

**SOSC2130/CORE2730 : EDUCATION AND SOCIETY**  
**Spring 2023**  
**Wednesday, Friday: 1330-1450 rm4620 (Lift 31-32)**

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 Division of Social Science, rm 3371.  
 Office hours: One hour after each class.

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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 the arts in education? Why is there a “crisis” in higher education? How might education be reformed? What is the role of new technologies in education? What is the future of education? To answer these questions, we will study several 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.	Reading about the ideas of major sociological thinkers.
An awareness of how formal education can perpetuate social inequalities.	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	Critically reviewing various attempts to reform education; student-run schools, creativity, experiential learning, online education, the Finnish education system.

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## REQUIREMENTS AND ASSESSMENT

### **Attendance and participation**

The surest way to achieve a high grade on this course is to *attend all the classes* and, whilst doing so, *to disconnect yourself from the internet and participate*. The PowerPoint slides shown in the class and placed on the course webpage are intended only as outlines of the materials covered. They are not substitutes for class attendance. You are responsible for taking your own notes during the classes and for catching up and obtaining notes from others/watching the online video of the class if you miss a class. In order to accommodate students who test positive for Covid 19, recordings of the classes will be made available in the Pages section of the Canvas website.

### **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 the required readings 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 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 (up to 5%) for 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

<b>Final Examination</b>	<b>40%</b>
<b>Midterm examination</b>	<b>35%</b>
<b>Assignment</b>	<b>20%</b>
<b>Participation</b>	<b>5%</b>

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

### INTRODUCTIONS

Date	Topic	Reading
Feb 3 <sup>rd</sup>	<b>How much do you know about education and society?</b> Common Sense Quiz	
Feb 8 <sup>th</sup>	Thinking sociologically about education	

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

Feb 10 <sup>th</sup>	<b>What are the functions of education?</b> Emile Durkheim and the functionalist perspective	Required: <i>Learning the Student Role: Kindergarten as Academic Bootcamp</i> . Harry L. Gracy  Required: <i>Patriotic Education in a Chinese Middle School</i> . W. O. Lee
Feb 15 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Whose interests are really served by the education system?</b>	Required: <i>Schooling in Capitalist America</i> . Bowles and Gintis. Required version.

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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.

		Supplementary: <i>Schooling in Capitalist America</i> . p.131-148. Bowles and Gintis
Feb 17 <sup>th</sup>	<b>What are the unintended consequences of education?</b>	Required: <i>Elements of a Culture</i> (from <i>Learning to Labour</i> ) Paul Willis

#### PART II: LABELING THEORY

Feb 22 <sup>nd</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
Feb 24 <sup>th</sup>	<b>How do students who need good teachers 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 1 <sup>st</sup>	<b>What is social class? What is cultural capital?</b>	
Mar 3 <sup>rd</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 8 <sup>th</sup>	<b>How to think sociologically about "race" ethnicity and nationality?</b>	
	Documentary: IQ testing: the great deceit	
Mar 10 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Does Increasing School Resources help ethnic minorities?</b> The Coleman Report.	
Mar 15 <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 17<sup>th</sup> MIDTERM EXAMINATION. Attendance required.**

PART V: GENDER AND EDUCATION

Mar 22 <sup>nd</sup>	<b>Thinking sociologically about gender</b>	
Mar 24 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Why are boys performing so poorly at school?</b>	<p>Required: <i>The gendered classroom</i> Michael Kimmel</p> <p>Supplementary: <i>The War Against Boys</i>. Christine Hoff Sommers</p>

PART VI: ISSUES IN HONG KONG EDUCATION

Mar 29 <sup>th</sup>	<p><b>What explains the current state of Hong Kong's high-stress education?</b></p> <p>Colonial and globalizing forces</p>	<p>Required: <i>A critical evaluation of Education Reforms in Hong Kong: Counting our Losses to Economic Globalization</i>. Choy Po King</p> <p>Supplementary: "The best students will learn English": <i>Ultra-utilitarianism and Linguistic Imperialism in Education in post-1997 Hong Kong</i>. Choy Po King.</p>
Mar 31 <sup>st</sup>	<b>What problems do ethnic minorities face in Hong Kong's educational system?</b>	<p><u>Reading:</u></p> <p>Required: <i>Envisioned Belonging: Cultural Differences and Ethnicities in Hong Kong Schooling</i>. Wai-Chi Chee.</p> <p>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.</p>

