

Educational Studies 320: Anthropology and Education

Trinity College Spring 2007
T Th 1:15-2:30pm McCook 305
<http://www.trincoll.edu/depts/educ>

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Office hours: Mon 4-5 and Thurs 2:30-4:30pm

Course Description

The anthropology of education has a rich history of investigating the links between culture, learning, and schooling. Anthropologists studying education have sought to illuminate learning and academic achievement as social processes and cultural products that cannot be understood apart from the socio-cultural contexts in which they occur. In this upper-level seminar, we will explore selected works in the anthropology of education—both classic and contemporary—in order to understand the unique contributions anthropology makes to the study of education, and in particular, to the study of minority groups in education. We will explore topics such as race, gender, class, and language in education and how they have been addressed by anthropologists. Students will have an opportunity to read critically a variety of detailed ethnographic and qualitative studies focusing on formal schooling and informal education in the United States and in other countries. Reviewing these studies, we will explore the central questions: What is a cultural analysis of schooling? What unique insights does ethnography—anthropology’s signature method—offer into key educational problems? And finally, how can a cultural analysis of schooling inform efforts to create a more socially just educational system?

Required Readings:

Available at bookstore in the Ed Studies section:

Paul Willis, *Learning to Labor: How Working Class Kids Get Working Class Jobs*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1977.

Mica Pollock, *Colormute: Race Talk Dilemmas in an American School*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004.

Additional readings will be made available in class.

Course Requirements

1) Readings and Class Participation

This class will be conducted as a participatory seminar, in which our primary goal is to engage with a body of literature in the anthropology of education. Students will be expected to do the assigned readings and come to class prepared to participate in discussion. Students should always bring readings and notes to class. Your class participation grade will be based on the following:

- Class attendance
- A demonstration that you have read the assigned material, as shown by your posting of discussion questions on Blackboard, your delivery of thoughtful comments about the readings during class, and your classmates' evaluation of your participation (see grading, below).

Each student will be required to facilitate a 15-20 minute discussion on one of the ethnographic readings on the syllabus (Unit III). Discussions should address the methods of the study as well as the findings and issues they raise. Guidelines for facilitators will be distributed in class. Each student will also be required to write *two* 1-2 page response papers for two different readings on the syllabus. Good response papers provide a concise *summary* of the author's main argument(s) and a *critique* of the author's work, including your own reflections and reactions to the author's claims. (See Reading Response Guidelines.) Finally, for classes in which there are no student-led discussions (all classes except Unit III), students will be required to post a discussion question on one of the assigned readings on Blackboard **by 11:00am on the day of class**. I will draw upon these questions during class.

2) Mid-term exam

A mid-term exam of short essay questions covering key concepts from the first half of the class will take place in class on Thursday, March 15. Please notify the instructor during the first week of class if you require any special accommodations.

3) Engaging with the public:

During Unit IV we will examine currently popular understandings of education and poverty, as circulated in the media and school district professional development workshops. This short paper assignment will require students to critique *either* Paul Tough's *New York Times Magazine* article or Ruby Payne's "framework for understanding poverty," from an anthropological perspective. In the form of a letter to the editor or a letter to a district administrator that has hired Ruby Payne for a staff development workshop, explain which theories of school failure are reflected in Paul Tough's or Ruby Payne's analysis, and suggest how an anthropologist of education might approach the subject differently. Suggested length is 3-5 pages, double-spaced. Due in class April 17.

4) Final Paper:

Students may select from one of the following two options, but must inform me of their decision by the beginning of the fourth week of class, or Feb. 13.

Option 1: Compare and contrast two pieces of scholarly research on a single educational issue, one from the perspective of anthropology (drawing on ethnographic methods), and the other from another discipline (e.g. psychology or sociology, drawing on quantitative or a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods). What features make the anthropological perspective distinctive? Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of each approach for understanding the issue at hand. A bibliography of ethnographies in education to choose from will be distributed in class. Suggested length of this paper: 12-15 pages.

Option 2: Conduct your own educational ethnography in a local Hartford classroom or community organization. This option requires at least 4 hours of fieldwork per week for a minimum of 9 weeks during the semester. Through detailed fieldnotes, analyze a particular educational issue or problem using the lenses we have studied from the anthropology of education. Suggested length: 15-20 pages.

Assessment

Participation	10%
Student-led discussion (facilitator role)	10%
Reading Response papers: 2 X 10 =	20%
Mid-term exam (short essay answers)	20%
“Engaging the public” assignment	15%
Final Paper	25%

Grading

I believe that teaching and learning are collective enterprises requiring mutual responsibility, support, and participation. For this reason, your course participation and student-led discussion will be graded by your peers (including the instructor). Your final grade for the student-led discussion will be an average of the grades submitted, including my own. Your participation grade will be heavily influenced by your peer evaluations, but even strong evaluations might be overruled by the instructor in the case of multiple absences or other failure to comply with course participation requirements. Please inform the instructor by e-mail if a major illness or family emergency keeps you away from class. Beyond the first absence, I will require documentation to excuse any further absence on the basis of illness or family emergency. More than two unexcused absences will result in a 5-point (50%) deduction from your participation grade.

