

# Sociology 3452 — Education & Society — Spring 2018

## SYLLABUS

**Hanson Hall 1-108 — Tuesdays/Thursday — 11:15am-12:30pm**

**Web Page** (for slides, readings, etc.): <https://www.rob-warren.com/3452.html>

Also see the Course **Moodle Page** (for grades, turning in assignments, etc.)

**INSTRUCTOR:** Rob Warren (he/him/his)  
1167 Social Sciences  
[warre046@umn.edu](mailto:warre046@umn.edu)  
(Useful: [How to Email a Professor](#))

*Office Hours:* Tue. 10:00-11:00am; Fri.  
1:30-2:30pm; & by appointment

**TEACHING ASSISTANT:** TBA

*Office Hours:* TBA

**COMMUNITY-ENGAGED  
LEARNING COORDINATOR:**

Monica McKay  
240 Appleby Hall  
[siems005@umn.edu](mailto:siems005@umn.edu)  
(612) 624-6574

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

Everyone thinks they know what "education" is and how schools work, partly because everyone has first-hand experience with schools and the education system. Most people have opinions about why some people go farther in school than others, why some learn more than others, and what creates systematic group differences in educational outcomes. Beyond that, most people have ideas about how education shapes who gets good jobs and who enjoys a long and happy life. Virtually everyone has opinions about how schools and the education system should be changed or improved.

This course is designed to challenge and expand what we think we know about these things. We will critically engage research in sociology, education, economics, public policy, and elsewhere. And, we will bring academic materials into direct dialogue with structured experiences in community organizations to enrich our understanding of educational issues. The goal is to better understand how "education" works: what shapes educational achievement; where inequalities in educational achievements come from; how and why educational experiences and accomplishments result in better social and economic outcomes; and how educational institutions might be improved.

This is not a course in which I will tell you what to think. Instead, we will collectively draw on our individual backgrounds and experiences; read and discuss research and other scholarship; debate and argue about the issues; consider how academic issues play out in the community; and challenge and transform our ideas. For the class to succeed, we must all be willing to bring our unique backgrounds and experiences into dialogue with academic knowledge and community service activities and to have our ideas and assumptions challenged. We must also all be willing to listen respectfully and carefully to one another, even when we come from different backgrounds or have sharply different views.

# THE BASICS

## 1. Respect for Others

This is a class that will touch on divisive, sometimes personal, and often politically-charged topics. For example, we will routinely explore and discuss reasons for social inequalities, what “fair” looks like, how public policy ought to be designed and paid for, and how to redress past racial, economic, and other injustices. It is understandable—maybe even necessary—that these discussions sometimes make people mad or uncomfortable.

**Everyone involved in the class must treat everyone else in the class with unfailing respect.**

We are here to learn from one another, and we can learn the most from people who don’t think like us or have the same perspectives or experiences as us. This means it is crucial that everyone feel free to voice their opinions and perspectives—even if others disagree with those opinions or have different perspectives. In my experience, people can only effectively communicate when they feel they are being treated with respect.

Listen carefully and respectfully to others. No shouting. No interrupting. No sarcasm. No personal attacks. If you get really upset, take a break, take a deep breath, maybe go for a short walk, and then come back to the discussion ready to calmly and respectfully re-engage.

## 2. Technology in the Classroom

Many instructors forbid or limit the use of iPads, laptop computers, tablets, phones, and other devices in class. Not me. Bring them and use them—they can be great resources and learning aids. In fact, I insist that you bring them since I will ask you to use these devices for some interactive exercises and in-class assignments. However:

- a. Do **not** distract or annoy your classmates or me! This means: Notifications and ringers off. Media sound off. If you are likely to use technology in some way that might distract or annoy people, sit in the very back of the room. Use good judgment. Don’t be a jerk.
- b. If you are easily distracted or annoyed by other people’s (mis)use of technology, sit toward the front of the classroom. Then you won’t be distracted by them.
- c. My advice: Use technology sparingly while in class. Use it, when appropriate, for collaborative group activities. Use your iPad or laptop to access course-related materials. Use your cell phone to send or respond to urgent messages and to respond to polls or quizzes that I send out. Otherwise, try to pay attention to me and your peers. Snapchat, Facebook, and Twitter can probably wait until after class.
- d. I reserve the right to change this policy at any time.

