Instructor: Anita Chikkatur
Office Location: Willis 105, X7109
Office Hours: Tuesdays and Wednesdays 3 to 5 pm or by appointment
Email: apchikka@carleton.edu

Course Description
This course examines how American schools structure, nurture and limit the educational trajectories of students and how these educational trajectories influences life opportunities and paths. We will examine evidence, theories and ideologies about the workings of primary, secondary and post-secondary schools in the U.S. Social and cultural theorists have argued that to understand a person's life, we need to consider biography, cultures and structures. Through course readings and discussions, we will examine how the interplay between biography, cultures and structures shapes the structuring of learning opportunities in K-12 schools, college and universities. We will start by reading about the personal journeys of individuals while examining the larger context in which these journeys occurred. Next, we will think about how families and schools shape educational opportunities, experiences and trajectories. In the last section, we will consider issues of access and opportunity in the realm of higher education.

Course Expectations
A successful class depends on each member actively engaging as both a learner and a teacher. Class meetings will be mainly structured around small and large group discussions of assigned readings. Students are expected to come to every class on time with the assignments read and completed, and to be responsible and active participants in all class activities. I encourage you to think critically and voice your opinions; however, respect for the opinions of others and a willingness to collaborate with others are also essential.

Policies

Attendance: Given the importance that all Educational Studies classes place on learning with peers through classroom discussions, students are expected to come to every single class session, prepared to participate. We cannot become a community of learners without regular attendance and participation from everyone. After three absences from class, each subsequent absence will result in the lowering of your course grade by a third (e.g. from a B to a B-). If you miss more than 6 class sessions, (20% of the class sessions), you will not be able to pass the class.

Late Assignments: Assignments not turned in during class on the due date will be penalized one-half grade per day late (A to A-, etc.) and will not be accepted after 7 days. See assignment details for final paper policy.
Students with Disabilities: Any student with a documented disability seeking academic accommodations is required to speak with Disability Services for Students. Although they will send out a letter about accommodations, it would be helpful if you can inform me of any accommodations required, so that we can make the appropriate arrangements for you.

Assignments

Please note that you are responsible for keeping track of when assignments are due and turning them in on time. All assignments, unless noted otherwise, are due IN CLASS on the due date. More details are provided about the assignments after the readings schedule. There are TWO major assignments—one individual, one group—with multiple parts and due dates. So please pay attention to all of these deadlines. There is also a grading rubric on Moodle that provides details about what I am looking for in written assignments as well as more specific grading rubrics for assignments.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ASSIGNMENT</th>
<th>DUE DATE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lives of learning and opportunity essay 15%</td>
<td>Monday, January 31st</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numbers in the News (QRE assignment) 30% total (each part 10%)</td>
<td>Part I Monday, January 24th  &lt;br&gt;Part II Monday, February 14th  &lt;br&gt;Part III, Monday, February 28th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final papers (group project) (45% total) See assignment details for breakdown of how much each part is worth</td>
<td>Top 3 program choices: Monday, January 10th  &lt;br&gt;Initial list of data sources: Monday, February 7th  &lt;br&gt;Preliminary bibliography and data report: Monday, February 21st  &lt;br&gt;Draft of final paper: Monday, March 7th  &lt;br&gt;Final presentations: Monday, March 14th 8:30 am to 11 am  &lt;br&gt;Final papers: Monday, March 14th, 5 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom participation (10%)</td>
<td>Every class!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Guidelines for Participation (Open for Discussion and Revision)

1. Maintain respect for all group members through confidentiality of what is discussed in class.
2. Help ensure that all have an equal opportunity to participate in class discussions.
3. Help keep the class on focus.
4. Let me know your concerns and needs.
5. Address your comments to the group, not just to the instructor.
6. Listen closely to others.
7. Engage in friendly disagreement—challenge ideas, not people.
8. Allow for and invite differences of opinion and experience.
10. Lean into discomfort.
Moodle and email

I will be using Moodle and email to communicate with the class as well as to post documents and links that are pertinent to the class. All readings, other than from the required books, will be available on Moodle. Please make sure that you check your email and Moodle course site regularly. You are also encouraged to use the site to share information about events, articles, websites, etc. that are relevant to the course.

