

## SOSC2130: EDUCATION AND SOCIETY

Spring 2022

Tuesday, Thursday 16:30-17:50 on Zoom/Rm2504

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Division of Social Science Rm 3371 (Lift 13-15)/Online via Zoom

Office hours: One hour after each class.

Teaching Assistant: Wendy Lee

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The course will initiate a sociologically informed conversation about education. What is school for? What social forces have shaped our current educational practices? Does schooling provide new opportunities, or perpetuate old inequalities? How are ethnic minorities and economically deprived students marginalized from education systems? Why do boys perform so poorly compared to girls in school? What should be the role of the humanities and creativity in education? Why is there a “crisis” in higher education? How might education be reformed? What is the future of education? To answer these questions, we will study a number of important sociological works on education and you will be encouraged to reflect upon your own educational experiences, as well as examine contemporary debates about education at all levels in Hong Kong and across cultures.

### Intended Learning outcomes

### Intended learning activities

An appreciation of how to be <i>sociologically mindful</i> about education.	By reading about the ideas of major sociological thinkers.
An awareness of how formal education can perpetuate social inequalities.	By collecting data and looking at studies of how social class, ethnicity, and gendered ideologies influence educational opportunities.
A critical understanding of the Hong Kong education system.	Exploring the global context of the Hong Kong education system, specifically colonialism and globalization. Reading articles about recent controversies surrounding language, national education, and ethnic minorities.
An appreciation of the problems in higher education.	Reading critical accounts and reflecting upon our own experiences in higher education: increasing student debt, insecure job prospects, managerial ideologies.
An appreciation of alternative educational practises and institutions	A critical review of various attempts to reform education; student-run schools, creativity, experiential learning, online education, the Finnish education system.

## REQUIREMENTS AND ASSESSMENT

### Readings

#### *Required Readings:*

Any worthwhile university course in the social sciences requires that you do some reading outside of the class on your own. I have tried to keep these to a minimum. There will be one or two *required* short articles or book chapters assigned for most classes. These will be included in the course assessment. I'll announce the reading assignments at the beginning of each class. You must read, at least, the required articles before coming to class in order to be able to understand the class and take part in it. I may call on you to answer questions about them in the class. Do not worry if you don't understand everything in the required readings. I will assist you by telling you in advance what I want you to get out of them. I will also help you with the more difficult points in the class, so please be sure to attend.

#### *Supplementary Readings*

Students often tell me that they want to read more about a particular topic. For these students, I have provided some *supplementary* readings. Supplementary readings will not be covered in the course assessment, but they will enhance your understanding of the subject, and students tell me that they find them interesting.

I shall make all the readings available on the Canvas webpage.

### Written Assignment

The written assignment for this course will be a small-group research project in which you will collect some information from the internet, or your own experiences related to the course and write up in around 5-10 pages. Details of the groupings and assignments will be given after the drop add period. In order to encourage all groupmates to contribute equally to the project, a small proportion of the assignment score will be based on a peer review in which you each get to evaluate the contributions of your groupmates.

### Class participation

I will reserve a small percentage of the final grade to the top 5-10 participators in the class. Participation includes frequently answering questions in the class, asking questions in the class, responding to other students in the class and taking part in my in-class activities.

### The Final Grade

Assignment	25%
Midterm Examination	30%
Final Examination	40%
Class Participation	5%

## CLASS SCHEDULE<sup>1</sup>

### INTRODUCTIONS

Date	Topic	Reading
Feb 8 <sup>th</sup>	<b>How much do you know about education and society?</b> Common Sense Quiz	
Feb 10 <sup>th</sup>	Thinking sociologically about education	

