

History 200: History of the High School Experience
Department of History, University of Wisconsin-Madison | Fall 2022

Instructor: Edward Frame

Email: eframe@wisc.edu

Office Hours: Wednesday, 11:00am-1:00pm, Humanities 5265, or by appointment

Course Session Dates: September 12 – October 23

Credits: 1 credit (45 hours)

Requisites: Sophomore Standing, or one course in HISTORY or HIST SCI

Meeting Time and Location: Online, via Canvas

Instructional Modality: Online, Asynchronous

How This Course Meets the Credit Hour Policy Standard: The credit standard for this course is met by an expectation of a total of 45 hours of student engagement with course learning activities (at least 45 hours per credit), which includes regular online seminar participation, reading, writing, quizzes, journal entries, tutorial sessions, and other student work as described in the syllabus.

Course Description:

Think back to your memories from high school. What comes to mind? What sights, sounds, smells, feelings, thoughts do you recall? Chances are, despite the fact that we all went to high schools all over the US and many of us at different times, we have some common experiences that transcend the differences. Historically, American education has deep local roots and never had a nationalized system like other countries. States and local boards of education control many of the details about how schools are funded and operate. How is it possible to have such a collective experience of high school across time and place, then? This course explores the roots of the high school experience in the US, tracing how certain elements of secondary education came into being and persisted or changed through the nineteenth and twentieth century.

At the same time that we recognize these commonalities, access to a quality high school education was not equal for all students. From its inception, the high school benefited certain groups and communities more than others. The struggles for access to secondary education, funding, integration, and high standards instruction during the late 19th and 20th centuries are issues that continue to affect our current educational system. This course will explore some of the ways that high school experiences was unevenly distributed or experienced differently in history.

In this class, we will focus on aspects of the contemporary US high school that many people might take for granted. The goal of the course is an introduction to the field of the History of Education through activities, materials, and structures that are often seen as ubiquitous and universal in secondary schools but have interesting histories that began less than 150 years ago. Examining these histories can illuminate the roots of our current educational system and provide insight into how and why people pursue school reform. The high school experiences that will be covered in this course are:

- Classes and Bell Schedules: Switching Classes, Periods, Bells
- Curriculum: Sex education, PE, Music, AP Classes

- Testing and Grades: Finals, SAT, ACT, Standardized Tests
- Furniture and Equipment: Lockers, Desks, Whiteboards, Flags
- School Spirit: Pep Rallies, Football Games, Mascots

Learning Objectives:

Students who complete History 200 will be able to:

- Read and evaluate a variety of historical materials to determine their origins, perspective, usefulness, and reliability.
- Recognize history as an interpretive account of the human past – one that historians create in the present from surviving evidence.
- Demonstrate how the use of different approaches, methodologies, analytical concepts, or sources can yield differing insights into a historical problem.
- Think critically about and appreciate the complexities of students' own societies, cultures, and larger global communities.
- Communicate effectively in writing and speech.
- Participate productively in purposeful, evidence-based discussion.
- Recognize multiple ways of being in the world, and how what may seem natural in a society has been built over decades of accumulated human actions.

Section Level Course Learning Objectives:

- Understand and describe how current school practices originated in their historical context and have changed over time.
- Read and evaluate primary and secondary sources to determine their origins, perspective, usefulness, and reliability in order to understand how students in the past experienced secondary education.
- Reflect on how educational reforms in the past have shaped school experiences today.
- Communicate findings to diverse audiences, in various formats.

Course Design:

This course is an online seminar. It is being offered “asynchronously,” which means we will not meet together as a group at a set time and you have some flexibility to complete the readings and the assignments at your own pace.

That said, the course is designed around a more-or-less fixed six-week schedule. Each week, you will be expected to work your way through a weekly “module” consisting of the following elements:

(1) Intro and Background Material: Weekly modules are organized by theme, and each week you will be asked to watch a very short introductory video (5 mins) and read weekly background material (2 hours of work) on a given topic. Modules will “open” on Monday of each week. You will have until midnight, on Tuesday, to watch the introduction and read the material.

(2) Weekly Quizzes: To keep you on track, and to evaluate your reading comprehension, you will be required to take a short quiz (30 mins of work) after you complete each reading set. Quizzes will become accessible on Canvas at the same time as the sets themselves—that is, on Monday. Like the readings, you must complete the quiz no later than Tuesday, at midnight.

(3) Primary Sources/Current Issue Links: To encourage you to apply the content of the weekly readings to the world around you, you will also be asked to interact with a variety of articles/videos/podcasts/photos (1 hour of work) throughout the course. These links will become available on Tuesday; you should plan to work through them by Wednesday, at midnight.

(4) Discussion Posts: Each week, you will also be expected to participate in an online seminar discussion. Seminars will “open” on Canvas at 12:01am on Tuesday. The format of the seminars will vary—details will be available as soon as the seminar “opens”—but you will always be asked to reply to a discussion prompt with an **initial post** (1.5 hours of work) sometime between Tuesday and Wednesday. (In other words, you’ll have 48 hours to reply to the initial discussion prompt.) And you will always be asked to respond to your peers’ initial post (30 mins of work) sometime between Thursday and Friday, midnight.

(5) Digital Activities: In addition to regular weekly seminar contributions, you will also be asked to create and upload an activity each week, such as a timeline, a presentation, or a podcast (1.5 hours of work). Like the seminar prompts, the activity will vary from week to week. But you will know what the activity is on Tuesday, and you must upload your work no later than Thursday, midnight.