Required Books

There are copies of the books for purchase at the bookstore and a copy on closed reserve at the library. All readings, other than from this book, will be available through Moodle.


Reading Schedule

Theme 1: Individual journeys and the big picture

January 3rd
Introductions

January 5th


Pathways to economic mobility: key indicators Fact Sheet
http://www.economicmobility.org/assets/pdfs/Pathways_to_Economic_Mobility_Fact_Sheet.pdf
January 7th


January 10th  TOP 3 CHOICES OF PROGRAMS FOR FINAL PAPER DUE


January 12th  FINAL PAPER GROUPS ASSIGNED


January 14th


January 17th


Theme 2: Families and Schools

January 19th


January 21st

January 24th **NUMBERS IN THE NEWS PART I DUE**


January 26th


January 28th


January 31st **LIVES OF LEARNING AND OPPORTUNITY ESSAY DUE**


February 2nd


February 4th


February 7th **NO CLASS** **INITIAL LIST OF DATA SOURCES FOR FINAL PAPER DUE VIA EMAIL**

February 9th


February 11th


February 14th **NUMBERS IN THE NEWS PART II DUE**

February 16th


February 18th


February 21st BIBLIOGRAPHY AND PRELIMINARY DATA REPORT FOR FINAL PAPER DUE


Theme 3: Issues in Higher Education

February 23rd


February 25th


February 28th NUMBERS IN THE NEWS PART III DUE


March 2nd


March 4th


March 7th DRAFT OF FINAL PAPER DUE


March 9th


March 14th 8:30 am to 11 am

FINAL PRESENTATIONS

March 14th, 5 pm

FINAL PAPERS DUE
ASSIGNMENT DETAILS

Class participation

This class is organized mainly around discussions and therefore it is essential that students come to class regularly and are prepared. Your class participation grade will depend on your attendance and evidence of having done the assigned readings; your active engagement in class activities; and your efforts to ensure that your classmates are able to participate in class (see guidelines for participation). Please note that while class participation is 10% of your final grade, not attending classes might result in a failing grade for the course, regardless of your grade on other assignments (see attendance policy).

General information about written assignments

All written assignments are due at the beginning of class on the due date. Half a grade will be deducted for each day it is late (one day counts as 24 hours after the beginning of class time. So an assignment is due on a Monday, if you hand it in before 9:50 am on Tuesday, it’s a half grade penalty (A to A-). If handed in on Tuesday after 9:50 am, it’s a one grade penalty (A to B+) and so forth.) Late assignments will not be accepted after 7 days beyond the due date.

All written assignments should be typed using 12-point font, double-spaced, numbered and stapled. Double-sided printing is encouraged.

All written assignments will be evaluated on the following general criteria though each assignment might also have other specific criteria:

1. Quality of writing: Make sure to proofread and spell-check your papers. Each of your paragraphs should discuss one main idea and there should be transitions within and between paragraphs. Make sure that your language is concise and clear.

2. Proper citation: Use APA format for in-text citation and the bibliography. You do not need a cover page. Make sure that you are familiar with the College’s policy on plagiarism. At least half a grade point will be deducted for failing to properly cite sources. See these websites for more information:

   https://apps.carleton.edu/campus/doc/honesty/complete/
   http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/  [also has good general information about academic writing]

3. Papers should provide evidence from credible, reliable sources for assertions and have a defensible thesis. Your papers should have clearly identifiable introductions and conclusions.

