Course Introduction

“Urban education” is both a very accurate term and a misnomer. Urban education is, in plain language, schooling that takes place within urban areas. Still, many associations with the term involve underperforming, underfunded and lawless schools, struggling (or unmotivated) teachers, dysfunctional districts and disadvantaged students. While these phenomena are definitely part of the world of urban education, they make up only a part of it (also, these phenomena are not limited to urban communities). The sociological perspective on cities, and on city schools, requires us to look broadly at what is involved in urban education. Such an examination of city schools’ complex ecology must consider the history of schooling in cities, urban demography and politics, and how urban educational policy is developed and implemented. In this context, one can take a more measured approach to understanding contemporary phenomena such as widespread school closings in cities like Philadelphia and Chicago, the proliferation of charter schools in cities and the increasing emphasis on student test scores as a component of teachers’ performance evaluations. We will consider schooling in a number of American cities including Chicago, a city with a rich and complicated history of school reform and the topic of a number of excellent studies of urban education.

Essential Questions

As the instructor, I assume that each student brings her or his own questions to this course and will pursue answers to those questions. I invite you to take in all that you can in this course and make use of it in ways that help you to get answers to, or further develop, your own questions. In addition, the following specific questions (to which I refer as “essential questions”) will guide our inquiry this semester:

1. How does the urban setting—the “urban” in “urban schools”—impact teaching and learning?
2. To what degree do urban educational policies and reform efforts acknowledge, incorporate and address the characteristics of urban schools and/or their settings?
**School of Education Conceptual Framework**
This course applies the School of Education’s Conceptual Framework—*Professionalism in Service of Social Justice*—in its consideration of how we as educators and educational researchers make sense of and interact with the constantly changing kaleidoscope of social, political, economic, professional and organizational factors that impact urban education. Our pursuit of this course’s essential questions (listed above) should further develop students’ abilities to think critically about and respond to the complex phenomena that occur in urban schools. My hope is that this course will support students’ abilities to reason about and respond to these issues with strong mind and spirit.

**Course Goals**
Given this course’s focus and essential questions, my goal as your instructor is to provide you with analytic tools that will help you to study and make sense of urban schools and efforts to influence them. As such, this course’s specific goals are that:

1. Students will be able to analyze and critically evaluate ideas, arguments, and points of view related to urban education by placing them in historic, political and demographic context, and by employing policy analysis skills. (This goal will have students analyzing issues in urban education during class discussions as well as through observational and written assignments.)
2. Students will expand their factual knowledge of contemporary events, issues and movements in urban education. (This goal will have students learning about a variety of relevant events, issues and efforts to impact urban schools and school districts.)
3. Students will learn to apply course materials and experiences to improve their thinking, problem-solving and decision making about practice and research in urban education.
4. Students will develop their ability to collect, synthesize and communicate information about urban education. (This goal will have students identifying an issue of concern to them, and doing independent research resulting in a paper, and also going out into the field to observe public education in action and writing about what they see.)

**Assigned Texts:**
The following texts are required for this course. All are available for purchase at the Loyola University Bookstore, Water Tower Campus (Baumhart Hall, 26 E. Pearson). These texts are available on reserve at the Lewis Library.


Other readings are either available through LUC’s electronic library holdings (accessible through Worldcat at http://libraries.luc.edu/, under “Find” and then “Course Reserves,” noted below in this syllabus as Electronic Course Reserves) or as PDF documents posted on LUC’s Sakai website, and are listed below by the week in which they are assigned. Where readings are accessible on the internet, I have provided a link on this syllabus. Links sometimes change from when the syllabus is written; please inform me if this happens so that I can provide a correct link to all class members.

Assessments of Learning:
This course’s assignments seek to build your practical and analytic understanding of urban schools through a number of channels. Assessments of learning include papers whose topics I select, papers whose topics students select, and observations that inform reflection papers. The assignments and the proportion that they contribute to your final grade are as follows.

Assignment 1: Introduction letter 2.5%
Assignment 2: Policy/Initiative analysis paper 35% (5% for topic proposal, 30% for paper)
Assignment 3: Educational resource paper (17.5%)
Assignment 4: Board meeting paper (12.5%) Classroom observation paper (12.5%)
Assignment 5: Classroom observation paper (12.5%)
Class participation: 20%
    • Attendance: 14%
    • Participation in class: 6%

Assignment descriptions (including grading criteria):

Assignment 1: Introduction letter
See description under materials for first class meeting (1/14). Graded on a credit/no credit basis, with credit given for students who bring the letter to class with them and complete all of the required elements.

