

Education Studies/Sociology 117 **Language, Culture, and Education**
Winter 2010

Lecture: Wednesdays 5:00-7:50 p.m., Center Hall 216

Discussion sections (optional): Weds 8:00-8:50 p.m. PCYNH 304; Weds 4:00-4:50 PCYNH 304

Instructor:

Amanda Datnow, Professor and Director of Education Studies

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Office hours: Mondays 9-11 and by appointment, PCH 317

Teaching Assistant:

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Office hours by appointment, outside PCH 317

Readers: Alexis Tucker and Suzanne Stolz

The purpose of this course is to enable you to think critically about education as a social institution. This course is focused on current theories and research about differential educational achievement in US schools. We will focus on understanding how the characteristics of groups and settings (e. g., socioeconomic status, ethnic group culture, school culture, peer culture) influence students' educational experiences. We will pay specific attention to how cultural processes mediate political-economic constraints and human action. The educational consequences of these theories, especially for low income and ethnic and linguistic minority students in the US, are discussed. We will read both historical and contemporary readings, with an emphasis on understanding how the discourse around the explanations of underachievement has shifted over time.

REQUIRED READINGS: A course reader is on sale at Cal Copy. You are expected to complete the required reading for each week prior to the class session. While you are reading for class, it is a good idea to jot down notes, as this will help you participate in class discussions in a more informed way. Think critically about what you read and consider the connections between the readings. Students will be called upon to summarize, discuss, or debate issues in the reading and in lecture both in large and small groups. Your active and thoughtful participation in these discussions will be part of your grade. Attendance is expected at every class meeting.

STUDENT EVALUATION: There will be four 2-page reflections, one take-home midterm exam, and a take-home final. The first 2 reflections will be due before the first midterm; the second 2 will be due before the final. See specific due dates below. The final exam questions will be posted on WebCT on Monday, March 7th and will be due **no later than 10:00 p.m. on Monday, March 15**. A review session will be held in class on Wednesday, March 9th. The exams will ask you to analyze course materials, construct a sociological argument and defend it

against competing interpretations. The 4 reflections will be worth 25%, the midterm will be worth 25%, and the final will be worth 50% of your grade.

Take home midterm and final exams must be submitted in HARD COPY to my office at PCH 317. Reflections must be submitted in class.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR REFLECTIONS: I will ask you to form groups of 4 on the first day of class. You will meet and prepare a group response to questions that I ask you. Each member of the group will be responsible for assembling and reporting one of the reflections. You will submit your group reflections in class. See due dates below.

COURSE EXPECTATIONS: The writing assignments will be evaluated according to (1) whether it meets the criteria; (2) the extent to which your assignment is analytical and reflective; (3) the quality, clarity, and organization of your writing; and (4) your ability to integrate readings/issues from the course. Written assignments must be handed in on time. I will grant extensions only for highly valid reasons, and these extensions must be sought in advance. Unexcused late assignments will receive lower grades (up to one letter grade down per day late).

Of course I want all of you to succeed in this class! In general, students who integrate readings and lecture material and construct a *thorough and well supported argument* can expect grades in the A and B range. Students who have assimilated the basic ideas of lecture but who do not integrate the readings in exams can expect to receive grades in the C range. Students who show a minimal mastery of assigned readings, recommended readings, lectures, participate in a minimal way in discussions can expect grades below a C.

January 6 -- Introduction: The Problem of Inequality in American Education

Ladson-Billings, "From the Achievement Gap to Education Debt"

UCLA IDEA, "California Educational Opportunity Report"

** Attendance at first class is crucial as we will be forming small groups

January 13 -- Cultural Mediation and the "Cultural Deprivation" Account

Ladson-Billings, "It's not the culture of poverty, it's the poverty of culture"

Erickson, "Conceptions of school culture"

Bereiter & Englemann, Teaching Disadvantaged Children in the Preschool (excerpt)

Payne, A Framework for Understanding Poverty (excerpt)

January 20 -- Critiques of the Cultural Deprivation Account and Introduction to the Cultural Discontinuity Account

Labov, "Academic Ignorance and Black Intelligence"

Gorski, "The Classist Underpinnings of Ruby Payne's framework"

Mehan, "What Time is it Denise?"

January 27 -- Educational Recommendations from Cultural Discontinuity Research

Au, "Participation structures in a reading lesson"

Mejia-Arauz et al. "Cultural Variation in Children's Social Organization"

Heath, "What no bedtime story means"

(FIRST REFLECTION DUE)

February 3-- Educational Recommendations from Cultural Discontinuity Research

Lee, "A Culturally-Based Cognitive Apprenticeship Model"

McCarty et al, "Native American Youth Discourses on Language Shift and Retention"

Bresser et al. "Equity for language learners"

Delpit, "The Silenced Dialogue"

February 10-- Widening the Context to Include Social Structural Constraints:

The Minority Status Thesis, A Critique, and Educational Implications

Ogbu, "Variability in Minority School Performance"

Gibson, "Complicating the Typology"

Conchas, "Structuring Failure and Success"

Lee, "Behind the model minority stereotype"

(SECOND REFLECTION DUE)

February 17-- Family Cultural Practices Mediating Structure and Agency in the Production of Inequality

Phelan, Davidson, & Yu, "Students multiple worlds: Navigating the borders of family, peer, and school cultures"

Lareau, "Social Class and Family-School Relations"

Horvat, Weininger, & Lareau, "From Social Ties to Social Capital"

(MIDTERM DUE)

February 24 – Peer Cultural Practices Mediating Structure and Agency in the Production of Inequality

Carter, "Straddling Boundaries"

Stanton-Salazar & Spina, "Adolescent peer networks as a context for social and emotional support"

Datnow & Cooper, "Peer networks of African American students in independent schools"

(THIRD REFLECTION DUE)

March 3 -- -- -- Towards A Comprehensive Sociological Account of Inequality:

The Role of the School in Producing Inequality and Equality

Oakes and Rogers, "Radical change through radical means"

Ladson-Billings, "But that's just good teaching! The case for culturally relevant pedagogy."

Banks, "The canon debate, knowledge construction, and multicultural education"

(FOURTH REFLECTION DUE)

March 10 – Review for final exam

Mehan, "Understanding Inequality"

FINAL EXAM DUE in hard copy no later than Monday, March 15 at 10:00 p.m. to my office -- PCH 317