

HUNTER COLLEGE, CUNY
DEPARTMENT OF URBAN AFFAIRS AND PLANNING

THE POLITICS OF EDUCATION

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HW 1639

Over time Americans have expected much from their schools. They have wanted schools to cultivate moral individuals, convert immigrants into patriotic citizens, and supply competent workers for a growing economy. They have also expected schools to promote fundamental democratic ideals such as justice, equality, freedom, and prosperity. These lofty expectations have prompted disagreement over the definition of highly cherished American values, and conflicts over individual and group interests. As a result, the process of determining the purpose and content of education has been a highly political one. It has resulted in battles that have not only divided people philosophically, but also on the basis of religion, region, class, race, and ethnicity.

While education has always been considered a state and local function in America, our aspirations as a people to use it to achieve higher order goals has provoked intervention by the federal and state governments, as well as the courts at both levels. Therefore, education provides us with a spectacular arena in which to explore the tensions inherent in American federalism, unresolved fights over the respective roles of the federal, state, and local governments.

This course is concerned with how politics shapes education policy in American cities. While focused on the latter half of the 20th and the beginning of the 21st centuries, it will examine some of the original thinking that put the education of children on the political agenda. It will start with the 18th century writing of Thomas Jefferson; then review the development of public schools in Massachusetts by Horace Mann during the early part the 19th century, and finally examine the battles over race and equality in the 20th century.

If there is one place where education has failed to meet the expectations of visionaries and practitioners, it is in the American city. Nobody has suffered more from this failure than the African American and Hispanic students that populate city schools in disproportionate numbers. As the course moves into the latter part of the 20th century, there will be a special focus on the politics of specific urban school districts including: Yonkers, San Francisco, Baltimore, Detroit, Chicago, Boston, Washington, Houston, Philadelphia, Milwaukee, Cleveland and, of course, New York.

This course begins with the premise that one cannot fully understand the politics of education without appreciating the philosophical values that underlie the political agenda of various actors. Many of our contemporary debates over control, money, identity,

religion and accountability in schooling, have their origins in the distant past, and repeat themselves in changing social contexts.

Requirements:

Approximately 20% of the course grade will be based on class participation, meaning that students will be expected to complete reading assignments before class and participate actively and intelligently in class discussions. Attendance is essential. There will be required readings and suggested readings for each session. There will be three required papers as indicated in the course sequence below: the first will be 4 pages (double-spaced) in length and worth 15% of the final grade; the second and third will be 4-5 pages and worth 20% of the final grade each. Topics will be assigned a week prior to the due dates. Late papers will be penalized. There will also be a final exam (25% of final grade). Those who so desire can also write an optional paper for extra credit after conferring with the instructor.

Please read Hunter College's policy on plagiarism published on the Web site. These policies are taken seriously and will be strictly enforced. Any student who has a question about it should consult with the instructor.

Most of the required reading is available on Blackboard (BKBD) as indicated below. There are also two required texts, Clarence N. Stone, *Changing Urban Education* (University Press of Kansas, 1998), and William Lowe Boyd, *et al. The Transformation of Great American School Districts* (Harvard Education Press, 2008), both of which are available at Shakespeare's Bookstore on Lexington Avenue (between E68 & E69).

Required and suggested readings for each lesson are listed below:

I. INTRODUCTION TO THE COURSE: NO REQUIRED ASSIGNMENT

Suggested:

Charles M. Payne, *So Much Reform, So Little Change: The Persistence of Failure in Urban Schools* (Harvard Education Press, 2008). (available at Shakespeare's)

Paul Tough, "A Teachable Moment," *New York Times Magazine*, August 17, 2008, p. 30. (The story of the New Orleans school district after Katrina).

II. WHY EDUCATE? ORIGINAL THOUGHTS

Required:

Thomas Jefferson, "A Bill for the More General Diffusion of Knowledge." (1779). (BKBD)

Suggested:

Diane Ravitch and Joseph P. Viteritti, eds. *Making Good Citizens: Education and Civil Society* (Yale University Press, 2001).