Assignment 2: Policy/Initiative analysis paper, Topic choice due 2/14 (6 pm), Paper due 4/29 (6 pm). There are two options for this paper.
Option 1: Choose a specific educational initiative happening in a specific urban district (using the Council for Great City Schools criteria for selecting a district, or, if you prefer to do research on schooling in a city outside of the U.S., a city that meets these criteria as closely as possible, determined in consultation with me). Your selection may be current or historical, as long as you have sufficient resources to inform your paper. Some examples (which you may use, but which are not intended to limit your choice) include:

- The movement to return to an elected school board in Chicago
- Homeless education initiatives in Seattle
- Parents’ and students’ organization to contest urban districts’ use of standardized testing
- The role of teacher evaluation in teacher union contracts in any number of cities, including Baltimore, Boston and Chicago
- The proliferation of charter schools in Detroit and/or New Orleans, where more than half of the cities’ students attend charter schools.

Please write a 10-15 page paper (double-spaced, 1” margins, 12 point font) in which you analyze your chosen initiative/policy from each of the following perspectives:

1. The initiative’s/policy’s origins (How did it come to be? Who brought it to the city/district? Was its initiation wanted, contested, both?) (15% of grade)
2. The initiative’s/policy’s intended outcomes (15% of grade)
3. Recent historical, political and/or economic context (15% of grade)
4. Relevant demographic trends in the city (e.g., population increases, decreases, or proportional shifts relative to race, ethnicity, language or immigrant status) (15% of grade)
5. Given the initiative’s/policy’s origins (#1) and context (#3 and 4), what outcomes do you anticipate? Will the policy be able to unfold as intended (#2)? What potential resources or obstacles can you identify? If you are considering a historic case, you can look instead at intended and unintended outcomes, contextual influences, and resources and obstacles. (20% of grade)

Your paper’s grade will be based on how completely you address each of the above points. Your responses will need to be informed both by class readings and by the research you conduct on your chosen topic. Please incorporate at least 6 sources of empirical information on your chosen topic (e.g., journalistic accounts, research literature and/or historic narratives). 15% of your grade will reflect the quality of your writing: the degree to which your paper is well-organized (including a thesis paragraph, body paragraphs/sections that articulate your findings, and a summarizing conclusion) and clearly written (with accessible language that effectively conveys your findings and points). 5% of your grade is dedicated to your submitting a 1-2 paragraph email by 6 p.m. on Friday, 2/14 in which you inform me of your chosen topic and how you plan to study it (e.g. what kinds of resources you will use).

Option 2: Develop a paper topic of your choice that is related to urban education (again, using the Council for Great City Schools criteria if you are focusing on a particular city). This project

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1 These criteria are: “School districts eligible for membership must be located in cities with populations over 250,000 and student enrollment over 35,000. School districts located in the largest city of any state are also eligible for membership, regardless of size.”
demands more student initiative and independent structuring of the paper, and will require sufficient research to submit the 1-2 paragraph proposal, in which you inform me of your chosen topic and how you plan to study it (e.g. what kinds of resources you will use), which is due on 2/14 at 6 pm. This paper will be graded according to the following rubric:

**Final Paper Option 2 Rubric**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Possible Points (Out of 100)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Argument clarity and coherence: Argument is clearly stated and flows from beginning to end of paper in a fashion that is seamless (leaves no gaps), well-developed and easy to follow.</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Argument and claims are substantiated with credible evidence.</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper reflects thorough efforts to gather and analyze relevant evidence</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topic and resources used connect clearly to urban education.</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of writing</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Writing is clear and easy to understand, even if concepts communicated are complex.</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper is well-organized, and is broken into sections that mirror the procession of the author’s argument.</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conventions of writing are followed (spelling, grammar, sentence structure, punctuation).</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This paper (option 1 or 2) is due on Tuesday, April 29 at 6:00 p.m.

