Instructor: Jared Furuta
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Office Hours: by appointment
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Time: Wednesdays, 1:30pm – 4:20pm
Location: TBD

Course Overview
This course will draw on a range of sociological theories and approaches to explore a broad overview on the relationship between education and society. In particular, the course will focus on themes related to the role of education in social stratification, linkages between education and the economy, polity, and culture, and the organizational contexts of schooling. The content of the course will focus not only on schooling in the United States, but also on cross-national and historical comparisons in order to illuminate the distinctive features of different education systems.

Learning Goals
(1) To be able to think about education through the lens of different sociological theories (functional, conflict, institutional).

(2) To be able to read a newspaper opinion editorial on a popular issue about education and think through and evaluate it critically: content, argument, and evidence.

(3) To learn important facts about education related to inequalities in achievement and attainment, different types of “capital” that are learned and reproduced through education, the college admissions process, etc.

(4) To be able to identify and explain some of the major dimensions of how education systems differ across countries (and what some of their effects are), so that they may be able to contextualize their own country and time—i.e. to think not only about the United States.

(5) To understand why education is perceived to be so important to individuals and societies (and what is taken for granted about these perceptions), so that they may think critically through the role that school plays in their own lives.

Course Evaluation
Three response papers: 30%
Final exam: 30%
Case study: 20%
Class participation: 20%

Response papers
Students will prepare three response papers for the course for the due dates specified below, that discuss the readings on the due date. Papers are generally 3-4 pages (Times New Roman, double spaced), and are due at the beginning of class.

The purpose of these response papers is to think critically through a set of readings, to help students engage with fundamental questions about the relationship between education and society, and to help students construct formal arguments related to these fundamental issues. The point is not to summarize the readings for a week, but to build on these ideas or use ideas to form a particular argument. Response papers must therefore draw on and engage with at least three readings for the week, and may either:

(a) Address one of the discussion questions provided at the end of the syllabus for respective weeks;

(b) Write about a common theme from the readings for the week, of the student’s choice. Here, students might discuss ideas, concepts or arguments that he/she found stimulating, discuss questions or disagreements with the ideas encountered, or suggest connections, linkages, or contradictions between one idea or approach with another.

Response papers will be graded based on: (1) how well the paper demonstrates an understanding of the readings for a given week, (2) how well the paper uses the readings and concepts to identify and support a clear argument, and (3) organization of the discussion and clarity of writing.

The first response paper may be revised within one week after it is handed back for a higher grade. The average of the two grades will be taken as the final grade for that paper.

Case study
One of the learning goals of the class is to develop an understanding of education systems in other countries, rather than focusing solely on education in United States. To this end, students will also be asked to give a 7-minute presentation in class that examines and explains a few selected dimensions of the education system of a given country; these dimensions will be provided in advance. To prepare for this presentation, students will also write a short outline (3-4 pages, double spaced) that addresses the main topics for the presentation.

Presentations will be evaluated based on the accuracy of the description of the country’s education system, clarity of presentation and communication, and thoroughness.

Final exam
The final examination for the course will be a 48-hour take-home examination (date provided on Axess). The format of the examination will be similar to the response papers: students will be given a set of discussion questions, and will choose three to write about (3-4 pages double-spaced each). The final examination will be graded on the same criteria as the response papers.

**Class participation**
Students are expected to attend class on time having completed all of the required readings, to contribute to class discussion, and to respectfully engage with the views of other students. Students are also required to sign up to meet with the instructor during the first two weeks of the quarter for a short 15-minute meeting.

**Class Format**
Readings for each week will be available on the Canvas website. In general, the readings will be more theoretical in nature in order to provide general orientation to the week’s topic, and class lecture/discussion will be more applied and concrete. So, don’t worry if some of the readings are a little tough, or if you don’t understand everything! We will go over them in class.

Class session will typically consist of one hour of lecture, one hour of application of the material to some substantive issue, and one hour of student discussion.

**Laptop use policy**
Please use laptops during class only for taking notes.

**Students with Documented Disabilities**
Students who may need an academic accommodation based on the impact of a disability must initiate the request with the Office of Accessible Education (OAE). Professional staff will evaluate the request with required documentation, recommend reasonable accommodations, and prepare an Accommodation Letter for faculty dated in the current quarter in which the request is being made. Students should contact the OAE as soon as possible since timely notice is needed to coordinate accommodations. The OAE is located at 563 Salvatierra Walk (phone: 723-1066, URL: [http://oae.stanford.edu](http://oae.stanford.edu)).

**Schedule and tentative reading list**

(* indicates an optional reading for the week)

**Week 1: Introduction**

**Week 2: Functional and conflict theories of education**


**Week 3: Institutional theories**


Response paper #1 due (Weeks 1-3)

**Week 4: Comparing education systems (Dimensions)**


**Week 5: Comparing education systems (Effects)**


**Case study outline due**

**Week 6: Education and Social Stratification (Forms of Capital / Tracking)**


**Response paper #2 due (Weeks 3-6)**

**Week 7: Education and Social Stratification (Race, Class, Gender)**


**Student presentations (in class)**

**Week 8: Education as Individual/Collective Good and Review**


**Response paper #3 due (Weeks 7-8)**

**Student presentations (in class)**