PSCI 311 Public Policy: School Reform  Horwitz #1 Office Hours:
Kenyon College  Tues. 2:30-4:00
Fall 2004  Wed. 3:00-6:00
Kirk Emmert  Or by appointment

AMERICAN PUBLIC POLICY: SCHOOL REFORM

BOOKS TO BE PURCHASED:
J. T. Gatto,  Dumbing Us Down: The Hidden Curriculum of Compulsory Schooling  (NSP)
Ravitch & Viteritti, Making Good Citizens: Education and Civil Society  (Yale)
E.D. Hirsch, Jr.,  The Schools We Need and Why We Don’t Have Them  (Doubleday)
A. Cohen,  The Schools Our Children Deserve: Moving Beyond Traditional classrooms & "Tougher Standards"  (HM)
Stevenson & Stigler,  The Learning Gap: Why Our Schools Are Failing and What We Can Learn from Japanese and Chinese Education  (Summit)
D. Meier,  Will Standards Save Public Education?  (Beacon)
M. Edmundson,  Teacher: The One Who Made The Difference  (Vintage)

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

1. To reflect on the proper goals of American secondary education and on the best means to attain these goals.
2. To consider the relations between secondary and civic education in our liberal democracy.
3. To study and assess the two basic, different approaches to secondary education in the U.S., traditional and progressive education
4. To study the strengths and weaknesses, and their causes, of current American secondary education.
5. To consider the possibilities and limits of school reform in the United States.
6. To help you come to your own considered view of the strengths and weaknesses of American schools and how they might be improved.
7. To help you to think, speak and write more clearly and deeply about education and policy reform.
8. To practice and enjoy learning from each other.
COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Written Work:

In this course everyone will write one short (2 page) essay and two 5-7 page essays. All of these essays will discuss books assigned for this course. You will also be doing some writing for your Issue Report and your Reform Project. (See Below) There will be a Final Exam and unannounced quizzes as needed.

Issue Groups:

Each of you will be part of an Issue Group. Most Groups will have two members but, if appropriate, you may work alone. You should choose your issue from the list I have given you or from an issue that interests you that is not on my list. Issues will be presented and discussed in class according to a schedule I will give you. Each presenting team will email the class by 10:00pm on the day before your report a 1-2 page statement of the problem being addressed, including different views of how to deal with it. In class, your team will present, briefly (10 minutes max.) different views of your problem in such a way as to promote discussion of it. We will devote 20-25 minutes of class time to a presentation and discussion of a problem.

Discussion:

I will conduct this course largely as a discussion seminar rather than a lecture course. To have interesting and fruitful discussions we must all do our part. This means you have to do the reading before class (there is a specific assignment for each class) and come prepared to discuss it, including raising questions and making judgments.

Reform Projects or Exhibitions:

Working individually, or with one or two others, I want each of you to undertake a practical study of school reform. The effort here is to apply some of the reform ideas you have encountered to a specific school or class. To do this you will need to visit a specific school (in Gambier, Mt. Vernon, or your hometown), interview teachers or administrators, visit classes, or in some way learn about reforms that have been, or might be, implemented at a particular school or in a particular classroom. Most of this project report should be written, but the rest may be presented in any way you think appropriate. These reports are due on Monday December 6. During the last day of classes some of them will be presented and discussed in class.

Grades:

Your course grade will be assessed as follows: three essays 40%; Project Report 20%; Discussion, Issue Report & Quizzes 20-25%; Final Exam 15-20%. Exceptionally good or poor work in one or more of these areas will be weighed somewhat more in determining your grade. According to faculty rules, I must penalize late work. Ask for extensions, granted only in unusual
circumstances, at least three days before an assignment is due. No late work accepted which is more than two weeks late. Required work which is not handed-in or is more than two weeks late receives a double F. If, due to some kind of emergency or unusual circumstances, you are unable to do the assigned work please see me as soon as you are aware of these difficulties. I assume you are familiar with the College’s policy on academic honesty and will strictly adhere to it.

