

Class: UEP 212, 213
Policy Debates and Controversies in Public Education

Instructor: Steve Zimmer

Location: Johnson 301

Date/Time: Wednesday Evenings 7:15-9:15 p.m.

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

Office Hours: Immediately before or 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 the lecture/panel series, and action 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 current and controversial issues facing public education in the United States and how those issues play out on the ground 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.
- Interact with leading public education experts in Los Angeles to gain insight from their expertise and experience in our efforts to understand and respond to the perceived crisis in public education
- 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 on 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
- Nogeura, Pedro. 2008 The Trouble with Black Boys: Reflections on Race, Equity and the Future of Public Education
- Kozol, Jonathan. 1991 Savage Inequalities: Children in America's Schools

Strongly Recommended Texts:

- Kirp, David. 2013 Improbable Scholars: The Rebirth of a Great American School System and a Strategy for America's Schools
- Diane Ravitch. 2010. **The Death and Life of the Great American School System** New York: Basic Books
- 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 The L.A. School Report and The Los Angeles Times education blogs, Education Week, and Politico's Morning Education. Check emails and moodle regularly for updates and additional readings for each class and especially for guest lectures.*

Grades

Assignments and Grading (2 credits)

Class Attendance and Participation	20%
Weekly Reflection Papers (2)	40%
Issue Analysis Paper	40%

Assignments and Grading (4 credits)

Class Attendance and Participation	20%
Weekly Reflection Papers (4)	20%
Issues Analysis Paper	20%
Public Education Research Project (paper and presentation)	40%

- Weekly reflection papers are a 2 page reflection and analysis of the lecture, panel or class discussion/activity. I really, 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.**
- The Issues Analysis Paper is an in-depth look at one of the public education issues addressed during the class lecture, panel and/or discussions. The paper must be approximately 5-7 pages in length and include at least three sources beyond the class material. A more detailed assignment will be distributed at a later date. **The Issues Analysis Paper is due by Friday, October 28th at 6 p.m.**
- The Public Education Research Project is for 4 credit carrying students only. It is a comprehensive analysis of a major public education issue. The paper portion of the project should be between 10-15 pages in length and must include some form of field work or primary source research. Projects will be presented in the last two weeks of class (including finals week) and papers are due the last day of final exams. **A much more detailed description will be distributed and a class meeting about the project will take place in early October.**

Tentative Class Schedule

August	31st	Introduction, Overview and Opening Exercises
September	7th	<u>First Panel: The L.A. Education Journalists</u> Howard Blume, The Los Angeles Times Selected Moodle Readings
September	14th	The History of Education Reform in Los Angeles Guest Speaker Dr. Charles Kerchner Required Reading: <u>Learning from Los Angeles</u>
September	21st	Introduction to the Politics of Public Education Lecture and Videos Moodle Readings and Part One of <u>Savage Inequalities</u>
September	28 th	(Tentative) The Future of Public Education in L.A. (Public Lecture) Moodle Readings and Part Two of <u>Savage Inequalities</u>
October	5th	The Evolving Role of the Teaching Profession Readings from <u>Teacher Wars</u> Part One of the <u>Strike that Changed New York</u>
October	12 th	<u>NO CLASS</u> Due the Yom Kippur Holiday Required films for viewing: “Waiting for Superman” and “East of Salinas”
October	21st	The Changing Role of Teacher’s Unions Lecture by Alex Caputo-Pearl and Friends Part Two of <u>The Strike that Changed New York</u>

Issue Analysis Paper Due on October 28th

- October 26th** **Panel: The Opportunity Gap, Equity A-G Implementation and School Discipline Reform**
- Required Reading: Closing the Opportunity Gap**
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- November 4th:** **Systemic Inequity in Schools and Communities**
- Readings: The Trouble with Black Boys**
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- November 9th:** **Public Lecture: Superintendent Michelle King**
 Moodle Readings
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- November 16th:** **Panel Discussion on Choice and the Charter School Movement in Los Angeles**
 Selected Moodle Reading
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- November 25th** **No Class (Film Viewing)**
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- November 30th** **Project Presentations**
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- December 7th** **Project Presentations and Class Reflections**

Final Papers are Due on December 9th