4. Papers should demonstrate a close reading of and connections to the course material.

5. You are strongly encouraged to use the available resources on campus to work on improving your writing. A good place to access those resources is the Writing Center:

   http://apps.carleton.edu/campus/asc/writeplace/

A general grading rubric for written assignments will be posted on Moodle.
Lives of Learning and Opportunity Considered Essay (7 pages maximum)

DUE: Monday, January 31st

Using the autobiographical and biographical materials from the first theme of the class, write an essay that addresses the question: How and Why Does Educational Opportunity Matter? Argue from examples. Don't think of this as your definitive answer to this question, but an exploration of your first tentative answer. Argue from specific examples from the readings to provide evidence for your argument. Use the concepts of social, human and financial capital to think with and clarify your argument.

Revision option: If you choose to revise this essay, you will have a week after I hand it back to you. For example, if I hand back the essays to you by February 7th, revised essays are due in class on February 14th and will not accepted anytime after that. Revising an essay will not erase a late penalty on the original paper.

Numbers in the News assignment (instructions adapted from an assignment in Professor Mija Van Der Wege's courses)

We often make learn about education-related research by reading general news stories about academic studies. One goal of this three-part assignment is to encourage you to become critical readers of such general news stories. Another goal is to develop your critical awareness of how numbers are often used in such stories to provide persuasive, if sometimes inaccurate, views about education-related issues.

Part I: Critically Reading Journalistic Reports of Research (3 pages maximum)
Due: Monday, January 24th

Step 1: Find a news article
Find an example of a quantitative education-related research-based claim made in a news story in the popular (that is, non-academic) news media (for example, newspaper, television, radio, magazine). Try to find something that is related to educational opportunities, factors that affect educational achievement, and so forth in the United States. In other words, pick a news story that is related to this course.

Pick a reliable source (for example, BBC News, the New York Times, or Newsweek rather than the Weekly World News, Glamour, or People magazine). You need to have some kind of record of the claim, so if it is a television or radio source, you’ll need to find a recording of it (online or record it yourself as you watch or listen). Pick a topic that you are interested in since you will be using this article/topic for the next two parts of the assignment. Because of Part II of this exercise, please find news articles that are more than 2 months old but not older than 5 years. Most news websites will let you search based on date range. You can also search for articles using library databases. Feel free to consult with Danya Leebaw or visit the Research/IT desk on the 4th floor of the library if you are having trouble finding a news report that meets these criteria.

Step 2: Preparation for writing
Write down 1-2 sentences of your first impressions after hearing the claim (i.e., reading the article, watching or listening to the news segment). Imagine that you are summarizing the news story for a friend or family member.

Review the precise wording of the news story and consider the following questions.

- What claims are implied by the news story?
- What claims are actually made by the news story (rather than implied)?
- What information does the news story give you about the source(s) of support that the journalist has for the claim?
- Is there any information in the article about who collected the data or reported the results?
- Is there any explicit information about the way in which the data were collected or the research methods used?

**Step 3: Writing**

Write a 2-3 page reflection about this news piece. Compare and contrast your first impressions with the actual claims made and implied by the news piece. Consider the types of evidence that the news story makes use of. Your paper should have a title, a clear thesis, and formal paragraph structure (rather than being a reflective stream of consciousness).

**Revision option:** If you choose to revise this essay, you will have a week after I hand it back to you. Revising an essay will not erase a late penalty on the original paper.

**Part II: Comparing Journalistic Reports to Primary Sources of Research (5 pages max)**

**Due: Monday, February 14th**

**Step 1: Finding the source(s)**

Based on the claim made in the news piece from the first assignment, find the research article on which the claim was based. There may be more than one, in which case, I recommend that you try to find a maximum of two of the articles. If you find two primary sources, you might want to find sources that have different or complementary results. Again, Danya Leebaw, the reference librarian for Educational Studies, is a great resource for this part of the project.

**Step 2: Reading the source(s)**

Read through the article(s). Parts may be difficult or technical, but do the best that you can to understand it. You need to get me a copy of the research article(s) either over email or a hard copy.

