

Race, Class, and Educational Policy

Educational Studies (EDUC) 309

Trinity College

Fall 2021 | Tue/Thu 1:30–2:45pm | Seabury Hall S204

Professor: Elise Castillo, Ph.D. (she/her)

Office: McCook 318

Email: Elise.Castillo@trincoll.edu (I aim to return emails within 24 hours, except on Saturdays)

Office Hours

Tue, 3:00–4:00pm; Wed, 10:00am–12:00pm; And by appointment (Email me and suggest a few times)

My office hours are times that I reserve specifically for meeting with my students. You do not need to sign up in advance. During office hours, I am happy to answer your questions about class material or assignments or offer academic advice or mentorship. Generally, I meet with each student for 15 minutes, so it's helpful if you come with a clear sense of what you'd like to discuss so that we can make the most of our time together.

Course Description

In this upper-level undergraduate seminar, our primary goal is to work collaboratively to research and analyze race, class, and educational policy. We will closely read studies by other authors and conduct our own collaborative research project. We will explore the following questions: How do various scholars make sense of and explain race, class, and educational inequity? What role have educational policies played in the production and reproduction of racial and socioeconomic inequities? How do policies attempt to address and remedy these inequities?

For the Community Learning component of this course, we will interview public school teachers in Connecticut to address the following research questions: To what extent are Connecticut public school teachers incorporating the histories and experiences of people of color in the curriculum? What is working well, and what, if any, challenges do they face? We will present study findings to public school teachers at nearby Hartford Public Schools to help them design ethnic studies courses, specifically in Black, Latinx, and Puerto Rican studies, which, per state policy, all Connecticut public high schools are required to offer beginning fall 2022.

Learning Objectives

Over the course of the semester, you will be able to:

- Explain how and why race and class inequity exist and persist in U.S. schools
- Describe, analyze, and evaluate policy approaches to addressing educational inequity
- Engage in primary research on educational (in)equity
- Employ credible evidence and analysis to craft persuasive oral and written arguments

Course Materials

The following book is required and available at the Trinity College library course reserves or to purchase at the Trinity College bookstore:

Ewing, E. (2018). *Ghosts in the Schoolyard: Racism and School Closings on Chicago's South Side*. University of Chicago Press.

Additional readings will be posted as PDFs to our course Moodle site. Alternatively, for a fee of around \$15 (exact amount TBD), I will provide printed copies of these readings throughout the semester. Readings may be subject to change.

Course Assignments and Evaluation

Assignment	Due Date	Points Possible
Class Participation	Every class	10 x 2 = 20
4 Short Essays (~500 words each)		
Short essay #1	Sunday, Sept. 26, 11:59pm ET	5
Short essay #2	Sunday, Oct. 10, 11:59pm ET	5
Short essay #3	Sunday, Dec. 5, 11:59pm ET	5
Short essay #4	Tue., Dec. 14, beginning of class	5
Class Research Project		
CITI ethics training	Sunday, Sept. 12, 11:59pm ET	2
Interview transcript	48 hours after interview	5
Presentation slide	Thurs., Oct. 28, end of class	2
Interpreting interviews essay	Monday, Nov. 1, 11:59pm ET	20
Class slide deck evaluation	Completed by guest evaluators by Sunday, Nov. 7; Self-reflection by Tue., Nov. 9, end of class	10
Research-Based Op-Ed Essay		
First draft	Sunday, Nov. 14, 11:59pm ET	10
Peer review	Tue., Nov. 16, 11:59pm ET	5 x 2 = 10
Final draft	Tue., Nov. 23, 11:59pm ET	15
Optional submission to <i>CT Mirror</i>	Sunday, Dec. 5, 11:59pm ET	2 (extra credit)
		Total possible: 114

Your final course grade will be calculated by dividing the total points earned by the total points possible.

The grading scale is as follows:

90 to 100% = A (outstanding work)

80 to 89% = B (good work)

70 to 79 % = C (adequate work)

Below 70% = D or F (unsatisfactory work)

Each letter grade is divided into equal thirds for minus (-), regular, and plus (+) letter grades (e.g. 80 to 83.33 is a B-, 83.34 to 86.67 is a B, and 86.68 to 89.99 is a B+).

