

Political Science 1770
Education, Inequality and American Democracy

Spring 2020

Professor: Susan Moffitt
Email: susan_moffitt@brown.edu
Office Hours: Mondays 10-12, 111 Thayer St. #318

Teaching Fellows: David Herrera
Email: david_herrera@brown.edu
Office Hours: Mondays 3-4pm, Fridays 1-2pm, Stephen Robert Hall lobby

Omar Afzaal
Email: muhammad_afzaal@brown.edu
Office Hours: Wednesdays 12-2, Stephen Robert Hall lobby

Class meets: Monday, Wednesday and Friday 2-2:50
Stephen Robert Hall Room 101, 280 Brook St.

Final Exam: May 8, 2020 at 9am

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Horace Mann, one of the founding architects of what evolved into the American system of public education, wrote in the 1840s that public education would be “the great equalizer ... the balance wheel of the social machinery:” that schools would redress social and economic inequality by offering equal education to all students, and that the equality of their school experience would subsequently level the playing field. Many indicators suggest American public education is far from working as an equalizing “balance wheel.” How are public schools and the educational programs they offer products of political inequality? How might public schools remedy those inequalities? How might they exacerbate them? What might be done in the short term and over the long run for school to contribute to key building blocks of democratic governance: engagement, enlightenment, efficacy, and empowerment? We will consider, study, and mull over these questions – and many others – in this course. Throughout the course, we will consider the possibility of structural change on multiple levels. What could we do tomorrow to produce structural improvements in the design and delivery of American public education? What should we aim to achieve in 50 years? How can we strive to ensure that what we do tomorrow supports (rather than inhibits) our 50 year goal?

COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES

This course is designed to help you

- Explore the ways in which education contributes to democratic governance and various forms of political participation;
- Understand the interconnectedness between political, economic and social structures of schooling;
- Consider how the development of American public schools builds on and reproduces political, economic, and social privilege and inequality;
- Assess the promise and limitations of various types of reforms designed to redress inequality;
- Identify areas of academic silence and neglect – questions not asked, data not collected, scholarship not written – in the space of education, inequality and American democracy, and consider approaches for addressing those silences.

This course focuses primarily on the United States, but also looks to other federalist democracies to understand the intersection of education, inequality and democratic governance.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Course Time Allocation

Over the course of the semester, students will spend 40 hours in class sessions. I expect students to spend at least 6 hours per week reading and preparing course material for class session (78 hours total). I also expect students to spend at least 12 hours researching and writing each of the three short paper assignments (at least 36 hours total). The course includes two midterm exams (1 hour each) and a final exam (2 hours). I expect students to spend at least 12 hours studying for each midterm and 20 hours studying for the final. The total expected hours of in-class and out-of-class work for this class is approximately 180 hours.

Course Assignments

Course requirements include carefully reading all assignments before class, outstanding attendance and participation, three short writing assignments, 2 midterm exams, and a final exam.

3 Short Writing Assignments:	30% (10% for each)
2 In-Class Exams:	30% (15 % each)
Final, Cumulative In-Class Exam:	30%
Class Participation:	10%

All papers must contain accurate and appropriate sources and citations. If you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism, please consult the Brown University Code of Conduct.

All writing assignments should be submitted over Canvas and are due by **the beginning** of class. The grade for late papers will be lowered by one full letter grade for each day it is late. Why do I require on-time submissions? To be late in the policy world is to be irrelevant. I want each of your voices to be relevant and active in policy discourse.

In-Class Exams

Our in-class exams will include material covered in the course readings, guest lectures, and course lectures.

Final Exam

Our in-class final exam will cover material from the entire course.

Class Participation:

Our class will benefit greatly from active participation from all class members. Class participation consists of attending all class sessions and engaging regularly and meaningfully in class discussions. This includes attending and engaging meaningfully when guest speakers join our class conversations. You can expect ideas and issues raised by our guest speakers to appear on the in-class and final examinations.

Using laptops/phones during our class for purposes unrelated to the class will interfere with class discussion and will lower your class participation grade. If you miss a class, please obtain class notes from one of your classmates.

Please note that our class may not be recorded without explicit, written permission from Professor Moffitt.