Lorraine M. McDonald, P. Michael Timpane, Roger Benjamin, eds. *Rediscovering the Democratic Purposes of Education* (University of Kansas Press, 2001).

Lawrence A. Cremin, *American Education: The Colonial Experience, 1607-1783* (Harper & Row, 1970).

III. A SYSTEM OF COMMON SCHOOLS (First Paper Assignment Distributed)

Required:

Horace Mann, "First Annual Report to the Board of Education" (1837). (BKBD)

Horace Mann, "Twelfth Annual Report to the Board of Education" (1848). (BKBD)

Charles L. Glenn, *The Myth of the Common School* (University of Massachusetts Press, 1987), pp. 63-85, 146-178. (BKBD)

Suggested:

Lawrence Cremin, *The American Common School: A Historic Conception* (Teachers College Press, 1951).

Jennifer Hochschild & Nathan Scovronick, *The American Dream and the Public Schools* (Oxford University Press, 2004).

Diane Ravitch, *The Great School Wars: A History of the New York City Public Schools* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), Chaps. 1-20.

Joseph P. Viteritti, *The Last Freedom: Religion from the Public School to the Public Square* (Princeton University Press, 2007), pp. 66-113.

IV. RACE, DESEGREGATION, AND THE COURTS: YONKERS AND SAN FRANCISCO (First Assignment Due)

Required:

Brown v. Board of Education, U.S. Supreme Court (1954). (BKBD)

Jennifer Hochschild and Michael N. Danielson, "Can We Desegregate Public Schools and Subsidized Housing? Lessons from the Sorry History of Yonkers, New York," in, Stone, *Changing Urban Education*.

Fernanda Santos, "After 27 years Yonkers Housing Segregation Battle Ends Quietly in Manhattan Court," *New York Times*, May 2, 2007, pp.1-3. (BKBD)

Luis Ricardo Fraga, Bari Anhalt Erlichson, and Sandy Lee, "Consensus Building and School Reform: The Role of the Courts in San Francisco," in, Stone, *Changing Urban Education*.

Linda Greenhouse, "Justices, Voting 5-4. Limit the Use of Race in Integration Plans," *New York Times*, June 29, 2007. (BKBD)

Suggested:

Joseph P. Viteritti, *Across the River: Politics and Education in the City*, (Holmes & Meier, 1983), pp. 215-265.

Derrick Bell, *Silent Covenants: Brown v. Board of Education and the Unfulfilled Promise of Racial Reform* (Oxford University Press, 2004).

Joseph C. Boger & Gary Orfield, *School Resegregation: Must the South Turn Back?* (University of North Carolina Press, 2006).

David Armor, *Forced Justice: School Desegregation and the Law* (Oxford University Press, 1995).

Richard Kahlenberg, *All Together Now: Creating Middle Class Schools Through Public School Choice* (Century Foundation, 2001).

V. SCHOOL FINANCE REFORM: EQUITY AND ADEQUACY

Required:

Hochschild & Scovoronic, *The American Dream and the Public Schools*, pp. 52-76. (BKBD)

Gail Robinson, "The Last Word in School Funding?" *Gotham Gazette*, November 27, 2006. (BKBD)

Backgrounder, *Crawford v. Davey*, Demanding Immediate and Meaningful Remedies for Children Deprived of a Constitutionally Adequate Education. (BKBD)

Suggested:

Campaign for Fiscal Equity v. State of New York, New York State Court of Appeals, June 26, 2003.

Brian J. Nickerson & Gerald M. Denihan, "From Equity to Adequacy: The Legal Battle for Increased Funding for Poor Districts in New York," *Fordham Urban Law Journal*, vol. 330 (2003).

Joseph P. Viteritti, "The Inadequacy of Adequacy Guarantees: A Historical Commentary on State Constitutional Provisions that are the Basis for School Finance Litigation," *University of Maryland Law Journal of Race, Religion, Gender, and Class*, Vol. 7 (2007), pp. 58-92.

