

# SOCI 231 SCHOOL & SOCIETY

Bucknell University, Spring 2022

**Professor:** Dr. Daniel Alvord  
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**Office Location:** 303 Academic West  
**Office Hours:** M/W 3:00 – 4:30PM

**Course Location:** 215 Academic West  
**Course Days:** Monday / Wednesday  
**Course Time:** 10:00am – 11:20am  
**Course #:** 54583

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

At this point, you have had years and years of experience in school. Heck, you are even in school right now. But what does a school do beyond educate you? Schools are one of the most important social institutions in society and this course is designed to introduce you to the sociology of schools and schooling. What do schools do in society? How do they socialize us? How are they organized? How do they produce or challenge social inequalities? We will consider these questions and more.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

The primary goal for this course is to introduce you to the sociology of schools and schooling. By the end of the course, you should be able to:

- Demonstrate knowledge of important concepts and methodologies for the sociological study of educational organizations
- Apply sociological concepts and insights to your personal life as well as to broader social events related to schools and schooling
- Appreciate the diversity of social identities and experiences in American educational organizations

### *Additional Course Goals*

In addition to grasping core sociological concepts and cultivating your sociological imagination, you should also, by the end of the course, develop and refine important academic skills including critical thinking, data analysis and inference, thoughtful engagement with complex ideas and academic writing, and summarizing and synthesizing various arguments and ideas. These are important skills not only for sociology, but for success beyond this classroom.

## COURSE MATERIAL

There is one book required for this class, *Ghosts in the Schoolyard* by Eve Ewing. All other required readings will be made available on Moodle. Readings may change or be adjusted over the course of the semester. However, any updates to the readings will be noted and communicated ahead of time.

## ASSESSMENTS

For this course, you will be expected to complete the following:

*Weekly Responses (20%):* Close, careful, and critical reading is important to your success in this class. To facilitate your understanding and engagement with the reading each week, as well as to prepare you for in-class discussions, you will complete weekly responses. These reflections will provide you some structure as you work through the readings. You'll be provided with a few questions for you to answer based on the readings that will clue you into what the important parts of each reading pertain to. The goal for these responses is for you to "write your way" into understanding some of these readings. You should not see these as needing to be polished masterpieces. I want you to aim for something closer to a diary or journal-entry type format where your writing *is* your thinking as structured by the question prompts. You'll need to complete **EIGHT** of these over the course of the semester. Your responses are not for any one specific reading for the week; rather they span the readings. These will be graded as either Outstanding, Satisfactory, or Unsatisfactory. If you receive a Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory mark for one week, you may complete more weeks and your lowest marked response will be dropped. Responses above the required eight will not count towards extra credit.

*Discussion Leader (10%):*

*Papers (2 x 20%; 1 x 15%):* You will have three papers over the course of the semester. Each paper will correspond with the theme for each unit. More specific details and instructions will be provided on the assignment handout. However, for the first paper, you will be asked to reflect on your own socialization in your high school and related it to course material. For the second paper, you will be asked to observe and ethnographically document one school board meeting and relate it to course material. And for the third paper, you will be compare and contrast two school districts on a range of variables using online statistical resources, namely the National Center for Education Statistics.

*Final Book Review (15%):* Finally, you will write a book review of *Ghosts in the School Yard* and contextualize the book and its argument with material covered over the course of the semester.

## **GRADING AND EVALUATION**

The following is the percentage breakdown for each of the components of this class:

Paper 1	15%
Paper 2	20%
Paper 3	20%
Final Book Review	15%
Discussion Leader	10%
Weekly Responses	20%

Final grades will be assessed on the following scale:

A	94-100	B-	80-83
A-	90-93	C+	77-79
B+	87-89	C	74-76
B	84-86	C-	70-73

## COURSE POLICIES

**Academic Integrity:** Bucknell’s policy on academic responsibility is as follows: “Bucknell students are responsible to the academic community for the preparation and presentation of work representing their own individual efforts. Acceptance of this responsibility is essential to the educational process and must be considered as an expression of mutual trust, the foundation upon which creative scholarship rests. Students are directed to use great care when preparing all written work and to acknowledge fully the source of all ideas and language other than their own.” Cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, academic misconduct, or misuse of computing facilities will not be tolerated. All incidents of which will be reported to the appropriate Associate Dean to be vigorously pursued in accordance with Bucknell’s Academic Responsibility policy. Please review the new Bucknell web resources on Academic Responsibility at <http://www.bucknell.edu/AcademicResponsibility/>

