

# *Moravian College*

## **SOC 294 - Sociology of Education**

**Dr. Joel Nathan Rosen, Associate Professor of  
Sociology  
PPHAC 311**

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**Office Hours: W 12n – 1p/Th 4p – 6p/F 12n – 1p or By Appointment**

### **Required Texts:**

- Frank Furedi's *Wasted: Why Education Isn't Educating* (Bloomsbury Academic, 2011).
- Diane Ravitch's *The Death and Life of the Great American School System: How Testing and Choice Are Undermining Education* (Basic Books, 2010).

### **Recommended Texts (some of which will be sampled during the semester):**

- Joel Spring's *The American School & Images of American Life*
- The Education-Related Work of Howard Zinn
- Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *Emile*
- The Education-Related Work of J.S. Mill

### **Course Description:**

This course will explore the socio-cultural meanings behind education and learning alongside the narratives that emerge from either/both. Of particular importance is the role of public discourse, and how it underscores a wide range of educational processes that fuel discussions of education as an institution that is both cherished and feared. Moreover, we will look at features of accepted educational practice such as textbooks and other similar curricular guides, and how they work to manage public ideologies and the cultural linkages that underscore everything from national mythologies to socialization schemes as informed through a wide range of educational processes.

### **Course Requirements:**

Students will be required to take a midterm, review a source (to be part of larger project assignment), negotiate the terms of an 10-12 page term-type paper, a project that includes a separate annotated bibliography, and perform other tasks, including writing article reviews and taking any unannounced quizzes, etc., as befitting a 200-level special topics course.

The breakdown of grades is as follows:

- Misc. Work, Quizzes, Participation etc. 20%
- Midterm 20%
- Annotated Bibliography 20%
- Source Review 20%
- Paper/Project (includes oral component) 20%

As I typically employ letter grades on written assignments, I offer the below list of how each letter translates numerically:

- A+=100/A= 96/A-=93
- B+=89/B=86/B-=83
- C+=79/C=76/C-=73
- D+=69/D=66/D-=63
- F=59-50 [actual score depends on the severity of the error(s)/student will be notified]
- Failure to turn in work translates into a *ZERO*

**Grade Scale:**

- A=100-94/A-=93-90
- B+=89-87/B=86-84/B-=83-80
- C+=79-77/C=76-74/C-=73-70
- D+=69-67/D=66-64/D-=63-60
- F=59...

**Grade Advisory** – While I respect that students have to be grade conscious, it is imperative that students understand that:

***I treat evaluations professionally—not personally!***

Do not ask from me anything that steps outside the boundaries, and do not wait until *Zero Hour* to inquire as to your status. Moreover, it is your responsibility to keep abreast of your own grade calculations, and unless the circumstances are unique, I'll leave you to your own devices on that matter. Also, to save us all needless heartache, and in the interest of propriety and mental health, I also have to insist on a twenty-four hour grace period before I will speak to you about any returned work. You may find that this cooling off period is exactly what we both need to come together rationally and in the spirit of liberal learning.

Finally, you are required to attend at least two office hour sessions during the semester, and it is mandatory that you appear during office hours to discuss/go over in much greater detail any assignment graded below a C-.

## **Classroom Decorum and Expectations:**

**Attendance** – Class attendance is mandatory and vitally important to your success. Failure to attend on a regular basis not only puts your grade in jeopardy but may also be met with a lowered mark for participation.

- There are no excused absences. If you have a legitimate emergency, it is your responsibility to bring it to the attention of your instructor at your earliest convenience.

**Tardiness** – Tardiness to class is not only detrimental to the learning process but quite disruptive and unfair to those who make it to class on time regularly. Recurring tardiness shows a lack of respect for the classroom, the instructor, and one's fellow students and will not be tolerated. Therefore, once the door has been shut, you will not be permitted to enter.

**Deadlines** – Assignment deadlines are exactly that. Students are expected to comply with deadlines in accordance with all rules, guidelines, and expectations of each assignment proffered. Failure to do so will result in a tendering of no-grade for work not done to expectation or submitted on time. The policy for late papers is as follows:

- On minor assignments, you will be allowed to turn in one late assignment as long as it is within twenty-four hours for a one letter deduction. After your one exception, you will no longer enjoy this luxury
- Do not expect me to have to chase you down in order to turn in assignments!

