**SOCIOLOGY OF HIGHER EDUCATION**  
**SPRING 2011  COURSE OUTLINE**

SOC 450/550 section 001  
TTh 1400 –1550  
PHONE: (503) 725-3961  
E-mail: cfpc.pdx.edu  

PROFESSOR: Collier  
OFFICE: 217-0 CH  
OFFICE HOURS: TTh 900-945  
AND TTh 1245 – 1345  
or by arrangement

This class meets in Cramer Hall 375

TA: Claudia Plesa  
Office: CH 217-W  
E-mail: plesac@pdx.edu  

Phone: (503) 725-5820  
Hours: TTh 900-945 & 1245 – 1345  
& by arrangement

**IMPORTANT: use the emails on this syllabus to contact the professor and TA for this course – do not send emails from within D2L**

**TEXT:** This will be discussed in class  
Note: you have to have Adobe Acrobat Reader to open or view documents.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES:**  
In this course students will develop a sociological understanding of higher education, primarily in the United States. Using both theory and empirical evidence, we will explore issues relating to the impact of social factors on higher education. Particular attention will be paid to the role that higher education plays in promoting social mobility as well as social reproduction. Specific topics to be covered include models of higher education, the application of Sociological theories to issues in higher education, access to college, Affirmative Action, standardized testing, and class, race, and gender-based differences in educational outcomes and retention.

**LEARNING GOALS:**  
Upon completion of this course students will be able to demonstrate:  
• familiarity with major sociological theoretical perspectives on education as they apply to post-secondary education  
• understanding of how social inequalities in regard to race, class and gender affect post-secondary educational outcomes,  
• the ability to analyze educational processes and practices through a sociological lens -- an approach that incorporates both individuals and institutions.  
• the ability to develop and write essays that integrate multiple perspectives on Sociology of Higher Education-related topics

**PREREQUISITE:** SOC 300  
Due to the nature and amount of reading, as well as the pace of the class, it is essential that all students have a basic familiarity with sociological concepts. If you have questions as to your knowledge level regarding this material, please see me and we can discuss your level of preparation, and, if necessary, I can recommend a introductory text.
REQUIRED WORK:
Undergraduate Students:
- exam (2) 60% of course grade
- in-class writing 10%
- group presentation 20%
- class participation 10%
- total 100%

GRADUATE STUDENTS: see separate Graduate syllabus

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Grading Scale

Exams (2): The mid-term and final exams will be take-home, essay format. The mid-term exam will cover the materials from weeks 1 – 5: the questions will build upon the study guide questions / in-class writings for those weeks. The Final exam will cover the materials on from weeks 6 -10, and the questions will build upon the study guide questions / in-class writings for those weeks. It is all right to confer with other students, however I expect each student to "do her/his own work." I will mark down papers with obviously identical answers. Late exams will be penalized.

The two exams will count for 60% of your total course grade.

GROUP PROJECT:
The class will be divided into 5-6 small groups, each of which will develop a 20-25 minute in-depth exploration class on a specific issue relating to American higher education that will be presented to the entire class. Each group will be provided with material – e.g. a video (or part of a video) -- that is relevant to the issue being studied, and asked to incorporate that into the presentation. Directions for this assignment will be distributed in class on Tuesday April 5th.

The Group Project will count for 20% of your final grade.

In-Class Writing
Every Thursday, there will be a 15 minute, in-class writing assignment over that week's reading and lecture material. Students will be allowed to use their notes, however the 15 minute time limit will be enforced. IMPORTANT: You want to be prepared for the Thursday writing as the in-class writing questions will be difficult to answer in allotted time if you are not previously familiar with each week’s class material. If you miss the in-class writing AND you notify me, you can make the writing up during my office hours.

Papers will be scored on the following scale:
- "check+" = 2 pts
- "check " = 1.5 pts
- "check --" = 1 pt
The 10 in-class writing assignments will count for 10% of your final grade.

Class Participation: I expect all students to come to class prepared to participate in the class discussion. This includes being "caught up" with the reading assignment for that week’s class. I will ask questions over the reading material during the class lectures and will keep track of which students participate.

