SOCIOLOGY OF EDUCATION
(EDPOL/SOC 648)

Professor Linn Posey-Maddox
Email: lposey@wisc.edu
Phone: 262-6863
Office: 219 Ed. Building
Office hours: Tuesdays, 2:30-4:15 p.m.
4:15-5:00 (Grad Discussion), and by appointment

Teaching Assistant: Susan Stanton Messimer
Office Hours: Thursdays, 10 am-noon, Room 234 Ed Bldg.
Email: messimer@wisc.edu

Course Description:

This course uses a sociological lens to examine American schools and schooling, with a particular focus on social inequality and how class, race, and gender intersect in the experiences of students. In our focus on inequality in American public education, we will examine how schools and schooling relate to broader social structures, institutions, and practices. We will ask such questions as:

- What role do social forces outside of the educational system play in influencing educational processes (such as student learning) and outcomes (such as student achievement and advantage/disadvantage)?
- Why are schools both similar to and different from one another?
- How are formal and informal relationships organized within schools, and what consequences for students’ learning, identities, and futures does the social organization of schooling have?
- To what extent, and in what ways, do schools promote equal opportunity, and to what extent, and in what ways, do schools reproduce prevailing patterns of power, privilege, and hierarchy?
- How are inequalities related to social class, ethnicity, race, gender, and sexual orientation manifested in schools?
Course Learning Objectives:
By the end of this course you will be able to:

- Articulate the relationship between education and social inequality along various dimensions
- Apply critical thinking skills to your understanding of educational institutions and individual educational experiences
- Read and evaluate scholarly research on education
- Effectively communicate what you learned about the sociology of education both orally and in writing

Assignments, Examinations, and Grading:

Staying current in your reading, attending class regularly, and actively participating in class discussion is both extremely important and expected. An attendance sheet will be distributed at the beginning of each class.

You will be responsible for summarizing, synthesizing, and critically reflecting on material from course lectures, class discussions, and readings. You should bring your notes and questions about the readings to class, and be prepared to discuss them.

Short Writing Assignments:

You will have the opportunity to develop your critical thinking and writing skills in this class. You will write a 500-700 word critical review of a current events article relevant to one of the topics we have covered in class, and present this article in class.

Mid-Term and Final Exams:

The course will include a take-home mid-term essay exam, which will be due at the start of class on Thursday, March 1st. The questions will be distributed at the end of class on Thursday, February 23rd. Undergraduate students will take a non-cumulative take-home final (written-essay) exam covering the second half of the course. Graduate students will be responsible for writing a 10-12 page paper related to one or several of the topics covered in the course.

The final exam questions will be distributed at the end of class on Thursday, May 10th, and both the take-home exam and final papers (grads) will be due by noon on Tuesday, May 15. Final exams should be delivered to my box in the
Department of Educational Policy Studies mail office in Room 235 of the Education Building.

Attendance & Participation 15%
Current Events Critical Review 10%
Mid-term Examination 35%
Final Examination/Paper 40%

Readings with an asterisk are available on e-reserve. You may download them for printing by logging into MyUW and clicking on your "Learning" tab and going to "Course Resources." Next to each of your registered courses that have reserves (paper & electronic), there will be a "Library/Reserve" link that will take you directly to your reserves for the course. Class films and hard copies of all the readings are on 3-hour reserve at the MERIT Library in the Teacher Education Building, 225 N. Mills Street (at corner of Dayton Street), Room 301.


Technology in Class: A minimal level of external distractions is essential to a productive learning environment. Cell phones and iPods are not to be used in class, and laptop computers are to be used only for note-taking. If you choose to bring your computer to class, you cannot have a web browser open at any time.

Requirements for Written Work: Unless prior arrangements are made with the TA or instructor, all written work is to be submitted in hard copy form. Written assignments must be typed and double-spaced with standard margins and twelve-point Times New Roman font. Your papers should be free of grammatical errors and display original thought. For citations, use the American Psychological Association (APA) format. Information about APA format and general writing support can be found at the Writing Center’s website: http://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/index.html

After all written assignments’ due dates and times, the assignment grade will be reduced by five percentage points for each 24-hour period in which it is late. If you have extenuating circumstances that keep you from turning in assignments by their due dates, it is your responsibility to contact me at least two days before the paper’s due date to make alternative arrangements.
Students With Disabilities:

I am committed to providing assistance to help you be successful in this course. Please let me know if you need any special accommodations in the curriculum, instruction, or assessments of this course to enable you to participate fully. I will try to maintain the confidentiality of the information you share with me. Students with special needs are encouraged to contact the McBurney Disability Resource Center, 905 University Avenue (263-2741), for information concerning campus disability-related policies and services.

Plagiarism and Academic Misconduct:

The University has a strict policy on plagiarism and cheating. Section 14.03 of the University of Wisconsin System Administrative Code defines academic misconduct as “an act in which a student: (a) seeks to claim credit for the work or efforts of another without authorization or citation; (b) uses unauthorized material or fabricated data in any academic exercise; (c) forges or falsifies academic documents or records; (d) intentionally impedes or damages the academic performance of others; (e) assists other students in any of these acts.”

Avoid any behavior that can be interpreted as plagiarism, such as copying and pasting material from the Internet without the proper citation. A definition of plagiarism and information about disciplinary sanctions for academic misconduct can be found at the Dean of Students website: www.wisc.edu/students/conduct/uws.14.hm.
**COURSE READINGS**

*Topics, readings, and dates subject to announced change by instructor*

### Introduction to the Sociology of Education

1/24  Course Introduction (no reading)


### Segregation, Resource Inequality and Public Schooling


The Organizational Environment of Schools


Teachers, Students, and Schools

2/16 Readings to be announced/Posted on Learn@UW


Additional readings to be announced

Tracking


Midterm questions distributed

**Midterm Due**

*Film and Discussion: Off Track*

### What Do Schools Teach Besides Academics?


### Cultural Capital and the Transmission of Educational Advantage


Social Capital and the Transmission of Educational Advantage


Current Events Small-group Presentations/Discussion

Graduate Students: Final Paper Prospectus Due

Film: Precious Knowledge

Spring Break
Race, Ethnicity, Identity, and Culture


Class


4/19 MacLeod, J. Conclusion, pp. 239-268.

Gender and Sexuality


**Issues in Higher Education**

5/1 Selected Readings from Higher Education and the Color Line: College Access, Racial Equity, and Social Change (2005) posted on Learn@UW

Additional Reading of Choice for Class Jigsaw Discussion (readings posted on Learn@UW)

**The Politics of Educational Reform**

5/3 Selected Readings on School Reform (posted on Learn@UW)


5/10 Evaluations/Final Course Reflections

*Final Take-Home Exam Questions Distributed*

FINAL TAKE-HOME EXAM (Undergraduates): distributed in class and due by NOON on Tuesday, May 15, delivered to my box in Room 235 Education.

FINAL PAPERS (GRADUATE STUDENTS) DUE TUESDAY, MAY 15, delivered to my box in Room 235 Education.