

University of Wisconsin-Madison
ED POL/HIST 412
Fall 2020

History of American Education

Professor Adam R. Nelson

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Teaching Assistants:

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Office Hours:

*By appointment

* Office hours will be conducted remotely. Occasional exceptions may be made following physical distancing and health recommendations at the discretion of your instructor/TA.

Course designations

*Credits: 3

*Face-to-face

*Undergraduate course/may be taken by graduate students

*This class meets for three 50-minute class periods each week over the spring semester and carries the expectation that students will work on course learning activities (reading, writing, problem sets, studying, etc) for about 3 hours out of the classroom for every class period. This syllabus includes additional information about meeting times and expectations for student work.

Course Description

Who should control the public schools? What should children learn in their classrooms? Are all American citizens entitled to a certain level of educational quality? How can public schools train students for jobs in a competitive marketplace and, at the same time, prepare them for citizenship in a dynamic and pluralistic democracy? These are a few of the questions that will be addressed in this course. Covering the period from the colonization of North America to the present, the lectures and readings will consider education in its broadest sense—as a process of individual development and cultural transmission. The course explores such topics as the rise of common schools in the urban North; the education of Native Americans, immigrants, slaves, and free blacks; the evolution of teacher training (primarily for women); various philosophies of “progressive” school reform; the politics of desegregation, bilingual education, and special education; the articulation between high school and college work; and the evolving federal role in American education. The syllabus is divided into four chronological parts:

Part I: The Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries: Education, Religion, and Social Hierarchy

Part II: The Nineteenth Century: Education, Democracy, and the Challenges of Diversity

Part III: The First Half of the Twentieth Century: Mass Education in a Capitalist Society

Part IV: The Second Half of the Twentieth Century: Defining Equal Educational Opportunity

The main emphasis of the course falls on the development of formal elementary and secondary schooling—that is, the public school system—in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The course also includes three documentary films.

Course Requirements

DISCUSSION PARTICIPATION: One of the chief purposes of this course is to discover ways in which historical understanding can inform current debates on education in the United States. Toward this end, discussions will provide crucial opportunities to share ideas and to express well-substantiated opinions. In order to make class discussions as lively and constructive as possible, it is vital that students complete all of each week's required reading prior to class (the readings for this course range from approximately 10 to 100 pages/week). Occasionally, students may be asked to write informal response papers in preparation for class discussions.

Discussion sections will be face-to-face until further notice. One discussion section will be online (asynchronous) to accommodate students who are quarantined or abroad.

Participation Grade Guidelines

A: This student never misses class, always completes assigned readings, and comes to class prepared to think carefully, making connections between readings and across topics. He or she is willing to take the lead in discussion periodically, posing interesting questions or taking risks by answering tough questions. He or she avoids dominating discussion, instead participating mindfully in discussion with other students, considering their ideas and responding thoughtfully. He or she helps to create a sense of a shared conversation in the group as a whole. This student shows passion for the work of the class and is committed fully to our work while in the classroom.

AB: This student does most of what an A student does, but may be slightly deficient in one area – for instance, he or she may be a conscientious reader and thinker who tends not to listen to other students or otherwise dominates conversation instead of engaging in productive deliberation. Or, he or she may have been late to class a few times, or may have missed a reading or two.

B: This student participates often, but not consistently. He or she may attend every class and do all the readings but avoids taking the lead in discussion, instead only responding to questions or adding periodically to others' ideas. This student may participate well, but may have missed a class.

BC: This student may be a frequent but superficial discussion participant. The student may let shyness keep him or her from participating as fully as he or she should. At times the student may seem not to have done the readings, though he or she usually comes prepared.

C: This student is intermittently prepared for class. He or she may have flashes of brilliance, but rarely participates beyond the occasional superficial comment.

D: This student very rarely participates, and only in superficial ways.

F: This student has missed two unexcused classes and/or attends most classes but never participates.

WRITING ASSIGNMENTS: This course involves two writing assignments.

