

# Ed Studies 309: Race, Class, and Educational Policy

Trinity College                      Spring 2007  
Wednesday 1:15-3:55pm    Life Sci 138-139  
<http://www.trincoll.edu/depts/educ>

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Office Hours: Tuesday 1-3pm and Wed 10am-noon

Additional resource people:

Rachael Barlow, Social Sciences Data Coordinator (office in library, level 1)  
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## Theme for Spring 2007: Magnet Schools and the *Sheff v O'Neill* school desegregation case

### Description:

This upper-level undergraduate seminar operates as a team research workshop. First, we closely examine a noteworthy study on some aspect of race, class, and educational policy in the United States. Next, we design and conduct a small-scale parallel research project to test whether the author's claims apply to our local setting. Students develop three types of research skills: qualitative, quantitative, and historical. For the community learning experience, the seminar partners with a local organization to develop a research study, present findings, and discuss interpretations. A major goal of the seminar is to prepare students to design and conduct their own independent research projects during their senior year. Prerequisite: Ed 200 or permission of instr.

In spring 2007, our seminar theme will be "Magnet Schools and *Sheff v. O'Neill*." We will investigate questions such as: What are the goals of magnet schools, and to what extent do they address the racial and socioeconomic inequity issues raised in the *Sheff* school desegregation lawsuit? How and why do families choose magnet schools, in contrast to their neighborhood schools or other public and private school choices? How do students experience magnet schools, and how do their perceptions vary across demographic groups?

**Required books:** (Note: Additional readings will be made available in seminar.)  
Prudence Carter, *Keepin' it Real: School Success Beyond Black and White* (Oxford University Press, 2005). ISBN hardcover 0-19-516862-3

Stacey Lee, *Unraveling the "Model Minority" Stereotype: Listening to Asian American Youth*. (Teachers College Press, 1996). ISBN paperback 08077-3509-4

Susan Eaton, *The Children in Room E4: American Education on Trial* (Algonquin Books, 2007). ISBN hardcover 1-56512-488X

## Research Projects and Assessment:

Project #1: Magnet school fair interviews, to understand prospective parent/ guardian motivations for applying, other choice options, and sources of information.

Research skills: qualitative and quantitative analysis of interview transcripts

Jan 13th - at Breakthrough Magnet in Hartford, hosted by HPS

Jan 29th - at Learning Corridor, hosted by HPS, with CREC magnets also

Feb 3rd - at Hartford Public Library, hosted by HPS

Partnership arranged with Delores Bolton, Asst Supt for Magnet Schools, HPS.

data exercises 10

analysis paper #1 20

Project #2: Magnet alumni on-line survey, with six years of graduates (and perhaps non-graduates) of the Greater Hartford Academy of Math and Science at the Learning Corridor, to compare white/ minority and city/ suburban student experiences, relationships with teachers, and support networks. Partnership arranged with GHAMAS alumna (Gloribel Gonzales) and former GHAMAS director Howard Thiery.

Research skills: qualitative and quantitative analysis of on-line survey responses

data exercises 5

analysis paper #2 20

Project #3: Evaluating change from Sheff lawsuit (1989) to settlement target date (2007), using recent district and magnet student enrollment data to update the *Visual Guide to Sheff* report for 2006-07. Research skills: historical analysis of change over time in Sheff legal documents; basic quantitative analysis of school enrollment statistics

data exercises 10

analysis paper #3 15

### Final Project

research proposal OR public outreach project paper 10

### Class Participation (graded by classmates)

discussion facilitator -- organize an engaging, focused dialogue on assigned topic, with partner; prep with instructor 5

overall contribution to the seminar \_\_\_\_\_ 5

TOTAL 100

Be advised that adequate work earns a C, good work earns a B, and outstanding work earns an A in this class. Students are expected to engage in academic honesty in all forms of work for this course. If this is unclear to you, ask me for clarification.

The penalty for overdue assignments will be 10% for every 12-hour period beyond the deadline, with exceptions granted only for documented medical or family emergencies. Your classmates and I expect your regular and prompt attendance at every session, since we rely upon our collective efforts to succeed in this team-based seminar. Please notify me during the first week if you require any special accommodations.

**Seminar schedule** (always subject to change due to the nature of community research partnerships and scheduling visitors to meet with our seminar)

**Jan 24th**

Intro to syllabus and research project #1; assign facilitators; interview teams & practice

In seminar:

Stan Simpson, "A Decade of Half Measures" [on tenth anniversary of Sheff ruling], *Hartford Courant NE Magazine*, July 23, 2006.

Nieves, Nivia, Aleesha Young, Naralys Estevez, and Jack Dougherty. "Who Shops for Schooling and Why? A Study of Hartford Magnet Middle School." PowerPoint presentation, Cities, Suburbs, and Schools research project, Trinity College, July 2005 <<http://www.trincoll.edu/depts/educ/CSS>>.

Docex network folder - magnet study background materials:

Interview guide, IRB application, current roster of magnet schools

Hartford Public Schools magnet info <http://www.hartfordschools.org>

Capital Region Educational Council (CREC) magnet info <http://www.crec.org>

Magnet school fair interview dates & locations:

- Saturday, Jan 13th, 10am-noon, Breakthrough Magnet School, 290 Brookfield Rd

Team \_\_\_\_\_

- Monday, Jan 29th, 5-7pm, Learning Corridor Commons (near HMMS entrance)

Team \_\_\_\_\_

- Saturday, Feb 3rd, 11am-1pm, Hartford Public Library, 500 Main Street

Team \_\_\_\_\_

**Jan 31st**

Mary Haywood Metz. "The School System's Influence on the Magnet Schools," in *Different by Design: Context and Character of Three Magnet Schools*. New York: Routledge, 1986/1992, chapter 2.