# COURSE REQUIREMENTS

## 1. Community Engaged Learning (CEL)

*(130 points, or 65% of course grade)*

Community-engaged learning (CEL) is a teaching and learning strategy that combines meaningful community service with instruction and reflection to enrich learning, teach civic responsibility, and strengthen communities.

As described in detail in the **yellow handout** titled “Community-Engaged Learning Assignments,” you will do 25 hours of service in a community organization and complete a series of written and other assignments reflecting on your experiences there.

## 2. Writing Assignments: Statements of Beliefs

*(30 points, or 15% of course grade)*

As described in detail in the **green handout** titled “Writing Assignments,” there are two writing assignments (besides those that make up the CEL part of the course).

First, at the start of the semester you will write an essay about your educational biography, about the factors that contributed to your educational accomplishments, and about the nature of educational inequality in America. Second, at the end of the semester you will write a version of that same essay that focuses on how your views and opinions changed after taking this course. You will get a chance to write a rough draft of the latter essay and then revise it.

## 3. In-Class Quizzes & Writing Assignments

*(40 points, or 20% of course grade)*

There will be a brief quiz or short writing assignment during every class session. They might happen at the beginning, middle, or end of class sessions. Some days, they will ask basic questions about readings or other materials I’ll ask you to review before class. Other days, they will ask about activities or discussions that happen in class.

There are 30 class sessions, and thus 30 quizzes or in-class writing assignments. However, you only need to complete 25 of them to get full credit. Each one is worth 1.6 points, so you can earn a total of  $25 \times 1.6 = 40$  points for quizzes or in-class writing. This also means you can miss 5 quizzes/assignments and still get full credit. In-class quizzes and writing assignments can only be completed in the classroom during class time, and cannot be completed once class ends.

## 4. Extra Credit

As described in detail in the **blue handout** titled “Extra Credit,” there are three ways to get extra credit in this course.

# GRADING AND EVALUATION

## 1. How Grades Will Be Assigned

There are 200 total points in the class (plus some opportunities for extra credit). Your end-of-semester letter grade will be based on the percentage of the 200 points that you earn:

Grade	Percentage	Grade	Percentage	Grade	Percentage
A	93.0% to 100.0%	B-	80.0% to 82.9%	D+	67.0% to 69.9%
A-	90.0% to 92.9%	C+	77.0% to 79.9%	D	63.0% to 66.9%
B+	87.0% to 89.9%	C	73.0% to 76.9%	F	less than 63.0%
B	83.0% to 86.9%	C-	70.0% to 72.9%		

In all, the community-engaged learning (CEL) assignments are worth a total of 130 points (or 65% of the course grade); in-class quizzes and writing assignments are worth 40 points (or 20% of the course grade); and the other writing assignments are worth 30 points (or 15% of the course grade). You can get up to 28 points of extra credit.

## 2. Contesting Grades

The teaching assistant and I might sometimes make mistakes—it happens—but we want you to get the grade you deserve. To contest a grade on an assignment: First, wait 24 hours after you receive the grade. Are you sure the grade was unfair? Then, if you still want to contest the grade, email me a list of your reasons for your dissatisfaction with the grade.

## 3. Incompletes

A grade of “Incomplete” is only given when a student is making good progress throughout most of a course and then some unexpected event or circumstance temporarily prevents that student from completing the course assignments on time. I will only agree to give an “incomplete” when both conditions are met. Also, I will only give an “incomplete” once you and I have met to sign the required university paperwork and have agreed about how and by what date all course assignments will be completed.

## 4. Learning Styles, Abilities, and Accommodations

If you are overwhelmed or feel like you could use some help catching up in the course, one good first step is to visit with me or the teaching assistant in our office hours. In most cases we can help you get back on track, especially if you talk to us early.

Everyone learns in different ways. If, for any reason, you become concerned about your ability to fully participate in this course due to the structure of activities or assignments please talk to me about it. I am committed to providing all students equal access to learning opportunities.

