

**SO 211 Racial, Cultural, Gender, and  
Social Identities in Urban Classrooms**  
Boston University School of Education

Spring Semester 2014  
Location: William Monroe Trotter School  
Time: Monday: 8:00-12:00; Wednesday: 8:00-11:00  
(January 15 to March 19)  
Prerequisite: SO 210

*We need to help students and parents cherish and preserve the ethnic and cultural diversity that nourishes and strengthens this community - and this nation.*

-César Chávez

*We do not have an achievement gap; we have an education debt.*

-Gloria Ladson-Billings

Professor: Christopher Martell, Ed.D.

Office: SED 502

E-mail: cmartell@bu.edu

Phone: (617) 353-3924

Office hours: Tuesday 2-3:30, Wednesday 2-3:30, or by appointment

**General Course Description:**

Examines issues of race, culture, gender, and identity in urban elementary classrooms. Course taught at the Trotter School; transportation provided. Includes a field placement. 2 credits.

**Course Overview:**

Almost 150 years after slavery was abolished in the United States and sixty years after the Supreme Court's *Brown v. Board of Education* decision, this nation continues to grapple with persistent social inequalities in schooling, often understood in terms of a racial achievement gap. This course examines the history, causes, and possible solutions for the achievement gap, or what has been astutely relabeled the opportunity gap and education debt. This course also examines issues of race, culture, gender, and social identity in the context of diverse urban student populations. It seeks to help young teachers, passionate about their mission and equipped with best teaching practices, to thrive in urban classrooms by deepening their understanding of identity issues.

SO211 expands on the important educational and sociological concepts related to urban schooling introduced in SO210. The focus of this course is on helping future teachers take action and work against the power, privilege, and discrimination embedded in American culture and schooling. This course is organized into five themes: Race/Ethnicity, Socioeconomic Class, Language/Immigration Status, Gender/Sexual Orientation, and Teachers as Agents of Change. Through these five themes we will strengthen your knowledge and understanding of the persistent social inequalities in American schools.

Because students taking SO 211 are diverse racially, ethnically, socioeconomically, and in gender, sexual orientation, language, and physical ability, it is important we create a climate where everyone feels comfortable sharing their experiences and perspectives, as well as offering and receiving constructive feedback or advice. At all times we will give each other respect, confidentiality, and confidence in each another.

Students are required to complete readings in preparation for each class session. These readings will be discussed in class (various strategies will be used to assess the readings including whole class discussion, small group discussion, carousel, jig-saw, and “renderings”). Students will also be required to complete regular assignments, including a reflection paper on a topic of their choosing and one unit plan to share with the class.

This course will include guest speakers, class discussions, interactive activities, and video segments. In addition, a field placement at the William Monroe Trotter School will be required. Students will tutor a Trotter child each week. Transportation to the Trotter will be provided. This course, which is required for all elementary education majors, may serve as an elective for CAS students who are interested in urban education.

The Trotter School is named after civil rights leader and Dorchester resident William Monroe Trotter, whose work with W.E.B. Du Bois in the Niagara Movement led to the creation of the NAACP. He would later form the National Equal Rights League and a critical newspaper called *The Boston Guardian*. Trotter's protests were successful in raising awareness of racial equality, including ending screenings of *The Birth of a Nation* in Boston, a popular film of the time that glorified the Ku Klux Klan. He would also have an infamous meeting with President Woodrow where he angrily protested Wilson's introduction of segregation into the federal government. He would help establish the Jones Hill section of Dorchester, which was the first racially integrated neighborhood in the U.S. Trotter once wrote, “My vocation has been to wage a crusade against lynching, disenfranchisement, peonage, public segregation, injustice, denial of service in public places for color, in war time and peace.”

### **Objectives:**

Students will be able to:

- Provide academic tutoring to elementary students so that they can fully realize their potential and intelligence.
- Reflect on school experiences while exploring issues of class, race, gender, language, identity, and curriculum and how these impact student learning.
- Understand issues of educational equity and support strategies for the educational success of culturally, linguistically, and economically diverse students.

### **Required Texts and Readings:**

- Pollock, M. (Ed.) (2008). *Everyday antiracism: Getting real about race in school*. New York, NY: The New Press. (TEXT A)
- Lareau, A. (2012). *Unequal childhoods: Class, race, and family life*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press. (TEXT B)

- Creech, S. (2001). *Love that dog: A novel*. New York, NY: HarperCollins. (FOR TUTORING)
- Course Reading Packet (on course Blackboard site). Students must bring **printed** copies (not digital on a computer) of the readings to each class session.