Class Attendance and Participation

"As a classroom community, our capacity to generate excitement is deeply affected by our interest in one another, in hearing one another's voices, in recognizing one another's presence."
bell hooks, *Teaching to Transgress* (1994), p. 8

Excellent class participation includes the following:

- *Attending all classes from start to finish.* More than two absences will affect your grade, except in cases of illness, religious observances, or family emergencies. Absences for these reasons may be made up through an alternative assignment. You must email me to receive permission to complete a makeup assignment. I encourage you to reserve your allowed absences for cases of illness.
 - If any student is required to isolate or quarantine due to a positive Covid-19 test or exposure to someone who tests positive, the entire class will meet virtually via Zoom. Please see the Academic Policies on p. 4 for more details.
- *Coming prepared to each class.* Come to each class having completed all required readings and assignments and with all necessary materials, such as readings and notes. Arrive on time and ready to engage.
- *Actively engaging in class discussions.* Make thoughtful and analytic contributions to small- and large-group discussions based on completed readings and assignments.
- *Listening and respond to others with respect.* Make space for others to share their perspectives and opinions in class discussions. Listen attentively and respectfully. If you disagree with something someone has said, do so graciously, respectfully, and with evidence to support your counterargument. Be open to learning from others' experiences, perspectives, and interpretations.

Up to three times during the semester, I will require each of you co-lead a class discussion question. More information about leading discussions will be distributed in class.

You will self-evaluate your participation at mid-semester and at the end of the semester, to reflect on your strengths and on how you can improve. I will take your self-evaluations into account when determining your grade, and I will discuss with you individually if my assessment differs from your own.

Four Short Essays

Throughout the semester, you will write short essays (around 500 words each) reflecting on the readings and on your learning. Essay prompts will be distributed in class in advance of each due date.

Class Research Project

We will conduct a collaborative interview-based research project, conducting interviews with Connecticut public school teachers to examine the extent to which they are incorporating ethnic studies into their curricula, what is working well, and what, if any, challenges they are facing. The goal of this project is to strengthen your qualitative research skills, connect empirical research with existing scholarship, and develop policy recommendations based on the study's findings. We will share research findings with community stakeholders. Additional assignment details will be distributed in class.

Research-Based Op-Ed Essay

The goal of this assignment is to apply your own research-based perspective to a topic related to race, class, and educational policy that is currently impacting Connecticut residents. An op-ed is short (usually

no more than 1,000 words), but it can be challenging to write a clear and coherent argument in such limited space. You will prepare a (1) first draft; (2) peer review of classmates' first drafts; and (3) final draft. Additional assignment details will be distributed in class.

For optional extra credit (2 points), you may submit your final draft for publication in *The Connecticut Mirror*, a nonprofit, nonpartisan news site focused on state policy and politics. This extra credit option entails sharing your final draft with a *Mirror* editor for additional feedback, revising your draft, and submitting it for publication via the *Mirror's* online submission platform.

Academic Policies

Face Mask Requirement

Per Trinity College policy, you are required to wear a face mask in the classroom, from the beginning to the end of class. Masks must cover your nose and mouth completely. There are no exceptions to this policy. You may not remove your mask to eat or drink during class; therefore, please plan ahead.

At times, it may be difficult to hear one another with our masks on. Therefore, please do your best to speak loudly and clearly during class discussions.

Accommodations for Students in Isolation or Quarantine

If any student must isolate or quarantine, our entire class will meet virtually via Zoom, and I will distribute a Zoom meeting link in advance. Although not ideal, meeting virtually as an entire class is much more effective and inclusive than a "hybrid" format, where some students are in-person while others are virtual. In addition, a virtual class maintains the confidentiality of isolated or quarantined students.

If you are in isolation or quarantine, *and* feeling healthy, you are required to attend virtual class sessions. Excused absences from a virtual class session are only permitted if you are ill and provide documentation from the health center.

Use of Electronics

I recommend that you bring a laptop to class, but only to access electronic copies of course readings, take notes, and participate in collaborative activities. Please refrain from using your laptop or phone for non-class-related purposes. Please let me know if you need to borrow a laptop.