**Assignment 3: Distribution of educational resources within urban districts**

This paper asks you to formulate and defend your opinion on the distribution of educational resources within urban districts, as well as to evaluate the feasibility of your ideas about how these resources should be distributed. Please write a 5-7 page paper in which you answer the following questions:

1. What are your views about the distribution of educational resources in urban school districts: should they be distributed equally across all students and schools, and if not, why not?
2. How would you propose distributing these resources, and how would you justify your plan to taxpayers, educators and civic leaders?
3. Given what you know about the history (both distant and more recent) of urban schools in America, how likely is it that that your proposal for the distribution of would take place and be accepted? What might facilitate or impair your plan if it was implemented? (If you wish to connect this portion of the paper to a particular city, you are welcome to choose one; since we will have just completed fairly thorough study of both Austin, TX and Chicago, either of these cities may be particularly suitable for this assignment.)

This paper will be evaluated according to how thoroughly you articulate and defend your views about educational resource distribution (items 1 and 2--35% for both together), how well you connect your proposed plan for resource distribution to your historical knowledge about urban
education (45%), and the quality of your writing (20%), as represented by your paper’s organization (including a thesis paragraph, body paragraphs or sections that articulate your findings, and a summarizing conclusion) and clarity (the use of accessible language that effectively conveys your findings and points).

This paper should be 5-7 pages long (excluding references) and is due on Friday, February 28 at 6:00 p.m.

Assignment 4: Board meeting paper
For this assignment, students are required to watch (via internet video, accessible at http://www.cpsboe.org/meetings/past-meetings) or attend in person the February 27 Chicago Public Schools Board meeting, which begins at 10:30, and will take place at the CPS Central Administration Building, 125 S. Clark Street, 5th Floor, Chicago, IL 60603. If you attend the meeting in person, please keep notes that make it possible for you to write a brief reflection paper and for you to discuss your impressions in class.

This paper should be 2-4 pages in length. Please address at least 3 of the following points in it:
- How did you see forms of urban school governance represented?
- How, if at all, was the distribution of educational resources addressed?
- How were different constituencies—such as teachers, students, parents, Chicago residents, Chicago businesses—represented?
- What surprises did you encounter?

This paper is due on Sunday, 3/16 at 6:00 p.m.

Assignment 5: Classroom observation paper
Please arrange to visit an urban classroom (in Chicago, or in another urban district that meets the Council for Great City Schools definition2) You may visit a classroom of any level (P-12), in a private, charter or public school. If you need help locating a school, please let me know ASAP (please do not wait until shortly before the paper is due to identify a school—this can take time). Please observe for 30 minutes and take detailed field notes of your visit. Please also make a detailed sketch of the classroom. I will discuss the field notes and the sketch in class early in the semester.

Please turn in your field notes, sketch of the classroom (hard copy or pdf) and reflections on your visit. Please make at least three connections to course readings. In your paper (and this can be in conjunction with the connections you make to readings), please address at least one the following points:
- What is “urban” about this classroom or its students? What lets you know that?

2 These criteria are: “School districts eligible for membership must be located in cities with populations over 250,000 and student enrollment over 35,000. School districts located in the largest city of any state are also eligible for membership, regardless of size.”
• Are there policies, historical underpinnings or demographic trends evident in this classroom?

Your paper, not including the field notes, should be 2-4 pages in length, and is due at 6:00 p.m. on Sunday, 3/30.

About written assignments

Paper length
Please adhere to the stated page length requirements (which do not include reference lists). Pages should be double-spaced with a 12-point font and 1-inch margins. I reserve the right to not grade material that exceeds the stated maximum length.

Reference lists and citation
Please prepare reference lists for all written assignments where you cite other published work. Please follow your academic discipline’s format for in-text citations and reference lists. In the field of education, this is usually APA, but if you use another style (e.g., MLA), that is fine as well.

Submission of assignments
Please submit all written assignments by uploading them to the appropriate Turnitin link on this course’s Sakai page.

Due dates
As your instructor, I expect timely submission of assignments or clear, proactive communication if alternative arrangements are needed. If you need to extend an assignment date due to pressing circumstances, please contact me before the assignment is due and we will negotiate a workable date. If you do not make arrangements with me before the assignment’s due date, late assignments’ grades will be reduced by one-third of a grade (3 points) per day. Written assignments turned in on the due date, but after the due time, will be considered late.

Assignment revisions
You are allowed 2 weeks from when your graded assignment is returned to revise any written assignment (except the final assignment, whose due date falls at the very end of the semester). Please note that submitting a revision does not guarantee you a higher grade. Please revise your assignments using the track changes function in Microsoft Word, so that I can clearly see where you have revised your work.

