Course Introduction
Why do we have an “achievement gap” between students from different communities, racial and ethnic groups, and social class groups? What leads people to such heated disagreement about curricula that children are taught in K-12 schools? How have we arrived at a point where children compete against one another for admission to public schools? Do teachers have a legitimate claim to protection from layoffs and benefit reductions in a time when our entire society grapples with economic strain? Do policymakers have any credible reasons to believe that replacing a school’s entire faculty and leadership (known as a “school turnaround”) might change student performance? What makes it so hard to bring about change in schools when so many people believe that change is necessary? How can there be so many explanations for what ails (and helps) schools’ efforts to teach their students?

Questions like this drive this course and the inquiry that we will do together this semester. Just as practicing sociologists of education do, we will use sociological lenses—those provided by research and theories from the academic disciplines of sociology, the sociology of education (a subdiscipline of education) and organizational theory—in our efforts to answer such questions. There is rarely one “correct” answer, but rather varying answers that are informed by particular perspectives, data, methods of analysis, and/or theory.

Essential Questions
As the instructor, I assume that each student brings her or his own questions to this course and that each student will pursue answers to those very individual questions. I invite you to take in all that you can in this course and make use of it in ways that help you to get answers to, or further develop, your own questions. In addition, the following specific questions (to which I refer as “essential questions”) will guide our inquiry this semester:

1) What do societies want from their schools?
2) How do different sociological lenses on education explain what works (and doesn’t work) in American schools?
3) What role do social forces outside of schools have in student learning experiences and outcomes?
4) What kinds of relationships can we observe between society, schools, teachers and students, and what impact do these relationships have on students’ experiences in school?
5) Who gets ahead or falls behind in our schools, and by what mechanisms?
6) What maintains stability in schooling? What brings change?

Course Goals
As your instructor, I want for all of the course’s students to be able to engage sociology of education (or related) literature in order to answer their own questions as well as this course’s essential questions. In order to meet this overarching goal, there are three more specific goals of the course:

1. Students will learn fundamental principles and theories from the sociology of education perspective that will help them analyze, understand and formulate responses to different situations, problems and dilemmas present in K-12 schools. Our pursuit of this goal will have students bridging together theory and various forms of evidence (such as empirical research, policies, practices and events in the world of education), and responding from this basis.
2. Students will use theory and empirical research from the sociology of education perspective to analyze and critically evaluate ideas, arguments, and points of view present in historical and contemporary discourse about K-12 schools. Our pursuit of this goal will have us working on identifying and expressing texts’ key arguments and findings, research questions and analytic methods, and critically analyzing texts accordingly.

Assessment of learning
Assessment of students’ learning will be ongoing throughout the semester. Assignments are spread out (timewise) and there is no high-stakes final assignment (e.g., major research paper or final exam). I chose this assignment structure for three purposes. First, given our course’s essential questions and goals, breadth of knowledge is important. I ask students to reflect on and respond to a variety of issues and readings—not just a final assignment topic—as they move through the semester. Second, the assignment structure is an attempt to balance against the substantial, and occasionally quite heavy, load of assigned reading. I hope that students will focus on reading and responding to assigned material, without the added pressure of a large final assignment. Third, a series of assignments (along with in-class activities) helps me as the instructor to gauge how the course is going for the students and adjust it if needed to better suit students’ strengths, needs or interests.
Your course grade will be calculated on a 100-point scale as follows:

A       93-100
A-      90-92
B+      87-89
B       83-86
B-      80-82
C+      77-79
C       73-76
C-      70-72
D+      67-69
I will use the following criteria for determining your course grade:

Class Attendance: 13%
Class Participation: 7%
Critical Memos:
- 14% for Critical Memo 1
- 17% for Critical Memo 2
- 19% for Critical Memo 3
- 20% for Critical Memo 4
Final Integrative Essay: 10%

Each component of students’ responsibilities in the course is described below.

**Class Participation and Attendance**
This is a highly interactive course, which makes every student’s participation very important. For this reason, participation is worth 20% of your final grade. Specifically, attendance at class each week counts towards 13% of your final grade (1% per class meeting), while active participation in class discussions counts towards 7% of your final grade.

Please come on time to class, having read and brought with you all assigned materials (either the text hardcopy or an electronic copy where you have taken notes either on the document or separately and have access to the electronic copy before class begins on the date when it is assigned), and ready to discuss them with your colleagues. If you come unprepared, both you and your work partners will have a difficult time fully participating inpartnered and small group discussions. In addition to regular participation in class, students are expected to attend class regularly. Please notify me in advance if you must miss or come late to a class. You will still be held responsible for all assigned readings, due dates for written assignments, and course requirements or updates discussed in class. Please check in with one of your colleagues if you miss a class meeting. Missed classes, unless there is a personal or medical emergency or a religious observance, will negatively impact your participation grade.