April 5-11	<b>Mid-term break</b>	
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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.
Apr 14 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Why is university education becoming so expensive?</b> Movie: <i>Ivy League</i> .	
April 19 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Are universities indoctrinating students? Is academic freedom in danger?</b>	Required: <i>The Death of American Universities</i> . Noam Chomsky
April 21 <sup>st</sup>	<b>Culture and Gender Wars: What is “cultural appropriation?”</b>  Required: <i>What’s Wrong with Cultural Appropriation?</i> Maisha Johnson  <b>Are universities dangerous places for women?</b>  Movie: <i>The Hunting Ground</i> .	Required: <i>Oberlin Students Take Culture War to Dining Hall</i> . The New York Times  Required: <i>What’s Wrong with Cultural Appropriation?</i> Maisha Johnson  Required: <i>Fraternities and Rape On Campus</i> . Patricia Yancey Martin

PART VIII: EDUCATIONAL REFORMS

April 26 <sup>th</sup>	<b>What if students managed their own education?</b> The Ideas of John Dewey  Student-governed schools	Required: <i>Summerhill</i> . AS Niel. pp1-45
April 28 <sup>th</sup>	<b>What is the place of the Humanities and arts in the education system?</b>	Required <i>Is Hong Kong dumbing down its education system?</i> Regina Yip.

	The ideas of Ken Robinson	
May 3 <sup>rd</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 5 <sup>th</sup>	<b>The future of education</b> <b>Catch up and review</b>	

**FINAL EXAMINATION TO BE SCHEUDELED BY THE UNIVERISTY 16-29 May**

### RULES AND PROCEDURES

This is a large class with a diversity of students from many backgrounds. Most of you will be studying in a second language (English) because this is the only language that we all share. Some of you may not have taken social science classes before. Others may be accustomed to different learning environments in which there are different expectations. This means that we need to have some common rules and understandings about how the class is to proceed so that everyone has an opportunity to learn and perform well.

#### **In the classroom**

The default mode of teaching is face-to-face (unless the University decides otherwise). This may be new experience for many of you and will require some adjustment.

#### *Coming late/leaving early*

The class will not begin until all students are seated and quiet. When students come late to the class, they disrupt 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. To minimize disruption, however, I will reserve some seats nearest to the doors on one side of the classroom to assist late students. 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 know, in advance, that you do have to leave early, please contact me or the teaching assistant before the class so that we can seat you close to an exit to prevent disruption of the class.

#### *Laptop computers*

Mastering the course content will require your full attention during the class. The classes will be highly interactive. I would prefer it if you took notes on iPads/Tablets/Mobile phones rather than bury your faces in laptop/notebook computers. If, however, you have to take notes on a laptop computer, please be aware that my teaching assistant will be monitoring you and

if you are performing tasks not related to the class (watching movies, games, messaging social media etc) you will be asked to close your computer.

### *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.

### **Quizzes**

Quizzes will be closed-book and must be taken without communicating with other students. This is a large class and it is impossible to schedule make-up exams for individual students who miss quizzes, except where medical documentation is provided by a licensed Western medical practitioner to say why you cannot attend. If you have to miss a quiz 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 quiz 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. The Final Examination will be scheduled by the University (May 16-29<sup>th</sup>). International students should not book trips home during this period, since no make-up examinations will be given for those not present.

### **PowerPoints**

I'm happy to share my PowerPoints with you after each class, but under the following conditions:

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. Please do not share my PowerPoints or any other materials on course-sharing websites, 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.

### **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 80 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, in the latter case, we find your work more



deficient than our original assessment). If you do ask us to look at your work again, please make sure that you have a very strong and clear justification for doing so.