

EDUC 101 The American School  
Fall 2019  
Tuesday/Thursday 2:45 - 4:00pm  
328 Ho

Instructor: Laura Jaffee  
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Office Hours: Mondays 3-5pm, Wednesdays 12-1pm, and by appointment

## **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course introduces some of the major ideas and issues in the American educational system, including the aims and role of public schooling in a democratic society, the foundations and politics of knowledge and instruction, and the manner in which education can function as either a liberating or oppressive force for human and social development. The course is designed for students to gain a critical perspective on the purpose and functions of the American school, primarily using philosophic and historical approaches. We will examine the ways schools serve as sites for the construction of difference, reproduction of inequality, and development of identity, as well as historically situate contemporary policy debates and political struggles in education. You will be asked to reflect on your own social identity and experience of schooling, to think through the ways theories we read and discuss speak to your educational experiences, and to critically explore how issues of race, class, gender, dis/ability and nation are implicated in the institution of American schooling.

Understanding that schools do not exist in a social/historical vacuum, we will examine how education operates not as a neutral terrain. Our experiences of schooling are situated within a web of historical, structural, social, cultural, ideological, political, and psychological forces that shape our possibilities of learning – inside and beyond the classroom walls and school gates. But neither are schools static locations doomed to replicate, reproduce, and exacerbate social inequity and oppressive conditions. This course thus also explores how schools can also be dynamic sites where these larger ideological and structural forces – and our possibilities of learning in relation to them – can be contested, resisted, and transformed through our conscious engagement with them.

## **COURSE OBJECTIVES**

- *Understand* how larger cultural, political, historical, and social forces shape schools and students.
- *Interrupt* the tendency to view our own schooling experience as normative.
- *Theorize* the relationship between citizenship and schooling within democratic societies.
- *Imagine* the ways that we as agents can make possible another kind of public education and society.

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING**

Critical analysis, clarity of expression, and punctuality will influence your grade on all assignments. Assignments are a way of showing me that you're comprehending authors' arguments, engaging with theories and concepts discussed during class and in readings, and applying course ideas to rethink and make sense of your own lived experiences and the world around you. All written assignments should be

double-spaced, in 12-point font (Times New Roman) with 1" margins. All written work must be proofread, edited, and cited properly. Please use APA (American Psychological Association) style for citation. See the Purdue OWL website for guidance: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>

### **Attendance and Participation (20%)**

Learning and knowledge production are collective processes. As such, your engaged and thoughtful participation is essential for the success of this course. You are expected to be on time and prepared for class. Readings should be completed by the date listed on the syllabus *before* class. Some questions to consider when reading and taking notes:

1. What are the author's main arguments?
2. What struck you as interesting or unsettling about those arguments? Why?
3. How do points or claims made in this reading relate to or compare to those brought up in other readings for this course?
4. What did you find in the reading that helped you better understand a past experience or important educational phenomena or event(s)?
5. What questions did the reading raise for you?

### **Reading Journal (10%)**

Your reading journal, which I'll distribute during the first full week of class, will include reading notes and questions, written reflections, short in-class writing assignments, and occasional quizzes on readings or key terms/concepts. I will periodically collect and read journals as another way—beyond verbal classroom participation—for me to assess how you're engaging with class discussions and comprehending authors' arguments and ideas.

### **Group Educational Policy/Event Project (20%)**

In small groups (3-4 people), you are going to research an educational policy issue, law, Supreme Court Case, or event that matters to you. Possible topics might include: early childhood education, ELLs (English Language Learners), desegregation, the Common Core, teacher certification policy, standardized testing, inclusive education, No Child Left Behind, the Puerto Rico teachers' strike, etc. Your topic must be selected in conversation with all group members and approved by me.

As a group, you will write a 4-6 page memo that provides a brief overview of the issue/event/case. Your memo should provide a summary of the policy/event, explain its significance, and address who is impacted and how. Some questions to consider: Who is included and who is excluded? What do we know about the underlying social problem that this is addressing and what do we know about the efficacy of different approaches in the past? Who are the major actors who are on different sides of the issue? What are the big coalitions? As a group, you'll submit your memo (10%) and present your findings to the class (10%) on Thursday, September 26th.