1. The first writing assignment involves a short essay (4 pages; 6 pages for graduate students) with

three options for the due date. You must submit an essay *either*

a. on Topic Option 1 in Week 5 of the semester

or . . .

b. on Topic Option 2 in Week 6 of the semester.

or . . .

c. on Topic Option 3 in Week 8 of the semester.

2. The second writing assignment also involves a choice between two options:

a. A longer essay (8 pages) on the topic listed in Week 14 of this syllabus.

or . . .

b. A research paper (8 pages) on a topic of your own design, also due in Week 13*

GRADUATE STUDENTS: For the second writing assignment, all graduate students must write a research paper of 20 pages (not including notes).

* If you have never written an historical research paper, I strongly recommend the UW Library's *Guide to Historical Research* (<http://researchguides.library.wisc.edu/introhist>)

Both writing assignments are designed to encourage careful and critical examination of historical issues explored in this course. In each assignment, the quality of the writing—its grammar, syntax, organization, spelling, citations, and overall style—will be judged equally with the quality of the analysis. All papers *must* be submitted on time; late papers will not be accepted (i.e., do not ask for an extension without a written excuse from a doctor or dean).

History Lab –The History Lab is a great resource to help with writing assignments. Appointments are currently remote. Please go to: <https://history.wisc.edu/undergraduate-program/the-history-lab/>

Paper Grading Rubric

A: This paper is exceptionally well written, with almost no mistakes of grammar, usage, or citation. It poses an original research question, engages with existing scholarly literature, and analyzes primary sources in the context of a persuasive thesis.

A/B: This paper is like an A paper, but does not meet standards of excellence in either its writing or its argumentation. The research topic may be less sophisticated or original, or the writing may suffer from noticeable flaws in grammar, citation, or structure.

B: This paper is well written with a few grammatical mistakes. It adequately synthesizes existing scholarship on a subject, which it illustrates with its own primary sources. Although it makes few new claims, this paper clearly articulates a thesis and supports it with reasoned, well-organized arguments.

B/C: This paper is like a B paper, but suffers from numerous flaws in grammar, citation, or structure. It lays out a clear research topic but fails to make a persuasive argument in its support.

C: This paper presents an argument but compromises its clarity with numerous flaws of style or evidence. It does not show an understanding of existing scholarship on a subject, does not incorporate original primary sources, or does not arrange them in a coherent fashion.

D: This paper shows insufficient effort. It may fulfill basic requirements of length, but is poorly written or researched, incoherent in its arguments, and unconnected to relevant scholarship.

F: This paper is unacceptable, either because of insufficient length, poor quality, or plagiarism.

FINAL EXAMINATION: The final examination for this course will consist of an in-class test, cumulative in content (i.e., covering the whole semester). It will include a few short identifications of subjects discussed in the lectures and the readings (names, concepts, movements, etc.) and will also include one or two essays requiring thoughtful synthesis of materials from the entire course.

Grading

First Essay	20%
Second Essay/Research Paper	30%
Final Examination	30%
Discussion Participation	20%

Grading Scale

A=93-100%, AB=88-92%, B=83-87%, BC=78-82%, C=70-77%, D=60-69%, F=0-59%.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY/MISCONDUCT: All students are expected to do their own work. Academic dishonesty in the form of plagiarism, cheating, etc., will not be tolerated. For information on the University's policies on academic dishonesty, see <http://www.wisc.edu/students/saja/misconduct/facstaff.html>.

STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS: The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil-rights protection for people with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires all schools, colleges, and universities to make reasonable accommodations for disabled students so that they can have access to an equal learning environment. If you have a disability requiring accommodation, please let me know so I can make the appropriate arrangements.

STUDENTS IN THE TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAM: This course provides you with the content related to UW-Madison Foundation Knowledge Standards 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 2.1, 3.1, 3.2, 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, and 5.5. This knowledge will inform your practices related to all of the performance standards. This course is approved for Minority Group Relations Criteria, 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5, and the topics covered by this course will also provide you foundational content you may find helpful in completing your edTPA.

