

Sociology of Education

SOCL 4431, Section 001

Department of Sociology

Louisiana State University

Fall 2017

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Classroom: 102 Audubon Hall

Class Meetings: Tuesdays and Thursdays, **10:30 – 11:50**

Office Hours: Tuesdays: 3:00 – 4:00, or email to make an appointment

LSU General Catalog Undergraduate Course Description

SOCL 4431 Sociology of Education (3). Prereq.: SOCL 2001 or equivalent. Theoretical approaches to understanding the roles of the institution of education, socialization processes, the linkages between education and stratification and educational change.

Course Overview

Sociology of Education is a subfield in sociology focusing on the institution of education and its interconnections with individuals, other social institutions, and the broader society. Sociologists use a range of theoretical perspectives and methods to explore topics related to learning, schools, socialization processes, educational systems, and social inequality. In this course, we will critically examine these theoretical perspectives, and strive to gain a better understanding of education as a social institution.

Course Material

1. Ballantine and Spade (editors). 2015. *Schools and Society: A Sociological Approach to Education, Fifth Edition*. SAGE Publications.
ISBN: 978-1-4522-7583-3
2. Additional readings will be made available through Moodle or email.

Course Structure

For upper-level (4000 level) courses in sociology, I like using a “reader” instead of a “text”, because readers give students more opportunities to think about course material, and share their thoughts with others. My approach to the course will be to assign readings and then ask students to read and reflect on the material they have read **before** we engage in in-class discussions about it. This approach allows each student to first engage in individual-level reflections on course readings, and then later engage in collective, group-level reflections. Our overarching goal is for each of us, by the end of the semester, to gain a better understanding of the multiple ways that education shapes society and individuals, and also how education has been changing over time.

We all have a nice advantage for reflection because, simply, we have multiple years of personal experience with the institution of education. We have all either been to school or been homeschooled. So, we all have some insight, just as we all have some insight into most topics in sociology (family, gender, race/ethnicity, and so forth).

In Sociology of Education, I will ask you to read each assigned reading very carefully and critically, and I will also ask each of you to, individually, reflect on these readings in writing. In addition, I will ask each of you to actively participate in either educational service or educational research directly related to Baton Rouge and Louisiana.

In class, we will engage in group-level discussions and activities aimed at enhancing course material. This will require a willingness to share your reflections with others, to listen to others' opinions, and to critically assess the merits of multiple perspectives. It will be important for every student to come to each class prepared, because I organize discussions in many ways. I will share my views but I will rarely "lecture"; I typically want to hear students' perspective first, then share my views later.

General Expectations:

Before each Tuesday Class

Read all assigned readings and complete all reflection paper assignments. Bring your reflections with you to class on Tuesday morning.

During Tuesday and Thursday Class time

Participate in all in-class discussions and activities. Bring laptops, smartphones, and tablets. Use them when appropriate. Sometimes I may ask you to put them away for a particular exercise or discussion. Activities might involve videos, Internet searches, contests, etc.

Service or Research Options (more details below)

All students will be asked (required) to choose either the "service" or "research" option. Both involve work outside of the classroom. In addition to the "service work" or "research work", students will be asked to regularly share their reflections on their work through course blogs. My general expectation is that students contribute to blogs on a weekly basis as required.

Grading

There will be no exams in this course!

Students' grades will be based on reading reflections and course participation, blogs, a mid-term essay, and a final essay, as follows

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|---|-----|
| 1. Reading Reflections and Course Participation | 40% |
| 2. Blogs | 40% |
| 3. Course Paper | 20% |

Reading Reflections and Course Participation

All students will engage in the same reading assignments each week, generally consisting of 3-5 short articles from the reader. These readings will form the core of the classroom activities, so it is critical that every student reads and reflects before each Tuesday's class. Each week's grade will be based on the following three components:

1. A 1-page Reflection Paper (printed and submitted in class each Tuesday)
2. Participation in Tuesday's Class
3. Participation in Thursday's Class
 - Reflection Papers should be formatted as follows:
 - 1-page, single-spaced, 12 point Times New Roman, 1 inch Margins
 - 1. First, summarize the set of readings in 1-3 short sentences
 - 2. Second, reflect (share your thoughts) on specific parts or points of the reading(s) by relating the argument to your own views/experiences/ideas
 - 3. Third, assess the value of each week's set of readings as a whole (how did this group of readings further our understanding of education?)-short concluding paragraph
 - Tuesday and Thursday Participation Grades
 - **Requires attendance to participate**
 - Students can only participate meaningfully if they have read and reflected on course material (however, all students should attend every class even if they did not write a reflection paper)
 - Engage in classroom activities. I like many different in class activities. I may organize students in pairs or small groups for discussions or Internet searches. I may come up with a short, in-class project related to course material. Activities may or may not involve using the Internet. I may show short videos and ask for student responses. I may bring in guest participants with some insights to share.

