

SOSC2130: EDUCATION AND SOCIETY
 Spring 2021
 Tuesday, Thursday 12:00-13:20 on Zoom

Prof. Julian M. Groves

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

Office hours: I will stay in the Zoom session after each class.

Teaching Assistant: Alison Chow Young (youngalisonc@ust.hk)

Office hours: Every Thursday 3:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m. via Zoom.

Meeting ID: 927 0419 5132

Passcode: 105462

Zoom link: <https://hkust.zoom.us/j/92704195132?pwd=cjZwaEVMeTVRaFB0Ly9RYmdlRkRlQT09>

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 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? 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.
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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. 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.

The Final Grade

Assignment (and participation) if applicable	20%
Midterm Examination	30%
Final Examination	40%
Attendance at Zoom meetings (with cameras on)	5%
Participation	5%

CLASS SCHEDULE¹

INTRODUCTIONS

Date	Topic	Reading
Feb 2 nd	How much do you know about education and society? Common Sense Quiz	
Feb 4 th	Thinking sociologically about education	

PART I: SCHOOL: WHAT IS IT FOR?

Feb 9 th	What are the functions of education? 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 11 th	Whose interests are really served by the education system?	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
Feb 16 th	What are the unintended consequences of education?	Required: <i>Elements of a Culture</i> (from <i>Learning to Labour</i>) Paul Willis

PART II: LABELING THEORY

Feb 18 th	What happens when we label children?	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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¹ Dates and readings may be subject to change. Please listen out for announcements at the beginning of each class.

Feb 23 rd	Why do the poorest students end up with the worst teachers?	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

Feb 25 th	What is social class? What is cultural capital?	
Mar 2 nd	How do parents influence their children's educational success?	Required: <i>Unequal Childhoods</i> Ch. 8, and Ch 10. Annette Lareau

PART IV: EDUCATION AND ETHNICITY

Mar 4 th	How to think sociologically about "race" ethnicity and nationality? Documentary: IQ testing: the great deceit	
Mar 9 th	Does Increasing School Resources help ethnic minorities? The Coleman Report.	
Mar 11 th	Why are Asian Americans so successful in their studies?	Required: <i>From Unassimilable to Exceptionable: The Rise of Asian Americans</i> and "Stereotype Promise" Jennifer Lee and Min Zhou

Mar 16th . MIDTERM EXAMINATION. Attendance required.

PART V: GENDER AND EDUCATION

Mar 18 th	How to think sociologically about gender?	
Mar 23 rd	Why are boys performing so poorly at school?	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 25 th	<p>What explains the current state of Hong Kong's high-stress education?</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>
Mar 30 th	<p>What problems do ethnic minorities face in Hong Kong's educational system?</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

April 1 st	<p>Are academic standards falling at universities?</p>	<p>Required: <i>College Cultures and Student Learning</i>. Richard Arum and Josipa Roksa.</p>
April 6 th	<p>The Day Following Easter Monday. <i>No Class</i>.</p>	
Apr 8 th	<p>Why is university education becoming so expensive?</p> <p>Movie: <i>Ivy League</i>.</p>	

April 13 th	Are universities indoctrinating students? Is academic freedom in danger?	Required: <i>The Death of American Universities</i> . Noam Chomsky
April 15 th	<p>Culture and Gender Wars: What is “cultural appropriation?”</p> <p>Required: <i>What’s Wrong with Cultural Appropriation?</i> Maisha Johnson</p> <p>Are universities dangerous places for women?</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 20 th	<p>What if students managed their own education? The Ideas of John Dewey</p> <p>Student governed schools</p>	Required: <i>Summerhill</i> . AS Niel. pp1-45
April 22 nd	<p>What is the place of the Humanities and arts in the education system?</p> <p>The ideas of Ken Robinson</p>	<i>Is Hong Kong dumbing down its education system?</i> Regina Yip.
April 27 th	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?	The Finnish Education system
April 29 th	What is the future of education?	
May 4 th	Students share assignment findings	
May 6 th	Catch up and review	

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. I am much more excited about meeting you in person and enjoying your company in the classroom. I will, however, do my best to make the class as interactive and interesting for you. But I will need your cooperation on a few matters.

Attendance and cameras

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

The University policy on cameras is as follows:

“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.”

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. While the recordings of the Zoom classes will be made available to you, my experience has been that if you do not 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. I will do my part to make the classes worthwhile, going *slowly*, and making frequent summaries to assist those with language difficulties. Fair enough? I also have a lot of interesting interactive activities that students tell me they enjoy.

Your attendance will be recorded on Canvas. To count as attendance, you must

1. Attend the whole class (absence of more than 20 minutes will count as an absence)
2. Turn on your camera during the entire lecture (but not necessary during the Break) so that we know you are there (still photos or emojis do not count).
3. Please do not log in with more than one device. That other device may not have a camera and your attendance may not be recorded.

Please make sure we can see your full names and do not change your names, so that we can record your attendance accurately. It would be helpful also 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. Chi Ho CHOY (Stephen).

For the purpose of assessment, we will start recording attendance after the Drop add period. To allow for technical problems and other unforeseen circumstances, I will allow for **up to THREE absences/no-camera shows without penalty**.

Participation

It is difficult for me to monitor the chat box, 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.

Please note that posting foul language, or comments that have no relevance to the class in the chat room or anywhere else may result in a deduction of points for attendance and participation.

PowerPoints

As noted, the PowerPoints are not substitutes for class attendance. They are mostly outlines of the lecture. I will post them shortly AFTER, and not before each class. I cannot post them before the class because doing so may give away answers or influence the discussions. Also posting them in advance gives me less flexibility to change them during the class. I provide the PowerPoints for your own study use, but they remain my intellectual property. They are watermarked, so please do not post them on course sharing websites.

Examinations

Until face-to-face proctored examinations are permitted, examinations for this course will have to be conducted on Canvas. I expect them to be completed under closed-book conditions without communicating with other students, consulting PowerPoints or the internet. 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.

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.

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.