Class: Mondays 1:00-4:00 p.m.  Prof. Jeffrey Mirel
Room: 2320 SEB Phone: 734-615-8983
Office Hours: Mondays by appointment, Office: 4114 SEB
Thursdays 4:00-6:00 p.m. Email: jmirel@umich.edu

Course Description:

This course explores the history of American urban education from the nineteenth century to modern times. We will undertake this exploration by examining a selection of books some of which are “foundational” texts in the history of American urban education, others that have opened up new and important areas of research in the field, and still others that have addressed vital issues in the history of urban education in a particularly compelling way. I have four main goals for the class:

• To provide you with a broad overview of the history of U.S. urban education;

• To introduce you to a number of widely used interpretive frameworks used to explain the history of American urban education;

• To critically examine a number of key books in the field in light of these interpretive frameworks;

• To give you experience using the historiography of urban education to illuminate current policies, practices, or trends in urban schools.

Required Texts:


The books are available at Shaman Drum Bookstore, 311-315 South State St., Ann Arbor. Phone: 734-662-7407.

**Course pack. Includes selections from:**


The course pack is available at Excel Test Preparation, 1117 S. University, Ann Arbor. Phone: 996-1500

**Course Requirements:**

Readings: All assigned readings must be completed prior to class. Everyone must be fully prepared to participate in class discussions.
Journals: While you are reading the required books and articles you should keep a journal in which you apply the ideas and questions this class addresses to the data and interpretations of historical events that you encounter in the texts. The kinds of questions I want you to consider include: What is the author’s thesis? What kinds of evidence does the author use to support that thesis? What are the best examples of sections that support the thesis? Where does the author’s argument seem to break down? Which of the authors seems to consistently have the better argument? Why? These journals will be due on October 8 and November 12. Each set of journal entries should be about 10-12 pages (doubled spaced, 12 point font in Times or Times Roman). Combined, the two sets of journal entries are worth 50 percent of your grade.

Historiography Essay: All students are required to do a 12-14-page historiography essay (double spaced, 12 point Times or Time Roman font). The essay should survey and critique some of the basic literature on an aspect of the history of urban education. Ideally, you should examine two distinctly different interpretations of the topic you have chosen to explore. Sample topics include:

- Immigration and Education (e.g., Americanization programs; bilingual education)
- Curriculum Issues in Urban High Schools (e.g., tracking; vocational education)
- Education and the Cold War (e.g., academic freedom issues; curriculum and national security issues)
- Political Issues in Urban Education (e.g., governance questions, controversies over school choice, community control, testing and accountability)
- Desegregation of Urban Schools (e.g., differences and similarities in northern and southern cities)
- Gender Issues in Urban Schools (e.g., women as leaders in educational reform efforts; women teachers in the union movement)
- Unity/Diversity Curriculum Issues (e.g., Core Knowledge; Afrocentric education; cultural maintenance)

Please choose a topic early in the semester. At various times during the semester I will ask you to report to the class on your progress in preparing this paper. The paper, which is due on December 17, will account for 35 percent of your grade.

Participation (includes attendance): Fifteen percent of your grade will be based on class participation. Please note that I would like you to hold December 17 for a make-up class if needed.
Course Calendar

September 10—Introduction

September 17—Interpreting the History American Education: Beverly, Massachusetts as the World

Required Reading:

Katz, *The Irony of Early School Reform* (selection in course pack)

Vinovskis, *The Origin of Public High Schools* ((selection in course pack)


Shipps, *School Reform, Corporate Style*, pp.1x-15

Recommended Reading:


September 24—Roots of Conflict in Nineteenth Century Urban Schools

Required Reading:

Bowles and Gintis, *Schooling in Capitalist America*, pp. 151-79


Shipps, *School Reform, Corporate Style*, pp. 16-27

October 1—The Politics of Urban Education in the Progressive Era

Required Reading:

Anyon, *Ghetto Schooling*, pp. ix-xix, 41-56

Bowles and Gintis, *Schooling in Capitalist America*, pp. 180-200

Ravitch, *The Great School Wars*, pp. 77-158

Tyack, *The One Best System*, pp. 3-176

October 8—The Glory Days: Experts, Bureaucracy, and Curriculum Reform, 1910-30

**Required Reading:**

Mirel, *The Rise and Fall of an Urban School System*, pp. vii-88

Ravitch, *The Great School Wars*, pp. 159-230

Tyack, *The One Best System*, pp. 177-229, 255-68

**Journal # 1 Due**

October 15—Fall Break—No Class

October 22—Negotiating a New Nation: Immigrants and Urban Schools, 1900-40

**Required Reading:**

Tyack, *The One Best System*, pp. 229-55

October 29—The Great Depression and World War II: The System Trembles

**Required Reading:**

Anyon, *Ghetto Schooling*, pp. 57-74

Mirel, *The Rise and Fall of an Urban School System*, pp. 89-215

Ravitch, *The Great School Wars*, pp. 231-40


November 5—The Not So Fabulous 1950s (and the early 60s weren’t so great either)

**Required Reading:**

Anyon, *Ghetto Schooling*, pp. 75-128


Shipps, *School Reform, Corporate Style*, pp. 50-88.

November 12 — The Controversy over Desegregation: Boston as a Case Study (Part I)

**Required Reading:**

Lukas, *Common Ground*, pp. 3-326

**Journal #2 Due**

November 19 — The Controversy over Desegregation: Boston as a Case Study (Part II)

**Required Reading**

Lukas, *Common Ground*, pp. 327-654

November 26 — Segregation and Desegregation in the Sun Belt

**Required Reading**

Donato, *The Other Struggle for Equal Schools*, (all)

December 3 — Things Fall Apart: Chicago and Detroit

**Required Reading:**

Mirel, *The Rise and Fall of an Urban School System*, pp. 293-397

Shipps, *School Reform, Corporate Style*, pp. 89-129.


**Required Reading**

Anyon, *Ghetto Schooling*, pp. 3-38, 129-86


Orr, *Black Social Capital*, (all)

Shipps, School Reform, *Corporate Style*, pp. 130-69.
December 17—No City Left Behind? The Uncertain Future of Urban Education

Required Reading:

Mirel, *The Rise and Fall of an Urban School System*, pp. 399-443

Mirel, “’There is still a long road to travel, and success is far from assured’: Politics and School Reform in Detroit, 1994-2002” (in course pack).

Ravitch, *The Great School Wars*, pp. 399-404

Shipps, *School Reform, Corporate Style*, pp. 170-210

Tyack, *The One Best System*, pp. 269-91

Final Paper Due