Sociology of Education
Sociology 548 CRN #13451
GRADUATE COURSE
Fall 2012

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*, 12:45-1:50; NH 350

COURSE DESCRIPTION
Through analysis of The Wire: The Complete Fourth Season, the 448 section of this course aims to develop students’ sociological understanding of education in the United States. Integrating theory and empirical evidence, the 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.

COURSE MATERIALS
(1) Schools and Society: A Sociological Approach to Education, Ballantine and Spade, 4th edition (2012). The text is available from the PSU bookstore and will be available on reserve at the library.
(2) Additional readings posted on D2L.
(3) The Wire: The Complete Fourth Season. Producer David Simon. HBO, 2006. TV mini-series. DVDs will be available on reserve at the library. However, I would recommend purchasing your own copy. Individual episodes (and the entire season) are available for purchase at amazon.com and from itunes. They are relatively inexpensive. THIS IS OPTIONAL FOR 548 STUDENTS (SEE BELOW).

COURSE STRUCTURE
*The 448 section of this course will be taught using a hybrid format, so we will only meet twice a week (Mon. and Wed.). We will not meet on Fridays; for 448 students, Fridays should be spent reviewing assigned course readings, viewing The Wire episodes, and completing your participation in on-line discussions (on D2L). For 548 students, every other Friday will be used for our bi-weekly seminar in which we will discuss class material and additional articles assigned for each week’s meeting. I expect 548 students to come to the seminar having read the assigned material and prepared to participate in the discussion. I will lead the discussion for the first seminar. In subsequent seminars, students will be assigned to lead the discussion of the readings for that week. For the most part, Monday and Wednesday classes will consist of lectures covering the assigned 448 readings. I will post lectures (PowerPoint slides) prior to class
meetings. At the beginning of each week I will post questions to consider as you complete the assigned 448 readings.

**COURSE WEBSITE**
Course materials, grades, and on-line discussions 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.

**548 REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING (TOTAL POINTS: 600)**

*OPTION 1*
(1) **Exams.** Two take-home essay exams worth 150 points each. **Total points: 300.**
(2) **In-class assignments/quizzes.** These assignments/quizzes will be, for the most part, unannounced in order to keep you motivated to attend class and to complete the assigned readings prior to class. We will have 6 in-class assignments/quizzes, worth 10 points each, and your lowest score will be dropped. **Total points: 50.**
(3) **D2L discussion participation.** There will be seven online discussions under “Discussions” on D2L based on the weekly readings and *The Wire* episodes, and your two lowest discussion participation scores will be dropped. Further details about discussions will be provided in class and posted on D2L. **Total points: 50.**
(4) **Education research assignment.** Using the social science citation index, you will be required to identify an educational research question of interest to you, to briefly summarize the previous research done on this question, and to identify a research gap related to this question. Further instructions will be provided in class. **Total points: 50.**
(5) **The Wire research assignment.** You will be required to choose a topic related to *The Wire* and the educational system (broadly) and to explore how this topic is experienced within the city of Baltimore and the city of Portland. You are required to write a two-page (minimum), summary of your topic and to be prepared to share your summary with the class. Further instructions will be provided in class. **Total points: 50.**
(6) **Bi-weekly seminar reading summaries.** For each assigned seminar reading, I expect a ½-3/4 page typed, single-spaced summary, including one question you have about the readings, that will be due at the beginning of each seminar. For example, for seminar #2 there are two assigned readings. Thus, each student should turn in two reading summaries. The student(s) leading the seminar will turn in three reading summaries (see below). Students will also sign up to lead discussion for one seminar during the term. The student(s) responsible for discussion will also be required to assign one additional reading for the seminar she/he is leading and must provide a reading summary of the chosen reading for each seminar participant. The additional reading should be sociological in nature, be related to the topic of the seminar, and be posted on D2L by Monday 5pm the week of the seminar. Each set of reading summaries will be worth 10 points. **Total points: 50.**
(7) **Presentation.** The presentation should be based on the topic you choose for your education research assignment or for *The Wire* research assignment and constructed using PowerPoint.
I expect that your presentation will consist of about 15-20 slides but no more than 30 slides and will last about 10 minutes and no more than 15 minutes. **Total points: 50.**