ACADEMIC CALENDAR & RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES: See: <https://secfac.wisc.edu/academic-calendar/#religious-observances>

USAGE OF AUDIO RECORDED LECTURES STATEMENT: Lecture materials and recordings for EDPOL/HISTORY 412 are protected intellectual property at UW-Madison. Students in this course may use the materials and recordings for their personal use related to participation in this class. Students may also take notes solely for their personal use. If a lecture is not already recorded, you are not authorized to record my lectures without my permission unless you are considered by the university to be a qualified student with a disability requiring accommodation [Regent Policy Document 4-1]. Students may not copy or have lecture materials and recordings outside of class, including posting on internet sites or selling to commercial entities. Students are also prohibited from providing or selling their personal notes to anyone else or being paid for taking notes by any

person or commercial firm without the instructor's express written permission. Unauthorized use of these copyrighted lecture materials and recordings constitutes copyright infringement and may be addressed under the university's policies, UWS Chapters 14 and 17, governing student academic and non-academic misconduct.

COURSE EVALUATIONS: Students will be provided with an opportunity to evaluate this course and your learning experience. Student participation is an integral component of this course, and your feedback is important to me. I strongly encourage you to participate in the course evaluation.

COVID-19:

STUDENTS' RULES, RIGHTS, AND RESPONSIBILITIES

During the global COVID-19 pandemic, we must prioritize our collective health and safety to keep ourselves, our campus, and our community safe. As a university community, we must work together to prevent the spread of the virus and to promote the collective health and welfare of our campus and surrounding community.

UW-MADISON [BADGER PLEDGE](#)

UW-MADISON [FACE COVERING GUIDELINES](#)

While on campus, all employees and students are required to [wear appropriate and properly fitting](#) face coverings while present in any campus building unless working alone in a laboratory or office space.

Face Coverings During In-person Instruction Statement (COVID-19)

Individuals are expected to wear a face covering while inside any university building. Face coverings must be [worn correctly](#) (i.e., covering both your mouth and nose) in the building if you are attending class in person. If any student is unable to wear a face-covering, an accommodation may be provided due to disability, medical condition, or other legitimate reason.

Students with disabilities or medical conditions who are unable to wear a face covering should contact the [McBurney Disability Resource Center](#) or their Access Consultant if they are already affiliated. Students requesting an accommodation unrelated to disability or medical condition, should contact the Dean of Students Office.

Students who choose not to wear a face covering may not attend in-person classes, unless they are approved for an accommodation or exemption. All other students not wearing a face covering will be asked to put one on or leave the classroom. Students who refuse to wear face coverings appropriately or adhere to other stated requirements will be reported to the [Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards](#) and will not be allowed to return to the classroom until they agree to comply with the face covering policy. An instructor may cancel or suspend a course in-person meeting if a person is in the classroom without an approved face covering in position over their nose and mouth and refuses to immediately comply.

The History Department has directed instructors to halt the class and, if necessary, leave the classroom if anyone in the room is not wearing a properly fitted mask.

Quarantine or Isolation Due to Covid-19

Student should continually monitor themselves for COVID-19 [symptoms](#) and get [tested](#) for the virus if they have symptoms or have been in close contact with someone with COVID-19. Student should reach out to instructors as soon as possible if they become ill or need to isolate or quarantine, in order to make alternate plans for how to proceed with the course. Students are strongly encouraged to communicate with their instructor concerning their illness and the anticipated extent of their absence from the course (either in-person or remote). The instructor will work with the student to provide alternative ways to complete the course work.

Required Texts

1. Carl F. Kaestle, *Pillars of the Republic: Common Schools and American Society, 1780-1860* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1983).
2. John Dewey, *The School and Society* (originally published 1899; Dover, 2001).
3. Jack Dougherty, *More Than One Struggle: The Evolution of Black School Reform in Milwaukee* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004).
- *4. All other readings are either online (see websites listed on the syllabus) or through UW Canvas (Weeks 4 and 10)

*Some course readings are on-line (e.g., in Week 2). These readings and their respective websites are noted on the syllabus. It is each student's responsibility to print copies of these websites to read and bring to class.