### *The Honor Code and Academic Engagement*

The Committee on Instruction recommended to the faculty that they add the following two texts to their syllabi (College of Arts and Sciences Meeting on December 5, 2012):

#### Bucknell University Honor Code

As a student and citizen of the Bucknell University community:

1. I will not lie, cheat or steal in my academic endeavors.
2. I will forthrightly oppose each and every instance of academic dishonesty.
3. I will let my conscience guide my decision to communicate directly with any person or persons I believe to have been dishonest in academic work.
4. I will let my conscience guide my decision on reporting breaches of academic integrity to the appropriate faculty or deans.

#### Bucknell University Expectations for Academic Engagement

Courses at Bucknell that receive one unit of academic credit have a minimum expectation of 12 hours per week of student academic engagement. Student academic engagement includes both the hours of direct faculty instruction (or its equivalent) and the hours spent on out of class student work. Half and quarter unit courses at Bucknell should have proportionate expectations for student engagement.

**Accommodations:** Any student who needs an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the Office of Accessibility Resources (OAR) at [OAR@bucknell.edu](mailto:OAR@bucknell.edu); 570-577-1188 or complete the Disability Accommodation Request form ([https://bucknell-accommodate.symphlicity.com/public\\_accommodation/](https://bucknell-accommodate.symphlicity.com/public_accommodation/)). The OAR will coordinate reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities.

**Attendance:** Consistent class attendance is vital to your success in this course. I will take attendance in this course (though there is no points awarded for attendance) and it is expected that you will attend all class meetings, that you will arrive on time, and that you will be present and engaged during class meetings. If you have a bona fide reason that you must miss class, such

as illness or a personal emergency, be sure to contact me and inform them about your situation; be sure to do so as soon as you know that you find it necessary to miss class, and if at all possible do this prior to the class session that you will need to miss. For any class session that you miss, for any reason, it is recommended that you come visit me during office hours to talk about the materials.

***Electronic Devices:*** Cellphones and other mobile devices are to be silenced and stowed away during class. Research shows that using a laptop during class impedes both your learning and the learning of students around you (see, e.g., Sana et al. 2013, and Dynarski 2017). If you must use one, or insist on using one, students may sit in a “laptop zone” if they feel, for any reason, that you would benefit from using a laptop to take notes.

***Email:*** Email is the most useful and convenient way to get in touch with me. There are a few email guidelines that should be adhered to during this course. First, I do not discuss grades over email. Any discussion of grades should be done during office hours. Second, unless otherwise noted, I do not read early drafts of papers or answer substantive questions by email. I am more than happy to read drafts, provide comments, and give clarification for concepts covered in class during office hours, but not by email. Finally, I am not “on call” with my email. If you email me late at night, for example, do not expect an immediate reply.

***Extra Credit:*** There are no “built in” extra credit opportunities in this class. However, opportunities for extra credit will be made available as they present themselves.

***Illness:*** If you are sick, please do not come to class. If you must miss a deadline because of illness, please contact me by email.

***Late Assignments:*** Unless otherwise noted, all assignments must be submitted by the beginning of class on the assigned due date. If you anticipate missing an assignment, you must contact me ahead of time and we will work out an arrangement. If you miss an assignment without contacting me ahead of time, you will have a limited period of time (2 weeks) to turn the assignment in for a reduced grade. After 2 weeks, there you will receive no credit for the late assignment.

***Library:*** The library is a great and wonderful place. Contact the social science librarian for help if needed: Carrie Pirmann ([carrie.pirmann@bucknell.edu](mailto:carrie.pirmann@bucknell.edu)), Bertrand Library Research Help Area.

***Masking:*** In accordance with the University's rule that all individuals are to be masked at all times whenever inside campus buildings, you must be fully masked at all times when attending class. Unless and until the University announces a formal change to this policy in a written communication to the campus community, the masking policy will remain in effect. "Fully masked" means having a mask fully covering both your mouth and the entirety of your nostrils; wearing a mask over your mouth but not covering your nose entirely is as good as not wearing a mask at all. There are no exceptions to this masking requirement.