Late Assignments

You are each entitled to two 36-hour extensions, no questions asked. You may use these extensions for any assignment. When you submit the assignment on Moodle, please note in the comment box that you are using the extension. Other than the use of these extensions, late assignments will be penalized with a 10% deduction for every 1 to 24-hour period beyond the deadline. Exceptions will be granted only for documented family or medical emergencies.

Excused Absences and Making Up Work

Please notify me during the first week of the course if you require any scheduling accommodations for religious observances. If granted an excused absence from class for religious observances or documented family or medical emergencies, please write a short essay (~500 words) reflecting on the day's readings and submit it to me no later than 7 days after the date of the missed class. Please also

communicate with me as soon as possible if you have any questions about what you missed. This is to ensure that you do not fall behind in the course material.

Re-Writes and Extra Credit

If I recommend that you re-write an assignment, you will meet me to self-assess errors and review grading comments. We will discuss and determine a resubmission deadline for up to 90% of the assignment point value.

I may offer extra credit assignments; examples might include attending a lecture or community event and writing a reflection that connects to course readings and themes. Please see me if you are interested in an extra credit assignment to receive approval.

Accessibility

Trinity College is committed to creating an inclusive and accessible learning environment consistent with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Like many things, the need for disability accommodations and the process for arranging them may be altered by the Covid-19 changes we are experiencing and the safety protocols currently in place. Students with disabilities who may need some accommodation in order to fully participate in this class are urged to contact the Student Accessibility Resource Center, as soon as possible, to explore what arrangements need to be made to assure access.

If you have approval for academic accommodations, please notify me by the end of week two of classes. For those students with accommodations approved after the start of the semester, a minimum of 10 days' notice is required. Please be sure to meet with me privately to discuss implementation. Student Accessibility Resources can be reached by emailing Lori.Clapis@trincoll.edu or SARC@trincoll.edu.

Intellectual Honesty

According to Trinity College policy, intellectual honesty "assumes that students do their own work and that they credit properly those upon whose work and thought they draw" (Trinity College Student Handbook, 2016). While we often draw upon the work of others, it is essential that any work presented as your own is indeed your own, no matter how big or small the assignment. Ideas and/or words that are not yours should always be appropriately cited.

You may use any citation style (e.g., APA, Chicago, MLA), as long as you do so consistently. If you have any questions about how to cite another author's work appropriately, or how to draw upon another author's work without plagiarizing, please ask me.

Intellectual dishonesty and plagiarism in any form will not be tolerated in this class. Instances of academic dishonesty or plagiarism may result in assignment failure, course failure, referral to the Honor Council, and/or other consequences.

Asking for Assistance or Clarification

I am usually happy to assist you and answer questions on anything related to course readings or assignments. However, part of being a successful college student is learning how to problem-solve on your own. So, before you ask me for assistance or clarification, please first consult at least two sources: (1) the course syllabus and Moodle site; (2) a classmate. If you still do not find the answer to your question after consulting these three sources, feel free to ask me!

Helpful Things to Know

(Adapted with thanks to Dr. Eve Ewing)

Trinity College Writing Center. We are all developing as writers and thinkers (myself included), and we all improve through receiving feedback. For assistance and feedback on your writing, at any stage, consider scheduling an appointment with a Writing Associate at Trinity's [Writing Center](#). If you visit the Writing Center for support on your Interpreting Interviews Essay or Final Op-Ed, you will receive extra credit (0.5 point).

Trinity College Library. Our librarians are amazing and eager to help you identify sources for research projects or other assignments. Although you can make a virtual appointment with any librarian, Rob Walsh, our social science librarian, has particular expertise in the library sources relevant to our class. You can email him at Robert.Walsh@trincoll.edu or [make an appointment on the library website](#).

Student Technology Assistants. The Student Technology Assistants (STA) work with Trinity's Research, Instruction, and Technology (RIT) staff to provide remote assistance and support regarding your technology needs, including using Zoom and Moodle. Contact the STAs at sta-help@trincoll.edu, drop by their virtual help desk (<https://trincoll.zoom.us/my/sta.helpdesk>), or read more on their [website](#).