Class Schedule

PART I: The Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries: Education, Religion, and Social Hierarchy

Week 1

Wednesday, September 2

Welcome and Course Information.

(NO DISCUSSION SECTIONS THIS WEEK)

Week 2 (approx. 16 pp.)

Monday, September 7

Lecture 1: Puritanism and Education in the Massachusetts Bay Colony

Wednesday, September 9

Lecture 2: Harvard College and "The Higher Learning" in the Seventeenth Century

Discussion Sections:

Reading: "The Education of Children" (attributed to Cotton Mather)

(<http://www.romans45.org/mather/edkids.htm>)

"A Father's Resolutions" (attributed to Cotton Mather)

(<http://www.romans45.org/mather/resolvd.htm>)

Elizabeth Bancroft Schlesinger, "Cotton Mather and His Children,"
William and Mary Quarterly, 3rd series, 10:2 (April 1953),
181-189. (<http://www.jstor.org/stable/2936931>)

Week 3 (~104 pp.)

Monday, September 14

Lecture 3: Charity Schools, Dame Schools, and Semi-Private Academies:
Precursors to the Public Schools

Wednesday, September 16

Lecture 4: Apprenticeship and Self-Education in the Eighteenth Century: A
Look at Benjamin Franklin

Discussion Sections:

Reading: Benjamin Franklin, *Autobiography*,
(<https://www.gutenberg.org/files/20203/20203-h/20203-h.htm>; in this
version, read **(a)** Chapters I-V, **(b)** the second half of Chapter VIII
(beginning with "Continuation of the Account of my Life, begun at
Passy, near Paris, 1784," and **(c)** Chapter IX; **pp. 1-76, ~140-168**)

Writing: Write one paragraph on the following question: to what extent was
Benjamin Franklin "self-educated," and to what extent was he not?

Week 4 (64 pp.)

Monday, September 21

Lecture 5: Education for Citizenship: "Republicanism" in the Early National
Period

Wednesday, September 23

Lecture 6: Education and Work during the Industrial Revolution

Discussion Sections:

Reading: Carl F. Kaestle, *Pillars of the Republic: Common Schools and
American Society, 1780-1860* (1983), ix-xiv, 3-61.
Anonymous, "False Stories Corrected: Learn to Unlearn What You
Have Learned Amis" (1822)—*quickly skim*
([http://www.archive.org/stream/falsestoriescor00unkngoog#pa
ge/n6/mode/2up](http://www.archive.org/stream/falsestoriescor00unkngoog#page/n6/mode/2up))

Also recommended: Sheila L. Skemp, *First Lady of Letters: Judith Sargent Murray
and the Struggle for Female Independence* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011)

PART II: The Nineteenth Century: Education, Democracy, and the Challenges of Diversity

Week 5 (93 pp.)

Monday, September 28

Lecture 7: Horace Mann and the Emergence of the Common School: Whigs v. Democrats

Wednesday, September 30

Lecture 8: Funding and Attending Schools on the “Northwest Frontier”

Discussion Sections:

Reading: Christina Snyder, *Great Crossings: Indians, Settlers, and Slaves in the Age of Jackson* (2018), 1-40, (*skim 41-69*), 70-123.

