SOCIOLGY OF EDUCATION
Sociology 448/548 CRN #14722/14727
Fall 2011

Professor Lindsey Wilkinson
Office: Cramer Hall 217N; 725-3975
Office Hours: MW, 3-4 and by appointment
E-mail: lindsw@pdx.edu
Class Times: MWF, 11:30-12:45; CH 325

TA: Katsuya Oi
Office: Cramer Hall 217X
Office Hours: Thurs. 12-1
E-mail: oi.katsuya@gmail.com

COURSE DESCRIPTION
Through analysis of *The Wire: The Complete Fourth Season*, this course aims to develop your sociological understanding of education in the United States. Integrating theory and empirical evidence, this course will investigate questions related to the role of schooling in society, the social structure of schools, social stratification and social reproduction, the dynamics of race, class, and gender in education, student teacher relationships, school choice, and educational outcomes. Using an open systems perspective, we will explore the U.S. educational system as a “whole, integrated, dynamic entity” comprised of parts and processes: the educational organization (e.g. structure, curriculum), the larger environment in which this organization is embedded (e.g. the local community), educational inputs (e.g. students and staff), educational outputs (e.g. knowledge), and the relationships among these parts and processes (Ballantine and Spade, pp. 2-3).

COURSE MATERIALS
**Required:**
1. *Schools and Society: A Sociological Approach to Education*, Ballantine and Spade, 4th edition (2012). The text is available from PSU bookstore and will be available on reserve at the library.
2. Additional readings available will be posted on D2L.

**Optional:**
1. *The Wire: The Complete Fourth Season*. Producer David Simon. HBO, 2006. TV mini-series. Episodes of *The Wire* will be shown in class. In addition, DVDs will be available on reserve at the library. However, you may choose to purchase your own copy. I recently bought a copy from amazon for less than $30.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING (Total Points: 500)
1. **Exams.** Two take-home essay exams worth 150 points each. **Total points: 300.**
2. **In-class assignments/quizzes.** Each Friday we will have a 15 minute in-class writing assignment or quiz covering the material for the week (*The Wire* episode(s) and readings) worth 5 pts. each. You will be able to use your notes and textbook, but the questions may be difficult to answer in the allotted time if you are not previously familiar with the material. **Total points: 50.**
3. **Class participation.**
   a. **Reading cards:** Each Wednesday you will be required to bring in a reading card (31/2 x 5 note card) that includes three main points from the week’s readings and one concept, theory, etc. that you found confusing. If you didn’t find anything confusing,
tell me what you found most interesting about the readings. Note cards will be randomly collected four times (10 pts. each) throughout the term. **Total points: 40.**

b. *The Wire mini-research paper:* At the beginning of the term, each student will choose a topic related to the city of Baltimore. You are required to write a one-page (minimum), single-spaced summary of your topic and to be prepared to share your summary with the class. **Total points: 10.**

(4) **Response papers.** Four 1-1½ page, **single-spaced response papers** on a *Wire* episode of your choice. Each response paper will be worth 25 points. In the first paragraph of your paper, briefly summarize the elements of the plot that you are responding to. The rest of your paper should present an academic argument that integrates at least one theory and one empirical finding (evidence) from course readings and/or lecture. An academic argument includes 1) a thesis statement with a question and a position and 2) at least one claim that is supported by 3) evidence or theory. By evidence I mean findings based on empirical research, not merely your own anecdotal evidence. For more information about how to make an academic argument see [http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/588/01/](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/588/01/) or please ask me or the TA. An academic argument is not merely a summary. You must use the episode and course materials to make a sociological argument. Also, you must cite the source from which you obtain the evidence and theory you use in your paper (this includes an internal citation indicating Author and page #). Papers are due the Friday after the episode you are responding to as shown. **Total Points: 100**

**EXTRA CREDIT**
You may earn up to 10 extra credit points by completing an extra response paper.

**GRADING SCALE**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>94 – 100% (Excellent)</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90 – 93%</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>86 – 89%</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>82 – 85% (Good)</td>
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<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80 – 81%</td>
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<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>76 – 79%</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>72 – 75% (Satisfactory)</td>
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<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70-71%</td>
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<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>66 – 69%</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>62-65% (Inferior)</td>
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<tr>
<td>D-</td>
<td>60-61%</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>≤ 59 (Failure, no credit)</td>
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<td>P</td>
<td>≥ 70%</td>
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**COURSE SCHEDULE**
(subject to change)