IMPORTANT DATES

February 19: Writing Assignment #1 Due at the Beginning of Class
February 24: In-Class Exam #1
March 18: In-Class Exam #2
March 20: Writing Assignment #2 Due at the Beginning of Class
April 22: Writing Assignment #3 Due at the Beginning of Class
May 8: In-Class Final Examination, 9am

COURSE MATERIALS

There are 3 required books for this course available for purchase at the Brown Bookstore.
Henig, Jeffrey R., Rebecca Jacobsen, and Sarah Reckhow. 2019. *Outsized Money in School Board Elections: The Nationalization of Education Politics*. Cambridge: Harvard Education Press.

Miler, Kristina C. 2018. *Poor Representation: Congress and the Politics of Poverty in The United States*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Morel, Domingo. 2018. *Takeover: Race, Education and American Democracy*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Additional articles and book chapters will be posted on our Canvas site. Books are on Reserves in the library. The class readings may change slightly over the course of the term. I will let you know about changes to the syllabus at least one week in advance.

CLASS SCHEDULE AND ASSIGNMENTS

Part 1: The Structure of American Schools

“Reading Is Power”

Crystal Sanders

Session 1, January 22: Course Introduction

Session 2, January 24: Education for Democratic Governance – Engagement, Enlightenment, Efficacy, and Empowerment

Questions to Consider

- Why does education matter to democracy?
- Why does democracy matter to education?

Required Reading

Alia Wong, “Civics Education Helps Create Young Voters and Activists,” *The Atlantic*, October 5, 2018 (Canvas).

Session 3, January 27: Democratic Governance for Education

Optional Assignment due at the beginning of class:

I invite you to submit a brief (no more than one page) summary of YOU: what animates your work, where you’ve been in life, where you would like to head, what you would like me to know about you.

Required Reading

Patrick McGuinn and Paul Manna. 2013. “Who Leads When Everyone is in Charge?” In *Education Governance for the Twenty-First Century*. Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press pp.1-10 (Canvas).

Session 4, January 29: School Board Elections (part 1)

Required Reading

Henig, Jeffrey R., Rebecca Jacobsen, and Sarah Reckhow. 2019. *Outsized Money in School Board Elections: The Nationalization of Education Politics*. Cambridge: Harvard Education Press, Chapters 1-3 (Required Text).

Session 5, January 31: School Board Elections (part 2)

Required Reading

Henig, Jeffrey R., Rebecca Jacobsen, and Sarah Reckhow. 2019. *Outsized Money in School Board Elections: The Nationalization of Education Politics*. Cambridge: Harvard Education Press, Chapters 4-7 (Required Text).

Session 6, February 3: Centralization and Democratic Governance

Guest Speaker:

Professor Domingo Morel, Rutgers University, Newark

Required Reading

Domingo Morel. 2016. "The Effects of Centralized Government Authority on Black and Latino Political Empowerment," *Political Research Quarterly*. (Canvas).

Paul Manna. 2013. "Centralized Governance and Student Outcomes: Excellence, Equity, and Academic Achievement in the U.S. States," *Policy Studies Journal* 41 (4): 682-703 (Canvas).

Session 7, February 5: Decentralization and Democratic Governance

Guest Speaker: Carina Cournoyer, Brown University Librarian

Required Reading

Jonathan Collins. 2018. "Urban Representation through Deliberation: A Theory and Test of Deliberative Democracy at the Local Level" *Journal of Urban Affairs* 40 (7): 952-973 (Canvas).

Session 8, February 7: Follow the Money – State and Local Funding

Guest Speaker: Professor Jonathan Collins, Brown University

Required Reading

Bruce D. Baker. 2014. *America's Most Financially Disadvantaged School Districts and How They Got That Way*. Washington, D.C. Center for American Progress, Selections (Canvas).

Urban Institute (2017). How Do School Funding Formulas Work?

<https://apps.urban.org/features/funding-formulas/>

Session 9, February 10: Follow the Money – Federal funding, Title I and Federal Grants

Required Reading

Paul Manna. 2008. "Federal Aid to Elementary and Secondary Education: Premises, Effects and Major Lessons Learned," Paper Commissioned by the Center on Education Policy, **pp.5-14 only** (Canvas).

Paul Manna and Laura Ryan. 2011. "Competitive Grants and Educational Federalism: President Obama's Race to the Top Program in Theory and Practice," *Publius: The Journal of Federalism* 6 (3): 552-546 (Canvas).

Optional Reading

David A. Gamson, Kathryn A. McDermott, and Douglas S. Reed. 2015. "Title I at Fifty: Aspirations, Effects, and Limitations," *Russell Sage Foundation Journal of the Social Sciences* 1(3): 1-29 (Canvas).