The late assignment penalty is a 10% reduction for every 12-hour period beyond the deadline, with exceptions granted only for documented medical & family emergencies.

Students are expected to engage in **academic honesty** in all forms of work for this course. If this is unclear to you, ask for clarification.

Class sessions

Tues Jan 23 Introduction to the course; overview of the syllabus.

I. Education and culture

Thurs Jan 25 Cultural transmission

Spindler, George, "The Transmission of Culture," in George D. Spindler (Ed.), *Education and Cultural Process, 3rd Edition*. IL: Waveland Press, 1997.

Tues Jan 30 Approaches to educational ethnography

Spindler, George & Louise, "Ethnography: An Anthropological View," and "Cultural Process and Ethnography: An Anthropological Perspective," in George D. Spindler (Ed.), *Education and Cultural Process, 3rd Edition*. IL: Waveland Press, 1997.

Thurs Feb 1 The use and mis-use of culture

Nieto, Sonia, "Culture and Learning," in *The Light in Their Eyes*, New York: Teachers College Press, 1999, pp. 47-71.

Ladson-Billings, Gloria. "It's Not the Culture of Poverty, It's the Poverty of Culture: The Problem with Teacher Education," in *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*, Vol. 37, No. 2, 2006, pp. 104-109.

Reviewers: _____, _____

Tues Feb 6: "Insider" research

Foley, Douglas, Bradley A. Levinson, and Janise Hurtig, "Anthropology Goes Inside: The New Educational Ethnography of Ethnicity and Gender," in *Review of Research in Education*, Vol. 25 (2000-2001), pp. 37-98.

Reviewers: _____, _____

II. Explaining school failure and under-achievement

Thurs Feb 8: Cultural deprivation and deficit theories

Reissman, Frank, *The Culturally Deprived Child* (excerpts), New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1962, pp. xiii-15, and 25-30.

Deutsch, Martin, "The Disadvantaged Child and the Learning Process," in *The Disadvantaged Child*, New York: Basic Books, 1967, pp. 39-57.

Valencia, Richard and Daniel Solórzano, "Today's Deficit Thinking about the Education of Minority Students," in Otto Santa Ana (Ed.) *Tongue-Tied: The Lives of Multicultural Children in Public Education*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, pp. 124-133.

Reviewers: _____, _____

Tues Feb 13: Cultural difference/mismatch theories

Philips, Susan, "Participant Structures and Communicative Competence: Warm Springs Children in Community and Classroom," in Cazden, John & Hymes (Eds.) *Functions of Language in the Classroom*, New York: Teachers College Press, 1972. pp. 370-393.

Vogt, Lynn A.; Cathie Jordan, and Roland G. Tharp, "Explaining School Failure, Producing School Success: Two Cases," in *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*, Vol. 18, No. 4, 1987, pp. 276-286.

Reviewers: _____, _____

Thurs Feb 15: Cultural-ecological explanations: John Ogbu

Ogbu, John. "Variability in Minority School Performance: A Problem in Search of an Explanation," in *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*, Vol. 18, No. 4, 1987 pp. 312-334.

Suarez-Orozco, Marcelo. "Becoming Somebody: Central American Immigrants in U.S. Inner-city Schools," in *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*, Vol. 18, No. 4, 1987, pp. 287-299.

Reviewers: _____, _____

Tues Feb 20: Social reproduction and resistance theories

Erickson, Frederick. "Transformation and School Success: The Politics and Culture of Educational Achievement." In *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*, Volume 18, 1987. (pp. 335-355).

Giroux, Henry, "Reproduction, Resistance, and Accommodation in the Schooling Process," (excerpts) in *Theory & Resistance in Education*, Bergin & Garvey, 1983, pp. 72-78 and 107-111.

Reviewers: _____, _____

Thurs Feb 22: Failure as a social construct

McDermott, Ray, "The Explanation of Minority School Failure, Again," in *Anthropology and Education Quarterly*, Vol. 18, 1987. 361-364.

Varenne, Hervé & Ray McDermott (1999). *Successful Failure: The School America Builds*. Preface, Introduction.

Reviewers: _____, _____

Tues Feb 27 – NO CLASS Trinity Days

III. Ethnographic Studies

Thurs Mar 1: Class and education: Learning to Labor

Paul Willis, *Learning to Labor: How Working Class Kids Get Working Class Jobs*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1977. Chapters 1-3 (pp. 1-85).

Reviewers: _____, _____

Facilitators: _____, _____

Tues Mar 6: Learning to Labor, continued

Paul Willis, *Learning to Labor*, Chapters 5 and 8

Reviewers: _____, _____

Facilitators: _____, _____

Thurs Mar 8: Ethnographies of language

Heath, Shirley. *Ways with Words*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983. Prologue and Chapt. 9, “Learners as ethnographers” (pp. 1-14 and 315-342).