### PART I: SCHOOL: WHAT IS IT FOR?

Feb 15 <sup>th</sup>	<p><b>What are the functions of education?</b></p> <p>Emile Durkheim and the functionalist perspective</p>	<p>Required: <i>Learning the Student Role: Kindergarten as Academic Bootcamp</i>. Harry L. Gracy</p> <p>Required: <i>Patriotic Education in a Chinese Middle School</i>. W. O. Lee</p>
Feb 17 <sup>th</sup>	<p><b>Whose interests are really served by the education system?</b></p>	<p>Required: <i>Schooling in Capitalist America</i>. Bowles and Gintis. Required version.</p> <p>Supplementary: <i>Schooling in Capitalist America</i>. p.131-148. Bowles and Gintis</p>
Feb 22 <sup>nd</sup>	<p><b>What are the unintended consequences of education?</b></p>	<p>Required: <i>Elements of a Culture</i> (from <i>Learning to Labour</i>) Paul Willis</p>

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<sup>1</sup> Dates and readings may be subject to change. Please listen out for announcements at the beginning of each class.

PART II: LABELING THEORY

Feb 24 <sup>th</sup>	<b>What happens when we label children?</b>	Required: <i>Racial Stereotyping in Hong Kong's textbooks undermines harmony</i> , SCMP  Required: <i>The Saints and the Roughnecks</i> , William Chamblis
Mar 1 <sup>st</sup>	<b>Why do the poorest students end up with the worst teachers?</b>	Required: <i>Skimming and Dumping at Penrose High: Career Mobility and the Perpetuation of Inequality</i> . Demie Kurz

PART III: EDUCATION AND SOCIAL CLASS

Mar 3 <sup>rd</sup>	<b>What is social class? What is cultural capital?</b>	
Mar 8 <sup>th</sup>	<b>How do parents influence their children's educational success?</b>	Required: <i>Unequal Childhoods</i> Ch. 8, and Ch 10. Annette Lareau

PART IV: EDUCATION AND ETHNICITY

Mar 10 <sup>th</sup>	<b>How to think sociologically about "race" ethnicity and nationality?</b>	
	Documentary: IQ testing: the great deceit	
Mar 15 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Does Increasing School Resources help ethnic minorities?</b> The Coleman Report.	
Mar 17 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Why are Asian Americans so successful in their studies?</b>	Required: <i>From Unassimilable to Exceptionable: The Rise of Asian Americans</i> and "Stereotype Promise" Jennifer Lee and Min Zhou

**Mar 22 MIDTERM EXAMINATION. Attendance required.**

PART V: GENDER AND EDUCATION

Mar 24 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Thinking sociologically about gender?</b>	
Mar 29 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Why are boys performing so poorly at school?</b>	Required: <i>The gendered classroom</i> Michael Kimmel  Supplementary: <i>The War Against Boys</i> . Christine Hoff Sommers

PART VI: ISSUES IN HONG KONG EDUCATION

Mar 31 <sup>st</sup>	<b>What explains the current state of Hong Kong's high-stress education?</b>  Colonial and globalizing forces	Required: <i>A critical evaluation of Education Reforms in Hong Kong: Counting our Losses to Economic Globalization</i> . Choy Po King  Supplementary: "The best students will learn English": <i>Ultra-utilitarianism and Linguistic Imperialism in Education in post-1997 Hong Kong</i> . Choy Po King.
April 5 <sup>th</sup>	Ching Ming Festival: No Class	
April 7 <sup>th</sup>	<b>What problems do ethnic minorities face in Hong Kong's educational system?</b>	<u>Reading:</u>  Required: <i>Envisioned Belonging: Cultural Differences and Ethnicities in Hong Kong Schooling</i> . Wai-Chi Chee.  Supplementary: <i>What accounts for the Underachievement of South Asians in Hong Kong? The Voices of Pakistani and Nepalese Parents</i> . Linda Tsung and Fang Gao.

