H504: History of American Education

Fall 2007
Education Building, Room 1201

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Office Hours: By appointment before or after class meetings

Purpose:
As part of a graduate-level curriculum, H504 is intended to help you meet, perhaps even exceed, University, School of Education, and personal expectations regarding your preparation as educational leaders. This general purpose will be pursued through the discipline of history, specifically the history of education in the United States.

Course Goals:
1. To examine the development of education in the United States from the pre-colonial period to the near present;
2. To identify and promote understanding of key contested issues in this history;
3. To support individual historical research on a selected topic;
4. To offer multiple opportunities to strengthen and apply imagination, curiosity, and skill in designing, conducting, and assessing historical research on education;
5. To provide substantive and methodological foundations for those who may undertake advanced study in the history of education or use history in dissertation projects.

Common Readings:
(books available at the IU Bookstore or various online services)

Adam Fairclough, A Class of Their Own: Black Teachers in the Segregated South (2007).


Course Requirements:

1. One-page research proposal, due September 16.
2. Essay examination, due October 21.
3. Class presentations of research projects (December 8 and 9).
4. Individual research paper, due December 9.
5. Discussion leadership and participation.

Grading policy: % of final grades:

- Essay examination 30%
- Research paper 35%
- Research presentation 15%
- Leadership and participation 20%

Student-instructor meetings:

To help set the tone of the course and to get acquainted, I will schedule brief individual sessions with you around the first few class meetings. But I urge you to take the initiative to meet with me often to discuss questions, ideas, interests, or problems.

Class discussions:

We will take turns leading discussions of the readings, in teams of two or three individuals. Each of us should come prepared to argue with the authors and analyze their evidence.

Examination: (October 20; submit on October 21)

The examination will be an essay written out of class that integrates critiques of the Fairclough and Katz books and the portions of Urban &Wagoner and Zinn that we have read by this date. You will be asked to design and write an essay that examines both content and research methods.

Research projects:

You may conduct either a biographical or topical study, using published sources and online archives of original documents. For biographical research, select any individual mentioned in the assigned readings.

For topical research, formulate a historical question or problem related to one of the following. Focus the project on schools, higher education, relations between the two, or other specific educational institutions or processes:

1. Aims of education
2. Assessment of students, teachers, faculty, programs, or institutions
3. Curriculum and pedagogy
4. Education and social class
5. Education, race, and ethnicity
6. Federal and state roles in education
7. Finance
8. Organization and control
9. Preparation of educational leaders and university programs that provide it
10. War and education

Your research paper should be 15-20 pp. (no longer), including notes. In citing sources you are free to follow the style manual you prefer, e.g., University of Chicago or American Psychological Association (APA). To help you begin, read research articles published by a journal in your area of specialization or the History of Education Quarterly. In class discussions of the projects you will have opportunities to provide progress reports on your research and seek advice on difficulties you may be encountering. A one-page preliminary proposal is due September 16. Papers are due December 9.

Research presentations (December 8 and 9):

We shall set time limits for the oral reports as the course proceeds, but given our numbers, each presentation may be limited to 10 minutes. You will have to plan carefully to emphasize key findings and engage the class in focused discussion. Think of these as teaching sessions, not performances. Pedagogy counts. The order of the presentations will be determined by December 2.

Questions to get us started:

1. What were Thomas Jefferson’s views on slavery? Did he change them? Why might these be considered educational questions? Have there been other educational institutions that functioned in ways similar to slavery?

2. What have been the purposes of public education in the U.S.? Have there been gaps between rhetoric and reality, and if so, why? Have there been purposes of public education that were educationally dysfunctional?

3. Why did teaching become women’s work? To what extent, if at all, has teaching as women’s work weakened the possibility of educational outcomes?

4. Did the history of American education begin in the New England colonies or in the southwest region of what became the United States?

5. In what ways did the Iroquois Great Law of Peace influence the writing of the U.S. Constitution?
Schedule

Reading assignments are to be completed before the indicated session.

August 25: Introduction: What is education, what is the scope of its history in the United States, and why may this past be important today?

August 26: Zinn, chapters 1 – 5; Urban & Wagoner, chapters 1 -2. Organize discussion leadership teams.

September 15: Zinn, chapters 6 – 10; Urban & Wagoner, chapters 3 – 4. Discussion of research projects.

September 16: Katz, including appendixes. Research proposals due.

September 29: Fairclough, Prologue and chapters one – six.

September 30: Fairclough, chapters seven – ten; Urban & Wagoner, chapter 5. Discuss essay examination.

October 20: Essay examination. No class meeting.


November 10: Kliebard, chapters 6 – 11, Afterword.

November 11: Zinn, chapters 11 – 13; Urban & Wagoner, chapters 6 – 8.

December 1: Zinn, chapters 14 – 20, Afterword. Updates on research projects.


December 8: Research presentations.

December 9: Research presentations; concluding discussion.