**Participation** – Classroom discussions are a big part of the learning process. Your participation is not requested—it is required. Failure to do so is both in bad taste and could conceivably be detrimental to your ability to learn effectively.

**Disruptions** – Disruptive behavior, including talking, unengaged behavior, i.e. reading a book, magazine, or newspaper, sleeping, chronic tardiness alongside loud entrances, and any other unfortunate breach will not be tolerated. **This is especially true with cell phone use and the use of other electronic devices during instruction time.** Learning is an active process, and failure to actively engage not only threatens the individual's ability to learn but also affects others.

**Academic Honesty** – You are all responsible for knowing and adhering to the code of academic honesty here at Moravian College. For those of you unfamiliar with this code, it can be found on pages fifty-two through fifty-seven in your student handbook.

**Please Note:** It is your responsibility to see to it that these expectations and guidelines are met satisfactorily and consistently. I take the classroom quite seriously, and I expect all of you to do the same as well.

## **Out of Class Submission Expectations:**

- a title page with a suitable title, your name, the course, section, and my name all spelled

correctly

- size 12 font Times New Roman in black with default margins and spacing set at *double*
- page numbers
- a *References* section (if necessary) at the end of the work done in the most recent citation form of your choice (depends on your major and other factors). The key here is fluidity and consistency.<sup>1</sup>
- for every unedited internet site there must be at least ***two*** published sources
- with few exceptions, single & two-digit numbers (*zero through ninety-nine*) are to be spelled out; three digits are to be written numerically
- be wary of overuse of abbreviations and/or contractions
- a staple in the upper left hand corner (no frilly covers)

**\*\*Please note that all in-class work must be done in blue or black ink\*\***

## **On Writing and Research:**

Though this is not designated to be a writing intensive course, you should expect that there will be an emphasis placed on written expression anyway. I should also like you to know from the start that I spend a great deal of time poring over your writing and expect that you will read and explore my commentary on all things ranging from content to grammar, punctuation, and syntax. Please try to check your ego at the doors and realize that this is a learning experience while convincing yourself that blips and missteps are all part of the process.

You should also note that where applicable, this instructor expects his students to deal directly with all matters relating to the citation process. Failure to do so will be dealt with harshly with penalties ranging from a zero on work not properly documented to a formal report to the proper academic disciplinary committee.

## **A Note on Academic and Disability Support:**

Moravian College encourages persons with disabilities to participate in its programs and activities. If you anticipate needing any type of accommodation or have questions about the physical access provided, please contact the event sponsor at least one week prior to the event. Students who wish to request accommodations in this class for a disability should contact either Dana Wilson or Laurie Roth in Academic and Disability Support at 610/861-1401 (office located on the first floor of Monocacy Hall). Accommodations cannot be provided until authorization is received from the Academic & Disability Support Office.

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<sup>1</sup> Work not properly cited will not be graded and could be brought to the Academic Standards Committee under a charge of plagiarism. If you have questions, please seek me out. Also, *Wikipedia* and other types of non-academic encyclopedias will under no circumstances be considered legitimate sources.

Education is hanging around until you've caught on.  
-Robert Frost



## **Breakdown of Course Topics:<sup>2</sup>**

### **Unit I: A Critical Sociology of Education (Füredi: readings to be assigned throughout)**

#### **Topics Include:**

- Why Education? – Separating Myth from Supposition
- Establishing a Vocabulary for Critical Debate
- Ideology, Stage-Management, and National Mythologies
- Education with/without Politics—What’s the Point?
- Popular Culture and the Learning Debates
- Common Knowledge and Common Standards
- For God and Country: Education and the State

- **Midterm Exam, 9 October**

- **Annotated Bibliographies Due, 16 October**

### **Unit II: The Particularist Matters (Ravitch: readings to be assigned throughout)**

#### **Topics Include:**

- School Reform Initiatives: Reforming What Exactly?
- The Silver Bullet Debate
- Do We Fear Truth/Learning/Each Other?
- Debating the Merits of Self-Esteem, Relativism, and Nostalgic Revivalism

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<sup>2</sup> This is an approximate collection of topics. Things are subject to change with fair warning to precede any changes, including pending due dates.

- A Culture of Fear: On Paranoid Parents, Teachers, Administrators, and Boards
- Reconciling the Historical with the Contemporary
  - **Source Reviews Due, 6 November**
  - **Oral Presentations Begin 27 November**
    - **Final Papers Due, 14 December**