Foundational Perspectives on Educational Reform
Educational Studies 649

Fall 2010
Wednesdays, 1-4
University of Michigan
School of Education
Room 2302

Simona Goldin
Office: 1360G School of Education
Office Hours: Tuesdays, 10-1
Email: sgoldin@umich.edu

Course Description:
In this section of ED649, we will critically examine selected reform efforts in education from the perspective of one or more of the foundation disciplines – history, philosophy, or sociology. This course is aimed at:

1. Developing a broader and deeper understanding of the tensions between policy and practice in dynamic social and educational environments,
2. Developing your skills to assess the key resources and instruments that policies bring,
3. Cultivating your abilities to assess what the potential obstacles or impediments for enacting educational policies might be. What would teachers, administrators, and students have to learn in order to implement an educational policy?
4. Developing your analytic and writing skills in a collaborative teaching and learning setting.

Expectations:
This course is structured as a seminar. As such, your active engagement with the readings prior to class is crucial. The class simply will not work if you have not critically read the readings. For each set of readings there are guiding questions – these are to be used to structure our class discussions and to direct your reading responses (see below, under “written work”).

Since class participation is so crucial to your success in the class, you are expected to come to all classes on time, fully prepared.
This class has been constructed to help students develop practices that enable disciplined professional work. These include how you think, analyze, write, argue, and engage with your colleague’s ideas and work. By analysis I mean the way you identify the question the author(s) is/are trying to answer, critique the author’s thesis in relation to that question, and discuss the evidence the author(s) brings to bear in supporting that thesis. The course is designed to specifically attend to methods of analysis: how you analyze, interpret, and critique the readings and your colleague’s work.

**Written Work:**
There will be three categories of written work for this class. Developing and attending to writing and analytical skills is a key component to success in this class. Reading critically and analytically is vitally important; each of these writing assignments is designed to assist you in maximizing what you learn from the readings, from me, and from each other.

1. The first category of writing assignment is responses to the readings. These reflective pieces should be no more than 2 pages long. In writing these, you have these choices:
   a. You can choose to respond to all of the guiding questions for the day;
   b. You can choose to focus more deeply on only one or two of the day’s guiding questions. Simply indicate this at the top of your paper. You will still be responsible for discussion of all of the questions during class discussion.
   c. You can craft your own analytic question, which you should state at the top of your paper. You will still be responsible for discussion of all of the questions during class discussion.

   A key consideration that you should touch upon, regardless of your question, should be the implication for practice -- teachers' and students' practices with content in schools.

   All of these guidelines are constructed so as to better enable deep analysis of the readings, given the short, two-page format of the assignment.

   All writing assignments are to be turned in at the beginning of each class.

2. The second writing assignment is a take-home Midterm Paper, due on October 13, 2010. In this paper you will pick one foundational text – i.e. from History of Education, Sociology of Education, Philosophy of Education, Economics of Education, Comparative/International Education. The constraints in choosing the text are that (1) it is not by an author we are discussing in class, (2) only one person per topic/author, (3) you do
not choose a text you have read or are going to read in another class. In this assignment you will:

a. Justify why you chose the text and what you wanted to learn from it;
b. Briefly situate the piece and the author historically and vis-à-vis US schools;
c. Formulate key questions that will drive your analysis – questions similar to the ones that I have provided for each date, and justify why you crafted these;
d. Present the main thesis and arguments of the author;
e. Substantively address the key questions you’ve crafted;
f. Address what evidence the author uses to support his/her argument;
g. Argue for how and why this piece is relevant today.

Midterm Paper: The Midterm paper will be a maximum of 6-7 pages long. You will need to provide a full bibliography. I prefer endnotes to footnotes (neither the bibliography nor the endnotes will count towards the total page count). The paper is due on October 13, 2010, the same date as the Midterm presentations.