SensusAccess File Converter. If you wish, you may convert course readings in PDF form into alternative formats, including audio files. In doing so, you can listen to the reading while following along with the written text. Trinity's RIT website includes additional details on the [SuccessAccess File Converter](#).

Title IX Resources and Mandated Reporting. As a faculty member, I am considered a "Responsible Employee." This means that if you disclose to me instances of sexual assault, sexual harassment, other sexual misconduct, dating violence, domestic violence, or stalking, I am required to share this information with Trinity's Title IX Coordinator or Deputy Coordinator. See Trinity's [Title IX website](#) for additional information.

If you need to talk to someone who will maintain confidentiality, you can reach out to "Privileged Employees" at the following places:

Spiritual and Religious Life, Trinity College Chapel, (860) 297-2013

The Reverend Marcus G. Halley

Counseling Center: 135 Allen Street, (860) 297-2415

Randolph M. Lee, Ph.D., Director

Kristine Kennan, Psy.D., Associated Director

[After business hours, call to receive an available counselor's phone number]

In addition, the following "Confidential Employees" are required to report basic information about alleged incidents, but will not disclose names or other details that may reveal individuals' identities, unless there is imminent harm to the campus or person/s disclosing.

The Health Center: Wheaton Hall 1st Floor, (860) 297-2018

Martha Burke O'Brien, Director

All non-student staff

Women & Gender Resource Action Center (WGRAC), Mather Hall, 2nd Floor, (860) 297-2408

Laura Lockwood, Director

All non-student staff

Queer Resource Center (QRC), 114 Crescent Street, (860) 987-6273
 Carrie Robinson, Director
 All non-student staff

Mental Health. Many of us face issues with our mental health over the course of our lives. Sometimes, being a student can create or exacerbate these issues. In addition, it is common to experience additional anxiety due to the pandemic and other national and global events. If you are struggling, your mental health is suffering, or you just need someone to talk to, I encourage you to make an appointment with the Counseling and Wellness Center, or call (860) 297-2415. These services are free and confidential.

Learning During the Pandemic. We are still navigating numerous uncertainties and challenges amid the Covid-19 pandemic. My goal is to support you in doing the best work you can in light of these uncertainties and challenges. I encourage you to prioritize your health and wellness, which are far more important than the grades you get in this class or any class. If you are finding it difficult to balance your health and wellness with your work in this class, please let me know. It's okay to ask for help.

I ask that you be patient with me if the challenges to the semester force me to make last-minute changes. I will do my best to communicate any changes clearly and with as much notice as possible. Finally, please be patient with your peers as well as we all navigate this semester together.

Course Schedule

Unit 1: Framing the Issues: Race, Class, and Urban Educational Inequality

Thursday, September 9: Course introduction and overview

*****CITI Ethics Training: Due Sunday, September 12, 11:59pm (Upload your certificate to Moodle.)**

Tuesday, September 14: How do scholars define and make sense of race and class?

Haney López, I. (2006). Preface (pp. xiii–xviii). In *White by Law: The Legal Construction of Race* (2nd Ed.). New York University Press.

Omi, M., & Winant, H. (2014). Excerpts from Introduction (pp. 1–3) and Ch. 4 (pp. 105–109). In *Racial Formation in the United States* (3rd Ed.). Routledge.

Lareau, A. (2011). Ch. 1: Concerted Cultivation (pp. 1–13). In *Unequal Childhoods: Class, Race, and Family Life* (2nd Ed.) University of California Press.

Thursday, September 16: How do scholars define and make sense of racism and antiracism?

Kendi, I. (2019). Ch. 1: Definitions (pp. 13–23). In *How to Be an Antiracist*. One World Press.

Bonilla-Silva, E. (2014). Excerpt from Ch. 1: The Strange Enigma of Race in Contemporary America (pp. 13–15). In *Racism Without Racists: Colorblind Racism and the Persistence of Racial Inequality in America* (4th Ed.). Rowman & Littlefield.

Ewing, E. (2018). Excerpt from Ch. 1: Introduction (pp. 10–13). In *Ghosts in the Schoolyard: Racism and School Closings on Chicago's South Side*. University of Chicago Press.