***Friday, October 2**

***Paper 1—Option 1:* Due no later than 4:00 p.m.**

TOPIC: Choose one of the following documents on education in the early republic:

1. Thomas Jefferson, “Bill for the More General Diffusion of Knowledge in Virginia” (1779)
(<https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/01-02-02-0132-0004-0079>)
2. Benjamin Rush, “Thoughts Upon the Mode of Education Proper in a Republic” (1786)
(<https://explorepahistory.com/odocument.php?docId=1-4-218>)
3. Benjamin Rush, “On the Establishment of Free-Schools,” *The American Museum, Or Repository of Ancient and Modern Fugitive Pieces, etc., Prose and Poetical* (1787), volume 1, issue 4, pages 38-41. [to get this text, (a) search UW Libraries for “American Museum, Or Repository”; (b) then select link to first online edition; (c) then select link to “[American historical periodicals from the American Antiquarian Society](#)”; (d) then use “search within publication” tab to search for “free schools”; (e) then use one of the available links to “On the establishment of free-schools”]
4. Noah Webster, “On the Education of Youth in America” (1788)
(<https://earstohear.net/heritage/On-The-Education-of-Youth-In-America.pdf>)
5. Robert Coram, “Political Inquiries: To Which Is Added, A Plan for the General Establishment of Schools Throughout the United States” (1791)
(https://books.google.com/books?id=8WjTQAAACAAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false)

In a four-page expository essay (six pages for graduate students), answer the following question: in the document you’ve chosen, what are the most persuasive arguments for and against “education for self-

government” in the early republic? Be sure to set the document in historical context and support your thesis with specific examples from the text. You may also use other readings and/or material from course lectures.

Week 6 (121 pp.)

Monday, October 5

Lecture 9: Women’s Education and the Feminization of Teaching in the Nineteenth Century

Wednesday, October 7

Lecture 10: Catholic Education and the Challenge of Religious Pluralism

Discussion sections:

Reading: Carl F. Kaestle, *Pillars of the Republic: Common Schools and American Society, 1780-1860* (1983), 104-181, (*skim 182-217*), 218-225.

***Friday, October 9**

***Paper 1—Option 2:* Due no later than 4:00 p.m.**

TOPIC: A copy of Horace Mann’s “Circular Letter” from his *Fifth Annual Report* (1841) is available on UW Canvas under “Files.”

In a four-page expository essay (six pages for graduate students), answer the following question: in Mann’s “Circular Letter” and the replies he reprinted in his *Fifth Annual Report*, which arguments in support of tax-funded common schools seemed most persuasive to factory **owners**, and which arguments (if any) do you think might have been persuasive to factory **workers**? Why? Be sure to set the “Circular Letter” in historical context and support your thesis with specific examples from Mann’s *Report*. You may also use other readings (e.g., Kaestle’s book) and/or material from course lectures.

Week 7 (84 pp.)

Monday, October 12

Lecture 11: Slavery and Education Before the Civil War

Wednesday, October 14

Lecture 12: African-American Education in the North in the Nineteenth Century

Discussion Sections:

Reading: Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* (1845), Chapter I-VII
(<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/23/23-h/23-h.htm>)

Booker T. Washington, *Up From Slavery* (1901), Chapters I-V.
(<http://www.bartleby.com/1004>).

Also recommended: Marie Jenkins Schwartz, *Born in Bondage: Growing Up Enslaved in the Antebellum South* (Harvard University Press, 2001)

Week 8 (95 pp.)

Monday, October 19

Lecture 13: Reconstruction, the Freedmen's Bureau, and Racially Segregated Schooling in the South after the Civil War

Wednesday, October 21

Film: "In the White Man's Image" (take notes; use handout)

Discussion Sections:

Reading: Booker T. Washington, *Up From Slavery* (1901), Chapters VI-XIV
(<http://www.bartleby.com/1004>).

W.E.B. DuBois, "Of Mr. Booker T. Washington and Others," in *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903) (<http://www.bartleby.com/114/>).

***Friday, October 23**

***Paper 1—Option 3:* Due no later than 4:00 p.m.**

TOPIC: See W.E.B. DuBois, "Of the Training of Black Men" in *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903) (<http://www.bartleby.com/114/>).