**Step 3: Analysis and comparison**

As best you can, review the precise wording of the research article or report and consider the following questions:

- What claims are actually made in the primary source?
- What claims are implied in the primary source?
- What information does the primary source give you about the evidence that the researcher has for the claims made in the article/report?
- Is there any information about who collected the data or reported the results?
• Is there any explicit information about the way in which the data were collected or the research methods used?
• How does the primary source differ from your considerations of the news story in the first assignment?

Step 4: Writing
Write a 3-5 page reflection paper about the news story and the primary source. Compare and contrast the claims made and implied by the news piece with the claims made and implied by the primary source(s). Does the news story seem to be a fair representation of the primary source(s)? Your paper should have a clear thesis and use evidence from both the news story and the primary source(s) to support your assertions.

Hand in or email a copy of the primary source(s) along with your paper.

Revision option: If you choose to revise this essay, you will have a week after I hand it back to you. Revising an essay will not erase a late penalty on the original paper.

Part III: Writing for a general audience about primary sources of research
Due: Monday, February 28th

Step 1: Review primary source(s)
Re-read your primary source(s)—the research article or report you used in Part II.

Step 2: Consider the journalistic challenge
Imagine that you are a journalist (or even a blogger) that strives for fair and balanced reporting of research.
• What factors need to be considered in reporting scientific results fairly to a general audience?
• What numbers should or should not be included?
• What details of the research procedures and methods should be included?
• What are some of the pros and cons of including too much or too little information about the research design or statistical results?

Step 3: Writing
Write a 2 page news article reporting the scientific findings fairly. Keep in mind that your audience is intelligent, but not necessarily versed in the background of the field you are reporting on.

Revision option: If you choose to revise this essay, you will have a week after I hand it back to you. Revising an essay will not erase a late penalty on the original paper.

Grading rubrics for each part of the assignment will be posted on Moodle.
**Final presentation/paper**

For the final presentation/paper, you will work with a small group of your classmates to develop a case study of a local program designed to increase educational access and opportunities. As a civic engagement project, your final papers will be shared with those involved in the program so that they can use your research to improve their programs, obtain funding, and so forth. The community partners will also be invited to the presentations you will do about your research and findings. Your research will be conducted through interviews with program coordinators and participants, data analysis, document analysis (brochures, websites and so forth) and a literature review. Your sources of data will depend on which program you will research. You might conduct interviews in person, over the phone, or via email. Depending on the nature of the program, you might be able to (and are highly encouraged to) conduct a site visit.

The plan is to have you do the research, do the presentation and prepare final presentations and papers in groups. Once you have told me your choices, I will place you in a group. Because this is a final project that involves contacting people, setting up interviews and doing both traditional (library) and non-traditional research, you CANNOT do this during the last week of classes or during reading days. Additionally, your work is not only important for you in terms of the grade you will receive, it is also important for the community partners. Therefore, to ensure that the necessary work happens in a timely fashion, there will be several smaller “parts” of the final paper/presentation that will be due during the term.

**Deadlines and details:**

All parts of the assignments, other than the final presentation and paper, will be assigned a letter grade (if your group completes the assignment and makes a reasonable effort, you will get full credit). Grading rubrics for the final presentation and paper will be posted on Moodle.

Details about programs will be given in class on Wednesday, January 5th.

*Top 3 program choices: Monday, January 10th (you will be given your group/program assignment on Wednesday, January 12th) Email me your choices BEFORE class time.*

*Initial list of data sources (5%): Monday, February 7th*

WE DON’T HAVE CLASS ON THE 7TH SO PLEASE MAKE SURE TO EMAIL THIS TO BE BY 5 PM ON FEB 7TH.

You will provide me with a preliminary list of data sources for your final report about the program. Providing me with as many details as possible at this point will help me ensure that you will have enough information to prepare your final paper/presentation. Data sources can include:

- the list of people you will be interviewing (e.g. program coordinators, program participants, parents, program volunteers/service providers)
- program materials (e.g. website, brochures, annual reports, grant applications)
• site visit plans (e.g. if you are going to research the Pre K readiness program in Northfield, you might want to visit the actual program once or twice)

The rest of the “parts” will be handed in class on the day it’s due. Please note that the general guidelines for written assignments should be followed.

