Introduction
This course introduces students to the sociological study of higher education in the United States. The course will examine a number of problems and questions regarding higher education, including those related to access, on campus experiences and social stratification outcomes.

As no single text exists in this field, the assigned readings for the course come from several books.

Course Requirements
A considerable amount of class time will be devoted to discussion of the course readings. It is imperative for students to have completed the reading assignments prior to class.

1. Students will be expected to lead one class per semester. Class leaders will prepare a one page “summary sheet” of the week’s reading(s) to distribute to the class. The summary will include, but is not limited to, the following elements:
   - Summary of the overall theme of the text
   - Outline of 3-4 main arguments in the text with supporting evidence (e.g. page numbers or blocks of text to refer to)
   - Methods
   - Synthesis across chapters
   - Discussion of relevant/applicable sociological theory

2. Class leaders will spend the last 45 minutes of class leading an activity and robust discussion related to the week’s readings. The class leader will monitor the discussion and have questions prepared to engage the group. In addition, during this time, class leaders are encouraged to connect current events or new research with themes in the week’s readings. Class leaders will be evaluated on the basis of thoughtfulness, depth of discussion, and analytical insight demonstrated in their leadership sessions.

3. Students will write a 1-2 page reflection on the weekly reading’s key themes, insights and takeaways. The class leader will not have to write a reflection piece for their week. The weekly reflection can connect sociological theory or questions to the week’s topic, or critically assess the author’s argument. These are due to me at the beginning of class.

4. In addition, students will write one paper for the class. The paper will be 20-25 pages, closely grounded in sociological theory, and address a novel question about higher education. All term
papers must include 1) a critical synthesis of theoretical and practical issues related to your
topic; and 2) identification of both existing research and needed research on your topic. A one
page description of your term paper topic is due to me the 5th week of class. The description
will be handed in to me at the beginning of class on February 26th.

Required Texts
3. Attewell, Paul, and David Lavin. *Passing the torch: Does higher education for the disadvantaged
4. Bailey, T., & Morest, V. S. *Defending the community college equity agenda.* Johns Hopkins
   University Press. (2006)
   University Press, 2014.
8. Mullen, A. L. *Degrees of Inequality: Culture, class, and gender in American higher education.*
9. Stevens, Mitchell L. *Creating a class: College admissions and the education of elites.* Harvard
10. Stulberg, L., & Weinberg, S. *Diversity in American higher education toward a more

Grading
Term Paper 40%
Weekly Reflections 25%
Class presentation of term paper 10%
Quality of format and discussion during class leadership 25%

Course Logistics
Office Hours: I am available to meet by appointment. You can also reach me by phone or email. I will
promptly respond to emails.

Deadlines: All assignment deadlines are firm and regular class attendance and participation is
expected. I will not grant extensions on assignments unless there is an emergency. If an assignment is
late, the grade will be reduced by a third. For example an “A+” will become an “A-”.

Academic Integrity: All students are responsible for understanding and complying with the
NYU Steinhardt Statement on Academic Integrity. A copy is available at
http://steinhardt.nyu.edu/policies/academic_integrity.
Students with Disabilities: Students with physical or learning disabilities are required to register with the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities, 726 Broadway, 2nd Floor, (212-998-4980) and are required to present a letter from the Center to the instructor at the start of the semester in order to be considered for appropriate accommodation. (Please see http://www.nyu.edu/life/safety-health-andwellness/students-with-disabilities.html).

This syllabus is subject to change. Any changes to the syllabus shall be distributed in writing, which may include electronic communication.

Course Calendar and Assignments

What is Sociology of Higher Education?
Week 1: 1/29
- Introduction

Sociological Theory and Higher Education
Week 2: 2/5
Pay particular attention to themes raised in the article below:


Excerpts of Sociological Theory
- Randall Collins, "Functional and Conflict Theories of Educational Stratification"
- Macleod, J. Introduction to “Aint No Makin It”
- Lareau, A. “Unequal Childhoods”

Diversity in Higher Education
Week 3: 2/12

  Pay particular attention to chapters 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 15, 20. However, you are expected to read the entire book and be able to discuss all chapters.

NO CLASS
Week 4: 2/19
Access
Week 5: 2/26
• Stevens, Mitchell L. *Creating a class: College admissions and the education of elites*. Harvard University Press. (2009)
• Description of term paper due

Community Colleges
Week 6: 3/5
• Bailey, T., & Morest, V. S. *Defending the Community College Equity Agenda*. Johns Hopkins University Press. (2006)

Inequality 1
Week 7: 3/12

SPRING BREAK

Inequality 2
Week 8: 3/26

Mobility
Week 9: 4/2

Learning on Campus
Week 10: 4/9

Student Culture 1
Week 11: 4/16

Student Culture 2
Week 12: 4/23
Higher Education Broad Implications
Week 13: 4/30

Conclusion
Week 14: 5/7
  • Final Term Paper Presentations