The use of electronics (cell phones, computers) is often a necessity of modern life, but also interferes with participation in class, particularly in this interactive course. Please refrain from using electronic devices in class if their use (e.g., surfing the internet, checking email text messaging, typing other than taking notes) does not pertain directly to your participation in our course; use of electronics in these ways will negatively impact your course participation grade.

Please note that two meetings of this class will take place online (October 28 and November 11). These meetings will blend independent work using material that students will be able to access via Sakai with shared conversations where all class members will join together in an online class format (during our regularly scheduled class time). During these weeks in particular, please check your email regularly for communications from me and/or from colleagues with whom you
are collaborating. All students will need to have headphones with a microphone (headphones suitable for use with a cell phone will be sufficient) for synchronous online class sessions. Participation in these sessions will be evaluated by the quality of comments made and completion of all tasks assigned during online sessions (or by the designated due date).

**Critical Memos**

Students are assigned a series of 4 critical memos, each of which should be 3-5 double-spaced pages in length (not including references), using 12 point font and 1” margins. Please post a copy of each memo assignment section of this course’s Sakai site on the assignment’s due date by the time at which it is due.

These memos serve as the main vehicle for developing students’ abilities as described in the course’s goals. Each memo should consist of 3 key parts: summary, application of concepts or theories, and your critical evaluation. First, you will need to **summarize** the source material (whether an author’s argument, a policy or practice, depending on the assignment and the material you are using), if these are relevant to the assignment) that you discuss in your memo. Please summarize your source material briefly, describing its main argument(s), central point(s), and/or issues that directly pertain to your memo. This summary should concisely orient the reader to the material you are considering in this paper. It should be a minor part of your paper compared to the other components (from 2 paragraphs to 1 page at the very most). Second, once you have clearly and succinctly summarized the materials to which you refer in this memo, please **apply your chosen concepts, theories or perspectives** to the issue you wish to discuss. How do these help you to interpret and understand your chosen material? What can you see in this material through the lens of these concepts, theories or perspectives? Interesting issues or opportunities? Obvious contradictions or problems? A good or poor fit? An opportunity to extend or challenge the concept or theory? A hidden solution?

Third, and most important, is your **critical analysis** of the written material that you cite. This part of your memo builds upon the application of concepts and theories as discussed above. In this analysis, please express your own analysis of and reaction to the work. It is fine to say that you liked or disliked what you read, but that is not sufficient for the critical memo assignment. Please also offer your own analysis and critique of what you have read based on the perspectives you have gained through steps 1 and 2 of this assignment. Please cite all of your sources in APA style at the end of your memo.

I will grade your memos according to the presence and quality of the three components discussed above (summary: 25%; application of perspectives, concepts or theories: 25%; and critical evaluation, 30%). In addition, I will also evaluate the strength of your writing, including organization, clarity and conventions of writing (e.g., spelling, grammar, sentence and paragraph structure, punctuation), worth 20% of each memo’s grade. The rubric I will use for evaluating your assignments follows at the end of this syllabus. My goal is to return your essay to you, with feedback, within two weeks. Students have the option of revising and resubmitting each critical memo. Revisions are due one week after the date on which I return papers (with my feedback) to students. I will evaluate your original papers using the “track changes” function in Microsoft Word. Please make revisions the copy I return to you, so that I can see in track changes how and where you have changed your
original paper. I will not be able to grade revisions that are not submitted in this format. While revision is never required and does not guarantee a higher grade, it is a chance for you to incorporate feedback into the development and improvement of your work.

Critical memo topics are:

1. How does contemporary American schooling reflect society’s values or priorities? Please analyze and discuss Angie Peifer’s document, The purpose of public education and the role of the school board (accessible online at http://www.nsba.org/sites/default/files/The%20Purpose%20of%20Public%20Education%20and%20the%20Role%20of%20the%20School%20Board_National%20Connection.pdf). Or, if you prefer, you may analyze another specific statement, policy or program, current-day or historical, of your choice. If you choose a different program or policy to evaluate, please consult with me about your choice prior to beginning work on the assignment. Please evaluate your material according to our course readings on what nations and societies want and get from their schools. What is the rationale given for the actions or programs proposed? What would the authors we have read say in response, if they could? Critical memo #1 is due on Sunday, 9/20 at 7:00 p.m.