Disability Services is the campus office that works with students who have disabilities to provide and/or arrange reasonable accommodations. Students who have, or think they may have, a disability (e.g. psychiatric, attentional, learning, vision, hearing, physical, or systemic), are invited to contact Disability Services for a confidential discussion at 612-626-1333 (V/TTY) or [ds@umn.edu](mailto:ds@umn.edu). Additional information is available at <http://diversity.umn.edu/disability/>. If you are already registered with Disability Services, please notify me at the start of the semester.

This course involves a fair amount of writing, and if you write poorly your grade will likely suffer. If you would like help with your writing, Student Writing Support at the Center for Writing (<http://writing.umn.edu/sws/>) offers a variety of very useful resources.

## **5. Academic Misconduct**

I encourage you to collaborate and brainstorm with your classmates and to read drafts of one another's written work, both inside and outside of class. However, individual assignments and essays should represent your own ideas and be your own work. If any words are not your own, you must place them in quotes, include a citation, and include the reference in a reference list at the end of the assignment. If any ideas are not your own even if the words are, you must still include a citation and include the reference in a reference list. (See the American Sociological Association's [Style Guide](#) for useful direction on citations and references.) It is OK to reflect on and synthesize the ideas of other people, with proper citation of sources. It is not OK to imply that those ideas are yours or to use them without attribution. When in doubt, cite!

Taking credit for work that is not your own constitutes scholastic dishonesty. I am a "zero tolerance" professor when it comes to scholastic dishonesty. The university makes it easy for me to report it, too. I fill out one short report via a very nice web interface—I can do it from my phone!—and they take it from there. If I ever think you engaged in scholastic dishonesty, I will discuss it with you. After that, if I still think you engaged in scholastic dishonesty, I will quickly give you a zero on the relevant assignment and report the incident to the university.

Not sure what scholastic dishonesty is? Read about it in the "Scholastic Dishonesty" section of the [Student Conduct Code](#).

## WEEK-BY-WEEK CLASS SCHEDULE

### WEEK 1

Tuesday, 1/16      *Class Introduction; Syllabus*

In Class: Quiz or Writing Assignment

Thursday, 1/18      *Visit from Community-Engaged Learning Office*

Before Class: See the course web site for readings or other materials to review before class.

In Class: Quiz or Writing Assignment

### WEEK 2

Monday, 1/22      Sign Up for CEL Organization by Noon

Tuesday, 1/23      *History of Schooling in the United States*

Before Class: See the course web site for readings or other materials to review before class.

In Class: Quiz or Writing Assignment

Thursday, 1/25      Guest Lecture by Sarah Garcia (PhD student in Sociology): *The Effects of Attending a Selective College on Health*

Before Class: See the course web site for readings or other materials to review before class.

In Class: Quiz or Writing Assignment

Start of Semester Statement of Beliefs Assignment Due

### WEEK 3

Tuesday, 1/30

*What Are School Supposed to Accomplish?*

Before Class: See the course web site for readings or other materials to review before class.

In Class: Quiz or Writing Assignment

Thursday, 2/1

*What Are Schools Accomplishing?*

Before Class: See the course web site for readings or other materials to review before class.

In Class: Quiz or Writing Assignment

### WEEK 4

Tuesday, 2/6

*Guest Lecture by Rob Stewart (PhD student in Sociology): The Effect of a Criminal Record on College Admissions*

Before Class: See the course web site for readings or other materials to review before class.

In Class: Quiz or Writing Assignment

Thursday, 2/8

*Guest Lecture by jim saliba (PhD Student in Sociology): School Racial Segregation and Educational Equity*

Before Class: See the course web site for readings or other materials to review before class.

In Class: Quiz or Writing Assignment

## WEEK 5

Tuesday, 2/13

*How Are Schools Organized and Paid For?*

Before Class: See the course web site for readings or other materials to review before class.

In Class: Quiz or Writing Assignment  
CEL Organization History & Mission Essay Due

Thursday, 2/15

*Separate but Equal? Segregation and Schools*

Before Class: See the course web site for readings or other materials to review before class.

In Class: Quiz or Writing Assignment

## WEEK 6

Tuesday, 2/20

*Race and Educational Outcomes*

Before Class: See the course web site for readings or other materials to review before class.

