

## SOSC2130: EDUCATION AND SOCIETY

Spring 2019

Wednesday, Friday 4.30-5.50pm via Zoom/Room 2504

Prof. Julian M. Groves

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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:

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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 less wealthy students marginalized from education systems? Why do boys perform so poorly compared to girls in our schools? 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? 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.

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## 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. The relevant reading assignments will be announced 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 short reflection piece of around 500 words.

### The Final Grade

Assignment and presentation (if applicable)	35%
Midterm Exam	25%
Final Exam (cumulative)	40%

### Extra Credit

Up to 5 percent **extra credit** may be awarded to individual students who make regular and outstanding contributions to the in-class discussions, or who frequently ask relevant questions.

CLASS SCHEDULE AS OF JAN 29<sup>1</sup>

INTRODUCTIONS

Date	Topic	Reading
Feb 19 <sup>th</sup>	<b>How much do you know about education and society?</b> Common Sense Quiz	
Feb 21 <sup>st</sup>	Thinking sociologically about education	

PART I: SCHOOL: WHAT IS IT FOR?

Feb 26 <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 28 <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.  Supplementary: <i>Schooling in Capitalist America</i> . p.131-148. Bowles and Gintis
Mar 4 <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

Mar 6 <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
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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.

Mar 11 <sup>th</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
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PART III: EDUCATION AND SOCIAL CLASS

Mar 13 <sup>th</sup>	<b>What is cultural capital?</b>	
Mar 18 <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 20 <sup>th</sup>	<b>How to think sociologically about "race" ethnicity and nationality?</b>  Documentary: IQ testing: the great deceit	
Mar 25 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Does Increasing School funding help ethnic minorities?</b> The Coleman Report.	
Mar 27 <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

Apr 1<sup>st</sup>. MIDTERM EXAMINATION.

PART V: GENDER AND EDUCATION

Apr 3	<b>How to think sociologically about gender?</b>	
Apr 8	<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
April 10	<b>Good Friday. No Class</b>	

PART VI: ISSUES IN HONG KONG EDUCATION

Apr. 15	<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: <i>"The best students will learn English": Ultra-utilitarianism and Linguistic Imperialism in Education in post-1997 Hong Kong.</i> Choy Po King.</p>
Apr 17	<p><b>What problems do ethnic minorities face in Hong Kong's educational system?</b></p>	<p><u>Reading:</u></p> <p>Required: <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> <p>Required: <i>Envisioned Belonging: Cultural Differences and Ethnicities in Hong Kong Schooling.</i> Wai-Chi Chee:</p>

PART VII: ISSUES IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Apr 22 <sup>nd</sup>	<p><b>Are academic standards falling at universities?</b></p>	<p>Required: <i>College Cultures and Student Learning.</i> Richard Arum and Josipa Roksa.</p>
Apr 24 <sup>th</sup>	<p><b>Why is university education becoming so expensive?</b> Movie: <i>Ivy League.</i></p>	
April 29 <sup>th</sup>	<p><b>Are universities indoctrinating students? Is academic freedom in danger?</b></p>	<p>Required: <i>The Death of American Universities.</i> Noam Chomsky</p>

May 1 <sup>st</sup>	<b>Labour Day. No Class</b>	
May 6 <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

May 8 <sup>th</sup>	<p><b>What if students managed their own education?</b> The Ideas of John Dewey</p> <p>Self-governing schools</p>	Required: <i>Summerhill</i> . AS Niel. pp1-45
May 13 <sup>th</sup>	<p><b>What is the place of the Humanities and arts in the education system?</b></p> <p>The idea of Ken Robinson</p>	<i>Is Hong Kong dumbing down its education system?</i> Regina Yip.
May 15 <sup>th</sup>	<p><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></p>	The Finnish Education system

## **RULES AND PROCEDURES**

Until the University indicates otherwise, I am required to deliver this class virtually using the Zoom software. This is far from satisfactory, in my opinion. I am much more excited about meeting you in person and enjoying your company in the classroom. I will do my best to make the class as interactive and interesting for you as possible. I will, however, need your cooperation.

### **Attendance**

The surest way to achieve a high grade on this course is to *attend all the classes* either online or face-to-face (when permitted) and disconnect from other electronic devices and activities. The PowerPoint slides shown in the class and placed on the course webpage are intended only as outlines of the main concepts covered. They are not substitutes for class attendance and will not make sense to you unless you have attended/watched the class.

As with face-to-face classes, I encourage you to attend the Zoom meetings on time. If you arrive late, you will miss important material and it might be difficult to understand what is going on.

### **Show your faces**

I too am self-conscious in front of a camera. But it would be very helpful to me and your fellow students if you turn on your webcams so that we can all see each other and make eye contact.

### **Talk to the class, not just to me**

I realize that it is easier to sit in silence when you are not in the same room as me. However, do not be shy about raising your hand and asking/answering questions in the virtual classroom. I love it when students participate and I will reward this in your assessment. Further, when using the chat functions, please direct your questions to the “everyone” not just to me since it is difficult for me to conduct conversations with individual students when the class is in progress.

A special note to **students taking, or who have taken, other courses with Prof. Groves:** As introductory sociology courses, it is unavoidable that there will be some overlap between these courses. I do not encourage you to take more than one course from me. It is better that you get a broader perspective in the social sciences by taking courses from other professors. If, however, you do decide to take more than one of my courses, please allow other students in class to answer questions that you may already know the answer to from my other courses. I do appreciate your cooperation on this.

### **Examinations**

Until further notice the examinations will take place online. I will try to replicate the regular close-book exam by giving you a strict time limit and shuffling questions. But I’m going to assume that you will be taking the exams without consulting other students or the internet.

My experience has been that HKUST students are among the best I have taught, so I am going to trust you to exercise academic integrity even in these difficult times.

This is a large class and it is impossible to schedule make-up exams for individual students, except where medical documentation (from a licensed Western medical practitioner) is provided to say why you could not complete it (online or in person) at the required time. In the case of an exam missed 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 on the situation in Hong Kong.**

This has been a very challenging time for us in Hong Kong. We must be cautious. But we must also remain calm and not overreact. The sociological training that you will undertake in this course reminds us to establish our positions through questioning, reasoning, and evidence. It also encourages us to be mindful of how our behaviour affects others. I admire your courage to continue your studies at this difficult time and I can't wait to meet each and every one of you when face-to-face classes begin.