***Mental Health Resources:*** Any student who is struggling and believes this may impact their performance in the course is encouraged to contact their Associate Academic Dean or the Dean

of Students at 570-577-1601 for support. Furthermore, please approach me if you are comfortable in doing so. This will enable me to provide resources and support. If immediate mental health assistance is needed, call the Counseling & Student Development Center at 570-577-1604 (24/7).

**Religious Holidays:** Students seeking academic accommodations (missing class, rescheduling labs or assignments, etc.) in order to observe religious holidays should inform me as early in the semester as possible to set up a time to meet and discuss appropriate action.

**Respectful Engagement:** In this class, all students are welcome regardless of race/ethnicity, gender identities, gender expressions, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, disabilities, religion, regional background, Veteran status, citizenship status, nationality and other diverse identities that we each bring to class. Your success at Bucknell and beyond is enhanced by the innovation and creativity of thought that inclusive classrooms facilitate. The success of an inclusive classroom relies on the participation, support, and understanding of you and your peers. We encourage you to speak up and share your views, but also understand that you are doing so in a learning environment in which we all are expected to engage respectfully and with regard to the dignity of all others. We all come to class from a variety of backgrounds and experiences. Since the purpose of a class is to explore and better understand a topic, we need that variety of perspectives to strengthen our ability to learn, generate hypotheses, and analyze facts and opinions. Therefore, it is vital that each person feels comfortable bringing their unique perspective to bear on a given subject, and that it happens in a respectful manner.

Most people appreciate having freedom to explore their own opinions (and perhaps change their minds or retrench), so let us consider providing that freedom to each other as well. This give and take requires a community where people believe that they can speculate, question, or discuss deep or challenging issues without fear of attack or disrespect. This class is one of your first professional environments, so we will practice professional quality behavior. Behaviors that are of low quality, such as arriving late, being unprepared, missing class, texting, shirking group work, turning in work late, not doing your own work or other less desirable behaviors, lay the groundwork for shallow learning. My intent is rather to help you lay the groundwork for deep and engaged learning, and so your involvement in and professional demeanor towards the class counts heavily. Please feel free to discuss these matters with me or the class. In cases of serious infractions, I will follow University policies for academic honesty & plagiarism, which can be found at <http://www.bucknell.edu/x1324.xml>.

## COURSE SCHEDULE

*\*SUBJECT TO CHANGE*

<i>Week</i>	<i>Day</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>Reading</i>	<i>Due</i>	<i>Assign</i>
W1	Tuesday, January 18, 2022	Syllabus	Syllabus	N/A	N/A
	Thursday, January 20, 2022	Introducing Sociology of Education and Schools	Brint – “Schools as Social Institutions” (31 pages)  Guhin – “Why Study Schools?” (15 pgs)		

**Unit 1: Schools and Socialization**

W2	Tuesday, January 25, 2022	Schools as Socializing Agents	Brint – “Schools and Socialization” from <i>Schools and Societies</i> (36 pgs)		
	Thursday, January 27, 2022	Schools as Socializing Agents	Gracey – “Learning the Student Role”  Baar and Dreeben – “How Schools Work”		
W3	Tuesday, February 1, 2022	Cultural Capital	Lareau and Weininger – “Cultural Capital in Education Research” (40 pages)		Paper 1
	Thursday, February 3, 2022	(Sub)Cultures in Schools	Milner – “Fitting In, Standing Out, and Keeping Up” from <i>Freaks, Geeks, and Cool Kids</i>  Kreager and Staff – “The Sexual Double Standard and Adolescent Peer Acceptance”		
W4	Tuesday, February 8, 2022	Gender: Socialization	Martin – Becoming a Gendered Body: Practices of Preschools  TBD		
	Thursday, February 10, 2022	Gender: Socialization	Booher-Jennings – Learning to Label  Castro and Sujak – “Why Can’t We Learn About This?”		
W5	Tuesday, February 15, 2022	Race: Socialization	Carter – “‘Black’ Cultural Capital and the Conflicts of Schooling” in <i>Keepin’ It Real</i>  Tyson – “Notes From the Back of the Room”  Morris – “Perceptions and Experiences of Black Girls in Classrooms”		
	Thursday, February 17, 2022	Race: Socialization	Downey and Pribesh – “When Race Matters”		

