

Sociology of Education, SOC 346
Monday/Wednesday/Friday from 12:10-1:00pm
Room: COLLEGE HALL 125

Instructor: Dr. Sarah Whitley
Office: Wilson-Short Hall #207
Office Hours: M/W 8:30-10:00am or by appointment (email to schedule)
Email: whitley@wsu.edu (please put "Soc 346" in subject line)
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Office Hours: T/W 2:00-3:00pm
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Course Description:

What is the purpose of education? If you are like most, you probably give little thought to the organization and role schools and education plays in modern society. Yet there is little doubt that education is a remarkably powerful and an important social institution. The goal of this course is to challenge our assumptions about education and ask some fundamental questions about the relationship between education and society. Is education fulfilling its purpose well? What problems does our education system face, and how should we solve them? Why do some students seem to learn more and "get ahead" further than others? How do schools help to maintain our capitalist system, and how do the factors of race, class, and gender affect the educational experiences of students within schools and within classrooms? In order to inform ourselves of the issues these questions examine, it is important we understand the social environment within which the education system operates. This course intends to help you develop a critical eye for examining the circumstances in which these questions arise.

Throughout the semester we will look at the structure, practices, content, and outcomes of schooling. We will focus on how social forces such as politics, economics, demographics, and institutional circumstances, create variation in school practices, and how variation in school practices affects individual student achievement and behavior. The course lectures, readings, and discussions will focus on the following topics: history of education in the U.S.; education as a social institution; theoretical approaches (classical and modern); class and race segregation; resource inequality (home, community and school); ability grouping and tracking; how school experiences vary by class, race and gender; student behavior; education policy and reform; and issues in higher education.

Learning Objectives:

- Provide a foundation of knowledge concerning the sociology of education and identify how education is interconnected with other components of inequality, such as class, race, and gender.
- Challenge your critical thinking skills by reading and evaluating scholarly research on education.
- Develop your critical thinking skills to explain the effects of education.
- Practice and improve your writing skills to effectively communicate what you learn about the sociology of education.
- Improve your ability to state your informed judgment about issues surrounding education and to consider merits and perspectives that differ from your own.
- Become aware of and exposed to the community setting which reflects education issues and examine these issues from a sociological perspective by applying sociological theories and concepts to a service-learning experience.

Course Structure

The course will consist of lectures, videos, discussions, and guest speakers (when available).

Blackboard (BB) – A Blackboard course space has been set up for this class. Here you will find important announcements, readings, assignments (including grading rubrics), and grade information. Please make sure that you regularly check your BB account.

Required Materials:

- The course requires two bluebooks (one for the service-learning reflection journal and one for 'The Wire' reflection journal). Please bring your bluebook reflection journals to each class meeting.
- The course will utilize the HBO series 'The Wire' season four *No Corner Left Behind*. You can purchase a copy or use a video streaming service.
- The course has one required text, listed below and supplemental readings which will be posted on BB. The reading schedule is listed in the Course Schedule.

Kozol, Jonathan. 2005. *The Shame of the Nation: The Restoration of Apartheid Schooling in America*. Three Rivers Press, New York, NY.

Course Requirements:

- 1. Exams:** (225 points). Three exams are scheduled for the course. Exam dates are listed in your Course Schedule. The exams will consist of multiple choice, true/false, fill-in-the-blank, matching, short answer, and/or short essay questions and will focus on the specific sections indicated on the Course Schedule (exams will not be cumulative). Study guides will be made available to help assist you when studying. No make-up exams will be given unless you have a **University excused absence**. If you will be absent for a University approved event on the exam date you must take the exam prior to leaving for the event and you must provide proper documentation. Each exam will be worth a possible total of 75 points.

