Summaries (**Starting Starting Sept. 15**): 10%
Midterm Exam (**October 20th, 2015**): 35%
Final Exam (**December 1st, 2015**): 35%

Notes on Assignments and Evaluation:

Seminar Participation: The mark assigned for this component of the course will be based on both attendance (5%) and participation (5%). You will be required to attend class and make informed contributions to seminar discussions.

Article Presentation: You will be required to present one of the assigned readings on the course outline. All articles will be presented on the week to which they have been assigned. Presentations should be roughly 15 minutes long. They should consist of a brief summary and analysis of the selected reading. If a student is not present on the date of their scheduled presentation they risk forfeiting the marks allocated to this component.

Weekly Summaries: Each week students will be required to provide a summary of the assigned readings. These will consist of a one page, single-spaced document (12-point font, Times New Romans). Within this document you will provide a brief summary and analysis of all of the articles assigned for that week. Summaries should be submitted via email no later than 10:00 pm on the day before class. Summaries submitted late will not be accepted.

Midterm Exam: The midterm exam will take place in class on **October 20th, 2015**. It will cover all material leading up to that date. Details about the format of the exam will be made available in the weeks leading up to it.

Final Exam: The final exam will take place in class on **December 1st, 2015**. It will cover all material covered after the midterm exam. Details about the format of the exam will be made available in the weeks leading up to it.

Readings: All of the assigned readings are available electronically.

September 8: Introduction

- No Readings

September 15: The Landscape of the Sociology of Education

Brint, S. (2013). The "Collective Mind" at Work A Decade in the Life of US Sociology of Education. *Sociology of Education*, 86(4), 273-279.

Binder, A. J. (2013). Sociology of Education's Cultural, Organizational, and Societal Turn. *Sociology of Education*, 86(4), 282-283.

Stevens, Mitchell, Elizabeth Armstrong and Richard Arum. 2008. "Sieve, Incubator, Temple, Hub: Empirical and Theoretical Advances in the Sociology of Higher Education." *Annual Review of Sociology* 34:127-151.

September 22: Sociological Theories (Human, Psychological and Social Capital)

Bowles, S., & Gintis, H. (1975). The problem with human capital theory--a Marxian critique. *The American Economic Review* 65(2), 74-82.

Demerath, P., Lynch, J., & Davidson, M. (2008). Dimensions of psychological capital in a US suburb and high school: Identities for Neoliberal times. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*, 39(3), 270-292.

Coleman, James S. 1988. Social Capital in the Creation of Human Capital. *American Journal of Sociology* 94:95-120.

September 29: Sociological Theories II (Cultural & Institutional Approaches)

Lareau, Annette, and Elliot B. Weininger. "Cultural capital in educational research: A critical assessment." *Theory and Society* 32.5-6 (2003): 567-606.

Meyer, J. W., & Rowan, B. (1977). Institutionalized organizations: Formal structure as myth and ceremony. *American Journal of Sociology*, 340-363.

October 6: Expansion

Collins, R. (1971). Functional and conflict theories of educational stratification. *American Sociological Review*, 1002-1019.

Schofer, E., & Meyer, J. W. (2005). The worldwide expansion of higher education in the twentieth century. *American Sociological Review*, 70(6), 898-920.

October 13: Fall Recess – No Class

- No Readings

October 20: Midterm In-Class Exam

- No Readings

October 27: Organizational Environments & Forms

Davies, S., & Quirke, L. (2007). The impact of sector on school organizations: Institutional and market logics. *Sociology of Education*, 80(1), 66-89. (NOTE: More readings on next page.)

Quirke, L. (2009). Legitimacy through alternate means: schools without professionals in the private sector. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 30 (5), 621-634

Kraatz, M. S., & Zajac, E. J. (1996). Exploring the limits of the new institutionalism: The causes and consequences of illegitimate organizational change. *American sociological review*, 61, 812-836.

November 3: Internal Structures

Weick, K. E. (1976). Educational organizations as loosely coupled systems. *Administrative science quarterly*, 21(1), 1-19.

Hallett, T. (2010). The Myth Incarnate Recoupling Processes, Turmoil, and Inhabited Institutions in an Urban Elementary School. *American Sociological Review*, 75(1), 52-74.

Coburn, C. E. (2004). Beyond decoupling: Rethinking the relationship between the institutional environment and the classroom. *Sociology of Education*, 77(3), 211-244.

November 10: Organizational Stratification

Davies, Scott and David Zarifa. 2012. "The Stratification of Universities: Comparing Canada and the United States." *Research in Social Stratification and Mobility* 30(2): 143-158.