Blogs

- Starting on Week 3, students will post blogs and also comment on others' blogs each week.
- Grades will be based on the number of blogs and comments, as well as the quality of the blogs and comments.
- In general, blogs should be posted Thursday-Sunday and comments from Monday-Tuesday

Course Paper

- The course paper is designed to allow students to reflect more broadly on what they have learned in the course, combining the readings and in-class activities with their unique outside service or research activities.
- Students may choose to write course papers that respond to specific essay-style questions I will design and distribute in October. Students will also have the opportunity to develop their own theme for their course paper.
- A required first draft of the course paper will be due before the Thanksgiving Holiday, and all students will have the opportunity to revise the paper based on my comments.

Grading Scale with Pluses and Minuses

A+	98.00	-	100.00
A	92.00	-	97.99
A-	90.00	-	91.99
B+	88.00	-	89.99
B	82.00	-	87.99
B-	80.00	-	81.99
C+	78.00	-	79.99
C	72.00	-	77.99
C-	70.00	-	71.99
D+	68.00	-	69.99
D	62.00	-	67.99
D-	60.00	-	61.99
F	0	-	59.99

Service-Learning Option and Research Option

All students will be required to choose between either the service-learning or the research option. I designed the course with the intent that both options will require an equal amount of time and effort. I developed this chart in order to provide all students with a fair comparison of the two options.

I am equally enthusiastic about both options, so please chose the option that works best for you. On the other hand, it is problematic for students to “switch” options in the middle of the semester, so please devote some time during the first two weeks to choosing the option that suits you best.

Option	Service-Learning	Research
General Description of Activities	1. Tutor each week 2. Blog connecting tutoring to course material	1. Research each week 2. Blog connecting research to course material
Training/Preparation during first two weeks	Complete VIPS EverybodyReads application and Training	Complete NIH human subjects research online training and library training
Minimum Requirements	10 tutoring sessions + blogs	10 research sessions + blogs
Average time commitment for service or research	1.5 hours per week (between 9am & 2pm)	1.5 hours per week (anytime)
Average time commitment for blogs	1 hour. 30 minutes for blog, 15 minutes for each comment	1 hour. 30 minutes for blog, 15 minutes for each comment

Service-Learning Option

Students who choose the service-learning option will be trained in tutoring during the second or third week of classes. I have worked with our Community Partner, Volunteers In Public Schools (VIPS) since 2007, to provide service-learning tutoring opportunities to my LSU students. The program VIPS operates is called EverybodyReads, and LSU students will be matched with “Reading Friends”: First- and Second-Grade students at an East Baton Rouge Parish public school near the LSU Campus. After the initial training and matching process, students will go to weekly tutoring sessions at the school. Each week, after tutoring, students will post a blog connecting their tutoring experiences and observations to course material.

Research Option

Students who choose research option will be trained in research during the second or third week of classes. I plan to work with LSU Library faculty to provide instruction on using LSU’s resources, and with the Louisiana Department of Education to provide an overview of school-, district-, and state-level data available online. After the initial training, students will spend the rest of the semester developing a research proposal that combines a relevant research question with strong literature review and a methodological approach that involves gathering, organizing, and analyzing data connected to Louisiana schools and districts. Each week, students will conduct research and post a blog connecting their experiences, observations, and initial findings to course material.

Academic Integrity and Professionalism

I insist that all students enrolled in Sociology of Education to uphold the highest standards of academic integrity required at LSU and (for tutors) the East Baton Rouge Parish School System. Fortunately, nearly all my previous students have represented LSU and my class admirably. Unfortunately, a very small handful of students have not adhered to LSU's academic integrity standards.

LSU now has many resources for anyone with questions about academic integrity. Our **Code of Student Conduct** is one excellent resource. The LSU **Faculty Handbook** explains why all instructors are obligated to report any form of misconduct to the **Dean of Students**. The LSU Student Advocacy and Accountability also has excellent resources for students, faculty, and parents—including information about plagiarism at <http://students.lsu.edu/saa/students/plagiarism>

Professionalism In the classroom:

- Students enrolled in this course must make the following commitments:
 1. Attend class
 2. Prepare for class (Timely completion of reading, reflections, tutoring, and blogs)
 3. Participate in class. Engage in discussions and share your thoughts.
- **I cannot overstate the importance of regular attendance!** Most of the grading in this course is based on what we actually do in class and, therefore, students must commit to attending all class sessions.