- 2. 'The Wire' Reflection Journal Entries:** (65 points). The best way to ensure you understand the course materials is to have you practice applying the concepts and theories regularly. A fun way to apply the concepts and theories is through popular media. You will practice applying the concepts and theories covered each week by applying information from readings and lectures to the HBO series 'The Wire' season four *No Corner Left Behind*. You will watch approximately one or two episodes per week throughout the course of the semester. For every week an episode/s is to be watched I will post journal entry questions on BB by Monday at 9:00am and you must complete the journal entry before class on the corresponding Friday. As you watch the episodes you should answer the journal entry questions in your bluebook. Bring your bluebook with you each Friday for grading purposes. The viewing and journal entry schedule is listed in the Course Schedule. Each entry will require written responses that are at minimum 200-300 words in length. You can find more information about season four of 'The Wire' on pages 7-8 of the syllabus. Your grades on these entries will depend on how well you apply the course materials in your written responses. Thirteen entries are scheduled and each entry is worth a possible five points.

- 3. Friday Group Led Discussions:** (25 points). Nine group led discussions are scheduled for the course. During Friday class on weeks a 'The Wire' episode/s is assigned, a designated student group will lead a discussion during class time connecting class materials for the week to 'The Wire' episode/s. Groups will pose discussion questions to the class, allow students to work in small groups to answer the questions, bring the class back together to discuss the questions posed, and then briefly (5 minutes) discuss and summarize the connections of the episode/s content to class materials. Your grade on the discussion will depend on your group's ability to create high quality critical thinking discussion questions, engage your classmates in high quality discussion, and provide a comprehensive and thorough brief discussion and summarization of the connections of the episode/s content to class materials. You will be graded as a group, however you will have the opportunity to rate your group member's contributions and if a member is found to be free riding on the work of other group members they will be graded accordingly and separate from the group grade. For further guidelines and grading parameters refer to the group led discussion document provided on BB.

- 4. Video Analysis Paper:** (50 points). Various videos will be shown in-class throughout the course of the semester. Video dates are listed in your Course Schedule. You will choose one of the videos to critically analyze using sociological concepts and theories discussed in-class and in the readings. The paper should be a minimum of three pages, doubled-spaced, with 1" margins, and college level writing. Paper due dates are listed in your Course Schedule. No late papers will be accepted unless you have a **University excused absence**. If you will be absent for a University approved event on the paper due date you must submit your paper prior to leaving for the event and you must provide proper documentation. The paper should be submitted as a hard copy at the beginning of class on the due date. No electronic papers will be accepted. For further guidelines and grading parameters refer to the analysis paper document provided on BB.

5. **Service-learning Project:** (150 points). Service-learning is a problem-posing method of teaching where students learn by active participation in organized service to address community needs. Service-learning is linked to academic study through structured reflection. To complement your classroom learning, each student will participate in approximately 20 hours of service to the local public school community (pen pals project with Sunnyside Elementary in Pullman and Tekoa Elementary in Tekoa and college experience field trip). The service-learning project will provide you with a broader understanding of sociological theories, education issues, community needs, and your personal informed judgment. Further project guidelines are provided below and will be provided throughout the course of the semester.

To complete the project you will need to: **1)** complete handwritten pen pal letters to an assigned Sunnyside and Tekoa Elementary student (2 pen pals; approximately five letters per pen pal throughout the semester), worth a possible 25 points (5 points per letters submission), **2)** complete and submit a service-learning reflection journal, collection dates are listed on the Course Schedule, worth a possible 25 points (12.5 points for each collection), **3)** organize and participate in a college experience field trip for the elementary students, worth a possible 25 points, and **4)** complete a service-learning reflection paper, worth a possible 75 points. For further paper guidelines and grading parameters refer to the reflection paper document provided on BB. **You must complete all portions of the service-learning project to be eligible to earn any points for the project towards your final course grade.** Further information about the service-learning project will be provided throughout the semester.