### **Assignments and Evaluation**

#### *Assignment 1: Issue Analysis: Urban Education*

Points: 40

Description: You will choose from a list of issues in urban schooling and, using evidence from the course readings and other sources, construct an argument about how to improve urban education in the United States.

#### *Assignment 2: Culturally Relevant Teacher Action Plan*

Points: 40

Description: You will create an action plan that will help you create a classroom that addresses the cultural, linguistic, and economic diversity of your future students. This action plan will design a step-by-step process to create and monitor change in your teaching and include a multicultural literature log.

#### *Assignment 3: Case Study/Tutoring Report*

Points: 40

Description: You will tutor your child weekly, collecting data about your child's literacy progress this semester. At the end of the semester, you will write a final case study.

#### *Reflective Journal*

Points: 30

Description: You will keep a weekly digital reflective journal (5 points each reflection) to document your thoughts on tutoring progress and/or obstacles and general reflections on the course content. Each reflective entry should cite at least one reading from the week. Students should post this reflective journal to the class Blackboard site (so it may be shared with peers and instructor each week).

#### *Participation: Readings, Class Discussions, Group Work, Activities, and Attendance*

Points: 50 [20 points for discussion group participation; 30 points tutoring, large group participation, and attendance]

Description: Class participation is important for successful learning. Students should regularly contribute to class discussions and participate during group work and class activities. The instructors will be informally assessing if students have read the material by their participation in reading related activities. It is expected that students will attend every class session. Consistently attending class is crucial for tutoring. If you miss class, it will diminish your participation grade. Please see the instructors in advance if you believe this will be an issue or let them know as soon as possible if there is an emergency and you cannot attend class. You should notify both instructors via email (cmartell@bu.edu; dgillis@bu.edu) if you will be absent.

There are 200 points total for the course. All assignments will be graded using a rubric (all rubrics are posted on the Blackboard site) and all grades will be returned in class or via e-mail. Assignments will be collected at the beginning of class as listed in the syllabus. Late assignments will have the grade decreased by 10% for each day late. Students may gain an extension in advance with permission of the instructor or when extenuating circumstance do not allow for forewarning.

### **Effective Oral and Written Communication**

All writers benefit from continuing instruction and feedback. The CAS Writing Program and writing tutorials offered in SED by Professor Kingston offer a range of support services. We urge to take advantage of these resources.

### **Statement of Accommodations for Students with Disabilities**

The School of Education at Boston University is committed to equal access for students with disabilities. If you have a specific disability and require accommodations in this class, please let me know early in the semester so that appropriate accommodations can be made. You must provide me with a letter of needed accommodations prepared by the Office of Disability Services. Contact information for that office is as follows: 617 353-3658 V/TTY or [access@bu.edu](mailto:access@bu.edu). All discussions and written materials will be kept confidential.

### **Plagiarism**

The pursuit of knowledge can proceed only when scholars take responsibility and receive credit for their work. Recognition of individual contributions to knowledge and of the intellectual property of others builds trust within the University and encourages the sharing of ideas that is essential to scholarship. Plagiarism, that is, failure to properly acknowledge sources, written or electronic, used for verbatim quotations or ideas, is a violation of academic integrity. Each student is responsible for learning and using proper methods of paraphrasing and footnoting, quotation, and other forms of citation, to ensure that the original author, speaker, illustrator, or source of the material used is clearly acknowledged. Please consult the College of Arts And Sciences Academic Conduct Code ([www.bu.edu/cas/academics/programs/conductcode.html](http://www.bu.edu/cas/academics/programs/conductcode.html)) for guidelines about proper citation of references as well as the University regulations. Any issue of plagiarism or other academic or professional misconduct will be referred to the Dean's Office for immediate investigation.

### **Respect for the Trotter School Community**

We are guests in the Trotter School. As guests, we should respect their school and community. Please observe the following guidelines.

1. The Trotter bus leaves promptly at 8:00 AM; please be in the SED lobby by 7:55.
2. Please demonstrate the highest level of professionalism during all interactions (field, classroom, meetings, etc.) and appropriate dress.
3. Be sure to thank the Trotter School teachers that allow us into their classrooms. As observers and tutors we disrupt their teaching and it is kind to show our appreciation to them.
4. The Trotter School has silent hallways. When walking in the hallways, please observe this rule.