### **Educational Autobiography (20%)**

This 5-6 page paper (12 pt. font, Times New Roman) asks you to reflect on your own educational experiences and how they relate to the themes we have discussed and read in class thus far. You should critically analyze how issues of race, class, gender, disability, and/or sexuality have shaped your lived experiences in schools. Overall, you will reflect on how schools teach us how to think, what to think, and why we should think this way and how this shapes and constrains your educational experiences. In particular, I want you to think critically about the purpose and function of education at your school(s).

### **American School of the Future Project and Presentation (30%)**

This class highlights the dissonance between common sense understandings of the American educational system, with all the issues and problems therein, and a more critical, or structural, approach. For the final project, you're asked to consider: What assumptions about education and its role in society have you come to question? What are the implications of this for your future aspirations, whether or not you intend to work in the field of education? In other words, what will you do with the information you have learned this semester? Your analysis should demonstrate comprehension of and critical engagement with central arguments from course readings. There is flexibility in form. Your final project could take the form of an open letter, zine, art project, short video, website, board game, etc. Regardless of your project, you must cite and include at least 3 texts. Your project format must be approved in conversation with me well before the submission date. Presentations will take place during the last week of class on Tuesday, December 10th and Thursday, December 12th.

### **\*\*Extra Credit Opportunities:**

There are 4 campus events that offer opportunities for extra credit. Events and their dates and times are listed below. To receive credit, in addition to attending the event, you must submit a *500 word response*. Your response should not be a summary of the event, but demonstrate critical engagement with the event, in particular addressing connections to course themes and readings. For attending one event and successfully completing the assignment, you will receive an additional 1% on your overall grade (which will be added to your participation grade). You can receive credit for attending and writing thoughtful responses to up to 2 events— successful completion of which will add 2 percentage points to your overall grade.

**Friday, September 6th at 5pm:** FMST/EDUC Film Screening of *Booksmart*

**Monday, October 7 at 7pm:** Dr. Anthony Abraham Jack Campus Talk on *The Privileged Poor*

**Thursday, October 17 at 4:30pm:** Dr. Marcyliena Morgan's talk, "‘But We Do Language:’ How Hiphop Measures Our Lives." Persson Auditorium.

**Thursday, November 7th at 12-1pm:** Dr. Dominique C. Hill in 111 Alumni. Title: "Traversing Spaces of Carcerality: Black Girl Pedagogies and Other Experiments in Critical Fabulation." This is part of the Social Sciences Luncheon Seminar Series. We will NOT be meeting as a class this day.

## SUMMARY OF DUE DATES:

<i>Assignment</i>	<i>Value</i>	<i>Due</i>
Participation	20%	Ongoing
Reading Journal	10%	Randomly collected throughout semester
Educational Policy Study	20%	Thursday, 9/26 in class
Educational Autobiography	20%	Tuesday, 11/5 by 5pm
American School of the Future Paper/Project	30%	Tuesday, 12/10 by 5pm

**CLASS POLICIES***Attendance*

In the event of an unavoidable absence, please contact me by email ([lijaffee@colgate.edu](mailto:lijaffee@colgate.edu)) prior to class. Please keep in mind that more than 2 unexcused absences will negatively affect your participation grade. Excused absences include religious holiday, illness with note from doctor, and death of immediate family member. After two unexcused absences, you will lose two percentage points per unexcused absence. I ask that students who are involved in Colgate sports keep me informed well in advance of conflicting game schedules.

*Accessibility*

My goal is to support the full participation of all students and create a learning environment that is inclusive, accessible, and welcoming. I understand that students have different ways and paces of learning and accessing information, and that each student comes with their own, and sometimes difficult, experiences with learning. I aim to make the classroom environment comfortable and respectful without undermining the importance of discussing conflicting ideas and opinions. If there are aspects of the instruction or design of this course that impede your inclusion and participation, please communicate with me as soon as possible so we can discuss the best way to support your learning. If you have any kind of disability, whether visible or non-visible, learning, emotional, physical, or cognitive, and need accommodations or alternatives to lectures or assignments, please contact me so we can discuss accommodations and support.