6. **Attendance:** (35 points). Because this is an upper division seminar, your grade will be dependent upon your attendance and participation. You need to be prepared (that means you've done the reading before you come to class), and ready to contribute. Participation will be divided into two separate components. First, attendance will be tracked for each class meeting (1 point per class) using an attendance sheet beginning in the second week of the semester. In order to earn the 1 point of attendance for each class you must be present when the attendance sheet is passed around (during the first five to ten minutes of class). **If you come to class after the attendance sheet has been passed around you will not be allowed to sign the attendance sheet.** Students should come to class on time, be prepared, and ready to contribute. The only way these points can be made up is if you have a **University excused absence.**
7. **Participation:** (25 points). Participation includes not only coming to class, but also contributing to discussions with critical thought and analysis about course materials. In addition to earning 1 point of attendance for each class meeting you are present, you will also earn up to 25 points of participation for contributing constructively to class meetings. I will award these points at the end of the semester based on the quality of your participation throughout the semester. Quality participation includes critically thinking and analyzing the class materials, contributing to class discussions, and asking questions. **Note: just coming to class and talking with a group during Friday discussions does not constitute participation.** In order to earn participation points you must engage with the entire class during discussions and with the instructor. Grading scale: students who come to class prepared and contribute to quality discussions 25 points; students who miss 2-5 classes, but contribute to quality discussions 20 points; student who miss more than 5 classes, but contribute to quality discussions 17.5 points; students who come to class and contribute to quality discussions occasionally 12.5 points; students who come to class, but do not contribute to quality discussions 0 points; students who do not contribute to quality discussions 0 points.

Point Breakdown

3 Exams (75 points x 3) = 225 points
13 'The Wire' Reflection Journal Entries (5 points x 13) = 65 points
1 Friday Group Led Discussion (25 points x 1) = 25 points
1 Video Analysis Paper (50 points x 1) = 50 points
1 Service-Learning Project (150 points x 1) = 150 points
Attendance (1 point x 35 classes) = 35 points
Participation = 25 points
Total Points for the Class = 575 points

Grading Scale

94-100% = A	76-79% = C+
90-93% = A-	74-75% = C
86-89% = B+	70-73% = C-
84-85% = B	66-69% = D+
80-83% = B-	63-65% = D

anything below a 63% = F

A Few Notes on Successful Completion of this Course: In order to perform well on exams, discussions and the written assignments, it is imperative you attend lecture and actively participate in class discussions. This means taking thorough notes during lecture and on the assigned readings, as well as completing all readings, discussions and the written assignments on time and asking questions when you need clarification or help understanding course requirements and/or materials.

I am here to assist you when you need help, so please seek my assistance if you find yourself struggling or just want to discuss the course material. The most effective way to reach me is to stop by my office during regularly scheduled office hours (Mondays and Wednesdays from 8:30-10:00am in Wilson-Short Hall #207) or through email (whitley@wsu.edu, please put "Soc 346" in subject line). You can expect an email response within 24 hours during the week or on Monday if you emailed during the weekend. In order for me to help you as much as possible, please compose your emails carefully, explain problems fully, and make sure to write using full words and sentences.

Grades may be disputed at the instructor's convenience (or during office hours). It is important to note, however, upon review the instructor has the option to lower, as well as raise the grade in question.

Academic Integrity: Washington State University and the Sociology department take academic integrity very seriously. If you cheat, you give yourself an advantage over other students; an advantage you do not deserve. Cheating robs honest students and disrespects the entire academic process. It's just not fair! **Do not Cheat! Any and all cheating will result in an "F" for the course and will be reported to the Academic Integrity Board!** Cheating includes but is not limited to the following: plagiarizing (i.e. presenting as your own or for academic evaluation, the ideas or words of another without proper acknowledgement and citations), cheating on assignments or examinations (including submitting the same (or substantially similar) papers or assignments), engaging in unauthorized collaboration on academic work, taking or acquiring exam materials without faculty permission, buying unauthorized materials (i.e. don't buy papers or notes online). For more on what constitute academic integrity and the consequences of violating academic integrity policies please visit <https://www.academicintegrity.wsu.edu>.

Students with Disabilities: I am committed to providing assistance to help you succeed in this course. Reasonable accommodations are available for students with a documented disability. If you have a disability and need accommodations to fully participate in this class, please either visit or call the Access Center (Washington Building 217; 509-335-3417) to schedule an appointment with an Access Advisor. All accommodations must be approved through the Access Center.

Emergency Procedures/Protocol: Please take the time to go to the following websites and educate yourself on WSU's emergency procedures and protocol: <http://safetyplan.wsu.edu>.