Class Participation
This is a highly interactive course, which makes every student’s participation very important. For this reason, participation is worth 20% of your final grade. Attendance accounts for 14% of your grade, equating to 1% for each class attended. Participation in class discussions (frequency and substance of your contributions) accounts for 6% of your grade.
Please come on time to class, having read all assigned materials, and ready to discuss them with your colleagues. If you arrive late, leave early or are unprepared, both you and your work partners will have a difficult time fully participating in partnered and small group discussions. Please notify me in advance if you must miss part or all of any class meeting. You will still be held responsible for all assigned readings, due dates for assignments, and course requirements or updates discussed in class. Please check in with one of your colleagues if you miss a class meeting to see what you missed. All power points from class will be posted on the class Sakai page.

Regarding electronic texts, if you elect not to print a hard copy of these texts, please make sure that texts are accessible to you before class begins, as time spent accessing documents during class takes away from valuable discussion time and may leave both you and your discussion partners in the lurch.

The use of electronics (cell phones, computers) is often a necessity of modern life, but interferes with participation in class. Please refrain from using electronic devices if their use does not pertain directly to your participation in our course.

Communication between instructor and students
In addition to updates I may give verbally in class, I will occasionally send updates to the class via email, using the LOCUS system. I will assume that if I have sent email updates to you at the address provided on LOCUS, and the email has not bounced back to me, that you have read it.

If you wish to reach me, the best way to do so is by my Loyola email address. I will respond within 48 hours between Monday and Friday.

Class meeting dates, themes and assigned readings

Jan 14—Course introduction, what is urban?
Course introduction, letters of introduction, definition of “urban,” contemporary demographics of American cities, discussion of class observation assignment.
Letter of Introduction: Please come to this first class prepared to share an approximately 1-page (double-spaced) letter of introduction. You may introduce yourself to your colleagues however you choose to, but please include the following information:
• Your personal or professional experiences with urban schools (If you have had none, that is of course fine; please note if that is the case.)
• The response of one person (family member, friend, neighbor, colleague, whomsoever!) to the question: “When you hear the words ‘urban education,’ what do you think?”
• Questions or concerns that you have about urban education.


Recommended reading (used for class discussion, but not assigned before first class meeting)


Week 2, January 21
History of urban education in the United States

Tyack, "From village school to urban system: Bureaucratization in the 19th century,” (p. 28-59), “Functions of schooling” (p. 72-77) and “Inside the system: The character of urban schools, 1890-1940”) (pp.177-255).


Cucchiara, pages 21-47.


*Week 3, January 28*
*Where history meets policy: The case of Austin, TX*

Cuban: pages 1-2, 21 (beginning with “Why pick Austin?”)-53, 73-84, 85-133 and 140-170. (include info on policy analysis)
Week 4, February 4
Chicago: What’s in our peat bog and why does that matter? What can we anticipate as a result?


Week 5, February 11
Putting the school in the city: City and neighborhood characteristics, urban change and public education


Cucchiara, chapter 5 (96-136)


February 14: Final paper topic due at 6 pm.

Week 6, February 18
Distribution of educational resources within cities


Cucchiara, chapter 4 (65-95)


Bulkley, Chapter 10 (Reckhow, Disseminating and legitimating a new approach: The role of foundations, 277-304).

Week 7, February 25
Teaching in the city: Conditions of teaching, the teacher workforce, and labor issues


Tyack, “Lady labor sluggers and the professional proletariat” (p.255-268, please also read 285-289).


Paper 3 due on Friday, February 28 at 6:00 p.m.

No class March 4—Have a great Spring break!
Week 8, March 11
Urban school governance and mayoral control


Sunday, March 16, 6:00 p.m.: Chicago Public Schools Board Meeting paper due

Week 9, March 18
Recent models of reform: School-parent-community partnerships
Harlem Children’s Zone Project Description. Accessible online at http://www.hcz.org/index.php/about-us/the-hcz-project.


Cucchiara, chapter 6 (137-166)

Guest Speaker: Wendy Katten, Raise Your Hand For Illinois Public Education (http://www.ilraiseyourhand.org/)

Week 10, March 25
Recent models of reform: Safety, discipline and military academies in schools


Guest Speaker: Christopher Dork, Dean of Students, Rickover Naval Academy (http://rickover naval.org/)

Sunday, 3/30: Classroom observation paper due, 6:00 p.m.