In some cases, I will ask students requesting accommodations to contact the Director of Academic Support and Disability Services to receive help determining and coordinating a specific accommodation on the basis of disability/medical documentation. Contact info as follows:

Lynn Waldman, Director of Academic Support and Disability Service Center for Learning, Teaching, and Research  
 Tel: (315) 228-7375; TTY: (315) 228-6001  
 Email: [lwaldman@colgate.edu](mailto:lwaldman@colgate.edu); [Website link](#)

*Technology Use in the Classroom*

You may use laptops or cell phones to take notes in class or for other *class-related purposes only*. I see this as a matter of access. While technology can enhance learning, it can also distract you and your

classmates. Your engagement and participation are critical to the learning of you and your peers in this class. Emailing, internet browsing, and other recreational use of technology is prohibited.

### *Email Policy*

Your questions are welcome. Please give me 48 hours to respond on weekdays before following up. I do not respond to emails on Sundays. Email me only from your @colgate.edu email address and include "EDUC 101" in the email subject line so that I know the message is course-related and can respond promptly.

### *Assignment Deadlines*

Assignments should be submitted on the due date listed next to each assignment. Points will be deducted at a rate of ½ letter grade per day for late assignments (e.g., A- becomes B+, C becomes C-). All assignments must be completed in order to pass the class. I will grant extensions when I determine, together with the student, that these are in the best interests of academic success. In all cases, extensions are negotiated in advance of the deadline.

### *The Writing and Speaking Center*

Regardless of ability, all of us can benefit from receiving constructive feedback on our writing or public speaking. At the Writing and Speaking Center, a free service for all students, writing consultants can help you with a draft's focus, organization, grammar, style, and citations, among other aspects. If you're preparing a speech or oral presentation, speaking consultants can help you organize your content or practice your delivery to an audience. All meetings are private, and you may visit at any stage of your process, from clarifying your initial ideas to reviewing a final draft or practicing a presentation. See the webpage (<http://www.colgate.edu/centers-and-institutes/writing-and-speaking-center>) for more information or to reserve an appointment. The center is located in 208 Lathrop Hall. Phone: (315) 228-6085

### *Counseling Center*

"The Counseling Center, located in Conant house, focuses on helping students to ameliorate problems that might be obstacles to their growth and development by providing the highest quality clinical services as well as consultation, prevention, training, and psycho-education. The Counseling Center supports the mission of Colgate University and the Office of the Dean of the College, encouraging the intellectual, emotional, and social development of students, working to cultivate a genuine sense of meaning and purpose in their lives. We are committed to supporting diversity and treating all members of the Colgate community with respect, recognizing a special duty to those of under-represented and historically marginalized groups."  
<http://www.colgate.edu/offices-and-services/counseling>

### *Academic Integrity and the Colgate University Honor Code*

Please bear in mind your obligations as a Colgate student. Academic dishonesty, which includes but is not limited to plagiarism, will not be tolerated. You are expected to cite work accurately and diligently. If you have any questions about what this means or how it is done correctly, feel free to contact me. It is expected that the work you submit in this class will be your own. You are expected to carefully read Colgate's Honor Code and Code of Conduct and will be held accountable for compliance to the policy. Any incident brought to my attention will follow the guidelines set forth in The Colgate University Academic Honor Code and Colgate University Student Handbook.

## COURSE SCHEDULE

\*Schedule may change. Any changes will be sent via email and posted to Moodle.

### Week 1

#### Syllabus, Course Overview, and Introductions

Thursday, 8/29

Welcome, Review Syllabus and Policies, Introductions

Friday, 8/30

Freire, P. (1998). Teachers as Cultural Workers: Letters to those who dare teach (p. 208-213).

In class, WATCH: Noam Chomsky, The Purpose of Education: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-QkhJTHp5r8&feature=youtu.be> (20 min)

### Week 2

#### Historical Foundations: The Social Purposes of Schooling

Tuesday, 9/3

David Labaree (2012), "School Syndrome: Understanding the USA's Magical Belief that Schooling Can Somehow Improve Society, Promote Access, and Preserve Advantage," *Journal of Curriculum Studies* 44, 2: 143-163.

Thursday, 9/5

Knopp, S. (2012). Schools, Marxism, and Liberation. In J. Bale & S. Knopp (Eds.), *Education and Capitalism: Struggles for Learning and Liberation* (pp. 9-39). Chicago, IL: Haymarket Books

\*\* Friday, 9/6 at 5pm

*Booksmart* screening in Golden Auditorium in Little Hall (optional, for extra credit)

### Week 3

#### Historical Foundations: Settler-Colonialism and Schooling

Tuesday, 9/10

Tinker, G. (2004). Tracing a contour of colonialism: American Indians and the trajectory of educational imperialism. In W. Churchill, *Kill the Indian, Save the Man: The genocidal impact of American Indian residential schools: The Genocidal Impact of American Indian Residential Schools*. San Francisco, CA: City Light Books.