*OPTION 2*
1. **Exams.** Two take-home essay exams worth 150 points each. **Total points: 300.**
2. **In-class assignments/quizzes.** These assignments/quizzes will be, for the most part, unannounced in order to keep you motivated to attend class and to complete the assigned readings prior to class. We will have 6 in-class assignments/quizzes, worth 10 points each, and your lowest score will be dropped. **Total points: 50.**
3. **Bi-weekly seminar reading summaries.** For each assigned seminar reading, I expect a ½-3/4 page typed, single-spaced summary, including one question you have about the readings, that will be due at the beginning of each seminar. For example, for seminar #2 there are two assigned readings. Thus, each student should turn in two reading summaries. The student(s) leading the seminar will turn in three reading summaries (see below). Students will also sign up to lead discussion for one seminar during the term. The student(s) responsible for discussion will also be required to assign one additional reading for the seminar she/he is leading and must provide a reading summary of the chosen reading for each seminar participant. The additional reading should be sociological in nature, be related to the topic of the seminar, and be posted on D2L by Monday 5pm the week of the seminar. Each set of reading summaries will be worth 10 points. **Total points: 50.**
4. **Term Paper.** Choose an education topic (e.g. tracking, cultural capital, educational reform, NCLB) that you’d like to understand better and to which you are comfortable applying one or more sociological perspectives. The term paper should be approximately 12 double-spaced, typed pages and should include at least 10 academic references (from peer-reviewed sociology/education journals). More information on the term paper will be distributed in the seminar. **Total points: 150.**
5. **Presentation.** The presentation should be based on the topic you choose for your term paper and constructed using PowerPoint -- about 15-20 slides but no more than 30 slides. I expect that your presentation will last about 10 minutes and no more than 15 minutes. Please email me with your term paper and presentation topic by Friday, Oct. 12th (by 11:59 pm). **Total points: 50.**

**COURSE SCHEDULE (SEMINAR READINGS/DATES POSTED AT END)**

(subject to change)

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<th>BS: Ballantine &amp; Spade;</th>
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| Week 1. What is the sociology of education? Why *The Wire?*  
Episode 1: Boys of Summer | BS: Introduction (pp. 1-7)  
D2L: Slate: “The Wire on Fire”  
D2L: Bill Moyers’ Journal: Interview of David Simon  
http://www.pbs.org/moyers/journal/04172009/watch.html | |
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| **Week 2. Intro to sociological perspectives on education; Intro to race/class inequality**  
Mon., Oct. 1st to Fri., Oct. 5th | BS: #1 Getting Started (pp. 9-29)  
BS: #36 How Race and Education are Related (pp. 311-317)  
BS: #42 The Achievement Gap: A Broader Picture (pp. 368-372)  
BS: #14 Lasting Consequences of the Summer Learning Gap (pp. 116-121) | **Episode 2: Soft Eyes**           |
| **Week 3. Schools as organizations/agents of socialization**  
Mon., Oct. 8th to Fri., Oct. 12th | BS: #3 The School Class as a Social System (pp. 35-39)  
BS: #5 Conflict Theory of Educational Stratification (pp. 44-50)  
BS: #19 Learning the Student Role (pp. 149-153)  
BS: #20 Real School: The Universal Drama (pp. 154-165) | **Episode 3: Home Rooms; Episode 4: Refugees** |
| **Week 4. Individual cognitive vs. non-cognitive traits; “flow”**  
Mon., Oct. 15th to Fri., Oct. 19th | D2L: After the Bell Curve  
D2L: Do Skills and Behaviors in High School Matter?  
D2L: Learning to Like Challenges  
D2L: Aligned Ambitions  
Optional:  
D2L: The 10,000 Hour Rule; Rice Paddies and Math Tests | **Episode 5: Alliances**           |
| **Week 5. Unequal educational environments?**  
Mon., Oct. 22nd to Fri., Oct. 26th | BS: #32 Schools: The Great Equalizer (pp. 271-281)  
BS: #38 Lessons Forgotten (pp. 333-340)  
D2L: NPR: Supreme Court Quashes School Desegregation  
BS: #33 Tracking in Mathematics and Science (pp. 283-293)  
Optional: D2L: NYTimes: What if the Secret to Success is Failure? | **Episode 6: Margin of Error; Episode 7: Unto Others**  
DUE: Exam #1 (Fri., Oct. 26th) |
| **Week 6. The family**  
Mon., Oct. 29th to Fri., Nov. 2nd | BS: #8 Moments of Social Inclusion and Exclusion (pp. 74-83)  
D2L: Social Capital in the Creation of Human Capital  
D2L: Why Do Parents Become Involved?  
D2L: Optimism and Achievement | **Episode 8: Corner Boys**         |
| **Week 7. Teachers**  
Mon., Nov. 5th to Fri., Nov. 9th | BS: #25 Teacher Influences on Students’ Attachment to School (pp. 212-215)  
D2L: Subtractive Schooling  
BS: #24 Teacher Burnout (pp. 199-211)  
Optional  
D2L: The Problem of Underqualified Teachers in American Secondary Schools | **Episode 9: Know Your Place**     |
| **Week 8. School organization/Reform**  
Mon., Nov. 12th is a HOLIDAY – no class  
Wed., Nov. 14th to | BS: #11 No Child Left Behind (pp. 100-106)  
BS: #21 Why Public Schools Need Democratic Governance (pp. 167-171)  
BS: #40 Charter Schools and the Public Good (pp. 351-357) | **Episode 10: Misgivings**         |
### Date
Fri., Nov. 16th