VI. ENTER CONGRESS: ATTAINING EQUALITY? (Second Assignment Distributed)

Required:

Paul Manna, *School's In: Federalism and the National Education Agenda* (Georgetown University Press, 2007), 117-137. (BKBD)

Barbara R. Foorman, *et al.* "Standards-Based Educational Reform is One Important Step Toward Reducing the Achievement Gap," in Adam Gamoran, ed., *Standards-Based Reform and the Poverty Gap: Lessons for No Child Left Behind*, (Brookings Institution Press, 2007).

Tom Loveless, "The Peculiar Politics of *No Child Left Behind*," in, Gamoran, *Standards-Based Reform and the Poverty Gap*. (BKBD)

Suggested:

Patrick J. McGuinn, *No Child Left Behind and the Transformation of Federal Education Policy, 1965-2005* (University Press of Kansas, 2007).

Stephen K. Bailey and Edith K. Mosher, *ESEA: The Office of Education Administers a Law* (Syracuse University Press), pp. 1-71.

Joseph P. Viteritti, "From Excellence to Equity: Observations on Politics, History and Policy," *Peabody Journal of Education*, Vol. 79 (2004), pp. 64-86.

Christopher Jencks and Meredith Phillips, eds., *The Black-White Test Score Gap* (Brookings Institution Press, 1998), pp. 1-51.

Abigail Thernstrom & Stephan Thernstrom, *No Excuses: Closing the Racial Gap in Learning* (Simon & Schuster, 2003).

VII. JUDICIAL MANAGEMENT: SPECIAL EDUCATION IN NYC (Second Assignment Due)

Required:

Ross Sandler and David Schoenbrod, *Democracy By Decree: What Happens When Courts Run Government* (Yale University Press, 2002), pp. 45-97. (BKBD)

Suggested:

Viteritti, *Across the River*, pp. 157-214.

Michael Rebell, "Jose P. v. Ambach: Special Education Reform in New York City," in, Barbara Flicker, ed., *Justice and School Systems* (Temple University Press, 1990).

Frank J. Macchiarola, "The Education of Handicapped Children," in, Diane Ravitch and Joseph P. Viteritti, eds., *City Schools: Lessons from New York* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000).

Shep Melnick, *Between the Lines: Interpreting Welfare Rights* (Brookings Institution Press, 1994), pp. 135-181.

VIII. THE POLITICS OF RACIAL SUCCESSION: BALTIMORE & DETROIT

Required

Marion Orr, "The Challenge of School Reform in Baltimore: Race, Jobs, and Politics," in, Stone, *Changing Urban Education*.

John Gehring, "Looming Race Fuels Sniping Over Baltimore Schools," *Education Week*, September 14, 2005, pp.1-5. (BKBD)

Liz Bowie, "Dixon Eyes Bid to Run Schools," *Baltimore Sun*, July 27, 2008. (BKBD)

Wilbur Rich, "Who's Afraid of a Mayoral Takeover of Detroit Public Schools?" (BKBD)

Suggested:

Marion Orr, *Black Social Capital: The Politics of School Reform in Baltimore* (University Press of Kansas, 1998).

Jeffrey Mirel, "Detroit: There is Still a Long Road to Travel," in, Jeffrey R. Henig & Wilbur Rich, eds., *Mayors in the Middle: Politics, Race, and Mayoral Control in Schools* (Princeton University Press, 2004), pp. 120-158.

Jeffrey Mirel, *The Rise and Fall of an Urban School System: Detroit, 1907-1981* (University of Michigan Press, 1999).

Wilbur Rich, *Black Mayors and School Politics: The Failure of Reform in Detroit, Gary and Newark* (Garland, 1996).

IX. MAYORAL CONTROL: CHICAGO AND BOSTON

Required:

Dorothy Shipp, "Neo-Progressivism as School Reform in Chicago: Big Change, Little Difference, in, Boyd, *Transformation of Great American School District*.