COURSE OUTLINE AND ASSIGNMENTS:

I. The Attack on Schooling

August

30M Introduction

September

1 School Pathologies & Hidden Messages

3 Less, Not More School
   Gatto, Chapt. 3 & 4, pp. 39-79

6M *Gatto, A Different Kind of Teacher, pp. 35-46 & pp. 60-93
   Report on Radical Critique

8 SHORT ESSAY DUE IN CLASS ASSESSING GATTO (2 pp. Max.)
   Report on Home Schooling

II. Secondary Education and Citizenship

10 Education and Democracy
   Ravitch & Viteritti (R & V), Making Good Citizens: Education and Civil Society, Chaps. 1 & 2, pp. 15-51
   * On ERES

13M Social Capital and Schooling
   R & V, Chapt. 3, article by Putnam, pp. 58-87

15 Differences in Social Capital & Schooling
   R & V, Chapt. 4, article by Grant, pp. 96-119

17 Student Complacency and Disaffection
   R & V, Chapt. 5, article by Damon, pp.122-40
   Report on Steinberg, Disengaged Students

20M Character Education
   R & V, Chapt. 6, article by Nord, pp. 142-65
   Report on character education
22 Diversity
R & V, Chapt. 7, article by Glazer, pp.168-84 & Chapt. 8, article by Holmes, pp. 187-99

24 Pluralism and Unity
R & V, Chapt. 8 by Holmes, pp. 199-210 & Chapt. 9, article by Salamone, pp. 213-31.

27M Religion and Civic Education
R & V, Chapt. 10, article by Racove, pp. 233-58
Report on Catholic Schools

29 Continued
R & V, Chapt. 11, article by Elshtain, pp. 263-78 & Chapt. 12, article by Wolfe, pp. 279-94

October

1 School Choice and Religion
R & V, Chapt. 13, article by Glen, pp. 297-322
Report on School Choice

4M Choice, Religion and Charter Schools
R & V, Chapt. 14, article by Viteritti, pp. 326-41
Report on Charter Schools

III. Traditional v. Progressive Schooling

6 Shared Knowledge and Equal Opportunity
E.D. Hirsch, The Schools We Need, Chapt. 1 & 2, pp.1-38

8 The Source of our Problems
Hirsch, Chapt. 2, pp. 38-47 & Chapt 3, pp. 47-68
ESSAY DUE ON CIVIC EDUCATION (5-7) pages

OCTOBER BREAK

13 The Progressive Response: Reactionary Reform
Alfie Kohn, The Schools Our Children Deserve, Chapt. 1, pp. 1-24 & Chapt. 6, pp. 101-14

15 (Continued) Motivation & Implementation
Kohn, Chapt 2, pp. 25-46 & Chapt. 5, pp.93-100

18M (Continued) Teaching & Learning
Kohn, Chapt. 4, pp. 47-72

20 The New Progressivism
Kohn, Chapt. 7-8, pp. 115-50

22 (Continued)
Kohn, Chapt. 8, pp. 50-58 & Chapt. 9, pp.159-82
25M Sources of Progressivism’s Errors  
Hirsch, Chapt. 4, pp. 69-115

27 Teachings of Mainstream Research  
Hirsch, Chapt. 4, pp. 115-26 & Chapt. 5, pp. 127-59

29 More on Research and Testing  
Hirsch, Chapt. 6, pp. 159-75 & Chapt. 7, pp.176-206

November

1M Kohn’s Response on Testing  
Hirsch, chapt. 7, pp. 206-15  
Kohn, Chapt. 4, pp. 73-92

3 Alternative Solutions  
Hirsch, Chapt. 7, pp. 215-38

5 Continued  
Kohn, Chapt. 10, pp. 183-208

7 ESSAY DUE (5-7 Pages) on Hirsh/Cohen Debate

IV. A Case for Reform: What Can we Learn from the Japanese and Chinese?

8M The American Problem  
Stevenson & Stigler, The Learning Gap: Why Our Schools Are Failing and What We Can Learn from the Japanese and Chinese, Preface and Chaps. 1 & 2, pp, 7-51

10 How Kids Live Here and There, Socialization, & Achievement  
Stevenson & Stigler, Chapt. 3 & 4, pp. 52-93

12 Effort, Ability & Expectations  
S & S, Chaps. 5-6, pp. 94-129

15M School Organization  
S & S, Chapt. 7 pp. 130-55  
Report on Tracking

17 Teaching Profession  
S & S, Chapt. 8, pp. 156-73  
Report on Teacher Training

19 An American Solution?  
S & S, Chapt. 10, pp. 200-24

THANKSGIVING BREAK
V. The Standards Debate

29M D. Meier, Will Standards Save Public Education?, pp.3-50

December

1 Meier, pp. 50-88

VI. Teaching

3 M. Edmundson, Teacher: The One Who Made the Difference, pp.1-85

6M Edmundson, pp 85-152

8 Edmundson, pp.153-202

10 Edmundson, pp. 202-76

13M Project Reports

FINAL EXAM (8:30am on Dec. 21st. or 1:30pm on Dec. 17th)