#### Readings
- **BS**: #7 Small Class Size and Its Effects (pp. 65-73)
- Optional
- **D2L**: Are Failing Schools Really Failing?
- **D2L**: Former 'No Child Left Behind' Advocate Turns Critic
- **D2L**: YouTube: Michelle Rhee Discusses “Waiting for Superman”

### Week 9. Peers/Bullying/Masculinity

#### Episode 11: A New Day

- **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

### Exams & Due Dates

- **DUE**: Education research paper (Nov. 21st)

### 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**: YouTube: Michelle Rhee in DC

### Finals Week

- **DUE**: Exam #2
- **DUE**: Extra Credit

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### Seminar Schedule

(Subject to change)

### Readings

#### All readings can be found on D2L

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**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.

**Net Etiquette:** In all of your course communications, whether formal or informal, you are required to observe the rules of netiquette. They include the following:

**General Rules from PSU D2L help:**

- Avoid using all CAPS as it can give the impression that you are shouting. If you want to emphasize a point, use *asterisks* around a word.
- Avoid personal attacks, otherwise known as "flaming." If you read a message that you suspect might be a personal attack, resist the temptation to fire off a response. Instead, let your response sit before sending or request that your instructor resolve the situation.
- If you disagree with a fellow student, describe your perspective clearly and politely rather than primarily criticizing her/his comments. Avoid any personal criticism or potentially offensive language.

**Additional Rules for the Class:**

- Be respectful when making a comment or responding to others’ comments. This rule is the same as for face-to-face classroom behavior. However, as there is no body language and tone of voice in our online communications, please use formal English appropriately.
- Be extra polite, careful, and kind about how you express yourself while posting to a discussion board, and emailing me or the TA.
- Avoid those thousand-word lengthy posts, and avoid posting dozens of messages a week. In the interests of time only, which I know none of you have enough of, please work on being succinct.
- Avoid the twitter and text message abbreviations. Not everyone knows them.
- Finally, if you run into any netiquette-related problems—if something has offended or hurt your feelings, for instance—please e-mail me directly about it. I would like to be aware of any problems.

**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, 1-inch margins (all the way around), and double-spacing. 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](http://www.writingcenter.pdx.edu); 188F Cramer Hall, (725.3570)).

**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](http://www.pdx.edu/uasc/drc).