Week 11, April 1
Recent models of reform: Portfolio models and school choice

Bulkley, Chapters 1 (Bulkley, Introduction: Portfolio management models in urban school reform, 3-26) 2 (Henig, Portfolio management models and the political economy of contracting regimes, 27-52) and 7 (Levin, A framework for designing governance in choice and portfolio districts 217-250).


Week 12, April 8
Recent models of reform: Charter schools


Center for Research on Education Outcomes (2013). *National Charter School Study.* Please read the beginning of Charter school demographics (14-20) and Summary and Implications (82-89) and skim the rest of the report to gain information about information presented in the summary. Accessible online at https://credo.stanford.edu/documents/NCSS%202013%20Final%20Draft.pdf


Bulkley et al, chapter 6: Levin et al., A diverse education provider: New Orleans (165-191)

Student writings about schools in New Orleans. Selections from Pedagogy, Policy, and the Privatized City (Teachers College Press, 2010). Posted on Sakai.

Week 13: April 15
Recent models of reform: school closures and turnarounds


Chicago Tribune (2013). School building closings. Please review map, under both “Community areas by change in the population of school-age children” and “Community areas by poverty rate” settings. Accessible online at http://graphics.chicagotribune.com/school_utilization/


Week 13, April 22
School turnarounds, final paper discussion and support, course summary and course evaluations


Tuesday, April 29, 6:00 p.m. Policy/Issue Analysis Paper (assignment 2) due.

Have a wonderful summer!!

Loyola University Chicago and School of Education policies that pertain to this course

Academic Honesty
Academic honesty is an expression of interpersonal justice, responsibility and care, applicable to Loyola University faculty, students, and staff, which demands that the pursuit of knowledge in the university community be carried out with sincerity and integrity. The School of Education’s Policy on Academic Integrity can be found at: http://www.luc.edu/education/academics_policies_integrity.shtml. For additional academic policies and procedures refer to: http://www.luc.edu/education/academics_policies_main.shtml

Please note that since all course papers are to be submitted via Sakai’s Turnitin function, they will be scanned for originality, which would reveal whether material has been plagiarized from other print sources, including books, journals, and websites (including Wikipedia). If you have any questions about proper citation of sources, please let me know.

Accessibility
Students who have disabilities which they believe entitle them to accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act should register with the Services for Students with Disabilities (SSWD) office. To request accommodations, students must schedule an appointment with an SSWD coordinator. Students should contact SSWD at least four weeks before their first semester or term at Loyola. Returning students should schedule an appointment within the first two weeks of the semester or term. The University policy on accommodations and participation in courses is available at: http://www.luc.edu/sswd/

Harassment (Bias Reporting)
It is unacceptable and a violation of university policy to harass, discriminate against or abuse any person because of his or her race, color, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, disability, religion, age or any other characteristic protected by applicable law. Such behavior threatens to destroy the environment of tolerance and mutual respect that must prevail for this university to fulfill its educational and health care mission. For this reason, every incident of harassment, discrimination or abuse undermines the aspirations and attacks the ideals of our community. The university qualifies these incidents as incidents of bias.

In order to uphold our mission of being Chicago's Jesuit Catholic University—a diverse community seeking God in all things and working to expand knowledge in the service of
humanity through learning, justice and faith, any incident(s) of bias must be reported and appropriately addressed. Therefore, the Bias Response (BR) Team was created to assist members of the Loyola University Chicago community in bringing incidents of bias to the attention of the university. If you believe you are subject to such bias, you should notify the Bias Response Team at this link: http://webapps.luc.edu/ biasreporting/

**Technology**
Internet access and enrollment in LUC’s LOCUS and Sakai systems is required for this course. I will communicate with students occasionally via the LOCUS system, which sends emails to all students enrolled in this course. All documents (including the syllabus, power point presentations, and additional texts) are posted on this course’s Sakai page. Occasional communication using online formats may be used during the semester.

**Diversity**
This course addresses diversity in urban schools and districts through many of its assigned readings. In addition, I as instructor will encourage class members to include notions of diversity (e.g., social class, gender, ethnicity, race, sexual and gender identity) as we consider different topics throughout the course. Diversity among enrollees in the course is critical to this course’s success. As instructor, I will promote full participation and contribution by all class members, asking that varied viewpoints be thoroughly considered and respected by all members of our class.