In a four-page expository essay (six pages for graduate students), answer the following question: in his essay "Of the Training of Black Men," what roles did DuBois foresee for common schools, industrial schools, normal (teacher-training) schools, colleges, and universities? What arguments did *critics* make about higher education for blacks, and how did DuBois respond to these arguments? Be sure to situate the essay in historical context and support your thesis with specific examples from the text. You may also use other readings (e.g., Booker T. Washington's autobiography) and/or material from course lectures.

PART III: The First Half of the Twentieth Century: Mass Education in a Capitalist Society

Week 9 (60 pp.)

Monday, October 26

Lecture 14: The Emergence of the American High School

Wednesday, October 28

Lecture 15: Social Darwinism and Education: Is School the Key to Success?

Discussion Sections:

Reading: William J. Reese, *The Origins of the American High School* (1995), 80-102, 123-161 (available on UW Canvas under “Files”).

Week 10 (50 pp.)

Monday, November 2

Lecture 16: John Dewey and the Roots of Progressive Education

Wednesday, November 4

Lecture 17: Education for Democracy: The “Progressive Synthesis”

Discussion Sections:

Reading: John Dewey, *The School and Society* (1899), read Chapters 1, 2, 5-8.

Week 11 (50 pp.)

Monday, November 9

Lecture 18: Dewey’s Critics during World War I and Workers’ Education during the 1920s

Wednesday, November 11

Film: “The Women of Summer: An Unknown Chapter of American Social History” (take notes; use handout); film available online via UW Libraries website

Discussion Sections:

Reading: Jack Dougherty, *More Than One Struggle: The Evolution of Black School Reform in Milwaukee* (2004), 1-50.

PART IV: The Second Half of the Twentieth Century: Defining Equal Educational Opportunity

Week 12 (52 pp.)

Monday, November 16

Lecture 19: Education during the 1930s: The Great Depression

Wednesday, November 18

Lecture 20: Progressive Education: From Reform to Re-Standardization

Discussion Sections:

Reading: Jack Dougherty, *More Than One Struggle: The Evolution of Black School Reform in Milwaukee* (2004), 51-103.

Friday, November 20

Paper 2: Due no later than 4:00 p.m.

- a. Option 1—Research Paper: Students’ choice (eight pages; twelve pages for graduate students; see handouts).
- b. Option 2: In an eight-page expository essay (twelve pages for graduate students), consider this statement: “Some have argued that public schools have served as a ‘great equalizer’ in American life, overcoming barriers of race, class, language, gender, and national origin (i.e., immigration status) and helping to create an ‘equal playing field’ for social and economic mobility.” Choose one of the categories listed in this statement and explain whether public education served as a “great equalizer” in the period from the Civil War to World War II. Be sure to consider both sides of the issue before rendering a final (and nuanced) judgment, and be sure to support your conclusions with specific examples drawn from the readings in this course.

Week 13 (0 pp.)

Monday, November 23

Lecture 21: Higher Education and the Cold War

Wednesday, November 25

Lecture 22: *Brown v. Board of Education*: Its Origins and Legacy

Discussion Sections:

THANKSGIVING BREAK: NO DISCUSSION SECTIONS THIS WEEK.

Week 14 (101 pp.)

Monday, November 30

Lecture 23: The Growing Federal Role in American Education, 1950-1975

Wednesday, December 2

Lecture 24: A Brief History of Education for Students with Disabilities

Discussion Sections: **ONLINE/ASYNCHRONOUS**

Reading: Jack Dougherty, *More Than One Struggle: The Evolution of Black School Reform in Milwaukee* (2004), 103-202.

Week 15

Monday, December 7

Lecture 25: The Ongoing Debates Over Bilingual Education

Wednesday, December 9

Film: Choose one of the following films and take notes:

“Fear and Learning at Hoover Elementary” (available via Kanopy)

“Precious Knowledge” (available via Kanopy)
“Crip Camp: A Disability Revolution” (available via Netflix)

Discussion Sections: **ONLINE/ASYNCHRONOUS**

Reading: None—discuss films.

Week 16

FINAL EXAM:

Saturday, December 12, 10:05am-12:05pm
(Online via Canvas)