			McGrady and Reynolds – “Racial Mismatch in the Classroom”		
			Carter – “Straddling Boundaries: Identity, Culture, and School”		
W6	Tuesday, February 22, 2022	Discipline in Schools	Morris – “Tuck in That Shirt!”  Morris and Perry – “The Punishment Gap”		
	Thursday, February 24, 2022	Discipline in Schools	Davison, Penner, and Penner – “Racial Disproportionality and School Discipline under Restorative Justice”	Paper 1 Due	
<b>Unit 2: Schools as Organizations</b>					
W7	Tuesday, March 1, 2022	Loosely Coupled Systems	Meyer and Rowan - “The Structure of Educational Organizations”		Paper 2
	Thursday, March 3, 2022	Teachers	Ingersoll and Collins – “The Status of Teaching as a Profession”  TBD		
W8	Tuesday, March 8, 2022	School Boards	Saatcioglu and Sargut – “Sociology of School Boards”  Resnick and Bryant – “School Boards: Why American Education Needs Them”		
	Thursday, March 10, 2022	School Staffing (Shortages)	Everitt – “The Social Psychology Behind Teacher Walkouts”  Ingersoll – “Is There Really a Teacher Shortage?”		
W9	Tuesday, March 15, 2022	<i>No Class – Spring Break</i>			
	Thursday, March 17, 2022	<i>No Class – Spring Break</i>			

W10	Tuesday, March 22, 2022	Market-Based School Accountability Movements	Selections from Schneider and Berkshire – <i>A Wolf at the Schoolhouse Door</i>		
	Thursday, March 24, 2022	Organizational Responses to Accountability the Accountability Movement	Booher-Jennings - Below the Bubble  Hallet – Myth Incarnate  Sauder and Espeland – “The Discipline of Rankings”	Paper 2	
<b>Unit 3: Schools and Inequality</b>					
W11	Tuesday, March 29, 2022	Inequality in Education	Reardon – “The Widening Academic Achievement Gap Between the Rich and the Poor: New Evidence and Possible Explanations”  Duncan and Murmane – “Growing Income Inequality threatens American Education”	In-Class Presentation from Carrie	Paper 3
	Thursday, March 31, 2022	Inequality in Schools	Semuels – “Good Schools, Rich Schools; Bad Schools, Poor Schools”  Kozol – “The Savage Inequalities of Public Education in New York” from <i>Savage Inequalities</i>		
W12	Tuesday, April 5, 2022	Inequality in Schools	Putnam – “Schooling” from <i>Our Kids</i>		
	Thursday, April 7, 2022	Choosing Schools	Billingham and Kimelberg – “Middle-Class Parents, Urban Schooling, and the Shift from Consumption to Production of Urban Space”  Lareau – “Schools, Housing, and the Reproduction of Inequality” from <i>Choosing Homes, Choosing Schools</i>		
W13	Tuesday, April 12, 2022	School Financing	Baker – “How Schools Use Money” from <i>Education Inequality and School Finance</i>		



			Weber – “The Impact of Tax Increment Financing on School Finance”		
	Thursday, April 14, 2022	School Segregation	Reardon and Owens – “60 Years after Brown: Trends and Consequences of School Segregation”  <b>TBD</b>		
W14	Tuesday, April 19, 2022	School Segregation	Owens, Reardon, and Jencks – “Income Segregation Between Schools and School Districts”  <b>TBD</b>		
	Thursday, April 21, 2022	<i>Ghosts in the Schoolyard</i>		Paper 3	Book Review
W15	Tuesday, April 26, 2022	<i>Ghosts in the Schoolyard</i>			
	Thursday, April 28, 2022	<i>Ghosts in the Schoolyard</i>			
W16	Tuesday, May 3, 2022	N/A			
	Thursday, May 5, 2022	N/A			
W17	Tuesday, May 10, 2022	N/A			
	Thursday, May 12, 2022	N/A		Ghosts of the Schoolyard	Book Review