**BS:** Ballantine & Spade  
**D2L:** Desire to Learn (PSU online learning)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Readings</th>
<th>Exams &amp; Due Dates</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Week 1. What is the sociology of education? Why <em>The Wire?</em></strong></td>
<td><strong>Episode 1: Boys of Summer</strong></td>
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| Mon., Sept. 26th to Fri., Sept. 30th | **BS:** Introduction (pp. 1-7)  
**D2L:** Slate: “The Wire on Fire”  
**D2L:** Bill Moyers’ Journal: Interview of David Simon  
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<td>Week 2. Intro to sociological perspectives on education; Intro to race/class inequality</td>
<td><strong>Episode 2: Soft Eyes</strong>&lt;br&gt;Mon., Oct. 3rd to Fri., Oct. 7th&lt;br&gt;BS: #1 Getting Started (pp. 9-29)&lt;br&gt;BS: #36 How Race and Education are Related (pp. 311-317)&lt;br&gt;BS: #42 The Achievement Gap: A Broader Picture (pp. 368-372)&lt;br&gt;BS: #14 Lasting Consequences of the Summer Learning Gap (pp. 116-121)</td>
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<td>Week 3. Schools as organizations/agents of socialization</td>
<td><strong>Episode 3: Home Rooms; Episode 4: Refugees</strong>&lt;br&gt;Mon., Oct. 10th to Fri., Oct. 14th&lt;br&gt;BS: #3 The School Class as a Social System (pp. 35-39)&lt;br&gt;BS: #4 Schooling in Capitalist Societies (pp. 40-43)&lt;br&gt;BS: #19 Learning the Student Role (pp. 149-153)&lt;br&gt;BS: #20 Real School: The Universal Drama (pp. 154-165)</td>
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<td>Week 4. Individual cognitive vs. non-cognitive traits; “flow”</td>
<td><strong>Episode 5: Alliances</strong>&lt;br&gt;Mon., Oct. 17th to Fri., Oct. 21st&lt;br&gt;D2L: After the Bell Curve&lt;br&gt;D2L: Do Skills and Behaviors in High School Matter?&lt;br&gt;D2L: Learning to Like Challenges&lt;br&gt;D2L: Aligned Ambitions&lt;br&gt;Optional: D2L: The 10,000 Hour Rule; Rice Paddies and Math Tests</td>
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<td>Week 5. Unequal educational environments?</td>
<td><strong>Episode 6: Margin of Error; Episode 7: Unto Others</strong>&lt;br&gt;Mon., Oct. 24th to Fri., Oct. 28th&lt;br&gt;BS: #32 Schools: The Great Equalizer (pp. 271-281)&lt;br&gt;BS: #38 Lessons Forgotten (pp. 333-340)&lt;br&gt;D2L: NPR: Supreme Court Quashes School Desegregation&lt;br&gt;BS: #33 Tracking in Mathematics and Science (pp. 283-293)&lt;br&gt;Optional: D2L: NYTtimes: What if the Secret to Success is Failure?</td>
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<td>Week 6. The family</td>
<td><strong>Episode 8: Corner Boys</strong>&lt;br&gt;Mon., Nov. 1st to Fri., Nov. 4th&lt;br&gt;BS: #8 Moments of Social Inclusion and Exclusion (pp. 74-83)&lt;br&gt;D2L: Social Capital in the Creation of Human Capital&lt;br&gt;D2L: Why Do Parents Become Involved?&lt;br&gt;D2L: Optimism and Achievement</td>
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<td>Week 7. Teachers</td>
<td><strong>Episode 9: Know Your Place</strong>&lt;br&gt;Mon., Nov. 7th to Wed., Nov. 9th&lt;br&gt;11/11 is a holiday – no class&lt;br&gt;BS: #25 Teacher Influences on Students’ Attachment to School (pp. 212-215)&lt;br&gt;D2L: Subtractive Schooling&lt;br&gt;BS: #24 Teacher Burnout (pp. 199-211)&lt;br&gt;Optional D2L: The Problem of Underqualified Teachers in American Secondary Schools</td>
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<td>Week 8. School organization/Reform</td>
<td><strong>Episode 10: Misgivings</strong>&lt;br&gt;Mon., Nov. 14th to Fri., Nov. 18th&lt;br&gt;BS: #11 No Child Left Behind (pp. 100-106)&lt;br&gt;BS: #21 Why Public Schools Need Democratic Governance (pp. 167-171)&lt;br&gt;BS: #40 Charter Schools and the Public Good (pp. 351-357)&lt;br&gt;BS: #7 Small Class Size and Its Effects (pp. 65-73)&lt;br&gt;Optional D2L: Are Failing Schools Really Failing?&lt;br&gt;D2L: Former ‘No Child Left Behind’ Advocate Turns Critic&lt;br&gt;D2L: YouTube: Michelle Rhee Discusses “Waiting for Superman”</td>
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| Mon., Nov. 21<sup>st</sup> to Wed., Nov. 23<sup>rd</sup> | **Week 9. Peers/Bullying/Masculinity**  
**Episode 11: A New Day**  
11/25 is a holiday – no class | BS: #27 Low-Level Violence (pp. 225-233)  
BS: #35 “Rednecks, “Rutters,” and ‘Rithmetic (pp. 303-309)  
BS: #37 Gender and Education (pp. 321-331)  
D2L: Adolescent Masculinity, Homophobia, and Violence | |
| Mon., Nov. 28th to Wed., Nov. 30th  
Fri., Dec. 2nd | **Week 10. Higher education & the transition to adulthood/Political systems**  
**Episode 12: That’s Got His Own; Episode 13: Final Grades** | BS: #52 Education and Social Stratification Processes in Comparative Perspective: School to Work (pp. 464-478)  
BS: #46 The Community College  
D2L: Career and College Advice to the Forgotten Half  
D2L: NPR: How to Avoid the Oil Curse  
D2L: YouTube: Michelle Rhee in DC | |
| Finals Time:  
Thurs., Dec. 8th  
12:30-2:20 | **Finals Week** | Due: Exam #2  
Due: Extra Credit | |