Claire Smrekar and Ellen Goldring. *School Choice in Urban America: Magnet Schools and the Pursuit of Equity* (Teachers College Press, 1999), pp. 1-50.

Facilitators 1 & 2 \_\_\_\_\_; prep meeting \_\_\_\_\_

Facilitators 3 & 4 \_\_\_\_\_; prep meeting \_\_\_\_\_

**Feb 7th**

Read: Joel Best, *More Damned Lies and Statistics: How Numbers Confuse Public Issues* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), chapter 2.

In seminar: transcripts due \_\_\_\_\_; coding exercise; paper #1 assigned.

**Feb 14th**

In seminar: Paper #1 due \_\_\_\_\_; preview of project #2; finalize on-line survey questions and start survey process.

Facilitators 5 & 6 \_\_\_\_\_; prep meeting \_\_\_\_\_

**Feb 21st**

Read: John Ogbu, "Immigrant and Involuntary Minorities in Comparative Perspective," in M. Gibson and J. Ogbu, eds., *Minority Status and Schooling*. (NY: Garland, 1991).

Prudence Carter, *Keepin' it Real: School Success Beyond Black and White* (Oxford University Press, 2005).

Facilitators 7 & 8 \_\_\_\_\_; prep meeting \_\_\_\_\_

Facilitators 9 & 10 \_\_\_\_\_; prep meeting \_\_\_\_\_

**Feb 28th**

Read: Stacey Lee, *Unraveling the "Model Minority" Stereotype: Listening to Asian American Youth*. (Teachers College Press, 1996).

Facilitators 11 & 12 \_\_\_\_\_; prep meeting \_\_\_\_\_

In seminar: end on-line survey and start coding data

**March 7th**

Read: selected *Hartford Courant* news stories on magnet schools, by city education reporter Rachel Gottlieb

In seminar: discussion with journalist Rachel Gottlieb during first hour; continue coding data exercise; paper #2 assigned.

### **March 14th**

Read: Courtney Bell, "All Choices Created Equal?" The Role of Choice Sets in the Selection of Schools." Unpublished journal submission, February 2007.

In seminar: paper #2 due \_\_\_\_\_; conference call (or road trip?) with UConn professor Courtney Bell during first half of class; Initial planning and discussion of final projects; samples of research on Trinity College students (by previous Educ 309 seminars; Office of Institutional Research and Planning, etc.); proposal & presentation resources.

**March 21st** Spring break -- no seminar meeting

### **March 28th**

Read: Susan Eaton, *The Children in Room E4*, (Algonquin Books, 2007), pp. 1-181.

*Sheff v O'Neill* complaint, Connecticut Superior Court at Hartford, April 26, 1989  
[the original lawsuit; in packet]

Optional: *Sheff v O'Neill* 678 A.2d 1267 (Conn. 1996). [the CT Supreme Court ruling; not in packet -- see docex]

In seminar: Descriptive statistics and charts with Microsoft Excel

Facilitators 13 & 14 \_\_\_\_\_; prep meeting \_\_\_\_\_

### **April 4th**

Read: Eaton, *The Children in Room E4*, pp. 183-end.

Connecticut General Assembly, Public Act 97-290, "An Act Enhancing Educational Choices and Opportunities," approved June 26, 1997. [the legislative response]

*Sheff v O'Neill* stipulation and order, Connecticut Superior Court at New Britain, January 22, 2003. [the legal settlement]

Jack Dougherty, Naralys Estevez, Jesse Wanzer, et al., *A Visual Guide to Sheff vs. O'Neill School Desegregation* Report by the Cities, Suburbs and Schools Research Project at Trinity College & the University of Connecticut Center for Education Policy Analysis (July 2006) <<http://www.trincoll.edu/depts/educ/CSS>>

Mark Monmonier. *How to Lie with Maps*, second edition. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996, chapter 3 excerpts.

In seminar: Computer mapping with ArcGIS; paper #3 assigned

Facilitators 15 & 16 & 17 \_\_\_\_\_; prep meeting \_\_\_\_\_

**April 11th**

In seminar: discussion with Susan Eaton, author *The Children of Room E4*

**April 18th**

In seminar: paper #3 due \_\_\_\_\_; planning and discussion of final projects.

**April 25th**

Research presentation exchange with the Pols 355: Urban Politics seminar, taught by Prof. Stefanie Chambers

Seminar wrap-up

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**Final Project options:**

A) Design and write a **research proposal** for a senior-level project on any topic related to this seminar on race, class, and educational policy, to be evaluated on these criteria:

- Does the author pose a thought-provoking, researchable question (or hypothesis) and explain its significance?
- Does the author connect the question to the existing research literature (secondary sources) and move beyond into new territory?
- Does the author identify the most appropriate primary sources and research methods for this study?
- Is the author's proposal well organized, and does it include sufficient background for audiences unfamiliar with the topic? Does the author cite sources in an acceptable format so that future readers may easily locate them?

B) Design and carry out a **public outreach project** that introduces real audiences to some research findings from our seminar's work. For example, you may:

- deliver a research presentation and lead a discussion with community partner
- produce a user-friendly research report to be used by a community partner
- write and submit a research-based op-ed essay to a local periodical
- organize a political protest or public speak-out, based on research findings

Students choosing this option must write a paper that incorporates the content of the presentation/report/essay/event, plus reflections on lessons learned during the process.

For either option A or B, the suggested length is approximately 5 double-spaced pages. In lieu of a final exam, the **final paper is due on Tuesday, May 8th at 3pm.**