Rucker Johnson. 2015. Follow the Money: School Spending from Title I to Adult Earnings. *Russell Sage Foundation Journal of the Social Sciences* 1(3): 50-76 (Canvas).

Alyson Klein. 2015. ESEA Reauthorization: The Every Student Succeed Act Explained. *Education Week*. November 30, 2015 (Canvas).

Session 10, February 12: Follow the Money – Federal funding, Headstart

Required Reading

Andrew Karch. 2013. *Early Start: Preschool Politics in the United States*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, pp.33-58 (Canvas).

Optional Reading

Crystal Sanders. 2016. *A Chance for Change: Head Start and Mississippi's Black Freedom Struggle*. University of North Carolina Press, Selections.

Session 11, February 14: Follow the Money – Federal funding, IDEA

Required Reading

Paul Manna. 2008. "Federal Aid to Elementary and Secondary Education: Premises, Effects and Major Lessons Learned," Paper Commissioned by the Center on Education Policy, **pp.15-24 only** (Canvas).

Thomas Hehir and Associates. 2012. "Review of Special Education in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts," **pp.5-33 only** (Canvas).

NO CLASS FEBRUARY 17 – UNIVERSITY WINTER BREAK

Session 12, February 19

**** Writing Assignment #1, Submit Over Canvas, Due by the Beginning of Class ****

Writing Assignment #1: School Description

This assignment is designed to help you understand the governance arrangements for American public schools.

Choose a public elementary school anywhere in the United States that you have not attended. You will examine this school in close detail over the course of the semester. In 4 to 5 pages (double-spaced), summarize:

- descriptive information about the school's population;
- descriptive information about the school's finances;
- descriptive information about the school's governance arrangements;
- descriptive information about the school's educational programs and performance;
- descriptive information about the system in which the school operates;
- descriptive information about the context in which the school operates.

Submit your assignment over Canvas, by the beginning of class. Come to class prepared to discuss your findings.

Session 13, February 21: Summary of the Structure of American Public Schools

Questions to Consider

- How do the various pieces of school governance connect – or not?
 - Think about this geographically
 - Think about this in terms of jurisdiction (authority and funding)
- What are the implications of education for democracy?
- What are the implications of democracy for education?

Session 14, February 24: In-Class Examination

Blue books will be provided.

Part 2: How Did We Get Here?

The Political, Social and Economic Context for Teaching and Learning

“Nothing has been discovered which acts in entire isolation”

John Dewey

Session 15, February 26: Early Structure of Public Education

Required Reading

Carl Kaestle. 1983. *Pillars of the Republic: Common Schools and American Society 1780-1860*. New York: Hill and Wang, Selections (Canvas).

Optional Reading

Tracy L. Steffes. 2008. "Solving the "Rural School Problem": New State Aid, Standards, and Supervision of Local Schools, 1900–1933." *History of Education Quarterly* 48 (2): 181-220 (Canvas).

John Dewey. 2009 (reprinted from 1899). *The School and Society*. Feather Trail Press reprint, pp.20-44 (Canvas).

Session 16, February 28: A Second Look at IDEA

Guest Speaker: Grace Allen, Dayton Regional STEM School

Session 17, March 2: Segregation and Implications for Education

Required Reading

Reardon, Sean F., Elena Tej Grewal, Demetra Kalogrides, and Erica Greenberg. 2012. "Brown Fades: The End of Court-Ordered School Desegregation and the Resegregation of America's Schools." *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, 31 (4): 876-904 (Canvas).

Katie Nodjimbadem. 2017. "The Racial Segregation of American Cities Was Anything But Accidental," *smithsonianmag.com* (Canvas).

Watch the Watson Institute research presentation by Jacob Faber, "We Built This: Consequences of New Deal Era Intervention in America's Racial Geography," YouTube link will be provided.

Session 18, March 4: US Social Policy and Implications for Education

Required Reading

Andrea Campbell. 2014. "The Place of the Poor in the American Welfare State." Chapter 3 in *Trapped in America's Safety Net: One Family's Struggle*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, (Canvas).

Joe Soss. 1999. Lessons of Welfare: Policy Design, Political Learning and Political Action. *American Political Science Review* 93 (2): 363-380 (Canvas).

Optional Reading

Ana L. De La O. 2012. Do Conditional Cash Transfers Affect Electoral Behavior? Evidence from a Randomized Experiment in Mexico. *American Journal of Political Science* 57 (1): 1-14.