Bollinger, M. (2012). Focus On: The Indian Boarding Schools. In J. Bale & S. Knopp (Eds.), *Education and Capitalism: Struggles for Learning and Liberation* (pp. 70-75). Chicago, IL: Haymarket Books

Thursday, 9/12

Grande, S. (2018). Refusing the University. In E. Tuck & K. W. Yang's (Eds.), *Toward What Justice? Describing Diverse Dreams of Justice in Education* (pp. 47-65). New York, NY: Routledge

### Week 4

#### Cultural Stories of Schooling: The Development of Deficit Thinking

Tuesday, 9/17

Baker, B. (2002). The hunt for disability: The new eugenics and the normalization of school children. *Teachers College Record* 104(4), 663-703.

Thursday, 9/19 Annamma, S. A. (2018). Public Schools and the Criminalization of Difference—Destruction and Creation. In *The Pedagogy of Pathologization: Dis/abled Girls of Color in the School-prison Nexus* (pp. 27-59). New York, NY: Routledge

**Week 5 Cultural Stories of Schooling: The American Dream and Myth of Meritocracy**

Tuesday, 9/24 Stephen J. McNamee & Robert K. Miller, Jr. (2004). The meritocracy myth. *Sociation Today*, 2(1). <http://www.ncsociology.org/sociationtoday/v21/merit.htm>

In class WATCH: "Race: The Power of an Illusion": <https://vimeo.com/133506632> (30 min)

Thursday, 9/26 **\*\*GROUP EDUCATIONAL POLICY/EVENT PRESENTATIONS IN CLASS**

**Week 6 The Black Freedom Movement, the *Brown* Decision, and Desegregation**

Tuesday, 10/1 Givens, J. (2019). "There Would Be No Lynching If It Did Not Start in the Schoolroom": Carter G. Woodson and the Occasion of Negro History Week, 1926–1950.

Thursday, 10/3 Highsmith, A.R. & Erickson, A.T. (2015). Segregation as Splitting, Segregation as Joining: Schools, Housing, and the Many Modes of Jim Crow. *American Journal of Education*, 121.

Taylor, K.Y. (2012). Focus On: The Freedom Schools. In J. Bale & S. Knopp (Eds.), *Education and Capitalism: Struggles for Learning and Liberation* (pp. 211-215). Chicago, IL: Haymarket Books

In class WATCH: "Separate and Unequal": <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/film/separate-and-unequal/> (27 min)

**Week 7 Cultural Stories of Schooling: Post-Raciality and Normalcy**

\*\* Monday, 10/7 at 7pm Dr. Anthony Abraham Jack Campus Talk on *The Privileged Poor* (optional)

Tuesday, 10/8 Theoharris, J. (2018). Chapter 1: The Long Movement Outside the South: Fighting for School Desegregation in the "Liberal" North. In *A More Beautiful and Terrible History: The Uses and Misuses of Civil Rights History* (pp. 31-62). Beacon Press.

Thursday, 10/10 Laura, C. T. (2018). Against Prisons and the Pipeline to Them. In E. Tuck & K. W. Yang's (Eds.), *Toward What Justice? Describing Diverse Dreams of Justice in Education* (pp. 19-28). New York, NY: Routledge

In class, LISTEN: "Schools, Prisons, and Abolitionist Futures," <https://rustbeltradio.org/2017/08/14/ep08/>

## **Week 8 Confronting Gender Norms: Feminist Theories of Education**

Tuesday, 10/15 *Mid-Term Recess— NO CLASS*

Thursday, 10/17 Woolley, S. W. (2015). "Boys Over Here, Girls Over There": A Critical Literacy of Binary Gender in Schools. *TSQ: Transgender Studies Quarterly*, 2(3), 376-394.

