

Class: UEP 214  
**The State of Public Education 2020**

Instructor: Steve Zimmer

Location: Johnson 104

Date/Time: Wednesday Evenings **7:30-9:30** p.m.

Guest Lecture times may vary but will always be on Weds Evening

Office Hours: Immediately after class and by appointment

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**NOTE: PLEASE SEND ALL EMAILS TO BOTH ADDRESSES**

### **Course Objectives**

- **Use the collective wisdom and experience of the class, information and ideas from guest lectures, and public policy research projects to contribute to collective solutions and strategies to the most serious issues facing Los Angeles students, their families and their schools.**
- Understand and analyze the most difficult issues facing public education in the United States and how those issues play out on the ground in Los Angeles
- Understand root causes and current impacts of the present and historical inequities facing students living in conditions of poverty and segregation in Los Angeles
- Examine the challenges of leadership at every level in public education (student, parent, teacher, principal, community, district, state and national) and identify the necessary skills education leaders must possess to become agents for change both within and outside the public education system.
- Engage in the 2020 local and national electoral process (specifically the March 3<sup>rd</sup> California Primary) through the lens of the most significant issues facing public education and the various campaigns' proposals to address these issues
- Study and reflect upon important texts (both contemporary and historical) that inform equity, social justice and critical race perspectives on public education
- Understand the impact of poverty, systemic racism and conditions on classroom instruction and student achievement.
- Understand the impact of state and federal funding as well as the persistent (and intentional) budget crisis on LAUSD students, teachers and families.
- Understand the impact of teacher training, support and evaluation on student achievement and school progress
- Analyze the role and impact of teacher's unions in Los Angeles and the nation
- Analyze the role and impact of parent and family engagement in schools and how this engagement affects student achievement
- Analyze the role and impact of charter schools for students enrolled in charters and on students enrolled in LAUSD

## **Required Texts:**

- Podair, Jerald. 2001      The Strike that Changed New York: Blacks, Whites and the Ocean Hill-Brownsville Crisis New Haven Yale University Press
- Kerchner, Charles. 2008      Learning from Los Angeles: Institutional Change in American Public Education Cambridge Harvard Educational Press
- Carter, Prudence and Welner, Kevin. 2013      Closing the Opportunity Gap: What America Must Do Give Every Child an Even Chance New York Oxford Press
- Ravitch, Diane. 2010.      The Death and Life of the Great American School System New York: Basic Books
- Kozol, Jonathan. 1991      Savage Inequalities: Children in America's Schools New York: Random House

## **Strongly Recommended Texts:**

- Noguer, Pedro. 2008      The Trouble with Black Boys: Reflections on Race, Equity and the Future of Public Education
- Kirp, David. 2013      Improbable Scholars: The Rebirth of a Great American School System and a Strategy for America's Schools
- Rhee, Michelle. 2014      Radical: Fighting to Put Students First New York: Harper Paperback Books
- Goldstein, Dana. 2014      **Teacher Wars** New York, Doubleday.
- Vinson, Jose Luis. 2014      **This is Not a Test: A new narrative on Race, Class and Public Education**
- Darling-Hammond, Linda      **The Flat World and Education: How America's Commitment to Equity will Determine our Future**

## Important Public Education Texts

TheodoreSizer 1992.	<u>Horace's Compromise</u>
Pedro Noguera. 2003	<u>City Schools and the American Dream</u>
Marion Orr and John Rodgers. 2010	<u>Public Education for Public Engagement</u>
Paulo Freire. 1993.	<u>The Pedagogy of the Oppressed</u>
Delpit, Lisa. 1995	<u>Other People's Children</u>

*A word about Texts: I know I required a lot here. This is not the type of class where you will be reading word for word from texts. But they are important. This is especially true when the author is visiting the class. Even if we don't use the full text as part of the class I promise you each of these texts will contribute to your understanding of the public education crisis. **Additional articles and texts will be required.** These will be posted on Moodle and/or distributed in class. **You will also be required to monitor Ed Source, The L.A. School Report and The Los Angeles Times education blogs, Education Week, and Politico's Morning Education.** At least for the duration of this semester, you should add these to you newsfeed, Instagram, news alerts, emails or however you receive updates. *Check emails and moodle regularly for updates and additional readings for each class and especially for guest lectures.**

# Grades

## Assignments and Grading

Class Attendance and Participation	10%
Reflection Papers/Political Action	20%
The March 3 <sup>rd</sup> Project	20%
Public Policy Proposal Group Project (paper and presentation)	40%
Final Reflection Paper	10%