'The Wire' Season Four Summary and Character List

The best way to ensure you understand the course materials is to have you practice applying the concepts and theories regularly. A fun way to apply the concepts and theories is through popular media. You will practice applying the concepts and theories covered each week by applying information from readings and lectures to the HBO series 'The Wire' season four *No Corner Left Behind*. You will watch approximately one to two episodes per week throughout the course of the semester. For every week an episode/s is to be watched I will post journal entry questions on BB by Monday at 9:00am and you must complete the journal entry before class on the corresponding Friday. As you watch the episodes you should answer the journal entry questions in your bluebook. Each entry will require written responses that are at minimum 200-300 words in length. Bring your bluebook with you each Friday for grading purposes. The viewing and journal entry schedule is listed in the Course Schedule. Your grades on these entries will depend on how well you apply the course materials in your written responses. Thirteen entries are scheduled throughout the semester (listed in your Course Schedule) and each entry is worth a possible five points.

While watching the series I want you to pay particular attention to the education setting of the junior high school and the city and neighborhood environment.

Plot Summary- http://thewire.wikia.com/wiki/Season_four#Plot_summary

In season four *The Wire* expands its scope again to include an examination of the school system. Other major plots include the mayoral race that continues the political storyline begun in season three, and a closer look at Marlo Stanfield's drug gang, which has grown to control most of western Baltimore's trafficking.

The show introduces Dukie, Randy, Michael, and Namond, four boys from West Baltimore, as they enter the eighth grade. At the same school, Prez has begun a new career as a math teacher. Despite mentorship from the more seasoned faculty, Prez has difficulties maintaining order and keeping his students focused in the chaotic and sometimes violent classroom. Namond, and later Michael, work as drugrunners for Bodie, who has had middling success selling Proposition Joe's product independently.

The cold-blooded Marlo has come to dominate the streets of the west side, using murder and intimidation to make up for his weak-quality drugs and lack of business acumen. His enforcers Chris Partlow and Snoop conceal their numerous victims in boarded-up row houses where the bodies will not be readily discovered. The disappearances of so many known criminals come to mystify both the major crimes unit investigating Marlo and the homicide unit assigned to solve the presumed murders. Marlo coerces Bodie into working under him, and attempts to bring Michael into the organization as well.

Meanwhile, the city's mayoral primary race enters its closing weeks. Royce initially has a seemingly insurmountable lead over challengers Tommy Carcetti and Anthony Gray, with a big war chest and major endorsements. Royce's lead begins to fray, however, as his own political machinations turn against him and Carcetti starts to highlight the city's crime problem. This propels Carcetti to victory in the primary, and he easily wins the general election to become Baltimore's new mayor. Carcetti's desire to reduce crime leads him to restrict Burrell's duties and promote the more competent Daniels, whom he is considering later appointing Commissioner.

Other familiar characters become involved in the same middle school where Prez works. Howard "Bunny" Colvin joins a research group attempting to study potential future criminals while they are still young. Dennis "Cutty" Wise continues to work with boys in his boxing gym, and accepts a job at the school rounding up truants. Bubbles takes a homeless teenager named Sherrod under his wing. He encourages the boy to attend class, which he fails to do. The two of them later find themselves assaulted and robbed constantly by a persistent drug addict.

Prez has a few successes with his students, but some of them start to slip away. Disruptive Namond is removed from class and placed in the research group, where he gradually develops affection and respect for Colvin. Randy reveals to the assistant principal knowledge of a murder in a moment of desperation, leading to his being interrogated by police and thereafter labeled a "snitch" by his classmates. Michael is unresponsive to the adults around him, including Prez, Cutty, and Bodie, who all see promise in him. When Michael feels he must make his hated stepfather leave home in order to protect his little brother, he calls on Chris, the only authority figure whom he thinks he can trust. Dukie, who had been nurtured by Prez, is transferred to high school through social promotion, and thus will have to leave their relationship behind.

Michael has now joined the ranks of Marlo's killers and runs one of his corners, with Dukie leaving high school to work there. Randy's house is firebombed by school bullies for his cooperation with the police, leaving his caring foster mother hospitalized and sending him back to a group home. Namond is taken in by Colvin, who recognized the good in him.