In addition, you will submit a proposal for the Midterm paper, which is due September 22, 2010. For the Midterm proposal you need to identify the piece you will focus on, why you think it will be useful, and indicate the subject domains of the text (i.e.: Sociology of Education, etc.)

Midterm Presentation: I will organize you into presentation groups after I receive the proposals. You will present your work in class in groups organized by domain so that we can all learn from you. The small group presentations will all be responsive to the same question:

What are the implications of the texts your group focused on for redesigning Ed Schools?

A sizeable portion of your class grade will be comprised of your engagement with each other’s work during the presentation question and answer times. Your creativity in presentation is encouraged; by creativity I mean use of relevant videos, etc. One main goal of your group presentation is to teach us about what you have learned, and thus you should think pedagogically about how to best structure your presentation.

3. The third writing assignment will be a take-home Final Paper, due December 1, 2010. You will be asked to pick the educational policy, e.g. tracking, homeschooling, mayoral reform, vouchers, etc., that you wish to learn more about. The two constraints are that (1) it is not a policy we are discussing in class, (2) only one person per policy. You will research your selected topic, write a short paper in which you describe and analyze the reform using what you have
learned in 649 in particular (i.e.: you will use the texts, lectures and group discussions in your analysis). Additionally, we will have a “reform fair” at the end of the term where you will present to your peers what you have learned.

The best sources of information will depend on the reform you select. In some instances, you will find ample information online via websites. Other programs will require looking at academic periodicals for up-to-date developments, as well as seeking out books, scholarly articles, or contacting people to interview. The key is that I would like you to triangulate your data. For example, if you select a particular comprehensive school reform model, do not rely solely on their website, but look for research that evaluates the model, newspaper or magazine articles that cover the reform, and make contact with teachers or other professionals who work at a school using the model.

In this paper you will:

a. Describe the policy – what are the goals of the policy?
b. What weaknesses of US schools does the policy address?
c. Situate the policy historically – what practices and structures does it build upon?
d. Analyze the key instruments and resources it brings to educational practice.
e. What resources, skills and practices is the policy dependent upon?
f. Which of these does it depend upon explicitly? Implicitly?
g. What would successful implementation of this policy mean for your work in schools? For the work of your colleagues – fellow teachers and administrators?

Again, you will draft a proposal for the paper, which is due by November 10, 2010.

Final Presentation: you will present your work in class so that we can all learn from you and your analysis. A sizeable portion of your class grade will be comprised of your engagement with each other’s work during the presentation question and answer times. Again, a main goal of your presentation is to teach us about what you have learned, and thus you should think pedagogically about how to best structure your presentation.

This paper will be a maximum of 7-9 pages long. You will need to provide a full bibliography. I prefer endnotes to footnotes (neither the bibliography nor the endnotes will count towards the total page count).

For all writing assignments, please use Helvetica 12 point font, and 1½ line spacing. Please include page numbers. All assignments are to be turned in at the beginning of the class on which the paper is due. Not late assignments will be accepted.
Grading:
20% Participation and Attendance:
Active, reflective, insightful participation in each class is key to the success of the course generally, and to how much you get from the class specifically. Your attendance, engagement in class discussions, in analysis of others’ classroom work, and in the question/answer sessions for each of the Paper presentations will comprise 20% of your grade.

20% Reading Reflections

30% Midterm Paper and small-group presentation.

30% Final Paper and presentation.

Readings:
I have tried my best to limit the cost of the reading and texts for this course; as such, a large number of PDFs will be available on CTOOLs. Thus, there will be no course pack for the course. However, you are expected to print out and bring to class copies of all readings; otherwise we will not be able to have substantive and fruitful discussions.

Following are the books that you need to buy.


Class 1: September 8, 2010: Introduction to the course and to each other.
What are the foundations of education and why is this work important for practicing and intending teachers?

