**Course Instructor:**
• Charles Dorn
• Office: Riley House #208
• E-mail: cdorn@bowdoin.edu  Phone: 798-4145
• Office Hours: By appointment.

**Course Time & E-mail:**
• Tuesday & Thursday, 10:00-11:25
• Class e-mail: educ1101B@bowdoin.edu

**Course Overview:**

“Unless the schools provide our children with a vision of human possibility that enlightens and empowers them with knowledge and taste, they will simply play their role in someone else's marketing schemes. Unless they understand deeply the sources of our democracy, they will take it for granted and fail to exercise their rights and responsibilities.”

--Diane Ravitch, *Making Good Citizens*

What is the purpose of America’s public schools? Or are there many purposes? Should schools educate students to reproduce society as it currently exists? Or to foster social, political and economic change? Why is America’s “system” of public education as it is? Is it even a system? Whose interests are served by school reforms?

The primary objective of this course is to examine the structural and institutional dilemmas confronting public schooling in the United States today. By approaching these dilemmas as unsolved puzzles instead of systematic failures, we will gain important insights into the challenges confronting a democratic society historically committed to the public provision of education. We will employ a mix of reading, discussion, and class-based exercises to explore important issues in contemporary American education, including school reform and finance, desegregation, pedagogical innovation, school choice, and standards and accountability.

Through this course you will also be introduced to teaching in public school classrooms by spending a half-day observing in a local school. We will discuss your classroom observations and relate them to both the Maine Beginning Teaching Standards and to the Education Department’s Bowdoin Teacher Scholars program.

**Course Readings:**
• Grant, Gerald. *Hope and Despair in the American City: Why there are No Bad Schools in Raleigh*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009.
• Articles, essays, and reports available on library reserve.

**Participation and Grading Policy:**
• You are expected to attend every class meeting over the course of the semester. If for some reason you will miss a class, please notify me in advance by e-mail. Your preparation for class, your presence, and your active participation during class meetings is essential.
• Grades are based on the successful and timely completion of four assignments. These assignments and their corresponding values are noted below:
  • Day in School Essay: 25%
  • Mid-term Exam: 25%
  • Critical Book Review: 25%
  • Final Exam: 25%
• Completion of these assignments, on time, is a course requirement. Only in unusual circumstances will extensions be granted.

**Evening Event:**
• **Speaker – Dale Russakoff—The Prize**
  On May 3 from 7:00 to 9:00PM, in Kresge Auditorium, Dale Russakoff will speak about *The Prize*.

**Assignments & Due Dates:**
• **Day in School Essay**
  You will spend a half-day observing a student in a local school (your placement will be arranged for you). Following your day in school, you will write an essay in which you both reflect on your experience and interpret your observations.
  **Essay Due Date:** Two weeks following your scheduled Day in School.

• **Mid-term Exam**
  The mid-term is an in-class essay exam that requires you to draw on the course readings to respond to a central issue regarding American education.
  **Mid-term Exam Date:** March 8

• **Critical Book Review**
  You will write a critical book review of one of the following four books that we will read and discuss in class:
  • Gerald Grant’s *Hope and Despair in the American City*
  • Denise Clark Pope’s “Doing School”
  • Amanda Ripley’s *The Smartest Kids in the World*
  • Dale Russakoff’s *The Prize*
  **Review Due Date:** Two weeks following your book’s in-class discussion.
Final Exam
As with the mid-term, the final exam will consist of an in-class essay.

Final Exam Date: Thursday, May 19, 9:00AM-12:00PM

Please Note: You are required to take the exam during the scheduled exam period, so plan your departure from Bowdoin at the end of the semester accordingly. Early exams will not be administered.

Course Schedule

January 26: Introductions and Logistics
• Discuss syllabus and course readings.

January 28: What is a “Public School”? Roundtable

February 2: Day in School & Critical Book Review
• Sarah Chingos in class to discuss Day in School placements.

February 4: What Americans Want from Public Schools
• Hochschild & Scovronick -- Introduction and Chapter 1.

February 9: The Shopping Mall High School

February 11: Book Discussion #1 – The Smartest Kids in the World
February 16: Desegregation – History

February 18: Desegregation – Contemporary Issues
- Hochschild & Scovronick -- Chapter 2.