2. Analyze the “no excuses” perspective on student achievement, summarized on pages 2-3 of Cheng et al’s No Excuses Charter Schools: A Meta-Analysis of the Experimental Evidence on Student Achievement (accessible online at http://www.uaedreform.org/downloads/2014/12/no-excuses-charter-schools-a-meta-analysis-of-the-experimental-evidence-on-student-achievement.pdf). When doing so, please consider evidence about what contributes to or detracts from student achievement at least two levels: societal, community, organizational, teacher and student. Given the evidence that you review and analyze, what is your opinion of the “no excuses” perspective, and what you recommend to a school district leader regarding whether s/he puts this perspective into practice? Critical Memo 2 is due on Sunday, November 8 at 7:00 pm.

3. What is your position on grouping students by ability (within class or between classes)? When developing and describing your position, please consider what you have learned in this class about what America wants from its public schools, how school organization shapes teaching and learning, and how social and economic status shapes students’ learning experiences and outcomes. Please cite evidence to back up your argument. Please also post this paper to LiveText, as per directions below (in the section entitled “School of Education Conceptual Framework Standards and Assessment”). Critical memo 3 is due on Sunday, 11/22 at 7:00 p.m.

4. Policy intention and impact analysis. Please choose and briefly describe an educational policy (contemporary or historical). Please describe how and why this policy came into existence, its stated intentions, whom it targets for change, and who is responsible for carrying it out (this is the “summary” part of this particular memo). Then, please analyze how it’s been implemented—how has it shaped teaching, learning or other school-related experiences? To borrow David Labaree’s term, how usable has this policy been? How, if at all, have national or local context impacted this policy’s implementation? What
outcomes have occurred (intentional and unintentional)? How stable has it been, what has changed it? Critical memo 4 is due on Friday, 12/4 at 7:00 p.m.

Please submit all critical memos using the Turnitin link on this course’s Sakai page.

**Final integrative essay**
This 3-5 page paper assignment asks students to integrate what they have learned in this course into their research and/or professional practice. For this assignment, please reflect upon and discuss ways in which this course has impacted your understanding of 1) yourself as a member of American society and as education professional, 2) the communities you work with or hope to work with in a professional capacity, and 3) education policy that shapes heterogeneous stakeholders (e.g., students, educators, community members, community and national leaders). What did you think or do at the beginning of this course, and how has your thinking/action changed (expanded, shifted, reversed, deepened)? What do these changes signal for your practice and/or research as you move forward in your education?

Please cite at least 3 specific readings or concepts discussed in the course, and explain specifically how they connect to your experience.

This assignment is worth 10% of your grade, and will be assessed on a pass/fail basis.

Please post the integrative essay using the turnitin link on this course’s Sakai page. It is due on Friday, December 11 at 9:00 a.m.. Please also post this paper to LiveText, as per directions below (in the section entitled “School of Education Conceptual Framework Standards and Assessment”).

**Written assignments and due dates**
If you have extenuating circumstances that keep you from turning in assignments in by their due dates, it is your responsibility to contact me before the paper’s due date to make alternative arrangements with me. After each written assignments’ due date and time, the assignment grade for a paper turned in late without previous arrangement will be reduced by one-third of a grade per day (e.g., an A becomes an A-, and A- becomes a B+, etc.). Written assignments turned in on the due date, but after the due time, will be considered late.

**Assessment according to School of Education Conceptual Framework Standards**
This course, as part of the School of Education, has assignments that map directly to standards that derive from the school’s conceptual framework (Professionalism in Service of Social Justice). Students’ work will be evaluated according to these standards, in addition to the grade assigned.

Critical memo 4 will be assessed according to Conceptual Framework standard 4: “Candidates demonstrate skills that will enable them to work effectively with diverse clients.”

The Final Integrative Essay will be assessed according to Conceptual Framework standards 2 and 6:
2. “Candidates demonstrate knowledge and skills in a variety of school and professional settings.”
6. “Candidates demonstrate professional decision-making skills and behaviors in advancing social justice and service.”

As the course instructor, I will assess each of these two assignments according to these standards. Results are reported on Livetext, to which the SOE requires all students to subscribe. Students are required to post Critical Memo 4 and the Final Integrative Essay to Livetext, in addition to submitting it via Turnitin on Sakai. The purpose of reporting student performance and posting student work to Livetext is the assessment of the SOE by state and national accrediting bodies, not the assessment of individual students. Instructions for posting your assignments to Livetext are posted on the “Assignments” section of our course’s Sakai page. Please contact me if you have any questions about this.