Tuesday, September 21: How have policies shaped educational inequity and segregation in Hartford?

Eaton, S. (2020). *A Steady Habit of Segregation: The Origins and Continued Harm of Separate and Unequal Housing and Public Schools in Metropolitan Hartford, Connecticut* (pp. 1–53).

Thursday, September 23: How do urban planning policies impact educational inequity?

Cucchiara, M. (2008) Re-branding urban schools: Urban revitalization, social status, and marketing public schools to the upper middle class. *Journal of Education Policy*, 23(2), 165–179.

*****Short Essay #1: Due Sunday, September 26, 11:59pm**

Unit 2: Race, Class, and Curriculum Policies

Tuesday, September 28: How do scholars explain the value of ethnic studies and teaching about race?

Sleeter, C. (2011). *The Academic and Social Value of Ethnic Studies: A Research Review*. Washington, DC: National Education Association.

de los Ríos, C.V. (2013). A Curriculum of the Borderlands: High School Chicana/o-Latina/o Studies as *Sitios y Lengua*. *Urban Review*, 45, 58–73.

Optional: (Re-)Watch *Precious Knowledge* (2011). Dos Vatos Productions, Inc.

Thursday, September 30: What are the political and policy barriers to teaching about race?

Listen to: Hannah-Jones, N. (2019). Episode 1: The Fight for a True Democracy. *1619 Project*.

Listen to: Crenshaw, K., & Kaplan, M. (2021, August 5). Kimberlé Crenshaw on Teaching the Truth About Race in America. At *Liberty Podcast*, American Civil Liberties Union.

Stout, C., & LeMee, G. L. (2021, July 22). Efforts to restrict teaching about racism and bias have multiplied across the U.S. *Chalkbeat*

Waxman, O.B. (2021, March 30). "A history of exclusion, of erasure, of invisibility": Why the Asian American story is missing from many U.S. classrooms. *Time*.

Unit 3: Class Research Project

Research Questions:

To what extent are Connecticut public school teachers incorporating the histories and experiences of people of color in the curriculum? What is working well, and what, if any, challenges do they face?

Tuesday, October 5: Why and how do researchers conduct interviews?

Seidman, I. (2019). Ch. 1: Why interview? (pp. 1–13) and Ch. 6: Technique isn't everything, but it is a lot (pp. 85–100). In *Interviewing as Qualitative Research: A Guide for Researchers in Education and the Social Sciences* (5th Ed.). Teachers College Press.

Thursday, October 7: What are the possibilities for, and constraints to, teaching about race in Connecticut public schools?

Guest Speakers: Rashanda McCollum and Benie N'sumbu, Students for Educational Justice

Asmelash, L., & Sturla, A. (2020, Dec. 9). Connecticut will become the first state to require high schools to offer Black and Latino studies in fall 2022. *CNN*.

Dunne, S. (2021, February). Senators push to mandate Asian American studies in Connecticut public schools amid surge of racist attacks. *Hartford Courant*.

Belsha, K. (2021, August 4). "They'll know more than I ever knew": More states move to require lessons on Native American history and culture. *Chalkbeat*.

*****Short Essay #2: Due Sunday, October 10, 11:59pm**

Tuesday, October 12: Class will not meet – Trinity Days!

Thursday, October 14: How do our positionalities as researchers shape the interview process?

Milner, H. R. (2007). Race, Culture, and Researcher Positionality: Working Through Dangers Seen, Unseen, and Unforeseen. *Educational Researcher*, 36(7), 388–400.

*****Edited interview transcript: Upload to shared Google folder within 48 hours of completing your interview.**

Tuesday, October 19: What themes emerged from our interviews? Analyzing interview data, Part 1

Seidman, I. (2019). Excerpts from Ch. 8: Analyzing, interpreting, and sharing interview material (pp. 133–138) and Ch. 9: The ethics of doing good work (pp. 147–152). In *Interviewing as Qualitative Research: A Guide for Researchers in Education and the Social Sciences* (5th Ed.). Teachers College Press.

Read your classmates' interview transcripts prior to class.