PART VII: ISSUES IN HIGHER EDUCATION

April 12 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Are academic standards falling at universities?</b>	Required: <i>College Cultures and Student Learning</i> . Richard Arum and Josipa Roksa.
April 14 <sup>th</sup>	Mid-term break. No class	
Apr 19 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Why is university education becoming so expensive?</b> Movie: <i>Ivy League</i> .	
April 21 <sup>st</sup>	<b>Are universities indoctrinating students? Is academic freedom in danger?</b>	Required: <i>The Death of American Universities</i> . Noam Chomsky
April 26 <sup>th</sup>	<p><b>Culture and Gender Wars: What is “cultural appropriation?”</b></p> <p>Required: <i>What’s Wrong with Cultural Appropriation?</i> Maisha Johnson</p> <p><b>Are universities dangerous places for women?</b></p> <p>Movie: <i>The Hunting Ground</i>.</p>	<p>Required: <i>Oberlin Students Take Culture War to Dining Hall</i>. The New York Times</p> <p>Required: <i>What’s Wrong with Cultural Appropriation?</i> Maisha Johnson</p> <p>Required: <i>Fraternities and Rape On Campus</i>. Patricia Yancey Martin</p>

PART VIII: EDUCATIONAL REFORMS

April 28 <sup>th</sup>	<p><b>What if students managed their own education?</b></p> <p>The Ideas of John Dewey</p> <p>Student-governed schools</p>	Required: <i>Summerhill</i> . AS Niel. pp1-45
May 3 <sup>rd</sup>	<p><b>What is the place of the Humanities and arts in the education system?</b></p> <p>The ideas of Ken Robinson</p>	Required <i>Is Hong Kong dumbing down its education system?</i> Regina Yip.

May 5 <sup>th</sup>	<b>What if children started school at age 7, had little or no homework until their teens, were taught in the same classrooms regardless of their ability?</b>	Required reading: Learning from the Fins.
May 10 <sup>th</sup>	<b>The future of education</b>  <b>Catch up and review</b>	

## RULES AND PROCEDURES

The surest way to achieve a high grade on this course is to *attend all the Zoom/face to face classes*, turn on your cameras in the case of the latter, and participate.

The default University position is that the first two weeks of class are to be offered only on Zoom. Thereafter classes will be face-to-face or hybrid. However, as we all know, this arrangement is likely to be subject to change.

## ATTENDING CLASSES

### Zoom classes

The University policy states that:

*“Students should turn on the camera in class for class participation and interaction. For courses with participation scores, students with video turned off should expect lower participation scores.”*

Unless there are extenuating circumstances, I will therefore require you all to turn on your cameras during the Zoom classes and will call on you to do so if I cannot see you.

Please make sure we can see your full names and do not change your names so that we can record your participation accurately. It would also be helpful if you could put your FIRST NAME (or the name you would like to be called) in brackets, so that I and the other students know how to call you. e.g., LEE Ka Yin (Wendy).

To avoid “Zoom fatigue” I will schedule a ten-minute break in the middle of each class where students can turn off their cameras.

### Participation

It is difficult for me to monitor the chat box while the Zoom class is in progress, so for participation to count please raise your hand and I will unmute you for you to speak. My

teaching assistant will keep a record of the frequency of your participation. Please be patient for me to get to you when your hand is raised because this is quite a large class. To give everyone a chance, I will sometimes call on the first hands up, sometimes call on the last hands up and then sometimes call on those in the middle of the waiting list. For the purpose of assessment, we will start recording participation after the drop add period.

### Examinations

I expect examinations to be completed under closed-book conditions without communicating with other students, consulting PowerPoints or the internet. I am hoping that by the date of the schedule midterm, we will be able to have the exam proctored in the classroom. In the event that examinations have to be held virtually on Canvas, precautions will be taken to prevent misconduct, including:

- Filming yourself on Zoom so that we can monitor you and your computer.
- Giving a limited time for your answers.
- Shuffling questions and answers.

