EDUC 2088/3088: Urban Education Reform
WWPH 4119
Spring 2016
Tuesdays, 9:30am-11:55am

Lori Delale-O’Connor, Ph.D.
Email: loridoc@pitt.edu
Office Hours: By appointment, WWPH 4118

The syllabus is a living document. I reserve the right to change the class syllabus to meet class needs.

Course Description
This course is designed to provide both a background understanding of urban education, as well as expose students to particular reforms in urban education. Students will examine selected contemporary reform efforts in education, in particular studying the theories of change, implementation challenges and critiques associated with these different reforms and reform movements as they apply to urban districts and schools. We will look at the theoretical underpinnings of particular reforms, as well as why education policies have succeeded or failed, and the consequences of these outcomes.

Course Objectives
By the end of this course, students will be able to view urban education through a multidisciplinary lens and understand the ways that broader social, cultural, historical, political, and economic forces have shaped their development and current structure and function. Through this course, students will develop a working knowledge of key concepts and theoretical frameworks in the field of urban education. Students will further be able to analyze and reflect critically on both prior and current educational reform initiatives as connected to their impact on urban schools and the students, teachers, and families connected to them.

Course Policies

Attendance—Attendance and punctuality are basic requirements for an effective discussion and success in this course. Beyond that, each person's frequency and quality of contribution to the class discussion will be assessed and reflected in the class participation score. If you cannot attend a class it is your responsibility to inform me as soon as you are able, in advance of your absence if possible.
**Email and Laptops**—Please check your email regularly—BUT not during class. 😊 While students are encouraged to bring in laptop computers to type notes, you are expected to be engaged in class throughout each session.

**Written Assignments**—All written assignments should be typed, double-spaced in Times New Roman, 12-point font, one-inch margins, and should follow the guidelines of the APA Publication Manual, Sixth Edition.

**Cell Phones**—Please turn cell phones to silent during class time.

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**University of Pittsburgh Policies and Regulations**

**Americans with Disabilities Act:** If you have a disability for which you are or may be requesting an accommodation, you are encouraged to contact both your instructor and Disability Resources and Services (DRS), 216 William Pitt Union, (412) 648-7890 or (412) 383-7355 (TTY), as early as possible in the term. DRS will verify your disability and determine reasonable accommodations for this course.

**Nondiscrimination:** The University of Pittsburgh prohibits and will not engage in discrimination or harassment on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, sex, age, marital status, familial status, sexual orientation, disability, or status as a disabled veteran.

**Academic Integrity:** Students in this course are expected to comply with the University of Pittsburgh Policy on Academic Integrity. Any student(s) suspected of violating this obligation for any reason during the course will be required to participate in the procedural process, initiated at the instructor level, as outlined in the University Guidelines on Academic Integrity.

**Statement On Classroom Recording**
To ensure the free and open discussion of ideas, students may not record classroom lectures, discussion and/or activities without the advance written permission of the instructor, and any such recording properly approved in advance can be used solely for the student’s own private use.
**Course Readings**

**Course Books**


**Course Articles**

**Course Articles**—All articles will be available through Pitt Box (https://pitt.account.box.com)


**Course Assignments**

**Review/Referee Report** (15%)

*Due: In class Tuesday, October 4, 2016*

For this course you are expected to write a review/referee report. A referee report is a critical review of a paper, typically at the request of a journal or book volume editor. This is an important type of writing in the academic world, and it is useful to understand (and practice!) how to complete one successfully. This assignment will use an assigned outside article/working paper and materials from the course. Although the paper is not meant to be a research paper, I encourage you to draw from other courses you have taken, as well as additional research and reading to make your review comprehensive and useful. The referee report should be approximately 3 to 5 double-spaced pages.

We will discuss this paper more in class, and review some referee reports, however it is helpful to have a general understanding of what a report like this should contain. Although journals editors will send specific instructions and questions to act as guidelines for your review, referee reports typically begin with an overview of the article’s main point and situate the article in its theoretical and/or topical. The rest of the report should be a critical analysis or the paper. Depending on the paper, this may include addressing questions such as: Does the paper achieve its stated purpose/goal? Is it well situated within the literature? Does the paper address the relevant and recent literature within the field or topic? How well does the paper use the stated methods and or/theory? Is the paper comprehensible? What do you as the reviewer suggest that the author(s) do to correct errors/omissions/etc. that you have found?

**District Report** (20%)

*Due: In class Tuesday, November 8, 2016*

For this course, you will complete a paper that examines reform in a particular urban district. The district must serve a large, diverse population of students (diverse suggests ethnic, racial, linguistic, and cultural plurality amongst the students and families living in that particular city). You will provide an overview of the district, the reform(s) you are examining and how this district implemented them, the political and social context of the reform; differences in implementation (if any) across schools, and a critical assessment of the implementation and outcomes of this. The critical assessment should touch explicitly on the discussion topics in the course. Papers should be approximately 10 pages double-spaced (12-point font with 1-inch margins), excluding references.
Lead Class (15%)
Due: Varies by individual

During this course, you will lead the first part of one class session. During this hour, you will review and synthesize the topic and some of the readings for the session, as well as lead the class in discussion. While you are expected to cover the material, you can take “creative license” with how you present. Feel free to use video clips (think documentary segments, YouTube clips, etc.), games or other strategies to engage your classmates. You may provide a handout or other materials to guide your instructional time, but it is not necessary.