What are salient educational resources, and how do they affect students’ opportunities to learn and learning outcomes? Why is this question important for a course on Educational Policy?
Reading:


Class 2: September 15, 2010: Educational Philosophy and Policy during the Common School Era: The debate between Horace Mann and the Boston Masters

What problems was Horace Mann trying to solve in his Seventh Report – at the school level and at the social and national level?

What educational weaknesses did he observe in Massachusetts schools, and what strengths did he see in European schools? How did Mann propose to solve the problems he observed?

In what ways did the Boston Masters’ views of “effective” instruction differ from Mann’s? What was the role of the teacher, of the student, and of knowledge in each of these texts?

How are the issues these authors wrote of and struggled with salient today?

Readings:
*** Note: I have assigned quite a lot of reading for this class. I recommend that you read judiciously – use the questions to guide your analytic reading of the pieces, while also looking for material to make use of for our class activity of lesson planning in the vein of each of these authors.

Mann, Horace. 1846. Report of an educational tour in Germany, and parts of Great Britain and Ireland, being part of the seventh annual report of Horace Mann, esq., Secretary of the Board of education. London: Simpkin, Marshall, and company. (pp. 1-10, 50-151,157-195, 248-263). These pages have been uploaded to CTOOLs.

Writing: First Writing Reflection due.

Class 3: September 22, 2010: Dewey’s educational philosophy: Ideas and Practice

It is widely assumed that Dewey argued for "child-centered" education. In what respects might that be a fair reading of the text? In what respects might the educational program sketched there be distinctly un-child-centered?

What were the challenges that Mayhew and Edwards chronicled in their report of implementing Dewey’s educational approach in the Chicago Lab School? How are these challenges salient today?

What problems was Dewey trying to solve in School and Society?

Readings:

The entire book is available on-line at:

http://books.google.com/books?id=GWYWAAAAIAAJ&printsec=frontcover&dq=The+School+and+Society&source=bl&ots=4llt4hPgfN&sig=TdQ6enVheQKZfPbVNGRteOjSIY&hl=en&ei=ULDZS5WdPJXYNpL9sHg&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=1&ved=0CAkQ6AEwAA#v=onepage&q&f=false

Read: Ch. 1-4. Skim the rest of the book.


The portion that we are reading is available on CTOOLs

Read: Ch. 1, 2, and Appendix

Writing: Second Writing Reflection due.

Midterm Proposal due
Class 4: September 29: Tinkering Toward Utopia: Historical View of Innovation
How do Tyack and Cuban explain failure and success in innovations in public education – what factors loom largest in their analysis?

What does their analysis imply for teachers’ work in contemporary US schools, for students’ work, for the work of improving schools?

How is their analysis salient today?

Reading:

Read: Prologue, Ch. 4 and Ch. 5. Skim the rest.

Writing: Third Writing Reflection due.

Class 5: October 6, 2010: Social Class as the determinant of what happens in Schools. Discussion: Value-Added Models for evaluating teachers
What role do Bowles and Gintis argue that school teaching and learning in schools plays in US society?

What role does professional practice play in their accounts of schooling?
What are the key problems that teachers must solve?

Was there anything that teachers could do about their situation, In Bowles and Gintis’ view? If not, why not? If so, what could they do?

What are the foundations of schooling, in their view?


Read: pp. 53-68, 84-101, 102-124.


Read: Conclusion – pp. 20-22.

Writing: Fourth Writing Reflection due.

**Class 6: October 13, 2010: Student Presentations**

Midterm Papers due; presentations

*** There will be no reading reflection papers due on this date because of the Midterm Papers and Presentations.

**Class 7: October 20, 2010: Tracking and the Traditional High School**

What problems of schooling does tracking solve? What problems does it create?

Who benefits from tracking? How? Who loses, how?

What are the effects of tracking on teachers’ practice? Administrators’ practice? Students’ practice?

What does consideration of the instructional triangle (Cohen, Raudenbush, Ball, 2003) assist in your analysis of these two pieces?