### **Face-to-face classes**

#### Coming Late and Leaving Early

When holding face-to-face classes, the class will not begin until all students are seated and quiet. When students come late, they disrupt the whole class by walking around the classroom to look for their friends while the class is in progress. They also miss important information that will be covered in the exams. I will, therefore, reserve some seats nearest to the doors on each side of the classroom to assist late students and minimize disruption to the rest of the class. On the occasion that you have to come late to the class, please sit at these seats, rather than walk around the lecture theatre while the class is in progress.

As with late students, students who leave the class early disrupt the class and miss important information too. Each class will have a ten-minute break in the middle. Please wait until the break or the end of the class before leaving (except, of course, in the case of a medical emergency or fire). If you get up to leave in the middle of a class, you will be asked to return to your seat. If you know, in advance, that you do have to leave early, please contact me or one of the teaching assistants before the class so that we can seat you close to an exit to prevent disruption of the class.

I will schedule a ten-minute break in the middle of each class for students who wish to leave or get refreshments.

#### Mobile Phones, Tablets, Texting and Computers

Mastering a sociological outlook will require your full attention during the class. If you are using laptop computers (for whatever purpose, including note-taking) or texting on your phone, you will miss important information. You are also turning away from your classmates, the instructor, and the course content, and depriving everyone of a good learning environment.

I will allow students to take notes on tablets, however, please refrain from using laptops and larger devices where you might be tempted to disengage from the class by surfing the

internet. Again, I will provide a ten-minute break in the middle of each class during which you can catch up with online activities.

### Eating and Drinking in the Classroom

Bringing food into the classroom leaves a mess and smell for your classmates. This is not a conducive atmosphere for learning. Would you like it if your classes were held in a McDonald's restaurant? I wouldn't think so! For this reason, the University prohibits eating in the classroom. There are many places where you can eat on campus. Please observe the "No Eating" signs in the classroom and have your meals before or after the class.

## POWERPOINTS

I'm happy to share my PowerPoints with you after each class, however, please note the following:

PowerPoints are intended only as outlines for each class and not substitutes for class attendance. Some students ask me to put more detailed lecture notes on the Canvas webpage. My experience, however, has been that if you don't have the time or inclination to attend the class, it is unlikely that you will have the time or inclination to study the materials outside of class.

It is impossible for me to release PowerPoints *before the class*. This is because the PowerPoints may give away answers to my questions as well as information that will compromise my in-class exercises and activities. Also, providing PowerPoints in advance does not allow me the flexibility to change the content of the class and PowerPoints in accordance with student's interests.

Finally, please respect my copyright, and *please do not share my PowerPoints or any other materials* on course-sharing websites, on social media, or anywhere else on the internet. If we find you have done this – and we look around the internet quite often for our materials, we will ask you to take them down and may have to report you to the website and to the University for violating our copyright.

## EXAMINATION ATTENDANCE

This is a large class, and it is impossible to schedule make-up exams for individual students who miss exams, except where medical documentation is provided by a licensed medical practitioner to say why you could not attend. If you have to miss an exam due to medical circumstances, you must contact us within a week after the missed exam to arrange a make-up, otherwise your entitlement to a make-up will be forfeited. The exam dates will be announced early in the semester, which will give you plenty of time to plan. Do not schedule job interviews or other activities on these dates.

A special note to **international students**: You have been instructed by the University during your orientation that you are required to stay for the entire exam period. Please do not book your flights home before the Final Exam or schedule other trips during the mid-term

examination. There will be no make-up exams should you choose to do this and there will be no credit or re-weighting of scores for the exam that you missed.

#### POLICY ON RE-GRADING

I have noticed that increasing numbers of students are expecting higher grades for their work. Students sometimes contact me with a request that their work be re-graded with the hope of obtaining a higher score. You will, however, appreciate that the grading of a large number of assignments and exams requires tremendous resources. We make every effort to grade your work accurately. If you do, however, request that your work/grade is reviewed, please be prepared for the possibility that your grade may move up *or down* (if, the latter case, we find your work more deficient than our original assessment). If you do ask us to look at your work or your scores again, please make sure that you have a very strong and clear justification for doing so.