John Portz and Robert Schwartz, "Governance of the Boston Public Schools: Lessons in 'Mayoral Control' in Urban Schools," (BKBD)

Suggested:

Dorothy Shipp, *School Reform: Corporate Style, 1880-1920* (University Press of Kansas, 2006).

Alexander Russo, ed., *School Reform in Chicago* (Harvard Education Press, 2004).

John Potz , *et al.*, *City Schools & City Politics: Institutions and Leadership in Pittsburgh, Boston and St. Louis* (University Press of Kansas, 1999), pp 82-105.

Ronald P. Formisano, *Boston Against Busing: Race, Class, and Ethnicity in the 1960's and 1970's* (University of North Carolina Press, 1991).

X. THE DEMAND FOR ACCOUNTABILITY: HOUSTON AND PHILADELPHIA (Third Assignment Distributed)

Required:

Thomas Langoria, "School Politics in Houston," in, Stone, *Changing Urban Education*.

Donald R. McAdams, "Lessons From Houston," in, Diane Ravitch, ed. *Brookings Papers on Education Policy, 1999* (Brookings Institution Press, 1999). (BKBD)

William Lowe Boyd, *et al.* "Radical Privatization in Philadelphia," in Boyd, *Transformation of Great American School Districts*.

Suggested:

Donald R. McAdams, *Fighting to Save Our Urban Schools-- and Winning: Lessons from Houston* (Teachers College Press, 2000).

XI. THE MERITS OF MAYORAL CONTROL (Third Assignment Due)

Required:

Jeffrey R. Henig, "Mayoral Control: What We Can and Cannot Learn From Other Cities." (BKBD)

Jane Hannaway & Michael Usdam, "Mayoral Takeover in the District of Columbia: The Need for a Shakeup," in Boyd, *Transformation of Great American School Districts*

Suggested:

Kenneth Wong *et al.*, *The Education Mayor: Improving American Schools* (Georgetown University Press, 2007).

XII. BLOOMBERG IN NEW YORK

Required:

Marilyn Gittell, "Education: The Decentralization-Community Control Controversy," in, Jewel Bellush & Stephen M. David, eds., *Race and Politics in New York City* Praeger, 1971), pp. 134-163). (BKBD)

Joseph P. Viteritti, "Abolish the Board of Education," *New York Times*, January 6, 2002. (BKBD)

Norm Fruchter, " 'Plus Ca Change ...' Mayoral Control in New York City" in, Boyd, *Transformation of Great American School Districts*.

Suggested:

Diane Ravitch and Joseph P. Viteritti, "New York, The Obsolete Factory," in, Ravitch and Viteritti, eds. *New Schools for a New Century* (Yale University Press, 1997).

Ravitch, *The Great School Wars*, chapt. 23-36.

XIII. DEMANDING CHOICE: MILWAUKEE AND CLEVELAND (Final Assignment Distributed)

Required:

Joe Williams, "Kids Can Come First," *Cheating Our Kids*, (Palgrave, 2005) pp. 183-206. (BKBD)

Joseph P. Viteritti, "School Choice: How an Abstract Idea Became a Political Reality," *Brookings Papers on Education Policy, 2005* (2005), pp. 137-156. (BKBD)

Suggested:

Joseph P. Viteritti, *Choosing Equality: School Choice, the Constitution and Civil Society*, (Brookings Institution Press, 1999).

James Forman, Jr., "The Rise and Fall of School Vouchers: A Story of Religion, Race and Politics," *UCLA Law Review*, vol. 54 (2007), pp. 547-604.

James Buckley & Mark Schneider, *Charter Schools: Hope or Hype* (Princeton University Press, 2007).

Herbert J. Walberg, *School Choice: The Findings* (Cato Institute, 2007).

Thomas Pedroni, *Market Movements: African American Involvement in School Voucher Reform* (Routledge, 2007).

Joseph P. Viteritti, "Schoolyard Revolutions: How Research on Urban School Reform Undermines Reform," *Political Science Quarterly* (Summer, 2003), pp. 233-257.