Additionally, each course in the School of Education focuses on promoting one or more professional dispositions. In this course, students are offered opportunities to receive feedback on their dispositional growth in the area of professionalism. The specific descriptions for expected professional behavior can be found on the rubric posted in LiveText for this course. Please contact me if you have any questions about this.

**Communication between instructor and students**
In addition to updates I may give verbally in class, I will occasionally send electronic updates to the class using the LOCUS system. I will assume that if I have sent any updates to you at the address you have provided to the university, and the email has not bounced back to me, that you have read it and that I may hold you accountable for understanding these updates’ contents. If you wish to reach me, the best way to do so is by my Loyola email address. I will respond within 48 hours between Monday and Friday.

**Course Readings**
The following assigned texts are available for purchase at the Loyola University Bookstore, Water Tower Campus (Baumhart Hall, 26 E. Pearson), and are also available on reserve at the Lewis Library (25 East Pearson, 6th floor).


Other readings are either available through LUC’s e-reserves (accessible on the LUC library webpage, noted below in reading list as ER), will be posted on LUC’s Sakai site for this course (noted as S) or, where readings are accessible on the internet, I have provided a searchable link. All assigned readings are listed below by the week in which they are assigned.

**Class meeting dates, themes and assigned readings**

**Class 1: August 26**
Introduction to course: purpose, focus, goals and logistics

Recommended reading:

Brint, S. (2006). *Schools and societies*, Chapter 1, particularly pages 20-28 (S)

Labaree text, Introduction.


**Class 2: September 2**
Sociological perspectives on education. What do societies want (and get) from their schools? Discussion of macro-perspective.

Brint, S. (2006). *Schools and societies*, chapters 2 and 3 (31-96) (S)


In class on 9/2 we will discuss the format and requirements for your first memo.
Class 3: September 9
What does America want (and get) from its schools?


Labaree: Chapters 1, 2 and 3 (10-105).


Class 4: September 16


From Sadovnik text, Chapters 3 (Collins, Functional and conflict theories of educational stratification, p. 37-52) and 4 (Bowles & Gintis, Broken promises: School reform in retrospect, p. 53-70), see also pages 6-8 for an overview by Sadovnik.

Brint, p. 13-18 also provides a helpful summary of functional-structural theory and conflict theory (see Brint, Chapter 1 on Sakai).

Critical memo #1 is due Sunday, September 20 at 7:00 pm.

No class September 22 due to Rosh Hashanah (Jewish holiday)

Class 5: September 30
Finish traditions in the sociology of education: Social and cultural capital and their manifestation as privilege in educational settings; Begin consideration of schools from a meso-level perspective. Social and cultural capital theories.
From Sadovnik text: Chapters 6 (Bourdieu, The forms of capital, p. 83-96), and 7 (Coleman, Social capital in the creation of human capital, p. 97-114).

Khan, pages 1-17, 77-80, 96-113, 151-192 and 193-199.

Lewis, Chapter 6 (154-187)

Class 6: October 7
The society-school-student connection: Schools and Communities. How factors outside of the school impact what happens inside of the school.


Chapter 5 from Putnam (190-226, skim case vignettes on pages 193-206).


Smrekar, C. & Goldring, E. (2009). Neighborhood schools in the aftermath of court-ended busing: Educators’ perspectives on how context and composition matter. From *From the courtroom to the classroom: The shifting landscape of school desegregation* (chapter 9, p. 157-190).(S)

Class 7: October 14
The society-school-student connection: Schools and districts as organizations, consideration of schools from a meso-level perspective.


From Sadovnik text: Chapter 10 (Gamoran, Secada and Marrett, The organizational context of teaching and learning: Changing theoretical perspectives, p. 153-176.)
Bryk, Lee and Holland (1993). *Catholic schools and the common good*. Chapter 4 (101-125) and Chapter 5 (126-147). (S)


**Class 8: October 21**
The society-school-student connection: Schools and teachers. What kind of relationships can we identify between society, schools and teachers? What do these relationships’ qualities tell us about the role of teachers in our society? How do schools influence teachers’ practice? How do these relationships effect student learning?

From Labaree text: Chapter 5 (p. 134-162)

Ingersoll and Merrill (2012). The status of teaching as a profession. In Ballatnine and Spade (eds.), *Schools and society* (4th ed.). Accessible online at [http://repository.upenn.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1226&context=gse_pubs](http://repository.upenn.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1226&context=gse_pubs).