Thursday, October 21: What themes emerged from our interviews? Analyzing interview data, Part 2

Read your classmates' interview transcripts prior to class.

In class: Work with partner(s) to draft slide deck for community stakeholders

In class: Assign Interpreting Interviews Essay

Tuesday, October 26: What recommendations can we make based on our interview evidence?

Read your classmates' interview transcripts prior to class.

In class: Work with partner(s) to draft slide deck for community stakeholders.

Thursday, October 28: Putting it all together

In class: Finalize the text and order of our slide deck for community stakeholders.

In class (time permitting): Work on Interpreting Interviews Essay; consult with peers and/or Prof. Castillo

*****Due by end of class: Final slide for slide deck**

*****Interpreting Interviews Essay: Due Monday, November 1, 11:59pm**

Unit 4: Writing About Race, Class, and Educational Policy for Public Audiences

Tuesday, November 2: How can we communicate persuasive policy arguments to public audiences?

Townsend, A. (2017, Mar. 14). I grew up on the other side of town. *The Hartford Courant*.

Villa, R., & Washington, R. (2020, Nov. 3). Connecticut charter schools take advantage of PPP funding, while traditional public schools are left behind. *The Connecticut Mirror*.

Cruceta, A. (2020, Nov. 6). To deliver or not to deliver: Facing privatization and long-term impacts on the US Postal Service. *The Connecticut Mirror*.

Optional: Additional *CT Viewpoints* articles by Trinity students

Thursday, November 4: How can we support our policy arguments with credible evidence?

Guest Speaker: Harriet Jones, *The Connecticut Mirror*

Huynh, K. (2021, Mar. 31). I didn't learn about Asian American history in high school. We can't fail another generation of students. *Chalkbeat*.

Dunson, C. (2021, Jul. 19). We need to meet the needs of Black civics students like me. *Chalkbeat*.

Finn, J. (2021, Aug. 4). My students thrived last year because they weren't policed. *Chalkbeat*.

Unit 5: How Race and Class Shape the Educational Policymaking Process

Tuesday, November 9: What "counts" as educational policy?

Anyon, J. (2014). Introduction. In *Radical Possibilities: Public Policy, Urban Education, and a New Social Movement* (2nd Ed.). Routledge (pp. 1–12).

*****Due by end of class: Reflection on guest evaluators' assessment of slide deck**

Thursday, November 11:

Ewing, E. (2018). Introduction. *Ghosts in the Schoolyard: Racism and School Closings on Chicago's South Side*. University of Chicago Press.

*****Op-Ed First Draft: Due Sunday, Nov. 14, 11:59pm**

Tuesday, November 16:

Ewing, E. (2018). Ch. 1. *Ghosts in the Schoolyard: Racism and School Closings on Chicago's South Side*. University of Chicago Press.

*****Op-Ed Peer Reviews: Due Tuesday, Nov. 16, by the beginning of class (1:30pm)**

Thursday, November 18:

Ewing, E. (2018). Ch. 2. *Ghosts in the Schoolyard: Racism and School Closings on Chicago's South Side*. University of Chicago Press.

Tuesday, November 23 and Thursday, November 25: Class will not meet – Thanksgiving

*****Op-Ed Final Draft (and peer evaluation if you worked in a pair): Due Tuesday, November 23, 11:59pm**

Tuesday, November 30:

Ewing, E. (2018). Ch. 3. *Ghosts in the Schoolyard: Racism and School Closings on Chicago's South Side*. University of Chicago Press.

Thursday, December 2:

Ewing, E. (2018). Ch. 4 and Conclusion. *Ghosts in the Schoolyard: Racism and School Closings on Chicago's South Side*. University of Chicago Press.

*****Short Essay #3: Due Sunday, December 5, 11:59pm**

*****Optional Op-Ed Submission to *The Connecticut Mirror*: Due Sunday, December 5, 11:59pm**

Unit 6: Student-Nominated Readings and Course Wrap-Up

Tuesday, December 7:

Student-nominated readings TBD

Thursday, December 9:

Student-nominated readings TBD

Tuesday, December 14:

Student-nominated readings TBD

*****Short Essay #4: Due Tuesday, December 14, at the beginning of class; be prepared to discuss**