**Course Schedule**

<b>Class</b>	<b>Topic(s)</b>	<b>Readings Due<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Assignments Due</b>
<b>1</b> Wednesday 1/15 (at COM 215)	<b>INTRODUCTION</b> Student and Instructor Introductions  Course Syllabus/Blackboard Site/Preview Assignments  Introduction to Poetry Academy		
<b>2</b> Wednesday 1/22	<b>TUTORING</b>  Welcome Back to the Trotter		
<b>3</b> Monday 1/27	<b>RACE/ETHNICITY</b>  Connecting to Readers and Writers in Urban Schools  Tour Pioneering Boston Schools: The Josiah Quincy School, The Raphael Hernandez School, The Mission Hill School	1-Sims* A-Pollock Ch. 30 (Morrell)* A-Pollock Ch. 28 (Sleeter)* A-Pollock Ch. 36 (Chadwick)*	Reflective Journal 1
<b>4</b> Wednesday 1/29	<b>TUTORING</b>  Welcome to the Trotter		
<b>5</b> Monday 2/3	<b>RACE/ETHNICITY</b>  Achievement/ Opportunity Gap	B-Lareau Ch. 1-5 (pp.1-103)* 2-Ladson-Billings  Choose 1: 3-Jencks & Phillips 4-Evans	Reflective Journal 2
<b>6</b> Wednesday 2/5	<b>TUTORING</b>		

<sup>1</sup> All readings with a star must be read. Readings without a star are part of a choice, which students will chose in the prior class.

<b>Week</b>	<b>Topic(s)</b>	<b>Readings Due</b>	<b>Assignments Due</b>
<b>7</b> Monday 2/10	<b>RACE/ETHNICITY</b>  Defining Diversity  <b>SOCIOECONOMIC CLASS</b>  Unequal Childhoods Discussion	Choose 1: 5-King A-Pollock Ch. 29 (Duncan-Andrade)  B-Lareau Ch. 6-7 (pp. 107-160)* 6-Hart & Risley*	Reflective Journal 3
<b>8</b> Wednesday 2/12	<b>TUTORING</b>		
<b>9</b> Wednesday 2/19 (Monday Schedule)	<b>SOCIOECONOMIC CLASS</b>  Families and Institutions  Opportunity and Higher Education	B-Lareau Ch. 8-12 (pp. 163-257)* 7-DeParle*	Assignment 1: Issue Analysis: Urban Education
<b>10</b> Monday 2/24	<b>SOCIOECONOMIC CLASS</b>  Unequal Adulthoods  Charter Schools and "No Excuses" Schools	B-Lareau Ch. 13 (pp. 261-311) & Afterward*  Choose 1: 8-Tough (1) 9-Tough (2)  Choose 1: 10-Gabriel/CREDO 11-Frankenber  12-Gregory, Skiba, & Noguera* 13-Tavernise*	Reflective Journal 4
<b>12</b> Wednesday 2/26	<b>TUTORING</b>		
<b>13</b> Monday 3/3	<b>GENDER/SEXUAL ORIENTATION</b>  The Role of Gender and Sexual Orientation in Schools and Urban Communities  Black Boys and Discipline/The Discipline Gap	14-Hays* A-Pollock Ch. 25 (Noguera)*  Choose 1: 15-Thorne 16-Mikelson 17-Brown  18-Noguera*	Reflective Journal 5
<b>14</b> Wednesday 3/5	<b>TUTORING</b>		

<b>Week</b>	<b>Topic(s)</b>	<b>Readings Due</b>	<b>Assignments Due</b>
<b>15</b> Monday 3/10	<b>TEACHERS AS AGENTS OF CHANGE</b>  Education for Liberation  Empowering Teachers and Students	19-Freire* 20-Giroux*  21-Glatthorn* 22-Sleeter*	Assignment 2: Culturally Relevant Teacher Action Plan
<b>16</b> Wednesday 3/12	<b>TUTORING</b>		
<b>17</b> Monday 3/17 (at COM 215)	<b>TEACHERS AS AGENTS OF CHANGE</b>  Final Thoughts and End of Course Celebration  Course Evaluations		Reflective Journal 6
<b>18</b> Wednesday 3/19	<b>TUTORING</b>		
Monday 3/24	<b>NO CLASS</b>		Assignment 3: Case Study/Tutoring Report

## READING LIST

### Text A

Pollack, M. (Ed.) (2008). *Everyday antiracism: Getting real about race in school*. NY: The New Press.