From Sadovnik text: Chapter 11 (Ingersoll, Is there really a teaching shortage? p. 177-196.)


On 10/21 We will prepare for online class meeting that will take place on October 28.

**Class 9: October 28 (This class will meet online beginning at 4:15 pm.)**
The society-school-student connection: Schools and students
How do schools shape students? How do students shape schools? How does a school’s social context set the stage for these interactions?


Class 10: November 4
Who gets ahead or falls behind in our schools, and by what mechanisms? Ethnicity, gender, culture, social class and educational achievement.

Putnam, chapters 1 (19-45), 3 (80-134) and 4 (135-190). Character vignettes can be skimmed.

Lewis chapters 3 (50-86 only), 5 (128-153).


Critical Memo 2 is due Sunday, November 8 at 7:00 p.m.

Class 11: November 11 (Class will meet online)
Who gets ahead or falls behind in our schools, and by what mechanisms? Focused discussion on tracking and ability grouping.

During class 11, we will be joined by Dr. Carrie Levy, LUC/SOE graduate and Senior Research Associate at Evanston Township High School, to discuss her experience researching and addressing tracking issues at ETHS. Please note that 1-3 short additional readings on ETHS’ detracking initiative may be assigned for this week.

From Sadovnik text: Chapter 19 (Hallian and Oakes exchange about tracking, p. 347-358).


Class 12: November 18
Why schools change (and don’t change). What maintains stability in schooling? What brings change?

Tyack, David and Cuban, Larry (1995). Tinkering Toward Utopia. Chapter 2 (pp. 40-59, Chapter 3 (pp. 60-84), Chapter 4, (pp. 85-109).


Critical memo 3 is due at 7:00 p.m. on Sunday, November 22.

No class Wednesday, November 25. Have a fabulous Thanksgiving holiday!

Class 13: December 2—Final class meeting
Continue discussion of stability and change in schooling, with a focus on education policy in response to inequity; Review, conclusions, preparation for integrative essay, course evaluations.

Labaree text: Chapters 4 (106-133) and 8 (222-256)
Darling-Hammond, L. (2013). Inequality and school resources: What it will take to close the opportunity gap. In P. Carter and K. Welner (Eds.), Closing the opportunity gap: What America must do to give every child an even chance (77-97). New York, NY: Oxford Press. (S)

Putnam, chapter 6 (227-261).


Critical memo 4 is due at 7:00 pm on Friday, December 4.

Final Integrative Essay due at 9:00 a.m. on Friday, December 11.

University Policies Related to Course

Please see http://luc.edu/education/syllabus-addendum/ for a summary of information on LUC’s policies on academic honesty, accessibility, ethics and electronic communication policies.

Academic Honesty
Please also note that all written assignments for this course are to be submitted via Turnitin on Sakai, which will result in each of your papers being assessed electronically for originality (comparing it to other papers submitted for this course, and available internet resources, including Wikipedia, academic and popular press articles, and other electronic texts). If you have any questions about properly citing and using other resources, please let me know.

Diversity
This course addresses diversity in the field of education through most of its assigned readings. In addition, I as instructor will encourage class members to engage notions of diversity (e.g., social class, gender, ethnicity, race, sexual and gender identity, age and ability) as we consider different topics. Diversity among enrollees in the course is critical to this course’s success. As instructor, I will promote full participation and contribution by all class members, asking that varied viewpoints be expressed, thoroughly considered and respected by all members of our class.
### Critical memo grading rubric

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<th>Category</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>Summary of content texts:</td>
<td>Author provides a clear, concise summary of any source material or content (as opposed to theoretical or conceptual) texts that are cited, so that the reader can understand the texts being analyzed in the paper. 25%</td>
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<td>Application of perspectives, concepts and/or theories:</td>
<td>Author clearly describes concepts and/or theories used in paper, and applies them explicitly and thoroughly to the content text. 25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Critical evaluation of material: Evidence of original analysis.</td>
<td>Evidence is present of author’s original analysis and critique of materials read. Critical evaluation is connected to author’s application of perspectives, concepts and/or theories. 15%</td>
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<td>Critical evaluation of material: Author’s argument coherently flows from</td>
<td>Author’s argument coherently flows from beginning to end of paper in a fashion that is cumulative, well-developed and easy to follow. All arguments are substantiated with credible evidence. 15%</td>
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<td>Writing is clear and easy to understand, even if concepts communicated</td>
<td>Writing is clear and easy to understand, even if concepts communicated are complex; Author follows conventions of writing (spelling, grammar, sentence and paragraph structure, punctuation, APA style). 20%</td>
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