Session 19, March 6: Political Inequality and Political Inattentiveness to Conditions of Poverty

Guest Speaker: Professor Kristina Miler, University of Maryland

Required Reading

Miler, Kristina C. 2018. *Poor Representation: Congress and the Politics of Poverty in The United States*. New York: Cambridge University Press, Chapters 1-2 (Required Text).

Session 20, March 9: Political Inequality and Representation in Congress

Required Reading

Miler, Kristina C. 2018. *Poor Representation: Congress and the Politics of Poverty in The United States*. New York: Cambridge University Press, Chapters 3-5 (Required Text).

Session 21, March 11: Political Inequality and Achieving Better Representation

Required Reading

Miler, Kristina C. 2018. *Poor Representation: Congress and the Politics of Poverty in The United States*. New York: Cambridge University Press, Chapters 6-8 (Required Text).

Session 22, March 13: Conditions of Teaching

Required Reading

Susan Moore Johnson. 2005. "Working in Schools," in *The Public Schools*, edited by Susan Fuhrman and Marvin Lazerson. Oxford University Press, (Canvas).

Session 24, March 16: Summary of the Political, Social and Economic Context for Teaching and Learning

- How do the designs of US housing policies matter for public education?
- How do the designs of US health and social welfare policies matter for public education?
- How does the operation of representation through the US Congress matter for public policy?
- How does the structure and operation of the teaching profession matter for democracy and education?

Session 25, March 18 In-Class Exam #2

Blue books will be provided.

Session 26, March 20:

**** Writing Assignment #2, Submit Over Canvas, Due by the Beginning of Class ****

Writing Assignment #2: Services for Special Needs

For this assignment and assignment #3, assume that you are “you,” with an undergraduate degree from Brown; and you are employed somewhere near the school you describe in Assignment #1. Now, assume a nine-year old family member (sister, brother, cousin, etc.) will be moving in with you and attending the school that you described in your first writing assignment (your family member has been attending a school in a different state). This nine-year old relative was classified in her previous school as having one (or more) of the following characteristics (you get to choose):

- visual impairment
- English learner
- gifted
- autism
- dyslexia
- ADD/ADHD

In four to five pages:

- Summarize what research says about recommended educational services for the classification you have chosen. In what ways does research converge on a recommended course of action? Where is there disagreement?
- Given the state of research on the classification(s) you chose, what educational programs would you like to find for your relative and why?

Submit your assignment over Canvas, by the beginning of class. Come to class prepared to discuss your findings.

NO CLASS MARCH 23-MARCH 27: UNIVERSITY SPRING BREAK

Part 3: Where Do We Go from Here?

“I will never read the sober, measured manuals from government programs or the academic analyses of social policy in the same way again. Behind the statistics—and beyond the ideological battles over policy design—are human beings whose lives are molded, distorted, and stunted by policies purported to help them.”

Andrea Campbell

Session 27, March 30: Instructional Improvement – What Does that Mean?

Required Reading

Elizabeth Green. 2014. *Building a Better Teacher*. W.W. Norton. Selections, (Canvas).

Optional Reading

Mary M. Kennedy. 2016. How Does Professional Development Improve Teaching? *Review of Education Research* 86 (4) (Canvas).

Session 28, April 1: Instructional Improvement – How Does that Work?

Guest Speaker: Chris Monschauer, Hope High School Math Teacher, Providence Public Schools

Required Reading

Kathleen Lynch, Heather Hill, Kathryn Gonzalez, and Cynthia Pollard. 2019. Strengthening the research base that informs STEM professional development and curriculum improvement efforts: A meta-analysis. *Educational Evaluation & Policy Analysis*, 41(3): 260–293 (Canvas).

Optional Reading

Ashley Jochim and Lesley Lavery. 2015. “The Evolving Politics of the Common Core.” *Brookings Issues in Governance Studies*. Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution (Canvas).

Session 29, April 3: Instructional Improvement and Information-Based Accountability

Required Reading

John B. Holbein. 2016. “Left Behind? Citizen Responsiveness to Government Performance Information” *American Political Science Review* 110 (2): 353-368 (Canvas).

Vladimir Kogan, Stephane Lavertu, Zachary Peskowitz. 2016. “Performance Federalism and Local Democracy: Theory and Evidence from Local Tax Referenda,” *American Journal of Political Science* 60 (2): 418-435 (Canvas).

Session 30, April 6: Restructuring Governance through State Takeovers – What Does that Mean?