Reviewers: _____, _____

Facilitators: _____, _____

Tues Mar 13: Ethnographies of language, cont.’d.

González, Norma. *I Am My Language: Discourses of Women and Children in the Borderlands*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2001. Introduction and Chapter 7, “Household Language Use,” (pp. xv-xxii and 129-166).

Reviewers: _____, _____

Facilitators: _____, _____

Thurs Mar 15: Mid-term exam

Mar 20 & 22 NO CLASS Spring Break

Tues Mar 27: Ethnographies of race: Colormute

Mica Pollock, *Colormute: Race Talk Dilemmas in an American School*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004. Introduction and Chapters 1-3.

Reviewers: _____, _____

Facilitators: _____, _____

Thurs Mar 29: Colormute, cont.'d

Mica Pollock, *Colormute*: Chapters 6, "Moving Forward," and "Practically Speaking: Words for Educators" (pp. 172-225).

Reviewers: _____, _____

Facilitators: _____, _____

Tues April 3: Ethnic identity and nationalism

Rival, Laura, "Formal Schooling and the Production of Modern Citizens in the Ecuadorian Amazon," and
Luykx, Aurolyn, "From *Indios* to *Profesionales*: Stereotypes and Student Resistance in Bolivian Teacher Training." Both in: Levinson, Foley, and Holland (Eds.), *The Cultural Production of the Educated Person: Critical Ethnographies of Schooling and Local Practice*. State University of New York Press, 1996.

Reviewers: _____, _____

Facilitators: _____, _____

Thurs April 5: Ethnographies of gender

Luttrell, Wendy, "Becoming Somebody In and Against School," in Levinson, Foley, and Holland (Eds.), *The Cultural Production of the Educated Person: Critical Ethnographies of Schooling and Local Practice*. State University of New York Press, 1996, pp. 93-112.

Hurtig, Janise, "Debating Women: Gendered Lessons in a Venezuelan Classroom," in Montoya, Frazier, and Hurtig (Eds.), *Gender's Place: Feminist Anthropologies of Latin America*, New York: Palgrave, 2002, pp. 21-42.

Reviewers: _____, _____

Facilitators: _____, _____

Tues April 10: Gender and athletic culture

Howard, Adam and Elizabeth England Kennedy, "Breaking the Silence: Power, conflict, and contested frames within an affluent high school," in *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*, Vol. 37, No. 4, 2006, pp. 347-365.

and

Foley, Doug, "The Great American Football Ritual," in *Learning Capitalist Culture: Deep in the Heart of Tejas*. University of Pennsylvania Press, 1990, pp. 28-62.

-or-

Anderson, Eric, "Openly Gay Athletes: Contesting Hegemonic Masculinity in a Homophobic Environment," in *Gender and Society*, Vol. 16, No. 6 (Dec. 2002), pp. 860-877.

Reviewers: _____, _____

Facilitators: _____, _____

Thurs April 12: Ethnography challenging stereotypes

Stack, Carol, "Black Urban Poor" and "Swapping," in *All Our Kin*, Basic Books, 1974, pp. 22-44.

Villenas, Sofia and Deyhle, Donna (1999) "Critical Race Theory and Ethnographies Challenging the Stereotypes: Latino Families, Schooling, Resilience and Resistance," in *Curriculum Inquiry*, Vol. 29, No. 4, pp. 412-445.

Reviewers: _____, _____

Facilitators: _____, _____

IV. Currently popular understandings of education and poverty: A long way to full circle

Tues April 17: Media portraits of the achievement gap

Paul Tough, "What it Takes to Make a Student," *The New York Times Magazine*, November 26, 2006.

Video excerpt in class: *Making Schools Work*

"Engaging the public" assignment due in class.

Thurs April 19: The Professional Development Industry

Ruby Payne, *A Framework for Understanding Poverty* (excerpts)

V. Using anthropological research to inform change: activist anthropology

Tues April 24: What can the Academy do?

Emihovich, Catherine, "Fire and Ice: Activist Ethnography in the Culture of Power," The Council on Anthropology & Education 2004 Presidential Address
and

Lipman, Pauline, "Educational Ethnography and the Politics of Globalization, War, and Resistance," in *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*, Vol. 36, No. 4 (2005).

Proposed new CAE Mission Statement – on Blackboard
(Current By-Laws can be found at <http://aaanet.org/cae/ByLaws.html>)

Reviewers: _____, _____

Thurs April 26: Models of activist research

Foley, Douglas & Angela Valenzuela. 2005. "Critical Ethnography: The Politics of Collaboration." In Norman K. Denzin & Yvonna S. Lincoln (Eds.) *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research: 3rd Edition*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Reviewers: _____, _____

Tues, May 1 Last Class Reflections, wrap-up, and evaluations.

Friday, May 11 Final Paper DUE by 12:00noon