Preliminary bibliography and data report (5%): Monday, February 21st
The preliminary bibliography should include sources from the course as well as at least 5 sources that are NOT including in the course reading list. The outside readings need to be published in reliable, academic sources—peer reviewed journals, books published by academic or other reputable presses, and so forth. Make sure that the bibliography is formatted using APA citation style.
The preliminary data report should be organized around the four main questions guiding the research and final report (see below). This is a chance for your group to review and analyze the data you have already collected, answer the questions you can with these data and consider what data you might still need to answer other questions.

Draft of final paper (5%): Monday, March 7th (I will give you feedback by Wednesday, March 9th).
The draft should be organized around the four main research questions. You should have a clear introduction that introduces the program, its aims and the arc of your paper. Your analysis of the program—why it is necessary, its effectiveness, what it is doing well, your suggestions for future growth/changes—should be grounded in the data you collected and in the literature we read in the course as well as your outside academic sources. You need to provide evidence for your assertions about the program and your recommendations for the program. Be sure to include quotes from those you interviewed, data from websites or annual reports, and observations from site visits.

Because this is a paper that will be read by the community partners, make sure to write in accessible, clear language. (Think about the writing you did for Part III of the Numbers in the News assignment). Use figures and charts as necessary and applicable.

Final presentations (15%) Monday, March 14th 8:30 am to 11 am
The final presentations can take any format (posters, PowerPoint, etc.). You will have about 20-25 minutes to present. Your presentation should highlight the program details, your findings, the program strengths and your recommendations. It SHOULD NOT be identical to the paper in that you are encouraged to think about how to present the data in visually and aurally compelling manner. While you can refer to the research literature, the presentation should focus on other sources of data (interviews, observations, etc.).

Final papers (15%): Monday, March 14th 5 pm (UPLOAD TO MOODLE)
The final paper should be organized around the four main questions. As with any written assignment, the writing should be clear and concise, the paragraphs should be organized logically with good transitions within and between paragraphs and assertions should be defended with proper evidence. Again, because the papers will be read by community partners and possibly used in their promotional literature or future grant applications, make sure to use language that is accessible and clear.
Guiding questions for research, presentation and paper:

There are four main questions you will be exploring for your assigned program. There might be additional questions that the community partner will want you to research.

1. How and why did the program start? (You can use information from those you interview as well as research literature about the “problem” the program is designed to address.) What is the “problem” that the program is designed to address?
   a. Who is the targeted population?
   b. What are its goals?

2. Impact:
   a. How does the program intend to gauge its impact on the targeted population?
   b. What kinds of data does the program intend to collect or has collected?
   c. What can you tell from these data and from your research (interviews, observations) about the impact the program is having?
   d. What kinds of access and opportunities is the program making available? To whom?
   e. What are the limitations of the impact that program is having or could have?

3. Challenges
   a. What are the challenges faced by the program? (This could be at any point—at the start of the program, during an expansion, at the current moment…)
   b. What are strategies that the program has used to meet those challenges?

4. Future planning
   a. What are the questions/challenges/successes the program should consider as it plans for the future?
   b. What strategies would you suggest (drawing from course and research literature) for the program?
   c. What are your recommendations for practices that the program should continue, strengthen, add, rethink, etc.?

Note about late final papers:

It is College policy that instructors are NOT allowed to accept or grade late final papers. So even if your paper is uploaded late even by a few minutes past the deadline, you will need to petition through the Dean’s Office to have the final paper graded late. So PLEASE plan accordingly and turn in your papers before the deadline.

See college policy:
https://apps.carleton.edu/campus/dos/handbook/academic_regs/?policy_id=21451