February 23: Book Discussion #2 – *Hope and Despair in the American City*


*** “Diversity and Affirmative Action” reading -- distributed in previous class.***

March 1: The Achievement Gap
- Hochschild & Scovronick -- Chapter 4

March 3: Educating All Students—English Language Learners
- Hochschild & Scovronick -- Chapter 6.

March 8: Mid-term Exam

March 10: No Class
March 29: Religion & Multiculturalism

- Hochschild & Scovronick -- Chapter 7.

March 31: Patriotism

- Dorn, Charles and Randall Curren. Patriotic Education: Realizing America in a Global Age, Introduction and Chapters 1-3.

April 5: Book Discussion #3 – Doing School


April 7: Gender


April 12: School Finance

- Hochschild & Scovronick -- Chapter 3.
April 14: Teachers and Teacher Education

April 19: Rural Schooling

April 21: Book Discussion #4 – The Prize

April 26: Book Discussion and Day in School Debrief

April 28: No Class (Read Ravitch)

May 3: Reign of Error—Questions, Answers, and Issues
• Ravitch, Diane. Reign of Error: The Hoax of the Privatization Movement and the Danger to America’s Public Schools.

AND

May 3: Evening Event – Speaker – Dale Russakoff—7:00-9:00PM—Kresge Auditorium

May 5: Reign of Error—Issues and Solutions
• Ravitch, Diane. Reign of Error: The Hoax of the Privatization Movement and the Danger to America’s Public Schools.

May 10: Wrapping Up
• Hochschild & Scovronick -- Chapter 8.

May 19: Final Exam, 9:00AM-12:00PM
• The final exam must be taken during the scheduled time.
Your success in this course is heavily reliant upon clear and concise writing. You should make good use of the Bowdoin Writing Project to ensure excellent writing.

**Writing Project Workshops**  
Location: First Floor Kanbar Hall  
To reserve a conference, go to the Writing Project website at:  
[http://academic.bowdoin.edu/writing-project/](http://academic.bowdoin.edu/writing-project/)

During Workshop sessions, trained Writing Assistants conduct 45-minute conferences with students writing papers in any course. Writers may come to the workshops at any phase of the writing process, from brainstorming to defining a focus, to structuring and refining an argument, to paragraph-and sentence-level editing. The Writing Assistants will help students clarify, focus, develop, and organize their ideas, preparing them to take the next step toward successful revision. While the assistants offer constructive responses at any point in the writing process, conferences are usually most productive when the writer has already written a thoughtful draft.

**Brief Criteria for Assessing Written Work**

**Completeness**
- Are all parts of the assignment included?

**Accuracy**
- Is what you say correct and supported by evidence?
- Accuracy refers to your summary of main points, your use of concepts learned in class, use of evidence from readings and other sources, choice of words, precision in quoting, and use of statistics and citations.

**Analysis**
- Are the main ideas in an argument you are analyzing (or an argument that you are constructing) identified?
- Have you identified and analyzed implicit assumptions?
- Is the logic of the argument coherent and internally consistent?
- Is the evidence used to support the argument examined for strengths and weaknesses?

**Quality of Writing**
- Will the reader find the writing clear?
- Will the reader find the writing succinct?
- Is the writing organized to help the reader move easily from the beginning to the end of paper (headings, etc.)?
- Are key statements supported by examples, details, etc.?
- Are positions taken in the paper supported by both evidence (facts, details, etc.) and argument (reasoning that includes analogies, metaphors, examples, etc.)?
- Will the reader find the overall piece of writing coherent?
ACADEMIC HONESTY

Using someone else’s words or ideas (even when put into your own words) demands that you cite and properly acknowledge them. Please ask if you are uncertain what this means. Plagiarism, either intentional or unintentional, is a very serious violation of the Bowdoin College honor code and academic standards in general. Cases of academic dishonesty will be brought before the Judicial Board without exception.

Please refer to The Bowdoin College Academic Honor Code at: http://www.bowdoin.edu/studentaffairs/forms/pdf/honor_code.pdf