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 graduation rates that are lower than the nation’s average, 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 also 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,” designated in this syllabus as “Course Reserves”), as PDF documents posted on LUC’s Sakai website (designated as “Sakai”) and are listed below by the week in which they are assigned, or via the internet (with a link provided on this syllabus). Links sometimes change from when the syllabus is written; please inform me if a link does not work 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: Urban Education Autobiography 5%
- Assignment 2: Classroom observation paper 1 (15%)
- Assignment 3: Policy/Initiative analysis paper 35% (5% for topic proposal, 30% for paper)
- Assignment 4: Board meeting paper (12.5%)
- Assignment 5: Classroom observation paper 2 (12.5%)
- Class participation: 20% (Attendance: 13%; Participation in class: 7%)

**Assignment descriptions (including grading criteria):**

**Assignment 1: Urban education autobiography** See description under materials for first class meeting (1/20). 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:**

*Classroom observation paper 1*

For this assignment, you are required to conduct a thorough observation in an urban classroom, located either within Chicago or in another urban district that meets the Council for Great City Schools eligibility criteria1. This school can be private or public,

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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
and can range from pre-K to 12th grade, and I am glad to help you locate a school. You will be writing two papers based on your single observation, so it is of critical importance that you observe very thoroughly and take meticulous field notes. Discussion of field note taking will take place early in the semester.

For this first paper, please plan to observe a classroom for 30-45 minutes. When you go to the school, please make note of everything you see and hear, including what you observe during your approach to the school, finding the classroom (via the school office and/or hallways), and leaving the school. While in the classroom, please take notes on the classroom’s physical appearance (including but not limited to the classroom’s arrangement and evidence of learning materials), the individuals present in the classroom, the interactions between students and teachers (including but not limited to instruction). Please also make note of connections to urban demographic trends, connections between what you see and the history of education in urban areas in general and, more specifically, in Chicago. Please answer at least one of the following questions in your paper (so, these are good questions to keep in mind when you are observing):

1. What, if anything, is urban about this classroom?
2. What evidence of the history of urban education and/or education in Chicago is evident in this classroom?

Grading criteria for this paper are:
- Makes clear, thoughtful connections to course readings: 5 points
- Claims are substantiated with evidence from classroom observation: 5 points
- Field notes submitted, provide rich detail about the full observation: 2.5 points
- Clarity of written expression, follows conventions of grammar, well-organized: 2.5 points

Your paper should be 2-4 pages in length, and is due at 6:00 p.m. on Sunday, 2/15. Please turn in your transcribed field notes and any sketches of the classroom that you draw.

Assignment 3: Policy/Initiative analysis paper, Topic choice due 2/22 (6 pm), Paper due 4/28 (10 pm). There are two options for this paper.

Option 1 (Highly structured): Choose a specific educational initiative happening in a specific urban district (using the Council for Great City Schools criteria (see footnote 1 in this syllabus) for selecting a district, or, if you prefer to do research on schooling in a city located in the largest city of any state are also eligible for membership, based on urban characteristics. If the Board of Education has jurisdiction over areas outside the central city, then the enrollment of those areas may also be included for purposes of eligibility, but the population outside the central city shall not.”
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)
6. Quality of 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). (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). 5% of your course grade (separate from your paper grade) is dedicated to your submitting a 1-2 paragraph email by 6 p.m. on Sunday, 2/22 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 (Less structured): 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 demands more student initiative and independent structuring of the paper, and will require more extensive research and preparation 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:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Possible Points (Out of 100)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Argument clarity and coherence: Argument is clearly stated and builds throughout the paper in a</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fashion that is steady, well-developed and easy to follow.</td>
<td></td>
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<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 the topic of urban education</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of writing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<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</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>argument.</td>
<td></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 28 at 10:00 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](http://www.cpsboe.org/meetings/past-meetings)) or attend in person, the February 25 Chicago Public Schools Board meeting, which begins at 10:30 am, and will be located at the CPS offices, 42 W. Madison Street (Garden level), Chicago. Advance registration (usually 8 days before meeting) recommended at [www.cpsboe.org](http://www.cpsboe.org). 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?
- How, if at all, was teaching addressed (e.g., instruction, curriculum, teacher performance evaluation)?
- What surprises did you encounter?

Grading criteria for this paper are:

- Makes clear, thoughtful connections between meeting and course readings about urban school governance and urban education policy: 5 points
• Claims are substantiated with evidence from board meeting (direct quotes and/or rich description): 5 points
• Clarity of written expression, follows conventions of grammar, well-organized: 2.5 points

This paper is due on Sunday, 3/22 at 6:00 p.m.

Assignment 5: Classroom observation paper 2
Now that you have learned much more about urban education policy, I’d like you to return to your classroom observation and put it more in context. Given this course’s recent class topics (e.g., teaching in the city, urban school governance, school-parent partnerships, school safety and discipline, school choice, charter schools), please consider what policy issues were present in the classroom that you observed.