Required Reading

Morel, Domingo. 2018. *Takeover: Race, Education and American Democracy*. New York: Oxford University Press, Chapters 1-3 (Required text).

Session 31, April 8: Restructuring Governance through State Takeovers – What Are Some Implications?

Guest Speakers

Matthew Buchanan, Vice Principal, Hope High School, Providence Public Schools
Robert Nyahkoon, Program Director, YouthBuild Providence
Professor Domingo Morel, Rutgers University, Newark

Required Reading

Morel, Domingo. 2018. *Takeover: Race, Education and American Democracy*. New York: Oxford University Press, Chapters 4-5 (Required text).

Session 32, April 10: Restructuring Governance through State Takeovers – How Might States and Schools Learn from Others’ Experiences?

Required Reading

Morel, Domingo. 2018. *Takeover: Race, Education and American Democracy*. New York: Oxford University Press, Chapters 6 (Required text).

Session 33, April 13: Restructuring Governance by Restructuring Finance

Required Reading

Rucker C. Johnson and Sean Tanner. 2018. “Money and Freedom: The Impact of California’s School Finance Reform On Academic Achievement and the Composition of District Spending,” *Getting Down to Facts II* (Canvas).

Jennifer Wallner. 2014. *Learning to School: Federalism and Public Schooling in Canada*, Toronto, CA: University of Toronto Press, Selections (Canvas).

Session 34, April 15: Restructuring Governance through Charters

Required Reading

Jason B. Cook, Vladimir Kogan, Stephane Lavertu, Zachary Peskowitz. Forthcoming. “Government Privatization and Partication: The Case of Charters,” *Journal of Politics* (Canvas).

Session 35, April 17: Restructuring Governance through Collaborations for Deep Learning

Required Reading

Alicia Grunow, Heather Hough, Sandra Park, Jason Willis, Kelsey Krausen. 2018. “Towards a Common Vision of Continuous Improvement for California.” *Getting Down to Facts II* (Canvas).

Heather Hough, Erika Byun, Laura Mulfinger. 2018. “Using Data for Improvement: Learning from the CORE Data Collaborative.” *Getting Down to Facts II* (Canvas).

Session 36, April 20: Restructuring Governance through Cross-Sector Collaboration

Required Reading

Jeff Henig et. al. 2016. *Collective Impact and the New Generation of Cross-Sector Collaborations for Education*. Teachers College, Columbia University, (Canvas).

Clarence Stone, “Civic Cooperation in El Paso,” in *The Public Schools*, edited by Susan Fuhrman and Marvin Lazerson. Oxford University Press, (Canvas).

Session 37, April 22

**** Writing Assignment #3, Submit Over Canvas, Due by the Beginning of Class ****

Come to class prepared to discuss the findings and recommendation you offered in your paper.

Writing Assignment #3: Comparative School Services

This assignment is designed to help you look closely at the services your school provides students and assess geographic variation in service provision. Submit your assignment over Canvas, by the beginning of class. Come to class prepared to discuss your findings.

- In about 1 page, describe the services offered by the first school you selected to support your young family member. Compare what the school offers with what “research says” is likely to be a promising course of action.

- In about 1 page, describe the services that another school (preferably in a neighboring district) offers. Compare what this school offers with what “research says” is likely to be a promising course of action. For this portion of the assignment, choose a school that differs in terms of the percent of students who receive free and reduced priced lunch (either more or less, by 25 percentage points) compared with the school you examined for assignment #1 and in the first bullet point just above. Ideally, the second school would be within 30 miles of the first school. You may choose a school you attended for this portion of the assignment.

- In 1-2 pages, describe the steps you need to take to help your family member obtain those services. What paperwork do you need to obtain from the child’s previous school? What paperwork do you need to complete to enroll your family member in your selected school? With whom would you need to meet from the school to determine eligibility? What tests or medical examinations would your family member need to be eligible to receive services? Where would those tests/medical examinations occur? Would you have to pay for those tests or does the school pay for them? With whom would you need to meet from the school to determine eligibility?

- Make a choice between the two schools and explain your choice (you might also want to consider some logistics in your choice: would you have to move to another district for your family member to attend the school you want her to attend? Is there ample, affordable housing near that school? How will your family member get to school in the morning and home from school in the afternoon? Who will care for your family member while you work?).

Session 38 April 24: Course Summary and Overview – Where We Have Been, Where Do We Go from Here?

May 8, 2020 at 9am

**** IN CLASS, FINAL EXAM ****

LOCATION TBA