**COURSE POLICIES**

**Please turn off your cellphones,** ipods, etc. during class, and please turn your attention away from materials (i.e. newspapers) that are not relevant to the class.

**Deadlines and Make-ups.** Assignments and readings are to be completed by the beginning of class on their due date, and I prefer that you turn in a hard copy of all assignments. Prior approval is required for e-mailed assignments. *(E-mail assignments at your own risk – they sometimes get lost in my inbox.)* Late work is penalized 1/3 of a letter grade per each class day. Missed quizzes cannot be made-up without prior approval. Please document any family or medical emergency and notify the professor or TA before the class you will miss.

**Requirements for Papers.** All papers should be typed using 12-pt font and 1-inch margins. All papers should be checked and corrected for spelling and grammar errors. You may be marked down if you have multiple spelling and/or grammar errors. The PSU Writing Center is a great resource. Please take advantage of it: *(http://www.writingcenter.pdx.edu; 188F Cramer Hall, (725.3570).*

**D2L.** Course materials and grades will be available online at https://d2l.pdx.edu. I may also use D2L to communicate with the class. Please let me know if you are unable to access D2L. It is your responsibility to maintain an updated email address with D2L so that you can receive emails and announcements. **PLEASE DO NOT email me through D2L** The best way to get in touch with me is by emailing me directly at lindsw@pdx.edu. If you are having trouble accessing your D2L account or do not have an ODIN account please contact the OIT help desk (Smith Memorial Student Union (SMSU) 18) at 503-725-HELP (4357) or help@pdx.edu.

**Plagiarism.** Plagiarism is a serious offense than can result in a failing grade and other serious consequences, including expulsion. Plagiarism occurs when you utilize the ideas, expressions,
phrases or words of another person without correctly citing that person or source. Make sure you understand how to correctly cite sources, including when and how to paraphrase and quote.

**Students with disabilities**, who may require accommodations, are encouraged to contact the PSU Disabilities Resource Center (DRC) and the professor at the beginning of the term to arrange accommodations. The DRC is located in 435 Smith and can be contacted at 725-4150 or by email at drc@pdx.edu. Visit their site at www.pdx.edu/uasc/drc.

**Recommended Materials**
Here are some helpful on-line grammar and writing resources:
The OWL at Purdue University
http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/679/01/
The Emory Writing Center
http://www.writingcenter.emory.edu/writing.html

**Resources to Help You Succeed at PSU**
Writing Center (http://www.writingcenter.pdx.edu)
One-on-one help with writing, on a drop-in or appointment basis
188F Cramer Hall, 725.3570

Millar Library (http://www.lib.pdx.edu)
Reference desk, phone, IM, email, 24/7 chat: http://library.pdx.edu/askus.html
Research guides, research survival guide: http://library.pdx.edu/researchguides.html

Undergraduate Advising and Support Center (UASC) (http://www.pdx.edu/uasc)
Drop-in advising hours are Monday-Friday, 10-3 (subject to change) OR call to schedule an appointment
425 SMU, 725.4005, askuasc@pdx.edu

Student Health and Counseling Center (SHAC) (http://www.shac.pdx.edu)
Counseling, psychological evaluation and intervention, testing services, and all health-related concerns
1880 SW 6th Ave., 725-2800