Professionalism in Service

- I expect all students who tutor in East Baton Rouge Parish public schools to respect the school systems code of standards for teachers, teaching aids, staff, and volunteers.
- As you will be working with children, maintaining standards of dress and language are critical for setting a positive example, and establishing a relationship conducive to learning.
- Most importantly, students must **respect confidentiality** when it comes to children, teachers, and schools.
- We will discuss these issues and more in detail during the first weeks of the semester, including the service-learning orientation.

Trip Insurance

The LSU Student Government has a Student Travel and Accident Insurance program that insures all students for course-related trips. The insurance is mandatory. Each student must go to the following web page to sign up for insurance <https://sites01.lsu.edu/wp/riskmgt/triptravelservice>.

Tentative Weekly Schedule (Note: Subject to Change)

Week 1:	Course Introduction
08-22	Course Overview: Complete VIPS Application
08-24	Syllabus review
Week 2:	Ch1. What is Sociology of Education? Theoretical Perspectives
08-29	Training Day
08-31	First Reflection Due, Discussion
Week 3:	Ch2. Studying Schools: Research Methods in Context
09-05	Second Reflection Due
09-07	Course paper assigned
Week 4:	Ch3. Schooling in a Social Context
09-12	Third Reflection Due
09-14	
Week 5:	Ch4. Schools as Organizations
09-19	Fourth Reflection Due
09-21	
Week 6:	Ch5. Roles and Responsibilities: Administrators, Teachers, and Student
09-26	Fifth Reflection Due
09-28	
Week 7:	Ch6. What We Teach in Schools: Knowledge for What and for Whom?
10-03	Sixth Reflection Due
10-05	Guest Speaker
Week 8:	Ch7. Who Gets Ahead? Race, Class, and Gender in Education
10-10	Seventh Reflection Due
10-12	
Week 9:	Ch8. Education and Opportunity: Attempts at Equality and Equity
10-17	Eighth Reflection Due
10-19	Fall Holiday
Week 10:	Ch9. Higher Education
10-24	Ninth Reflection Due
10-26	

Week 11:	C10. Globalization and Education
10-31	Tenth Reflection Due
11-02	
Week 12:	
11-07	Ch11. Can Schools Change?
11-09	Eleventh Reflection Due
Week 13:	Student Topics
11-14	Twelfth Reflection Due
11-16	
Week 14:	Student Topics
11-21	Thirteenth Reflection Due, First Draft of Course Paper Due
11-23	Thanksgiving Holiday
Week 15:	Student Topics
11-28	14 th Reflection Due
11-30	
Week 16	Finals Week
12-08	5pm. Final Draft of Course Paper Due

Service-Learning

This is a service-learning course. Service-learning is a credit-bearing, educational experience in which students participate in an organized service activity that meets identified community needs and reflect on the service activity in such a way as to gain further understanding of course content, a broader appreciation of the discipline, and an enhanced sense of civic responsibility. More information about service-learning can be found here: www.lsu.edu/ccell. Importantly, students who enroll in service-learning courses get assessed (graded) on their ability to demonstrate that they were able to learn from their service; performing the service is not enough.

For the Fall 2017 Semester, we will collaborate with **Volunteers in Public Schools (VIPS)** and work with the **EveryBody Reads Program**. Each of you will be **Reading Friends**. You will be matched with a First or Second Grade student in the East Baton Rouge Parish School system, who have been identified as reading below grade level, but not otherwise having any serious learning or behavioral issues requiring more targeted interventions. You will tutor in reading throughout the semester. In most cases, you will basically be teaching your Reading Friends how to read. Again, you will not get credit for tutoring, but for demonstrating that you are learning about sociology of education through your tutoring service activities.

After each tutoring session (in the evening)

Post a blog that connects your tutoring experiences to course readings or discussions. More details about what to include in each blog will be provided in class.

Community Partners:

1. Volunteers in Public Schools (VIPS): EveryBodyReads Program
Tony Prior, Coordinator
Office Phone: 225-226-4703
Email: everybodyreads@ebrschools.org

2. Buchanan Elementary School
Charlotte Britten, Principal
1222 E. Buchanan
Baton Rouge, LA 70802
Phone: 224-343-4585

Orientation

Tony Prior, the EverybodyReads coordinator, will provide an orientation/training session during class on **Thursday, September 3**. The orientation will include information on how we will initially make contact with our Reading Friends at Buchanan Elementary

School. Charlotte Britten, Principal of Buchanan, will also be invited to attend the orientation or send a representative. All students must attend the orientation.