Class Participation will count for 10% of your final grade.

Study Sheets: A study sheet will be provided each Thursday for the following week’s set of required reading articles. NOTE: Study sheet questions make excellent in-class writing questions.

Missed In-Class Writing
If you are absent on the day when an in-class writing assignment is scheduled, please notify me (voice mail: 725-3961 / email cfpc@pdx.edu). In your message, please include when you plan to make-up the in-class writing assignment. If you are absent on the day of a in-class writing assignment, AND you have notified me before class that you are going to miss the writing assignment, you must make up the assignment BEFORE you attend the next session of this class, unless you make other arrangements with me.

Extra Credit Work: Film Reviews
There will 2 films shown in this class. Students can earn extra credit in this class by writing a 2 page summary and critique of each film (typewritten; no larger than 12 point print, double-spaced; no more than one inch margins -- top, bottom, left, right).

Each paper can be worth up to 3 points towards your final class score. A critique guideline will be passed out in class, along with specific due dates for each assignment. Papers are due in class one week after the period in which the film is shown. NO LATE PAPERS WILL BE ACCEPTED.

In an effort to make this class a learning experience for everyone, please be considerate of the other students in the class. Do not play walkmans or other radios/tape players in the class (even with headphones). Also, if you wish to carry on conversations with your friends, please do so outside of class; not during the lecture. If these or other types of distracting behavior persists, the students involved will be asked to leave the class.

week 1 March 29 - 31 Introduction to the Sociology of Higher Education / Sociological Perspectives on Higher Education: Interactionism

Readings: week 1

week 2 April 5 - 7 Sociological Perspectives on Higher Education: Structural-functionalism and Conflict theory

Readings: week 2


week 3 April 12 - 14 Social Mobility and Social Reproduction

Readings: week 3


week 4 April 19 - 21 Social Reproduction / Models of Educational Attainment and Persistence

Readings: week 4


week 5 April 26 - 28 Who Gets In? / Standardized tests


**Thursday April 28th Mid-term Exam distributed in class**

week 6 May 3 - 5 Affirmative Action and Alternative Admissions Standards

Readings: week 6


***Thursday May 5th Mid-term Exam DUE ***

week 7 May 10 – 12 Paying for College / Community Colleges

Readings: week 7


week 8 May 17 - 19 Race & Ethnicity Matters when it comes to Higher Education

Readings: week 8

Article 20. Steele 1999 " Thin Ice: Stereotype Threat and Black College Students," The Atlantic Magazine,


Experiences of First-Generation Latino Students.” Journal of Hispanic Higher Education, pp. 146-163

**week 9 May 24 - 26 Social Class Matters when it comes to Higher Education**

Readings: week 9


**week 10 May 31 – June 2 Gender Matters when it comes to Higher Education**

Readings: week 10


Article 28. Spalter-Roth, Kennelly and Erskine, 2006 "Resources or Rewards work family policies," American Sociological Association Research Brief

Article 29. Spalter-Roth, Erskine, and Besic, 2004 "Best Time to Have a Baby," American Sociological Association Research Brief

***** FINAL EXAM *****
Passed out at the end of class Thursday May 26th
Due in class during scheduled exam period
Monday June 6th 1015 -- 1115

The schedule listed in the course syllabus is subject to change during the term. Any changes will be announced in class.
1. All papers are to be typed or computer printed. Handwritten papers will not be accepted.

2. Please pay attention to deadlines for turning in papers.
   - The Term Paper is due, in class, Monday May 17th. Late Term Papers will be penalized 5 points per class period; term papers will not be accepted after Friday, May 21st.
   - The Final exam is due, in class, Monday June 7th. Late final exams will be penalized 5 points a day. The final exam will not be accepted after noon on Wednesday June 9th.
   - Late extra-credit papers will not be accepted.

3. All papers need to checked and corrected for spelling errors, and should be grammatically correct. If you require assistance in this area, the PSU writing lab (188F CH) can help. Papers with high numbers of spelling and grammatical errors will be penalized 20% of assignment grade.

4. Keep a copy of all papers you write for this course.