*This chapter is available on CTOOLS*


Read: Foreword, Preface, Ch. 1, Ch. 2, and Ch. 10.

Writing: Fifth Writing Reflection due.

**Class 8: October 27, 2010: What to teach and how to teach it**

In what ways are ED Hirsch, Jr. and Carol Lee’s goals for students similar? In what ways are they different?

What knowledge and practices are salient -- explicitly and/or implicitly -- for student learning?

What do teachers need to know how to do, and what do students need to know how to do, in each of these?

Reading:

Read: Ch. 1, Ch. 2, Ch. 5. Skim/read appendix, paying particular attention to using this material for your work answering the reflective questions.


Writing: Sixth Writing Reflection due.

**Class 9: November 3, 2010: Federal Effort to improve teaching and learning**

*What were the political and educational barriers to educational success for Title I, according to Cohen and Moffitt?*

*What were the resources and instruments that Title I brought to schools, which of these were salient to instruction, and which were not?*

*What are the implications of their arguments for efforts to reform schools, and to improve teaching and learning in US schools?*

Reading:

Read: CH. 1, 6, 7.


Writing: Seventh Writing Reflection due.

**Class 10: November 10, 2010: Charter Schools**

*What are the arguments for charter schools?*

*What is the evidence on their effectiveness?*

*What resources and instruments do they bring, and how are these – or might these – be salient for teaching and learning?*

*How do the findings in each of the readings for today reinforce or challenge each other?*
*The report is available on CTOOLs*

*The article is available on CTOOLs*

*The report is available on CTOOLs*

Writing: Eighth Writing Reflection due.

**Final Paper Proposal due**

**Class 11: November 17, 2010: Comprehensive School Reform: The case of SFA**  
*What are the assumptions about school weaknesses upon which Comprehensive School Reforms are built?*  
*What are the key instruments and resources that the SFA design brings to failing schools?*  
*What resources and practices is successful implementation of SFA dependent upon?*

Readings:  
*The article is available on CTOOLs*

*The chapter is available on CTOOLs*

*The chapter is available on CTOOLs*
Writing: Ninth Writing Reflection due.

**Class 12: November 24, 2010: Do Resources Matter? Class size case-study**
*Do resources matter for learning outcomes? If so, how, and which?*

*How can we reconcile Kozol, Hanushek, and Finn and Achilles?*

*What do these three pieces imply, together for teaching practice? For policy design? For policy implementation?*


Writing: Tenth Writing Reflection due.

**Class 13: December 1, 2010: The Dilemma of Policy and Practice: Presentations**
*What is the dilemma that Cohen, Moffitt and Goldin write about?*

*Trace how this dilemma can be illustrated in two examples of educational policy (that we have or have not studied).*

*What instruments or resources could be brought to bear to alleviate this tension?*

Reading:

Class Presentations and discussions: Final Policy Paper

*** There will be no reading reflection papers due on this date because of the Final Papers and Presentations.***
Written Final Papers Due

Class 14: December 8: Presentations
Class Presentations and discussions: Final Policy Paper

Reading:

Epilogue.

*** There will be no reading reflection papers due on this date because of the Final Papers and Presentations.
**READINGS:**


Mann, Horace. 1846. Report of an educational tour in Germany, and parts of Great Britain and Ireland, being part of the seventh annual report of Horace Mann, esq., Secretary of the Board of education. London: Simpkin, Marshall, and company.


Miller, Matt. March 2008. Nationalize the Schools (... A Little)!: Center for American Progress. *The report is available on CTOOLS*

Mirel, Jeffrey. Winter 2006. The Traditional High School: Historical Debates Over its Nature and Function. Education Next. *The article is available on CTOOLS*


Peurach, Donald. 2005. Designing and Managing Comprehensive School Reform: The Case of Success for All, School of Education, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. *The chapter is available on CTOOLS*

*The book is available on CTOOLs*

*The article is available on CTOOLs*


*The report is available on CTOOLs*