Brint, S., Riddle, M., & Hanneman, R. A. (2006). Reference sets, identities, and aspirations in a complex organizational field: The case of American four-year colleges and universities. *Sociology of education*, 79(3), 229-252.

Hermanowicz, J. C. (2005). Classifying universities and their departments: A social world perspective. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 76(1), 26-55.

November 17: Emergence of Rankings

Dill, D. D. (2006). Convergence and diversity: The role and influence of university rankings. In *Keynote Address presented at the Consortium of Higher Education Researchers (CHER) 19th Annual Research Conference* (Vol. 9).

Sauder, M., & Lancaster, R. (2006). Do rankings matter? The effects of US News & World Report rankings on the admissions process of law schools. *Law & Society Review*, 40(1), 105-134

Drewes, T., & Michael, C. (2006). How do students choose a university?: an analysis of applications to universities in Ontario, Canada. *Research in Higher Education*, 47(7), 781-800.

November 24: Empirical Studies of High and Low Achieving Groups

Charles, M., & Bradley, K. (2009). Indulging our gendered selves? Sex segregation by field of study in 44 countries¹. *American Journal of Sociology*, 114(4), 924-976.

Thiessen, Victor. 2009. "The Pursuit of Postsecondary Education: A Comparison of First Nations, African, Asian, and European Canadian Youth." *Canadian Review of Sociology* 46(1), 5-37.

Carter, P. L. (2006). Straddling boundaries: Identity, culture, and school. *Sociology of Education*, 79(4), 304-328.

December 1: Final In-Class Exam

- No readings.

December 8: The Future of the Sociology of Education

- No readings.

Course Learning Objectives:

This course addresses three University Undergraduate Degree Level Expectations (see, <http://cfl.mcmaster.ca/COU/pdf/Undergraduate%20Degree%20Level%20Expectations.pdf>). It will help students develop knowledge and critical understanding of the key concepts, theories, methodologies and recent advances within the sociology of education. Moreover, assignments completed through it will allow students to develop their ability to 1) gather, review, interpret and evaluate information, as well as 2) compare the merits of alternate hypotheses within the discipline.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY:

Academic dishonesty consists of misrepresentation by deception or by other fraudulent means and can result in serious consequences, e.g. the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: "Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty"), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university.

It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. For information on the various kinds of academic dishonesty please refer to the Academic Integrity Policy, specifically Appendix 3, located at <http://www.mcmaster.ca/policy/Students-AcademicStudies/AcademicIntegrity.pdf>

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

1. Plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one's own or for which other credit has been obtained.
2. Improper collaboration in group work.
3. Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

(If applicable) In this course we will be using a software package designed to reveal plagiarism. Students will be required to submit their work electronically and in hard copy so that it can be checked for academic dishonesty.

DEPARTMENTAL/UNIVERSITY POLICIES:

Do NOT fax assignments. Please see your instructor for the most appropriate way to submit assignments.

The Sociology staff do NOT date-stamp assignments, nor do they monitor the submission or return of papers.

The McMaster Student Absence Form (<http://www.mcmaster.ca/msaf/>) is a self reporting tool for Undergraduate Students to report absences that last up to 3 days and provides the ability to request accommodation for any missed academic work. Please note, this tool cannot be used during any final examination period.

You may submit a maximum of 1 Academic Work Missed request per term. It is YOUR responsibility to follow up with your instructor immediately regarding the nature of the accommodation.

If you are absent more than 3 days, exceed 1 request per term, or are absent for a reason other than medical, you MUST visit your Associate Dean's Office (Faculty Office). You may be required to provide supporting documentation.

This form should be filled out when you are about to return to class after your absence.

Students should check the web, the white board and the Undergraduate Bulletin board outside the Sociology office (KTH-627) for notices pertaining to Sociology classes or departmental business (eg. class scheduling information, location of mailboxes and offices, tutorial information, class cancellations, TA job postings, etc.).

Computer use in the classroom is intended to facilitate learning in that particular lecture or tutorial. At the discretion of the instructor, students using a computer for any other purpose may be required to turn the computer off for the remainder of the lecture or tutorial.

The instructor and university reserve the right to modify elements of the course during the term. The university may change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances. If either type of modification becomes necessary, reasonable notice and communication with the students will be given with explanation and the opportunity to comment on changes. It is the responsibility of the student to check his/her McMaster email and course websites weekly during the term and to note any changes.

It is the policy of the Faculty of Social Sciences that all e-mail communication sent from students to instructors (including TAs), and from students to staff, must originate from the student's own McMaster University e-mail account. This policy protects confidentiality and confirms the identity of the student. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that communication is sent to the university from a McMaster account. If an instructor becomes aware that a communication has come from an alternate address, the instructor may not reply at his or her discretion.