Grading criteria for this paper are:
• Makes clear, thoughtful connections to course readings about urban education policy: 5 points
• Claims are substantiated with evidence from classroom observation: 5 points
• Clarity of written expression, follows conventions of grammar, well-organized: 2.5 points

This paper is due at 6 pm on Sunday, April 19 (Please submit on Sakai).

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 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 1 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 original work. If you do not revise in track changes, I will not be able to grade your revision.

**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 13% of your grade, equating to 1% for each class attended. Participation in class discussions (frequency and substance of your contributions) accounts for 7% 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 20—Course and student introduction; What is urban? the 21st century American city; taking field notes

Course introduction, urban education autobiography, definition of “urban,” contemporary demographics of American cities, discussion of class observation assignment.

Please come to this first class prepared to share an approximately 1-page (double-spaced) urban education autobiography. Please include the following information:

- Your personal experiences with urban schools (If you have had none, that is of course fine; please note that if that is the case.)
- Your professional experiences with urban schools (If you have had none, that is of course fine; please note that if that is the case.)
- Questions or concerns that you have about urban education.

This paper will be graded on a pass/revise basis—you will receive full credit (worth 5% of your course grade) if you meet all of the requests above. If you don’t, you will be asked to revise the paper. I understand that some people’s papers will be longer than others, and this is fine—all I ask is that you provide the full extent of your experiences with and questions about urban education in this paper.


Week 2, January 27

*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, February 3

*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 10

*Chicago: What’s in our peat bog and why does that matter? What can we anticipate as a result?*


Ahmed-Ullah, N., Chase, J. & Sector, B. (2013). CPS approves largest school closure in
Chicago history. *Chicago Tribune*, accessible online:


*Sunday, February 15, 6:00 p.m.: Classroom observation paper 1 due (Please submit via Sakai)*

*Week 5, February 17*

*Putting the school in the city: City and neighborhood characteristics, the geography of opportunity, urban change and public education.*


Cucchiara, chapter 5 (96-136)


*February 22, 6:00 p.m.: Final paper topic due at 6 pm. (Please submit via Sakai.)*

*Week 6, February 24*

*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).

*Wednesday, February 25: CPS board meeting (for board meeting paper). 10:30 am at CPS offices, 42 W. Madison Street, Chicago, Garden Level. Advance registration (usually 8 days before meeting) recommended at www.cpsboe.org*

*No class 3/3: Enjoy spring break!*

*Week 7, March 10
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).

Guest speaker: Jackson Potter, Staff Coordinator, Chicago Teachers Union

**Week 8, March 17**

*Urban school governance and mayoral control*


Sunday, March 22, 6:00 pm: CPS board meeting paper due (Please submit on Sakai).

**Week 9, March 24**

*Recent models of reform: School-parent-community partnerships*


Cucchiara, chapter 6 (137-166)


**Week 10, March 31**

*Recent models of reform: Safety and discipline in schools*


*Week 11, April 7*

*Recent models of reform: Portfolio models and school choice*

Bulkley, Chapters 1 (Bulkley, Introduction: Portfolio management models in urban school reform, 3-26) and 2 (Henig, Portfolio management models and the political economy of contracting regimes, 27-52).


Week 12, April 14
Recent models of reform: Charter schools


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). Sakai.


Sunday, April 19, 6 pm: Classroom observation paper 2 due.

Week 13: April 21
Recent models of reform: school closures and turnarounds, course summary


Gwynne and de la Torre (2009). When Schools Close: Effects on Displaced Students in Chicago Public Schools (Consortium on Chicago School Research). Accessible online at:


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/


*Tuesday, April 28, 10:00 p.m. Policy/Issue Analysis Paper 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](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](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/](http://www.luc.edu/sswd/)

**EthicsLine Reporting Hotline**
Loyola University Chicago has implemented EthicsLine Reporting Hotline, through a third party internet & telephone hotline provider, to provide you with an automated and anonymous way to report activities that may involve misconduct or violations of Loyola University policy. You may file an anonymous report here [on-line](http://www.luc.edu/ethicsline) or by dialing 855-603-6988. (within the United States, Guam, and Puerto Rico)

The University is committed to the highest ethical and professional standards of conduct as an integral part of its mission of expanding knowledge in the service of humanity through learning, justice and faith. To achieve this goal, the University relies on each community member’s ethical behavior, honesty, integrity and good judgment. Each community member should demonstrate respect for the rights of others.

[www.luc.edu/ethicsline](http://www.luc.edu/ethicsline)

**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.

**Electronic Communication Policies and Guidelines**
The School of Education faculty, students and staff respect each other’s rights, privacy and access to electronic resources, services, and communications while in the pursuit of academic and professional growth, networking and research. All members of the university community are expected to demonstrate the highest standards of integrity, communication, and responsibility while accessing and utilizing technology, information resources, and computing facilities. A link to the Loyola University Chicago and School of Education official policies and guidelines can be found at:
[http://www.luc.edu/media/lucedu/education/pdfs/SOE_Cyberbullying_Policy.pdf](http://www.luc.edu/media/lucedu/education/pdfs/SOE_Cyberbullying_Policy.pdf)
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.