\*\* Campus Event: Dr. Marcyliena Morgan's talk, "'But We Do Language:' How Hip-hop Measures Our Lives." at 4:30pm in Persson Auditorium (optional)

## **Week 9 School "Choice" and the Privatization of Education**

Tuesday, 10/22 Au, W. (2009). *Unequal by Design*. New York, NY: Routledge. (Chapter 6)

Hartman, A. (2012). Teach for America: The Hidden Curriculum of Liberal Do-Gooders. Retrieved from <https://jacobinmag.com/2011/12/teach-for-america/>

Movement for Black Lives Policy Platform [Excerpts]: <https://policy.m4bl.org/community-control/>

Thursday, 10/24 Barkan, J. (2011). Got Dough? How Billionaires Rule Our Schools. *Dissent Magazine*. Retrieved from: <https://www.dissentmagazine.org/article/got-dough-how-billionaires-rule-our-schools>

Russom. G. (2012). Obama's Neoliberal Agenda for Public Education. In J. Bale & S. Knopp (Eds.), *Education and Capitalism: Struggles for Learning and Liberation* (pp. 109-140). Chicago, IL: Haymarket Books

## **Week 10 Confronting Ableism in Schools**

Tuesday, 10/29 Leonardo, Z., & Broderick, A. A. (2011). Smartness as Property: A Critical Exploration of Intersections Between Whiteness and Disability Studies. *Teachers College Record*, 113(10), 2206-2232.

Thursday, 10/31 Ferri, B & Connor, D. (2005). Tools of Exclusion: Race, Disability, and (Re)segregated Education. *Teachers College Record*, 107(3): 453-474.

## **Week 11 The Politics of Power and Privilege in Education**

Tuesday, 11/5 Anyon, J. (1981). Social Class and School Knowledge. *Curriculum Inquiry*, 11(1), 3-42.

**\*\*EDUCATIONAL AUTOBIOGRAPHY DUE BY 5PM**



Thursday, 11/7 *Professor Jaffee Away— On your own, LISTEN to This American Life, “The Problem We All Live With Pt. 1 and 2”*

**Week 12 Teachers and Teaching**

Tuesday, 11/12 Smith, Clint. 2017. “James Baldwin’s Lesson for Teachers in a Time of Turmoil” *The New Yorker*, September 23, 2017. <https://www.newyorker.com/books/page-turner/james-baldwins-lesson-for-teachers-in-a-time-of-turmoil>

hooks, b. (1994). *Engaged Pedagogy. Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom*. New York, NY: Routledge. (pp. 13-22.)

In class, WATCH *Maestra* (33 minutes)

Thursday, 11/14 Ramesh, M. & Patel, R.C. (2013). *Critical Pedagogy for Constructing Knowledge and Process Skills in Science*.

*Professor Jaffee Away—* Dr. Meg Gardner will lead lecture on assigned reading

**Week 13 Higher Education and U.S. Imperialism**

Tuesday, 11/19 El-Haj, T. R. A. (2010). "The beauty of America": Nationalism, education, and the war on terror. *Harvard Educational Review*, 80(2), 242-275.

Thursday, 11/21 Chatterjee, P. & Maira, S. (2014). *The Imperial University: Race, War, and the Nation-State*. In P. Chatterjee and S. Maira (Eds.), *The Imperial University: Academic Repression and Scholarly Dissent* (pp. 1-50). Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

**Thanksgiving Break**

**Week 14 Social Movements and the Liberatory Potential of Education**

Tuesday, 12/3 <https://jacobinmag.com/2018/09/los-angeles-teachers-strike-education-reform>

Thursday, 12/5 Kelley, R. D. G. (2016, March 7). *Black Study, Black Struggle*. *Boston Review*. Retrieved from <http://bostonreview.net/forum/robin-d-g-kelley-black-study-black-struggle>

Belcourt, C. (2018). *The Revolution Has Begun*. In E. Tuck & K. W. Yang’s (Eds.), *Toward What Justice? Describing Diverse Dreams of Justice in Education* (pp. 113-121). New York, NY: Routledge

**Week 15 Final Presentations and Reflections**

Tuesday, 12/10      *American School of the Future Presentations*

Thursday, 12/12      *American School of the Future Presentations*

\*I am grateful for the pedagogical acumen and collective labor of multiple individuals and organizations that informed the development of this syllabus. I have especially benefited from the insights of Dr. Anna Ríos-Rojas, Dr. Mario Perez, Dr. Susan Wooley, Dr. Brenda Sanya, and Dr. Sally Bonet.