- Weekly reflection papers are a 2 page reflection and analysis of the lecture, panel or class discussion/activity. I really like it when students include readings and/or their own personal experiences in these reflection papers. Students can choose to write the four reflection papers at any point in the semester but they must be submitted on the week of the topic. **Reflection papers must be submitted by 6 p.m. on Friday. Please send a copy to both of my email accounts. This semester you will be offered the option of volunteering on a School Board, City Council, or Presidential Campaign in advance of the March Primary. You may substitute 3 out of the 4 class reflections. To do this you must submit documentation of at least 10 hours of campaign work and write one two page reflection on the experience.**
- The March 3<sup>rd</sup> Project. Your team will be randomly assigned a School Board Candidate, a Council District 14 Candidate or a Presidential Candidate. Your assignment will be to research (web site, visiting campaign office, interviewing the candidate or staff, news reports/analysis, etc) the candidate's agenda on pivotal education issues affecting students, their schools, their teachers and their communities. On February 26<sup>th</sup> your team will present a 10 slide (or equivalent) presentation to the class on your candidate's education platform and submit a 5-7 page analysis paper. We will divide into team and get our assignments on in class on January 29<sup>th</sup> at which time I will give you a detailed guide to the project.
- **The Public Policy Proposal Group Project** will be the focus on the second half of the semester. In a group setting your team will choose a vexing public policy dilemma that is deeply affecting student outcomes. In most cases the public policy issue will be related to the school system and/or a specific equity barrier that is affecting students' access to an outstanding public education.

The project will have three significant components. The first component will be a presentation to the class (this presentation may include additional members of the Oxy and LAUSD community). Student teams will have wide latitude in how to present their report, but my guess is that some type of power point and some narrative research summary. The second group component will a community action component. Here, group members will either present the project findings or recommendations to either LAUSD Board staff, LAUSD Board Members, a Board or Committee Meeting, City Council staff or the staff of the Mayor's Office. While the presentation may contain similar information to the in-class presentation (incorporating feedback from myself and your colleagues), I expect the group to employ lobbying and presentation strategies that we will go over in class during the semester.

The final component to the project will be an individual analysis paper that will cover both the issue and a detailed reflection about the group process you participated in throughout the semester. I will expect you to incorporate new research and sources into your paper, but you should use the group's primary research as well. I will distribute a much more detailed description of the paper, but you can anticipate that it will be between 6-8 pages in length and will be due at the end of Finals.

# Tentative Class Schedule

January	22nd	<b>Introduction, Overview and Opening Exercises</b>
January	29 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Class Overview/Project Overview and March 3<sup>rd</sup> Assignment</b> Posted Readings from Moodle
February	5 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Understanding the Role of School Boards and School Governance in Los Angeles</b> Posted Readings from Moodle Chapters One and Two: Closing the Opportunity Gap Chapters One and Two: Savage Inequalities
February	12 <sup>th</sup>	<b>First Panel: The Los Angeles Education Journalists</b> Posted Readings from Moodle <u>The Death and Life of the Great American Public System:</u> Chapters One and Two <u>Savage Inequalities:</u> Chapter 3
February	19 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Guest Lecture: School Board Member Jackie Goldberg</b> Posted Moodle Readings <u>Death and Life of the Great American School System:</u> Chapters 7, 8 and 10
February	26 <sup>th</sup>	<b>March 3<sup>rd</sup> Project Presentations (Full Class Time)</b> Posted Moodle Readings <u>Learning from Los Angeles</u> Presentations Due
March	4 <sup>th</sup> :	<b>Guest Lecture: Dr. Charles Kerchner</b> Election Analysis <u>Learning from Los Angeles</u> and Moodle Readings Policy Group Proposal <u>Due</u>
<b><u>SPRING BREAK</u></b>		
March	18 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Understanding the Role of Unions in Public Education</b> <u>The Strike that Changed New York:</u> Part One Moodle Readings

<b>April</b>	<b>1st</b>	<b>Panel Discussion: The Lessons of the LA Strike</b> Moodle Readings <u>The Strike that Changed New York: Part Two</u>
<b>April</b>	<b>8<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Education Policy: Process, Influences and Priorities</b> <b><u>Closing the Opportunity Gap</u></b> : Chapters 5, 6, 8 and 9 Moodle Readings
<b>April</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>Panel Discussion: Education Policy in Action</b> Moodle Readings <u>Closing the Opportunity Gap</u> : Chapters 12, 14 and 15

**(The remainder of the schedule will be determined by our Group Projects)**