### Text B

Lareau, A. (2012). *Unequal childhoods: Class, race, and family life*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

### Reading 1

Sims, R. (1983). *What has happened to the 'all-White' world of children's books?* *Phi Delta Kappan*, 64(9), 650-653.

### Reading 2

Ladson-Billings, G. (2006). From the achievement gap to the education debt: Understanding achievement in U.S. schools. *Educational Researcher*, 35(7), 3-12.

### Reading 3

Jencks, C & Phillips, M. (1999). America's next achievement test: Closing the Black-White score gap. In R. Arum, I. Beattie, & K. Ford (Eds.), *The structure of schooling: Readings in the sociology of education* (pp. 319-325). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

### Reading 4

Evans, R. (2005). Reframing the achievement gap. *Phi Delta Kappan*. 86(8), 582-589.

### Reading 5

King, J. E. (1991). Dysconscious racism: Ideology, identity, and the miseducation of teachers. *Journal of Negro Education*. 60(2), 133-146.

### Reading 6

Hart, B. & Risley, T. R. (2003). The early catastrophe: The 30 million word gap. *American Educator*, 27(1), 4-9.

### Reading 7

DeParle, J. (2012, December 22). For poor, leap to college often ends in a hard fall. *New York Times*, n.p.

### Reading 8

Tough, P. (2009). *Whatever it takes: Geoffrey Canada's quest to change Harlem and America*. New York, NY: Mariner Books. (Ch. 1: The lottery and Ch. 11: What would it take?)

### Reading 9

Tough, P. (2012). *How children succeed: Grit, curiosity, and the hidden power of character*. New York, NY: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. (Chapter 2: How to build character)

### Reading 10

Gabriel, T. (2010, May 1). Despite push, success at charter schools is mixed. *New York Times*, n.p.

Center for Research on Education Outcomes. (2009). *Multiple choice: Charter school performance in 16 states*. Stanford, CA: Author. (Executive summary)

### Reading 11

Frankenberg, E. (2011). Charter schools: A civil rights mirage? *Kappa Delta Pi Record*, 47(3), 100-105.

**Reading 12**

Gregory, A., Skiba, R. J., & Noguera, P. (2010). The achievement gap and the discipline gap: Two sides of the same coin? *Educational Researcher*, 39(1), 59-68.

**Reading 13**

Tavernise, S. (2012, February 9). Education gap grows between rich and poor, studies say. *New York Times*, n.p.

**Reading 14**

Hays, S. (2004). *Flat broke with children: Women in the age of welfare reform*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press. (Chapter 3: Promoting family values)

**Reading 15**

Thorne, B. (1999). Boys and girls together... But mostly apart. In R. Arum, I. Beattie, & K. Ford (Eds.), *The structure of schooling: Readings in the sociology of education* (pp. 338-345). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

**Reading 16**

Mikelson, R. A. (1999). Why does Jane read and write so well? In R. Arum, I. Beattie, & K. Ford (Eds.), *The structure of schooling: Readings in the sociology of education* (pp. 326-337). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

**Reading 17**

Brown, L. M. (2001). Performing femininities: Listening to White working-class girls. In D. L. Tolman, Deborah & M. Brydon-Miller, *From subjects to subjectivities: A handbook of interpretive and participatory methods* (pp. 95-110), New York, NY: New York University Press.

**Reading 18**

Noguera, P. (2010). The trouble with Black boys: The role and influence of environmental and cultural factors on the academic performance of African American males. In M. Kimmel & A. Aronson, *The gendered society reader*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

**Reading 19**

Freire, P. (1970/2000). *Pedagogy of the oppressed* (M. B. Ramos, Trans.). New York, NY: Continuum. (Chapter 2)

**Reading 20**

Giroux, H. A. (1988). *Teachers as intellectuals: Toward a critical pedagogy of learning*. Westport, CT: Bergin & Garvey. (Chapter 9: Teachers as Transformative Intellectuals)

**Reading 21**

Glatthorn, A. A. (1993). *Teachers as agents of change: A new look at school improvement*. Washington, D.C.: National Education Association.

**Reading 22**

Sleeter, C. (1991). *Empowerment through multicultural education*. Albany, NY: SUNY Press. (Introduction)