Final Paper *(25%)
Due: by 3:00 PM Friday, December 16, 2016

This assignment will vary by student, but this paper should connect the readings and understanding gained in class with a topic that is meaningful to your current work/research interests. All students are expected to meet with me by November 1st (ideally earlier!) to discuss potential topics, format and product for this assignment. The final product should be the equivalent of a 20 page paper.

Presentation of Final Paper (15%)
Due: In class Tuesday, December 13, 2016

During our final class meeting, you will conduct a 15-20 minute presentation and discussion of your final paper. Be prepared to provide an overview of the education reform around which your project centers, connect this to the course readings (and other relevant readings on which the class may need background) and pose/respond to questions for discussion.

Class Participation (10%) For class participation you will be evaluated on the following:
- Are you in class and on time?
- Do you attend class regularly?
- Do you respond and contribute to class discussions and to activities drawing from the readings?
- Is it evident that you have completed the readings?

Grading
1. Review/Referee Report—15%
2. District Report—20%
3. Lead Class—15%
4. Final Paper—25%
5. Final Presentation—15%
6. Class Participation and Attendance—10%
Course Schedule

Part 1: Setting the stage and understanding the context

Tuesday, August 30, 2016
Class Session 1: Getting started—Defining “urban education” and the current landscape of urban education

Discussion: What is the meaning of “urban education”? How do we define urban? Why does the definition matter? What are the connections and difference between urban and other types of education (suburban, rural)? What do urban schools look like today? How does perception compare to reality? What are the “issues” that reform and reforms seek to address?

Read— Milner, 2012 (In class)

Tuesday, September 6, 2016
Class Session 2: Historical understanding of urban education and education reform
Discussion: What are the purposes of schooling and the role of education, particularly in urban schools? How did we get to the current state of urban education in the U.S.? Are we always just tinkering toward utopia?

Read— Tyack, 1974, pp. 28-58
Tyack & Cuban, 1995

Tuesday, September 13, 2016—NO CLASS MEETING

Tuesday, September 20, 2016
Class Session 3: Neoliberalism and reform
Discussion: What is “neoliberalism”? How does neoliberalism connect to education reform broadly?

Read—Lipman, 2011
Apple, 2006
Lakes & Carter, 2011
Part 2: Situating reform in structural, social and cultural aspects of society

**Tuesday, September 27, 2016**
**Class Session 4: Race and reform**
Discussion: What is the salience of race (historically and contemporarily) in education reform? What are some specifically race-focused reform efforts and how did/do they connect with and influence other reform initiatives?

*Read*— Kozol, 2012
Ladson-Billings, 2004
Orfield and Lee, 2005

**Tuesday, October 4, 2016—REFEREE REPORT DUE IN CLASS**
**Class Session 5: Bilingual and immigrant education**
Discussion: What is the salience of language difference and immigration status (historically and contemporarily) in education reform? What are some specifically language- and immigration-focused reform efforts and how did/do they connect with and influence other reform initiatives?

*Read*— Blaise, 2015
Mora, 2002
Ovando, 2003

**Tuesday, October 11, 2016**
**Class Session 6: Special education**
Discussion: What are some special education-focused reform efforts and how did/do they connect with and influence other reform initiatives?

*Read*— Artiles, 2003
Skiba, Simmons, Ritter, Gibb, Rausch, Cuadrado, & Chung, 2008

**Tuesday, October 18, 2016—NO CLASS DUE TO UNIVERSITY CALENDAR MONDAY**
**CLASSES MEET**
Part 3: Analyzing specific reforms

We will look at some specific reforms, how they vary in implementation and outcome, how they are situated in the reform “landscape,” and how they connect to Part 1 and Part 2 of the course.

Tuesday, October 25, 2016
Class Session 7: School choice

Read—Darby & Saatcioglu, 2015
Berends, 2015
Teske & Schneider, 2001

Tuesday, November 1, 2016
Class Session 8: Comprehensive school reform

Read—Desimone, 2002
Datnow, 2005
Cooper & Jordan, 2003

Tuesday, November 8, 2016—DISTRICT ANALYSIS PAPER DUE IN CLASS
Class Session 9: Race to the Top

Read—McGuinn, 2011
Childs & Russell, 2016

Tuesday, November 15, 2016
Class Session 10: Reforms to teaching as education reform

Read—Milner, 2013
Heilig & Jez, 2014
SKIM Silva, McKie, Knechtel, Gleason & Makowsky, 2014

Tuesday, November 22, 2016
Class Session 11: Community-Based Education Reform

Read—Green & Gooden, 2014
Horsford & Sampson, 2014
Hopson, 2014
**Tuesday, November 29, 2016**
Class Session 12: Reform beyond schools

Read—Anyon, 2014

**Tuesday, December 6, 2016**
Class Session 13: Bringing it all together—Why is education reform so challenging?

Read—Payne, 2008

**Tuesday, December 13, 2016—PRESENTATION OF FINAL PAPER DUE**
Class Session 14: Student Presentations

Final Paper Due: Friday, December 16, by 3:00 PM
Please bring a hard copy to Center for Urban Education