Law Enforcement-

Ervin Burrell	Commissioner
Ellis Carver	Western District Drug Enforcement Unit Sergeant
Cedric Daniels	Western District Major/Criminal Investigations Division Colonel
Lester Freamon	Major Crimes Unit/Homicide Detective
Kima Greggs	Homicide Unit Detective
Herc Hauk	Mayor's Security Detail/Major Crimes Unit Sergeant
Jimmy McNulty	Homicide Detective
Bunk Moreland	Homicide Detective
Rhonda Pearlman	Assistant State's Attorney
Williams Rawls	Deputy Commissioner for Operations

Neighborhood-

Namond Brice	Student
Bodie Broadus	Drug Dealer
Bubbles	Drug Addict
Michael Lee	Student
Omar Little	Stick-Up Man
Marlo Stanfield	Drug Kingpin
Randy Wagstaff	Student
Dukie Weems	Student
Dennis Wise	Boxing Trainer

Politics-

Tommy Carcetti	Councilman/Mayor
Clarence Royce	Mayor
Norman Wilson	Senior Mayoral Aide

School-

Howard Colvin	Educator
Marcia Donnelly	Assistant Principal
Roland Pryzbylewski	Teacher
Claudell Withers	Principal

Course Schedule

Please note: the instructor reserves the right to alter this schedule if necessary to meet learning objectives, in the event of class cancellations or for other reasons. All changes will be announced in class in advance.

Reading should be completed for class on the date specified.

Week #1:

Monday, January 9th: Introduction and Syllabus Review

Wednesday, January 11th:

Topic: 'The Wire'

Reading: Supplemental Reading- "Why We're Teaching 'The Wire' at Harvard"

Friday, January 13th:

Topic: History of Public Education in the United States

Reading: Supplemental Reading- "American Public Education an Origin Story"

Week #2:

Monday, January 16th:

No Class-Martin Luther King Jr. Day

Wednesday, January 18th:

Topic: Service-Learning

Reading: Supplemental Reading- "Service-Learning and Sociology an Introductory Reading"

Friday, January 20th:

Topic: Education as a Social Institution

Reading: Supplemental Reading- "Sociology of Education Studying the Relationship between Education and Society"

'The Wire': Episode 1 *Boys of Summer* **bluebook journal entry due**

Group Led Discussion: Professor Whitley and Xiao Li

Week #3:

Monday, January 23rd:

Topic: Theoretical Perspectives

Reading: Supplemental Reading-“Sponsored and Contest Mobility and the School System”

Wednesday, January 25th:

Topic: Theoretical Perspectives

Reading: Supplemental Reading-“Functional and Conflict Theories of Educational Stratification”

Friday, January 27th:

‘The Wire’: Episode 2 *Soft Eyes* **bluebook journal entry due**

Group Led Discussion: Group 1

Week #4:

Monday, January 30th:

Topic: Theoretical Perspectives

Reading: Supplemental Reading-“Schools, Families, and Communities”

Wednesday, February 1st:

Topic: Theoretical Perspectives

Reading: Supplemental Reading-“Social Class Differences in Family-School Relationships: The Importance of Cultural Capital”

Friday, February 3rd:

‘The Wire’: Episode 3 *Home Rooms* **bluebook journal entry due**

Group Led Discussion: Group 2

Week #5:

Monday, February 6th:

Video: *Separate and Unequal* (<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/film/separate-and-unequal/>)

Wednesday, February 8th:

Topic: Review for Exam 1 (optional)

Friday, February 10th:

Exam #1

Week #6:

Monday, February 13th:

Topic: Stratification between Schools

Reading: Supplemental Reading-“The Chosen Ones”

Wednesday, February 15th:

Topic: Stratification between Schools

Reading: Supplemental Reading-“Equality of Educational Opportunity: The Coleman Report”

Due: Video Analysis-*Separate and Unequal*

Friday, February 17th:

‘The Wire’: Episode 4 *Refugees* **bluebook journal entry due**

Group Led Discussion: Group 3

Week #7:

Monday, February 20th:

No Class-President’s Day

Wednesday, February 22nd:

Topic: Stratification between Schools

Reading: *The Shame of the Nation* Chapters 1, 2 and 3

Friday, February 24th:

‘The Wire’: Episode 5 *Alliances* **bluebook journal entry due**

Group Led Discussion: Group 4

Due: Service-Learning Reflection Journal

Week #8:

Monday, February 27th:

Topic: Stratification between Schools

Reading: *The Shame of the Nation* Chapters 4, 6, and 7

Wednesday, March 1st:

Reading: Supplemental Reading-“Disparities Within: Unequal Spending and Achievement in an Urban School District”

Video: *Children in America’s Schools* (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kfcrQxIJsU>)

Friday, March 3rd:

‘The Wire’: Episode 6 *Margin of Error* and Episode 7 *Unto Others* **bluebook journal entry due**

Group Led Discussion: Group 5

Week #9:

Monday, March 6th:

Topic: Stratification within Schools

Reading: Supplemental Reading-“Tracking from Theory to Practice”

Wednesday, March 8th:

Topic: Stratification within Schools

Reading: Supplemental Readings-“Is Ability Grouping Equitable” and “Track Mobility in Secondary School”

Due: Video Analysis-*Children in America’s Schools*

Friday, March 10th:

‘The Wire’: Episode 8 *Corner Boys* **bluebook journal entry due**

Group Led Discussion: Group 6

Week #10:

Monday, March 13th-Friday, March 17th

No Class-Spring Vacation

Week #11:

Monday, March 20th:

Topic: Service-Learning College Experience Field Trip Briefing/Activity

Wednesday, March 22nd:

Topic: Review for Exam 2 (optional)

Friday, March 24th:

Exam 2

Week #12:

Monday, March 27th:

Topic: Class, Race, and Gender

Video: *Our Failing Schools Enough is Enough*

(https://www.ted.com/talks/geoffrey_canada_our_failing_schools_enough_is_enough)

Readings: Supplemental Readings-“Black Students’ Success” and “It’s Not a Black Thing”

Wednesday, March 29th:

Topic: Class, Race, and Gender

Readings: Supplemental Reading-“Rewriting Race and Gender High School Lessons”

Friday, March 31st:

‘The Wire’: Episode 9 *Know Your Place* **bluebook journal entry due**

Group Led Discussion: Group 7

Week #13:

Monday, April 3rd:

Topic: Policy and Reform

Reading: *The Shame of the Nation* Chapter 5

Wednesday, April 5th:

Topic: Policy and Reform

Reading: *The Shame of the Nation* Chapters 8 and 10

Due: Video Analysis-Our Failing Schools Enough is Enough

Friday, April 7th:

'The Wire': Episode 10 *Misgivings* and Episode 11 *A New Day* **bluebook journal entry due**

Group Led Discussion: Group 8

Week #14:

Monday, April 10th:

Topic: Policy and Reform

Reading: *The Shame of the Nation* Chapters 9 and Supplemental Reading-"Charter Schools and the Public Good"

Video: *Waiting for Superman*

Wednesday, April 12th:

Topic: Policy and Reform

Video: *Waiting for Superman*

Friday, April 14th:

'The Wire': Episodes 12 *That's Got His Own* and 13 *Final Grades* **bluebook journal entry due**

Group Led Discussion: Group 9

Week #15:

Monday, April 17th:

Topic: Higher Education

Reading: To Be Determined

Wednesday, April 19th:

Topic: Higher Education

Reading: To Be Determined

Due: Video Analysis-*Waiting for Superman*

Friday, April 21st:

Topic: Higher Education

Reading: To Be Determined

Video: *Ivory Tower*

Due: Service-Learning Reflection Journal

Due: Service-Learning Reflection Paper

Week #16:

Monday, April 24th:

Topic: Higher Education

Video: *Ivory Tower*

Wednesday, April 26th:

Topic: Higher Education

Video: *College, Inc.* (<http://www.pbs.org/video/1485280975/>)

Friday, April 28th:

Review for Exam 3 (optional)

Final: Tuesday, May 2nd from 1:00-3:00pm

Exam 3