In Class: Quiz or Writing Assignment

Thursday, 2/22

*Are Schools Melting Pots?*

Before Class: See the course web site for readings or other materials to review before class.

In Class: Quiz or Writing Assignment

## WEEK 7

Tuesday, 2/27

*School Violence and School Discipline*

Before Class: See the course web site for readings or other materials to review before class.

In Class: Quiz or Writing Assignment  
CEL Initial Impressions Essay Due

Thursday, 3/1

*Community-Engaged Learning Check In; Educating Disabled Students*

Before Class: See the course web site for readings or other materials to review before class.

In Class: Quiz or Writing Assignment

## WEEK 8

Tuesday, 3/6

*Born on Third Base?*

Before Class: See the course web site for readings or other materials to review before class.

In Class: Quiz or Writing Assignment

Thursday, 3/8

*The American Dream?*

Before Class: See the course web site for readings or other materials to review before class.

In Class: Quiz or Writing Assignment

## WEEK 9

Tuesday, 3/13

**No Class Today – Spring Break**

Thursday, 3/15

**No Class Today – Spring Break**

## WEEK 10

Tuesday, 3/20

*Educating Girls in the United States and Around the World*

Before Class: See the course web site for readings or other materials to review before class.

In Class: Quiz or Writing Assignment

Thursday, 3/22

*The Lived College Experience*

Before Class: See the course web site for readings or other materials to review before class.

In Class: Quiz or Writing Assignment  
CEL Progress Report Essay Due

## WEEK 11

Tuesday, 3/27

*A Good Start?*

Before Class: See the course web site for readings or other materials to review before class.

In Class: Quiz or Writing Assignment

Thursday, 3/29

*Does It Matter Which School You Go To?*

Before Class: See the course web site for readings or other materials to review before class.

In Class: Quiz or Writing Assignment

## WEEK 12

Tuesday, 4/3

*Community-Engaged Learning Check In; Private Schools and Vouchers*

Before Class: See the course web site for readings or other materials to review before class.

In Class: Quiz or Writing Assignment

Thursday, 4/5

*Public School Choice; Charter Schools*

Before Class: See the course web site for readings or other materials to review before class.

In Class: Quiz or Writing Assignment

## WEEK 13

Tuesday, 4/10

*Standardized Testing; Curriculum Standards*

Before Class: See the course web site for readings or other materials to review before class.

In Class: Quiz or Writing Assignment  
CEL Progress Report Essay Due

Thursday, 4/12

*Education Systems Around the World*

Before Class: See the course web site for readings or other materials to review before class.

In Class: Quiz or Writing Assignment

## WEEK 14

Tuesday, 4/17

*Community-Engaged Learning Presentations; Education, Health, and Mortality*

Before Class: See the course web site for readings or other materials to review before class.

In Class: Quiz or Writing Assignment

CEL End of Semester Email Due

Rough Draft of End of Semester Statement of Beliefs Due

Thursday, 4/19

*Community-Engaged Learning Presentations; College for All?*

Before Class: See the course web site for readings or other materials to review before class.

In Class: Quiz or Writing Assignment

## WEEK 15

Tuesday, 4/24

*Community-Engaged Learning Presentations; College Debt*

Before Class: See the course web site for readings or other materials to review before class.

In Class: Quiz or Writing Assignment

Thursday, 4/26

*Community-Engaged Learning Presentations; Course Evaluations*

Before Class: See the course web site for readings or other materials to review before class.

In Class: Quiz or Writing Assignment

## WEEK 16

Tuesday, 5/1

*Community-Engaged Learning Presentations; For-Profit Colleges*

Before Class: See the course web site for readings or other materials to review before class.

In Class: Quiz or Writing Assignment

Thursday, 5/3

*Community-Engaged Learning Presentations; Wrap Up*

Before Class: See the course web site for readings or other materials to review before class.

In Class: Quiz or Writing Assignment

CEL End of Semester Essay Due

## FINALS WEEK

Tuesday, 5/8

Deadline to Complete 25 CEL Hours

CEL End of Semester Evaluation Due

Final Draft of End of Semester Statement of Beliefs Due