(6) Peer Feedback: Finally, from time to time, you will also be asked to provide feedback to your peers in modules 1, 3, and 5 (30 mins of work). Details will be available in the weekly module, but you must submit your feedback no later than Saturday, midnight.

Thus, the weekly flow for the course will look something like this:

Monday

- Introductory videos and background material becomes accessible on Canvas at 12:01am.
- Weekly quiz also becomes accessible at 12:01am.

Monday-Tuesday

- Students are independently responsible for completing watching videos and reading background material
- Students must complete weekly quiz no later than Tuesday, midnight.

Tuesday

- Primary sources/current issue links become available at 12:01am.
- Online seminar “opens” at 12:01am.
- Weekly activity prompt becomes accessible at 12:01am.

Tuesday-Thursday

- Students should engage with primary sources no later than Wednesday, midnight.
- Students must write an initial discussion post no later than Wednesday, midnight.
- Students must create and upload the weekly activity no later than Thursday, midnight.

Thursday-Saturday

- Peer feedback prompt becomes available on Thursday at 12:01am.
- Students must write a follow-up discussion post no later than Friday, midnight.
- Peer feedback due no later than Saturday, midnight.

N.b. all times/deadlines in this syllabus refer to Central Time, i.e. Madison, Wisconsin time. Please adjust accordingly as needed.

Readings and Course Materials:

All of the assigned readings and course materials are available on Canvas.

Course Assessments and Grading Standards:

Your final grade in this course will be assessed based on 1) your performance on the reading quizzes, 2) your participation in weekly activities, and 3) your weekly seminar participation.

I. Reading Quizzes (20%)

There will be six quizzes total, one for each module. Questions will be weighted equally and each quiz will be worth 10 points, for a total of 60 possible points. Quizzes will be worth a total of 20 percent of your final grade. Students may take quizzes up to 3 times to improve their grade.

II. Digital Activities (30%)

You must complete six activities throughout the course, one for each module. Each activity will be worth 15 points, for a total of 90 possible points. These activities will be worth a total of 30 percent of your final grade.

The rubric I will use to assess these activities is reprinted in this syllabus after the schedule of readings.

III. Online Seminar Participation (50%)

There will be six seminars total, one per week. Regular participation in weekly discussion is worth up to 25 points per week, for a total of 150 points. Seminar participation will be worth a total of 50 percent of your final grade. Points will be assigned as follows:

Initial Posts	Stellar: 13-15 Points	Good: 10-12 Points	Needs Work: 0-9 Points
	1-2 solid paragraphs that demonstrate engagement with a variety of sources from the module. Post presents strong ideas and questions connected to the prompt. Writing clearly conveys meaning.	1-2 small paragraphs with little evidence or examples. Some effort to engage with 1-2 sources from the module. Writing is unclear and does not present strong ideas.	Little to no effort exhibited. Post might be only a few sentences, show no connection to module materials, or writing is unclear.

Response Posts	4-5 (Each Response) Points	0-3 Points
	Respectfully engages with classmates' posts. Communicates connections, questions, or additional ideas.	Disrespectful or unrelated responses to classmates' posts. Little effort shown.

Note: late submissions on quizzes, activities, and seminar discussions will not be honored and will be counted as a zero in the gradebook. No exceptions.

Grading Scale:

The grading scale is: A: 100-93%, AB: 92-88%, B: 88-85%, BC: 85-80%, C: 79-70%, D: 69-60%, F: 59-0%. For students taking the class on a pass/fail basis, 70% and above is a passing grade.

A Note on Course Etiquette:

An online course requires extra attention to basic etiquette. Be respectful and considerate of your classmates and me. Remember that words may sound differently in an online setting than they do in person. When in doubt, please err on the side of politeness and generosity during interactions in discussion forums and elsewhere throughout the course.

Disability Statement:

The University of Wisconsin-Madison supports the right of all enrolled students to full and equal educational opportunity. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Wisconsin State Statute (36.12), and UW-Madison policy (Faculty Document 1071) require that students with disabilities be reasonably accommodated in instruction and campus life. Reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities is a shared faculty and student responsibility. If you require special accommodations, it is your responsibility to inform me as soon as possible. I will work either directly with you or in coordination with the McBurney Center to identify and provide reasonable accommodations. All

disability information, including special instructional accommodations, is confidential and protected under FERPA.

Diversity and Inclusion Statement:

Diversity is a source of strength, creativity, and innovation for UW-Madison. We value the contributions of each person and respect the profound ways their identity, culture, background, experience, status, abilities, and opinion enrich the university community. We commit ourselves to the pursuit of excellence in teaching, research, outreach, and diversity as inextricably linked goals.

The University of Wisconsin-Madison fulfills its public mission by creating a welcoming and inclusive community for people from every background—people who as students, faculty, and staff serve Wisconsin and the world. For more information, visit: <https://diversity.wisc.edu/>

Schedule of Readings/Assignments:

Module 1: The Invention of the High School

Reading(s):

- Introductory Essay
- Thomas Hine, “The Invention of the High School,” from *The Rise and Fall of the American Teenager* (2000), p. 138-157

Primary Sources/Current Issue Links:

- [American Indian Boarding Schools Primary Sources \(Digital Public Library of America\)](#)
- [“In Nation’s First Black Public High School, A Blueprint for Reform” \(NPR Code Switch, 2013\)](#)
- Recent Essays on the purpose of High School
 - [“Are high schools preparing students to be college- and career-ready?” \(Hechinger Report, 2016\)](#)
 - [“What Is the Purpose of High School? \(National Review, 2019\)](#)
 - [“The Purpose of Education—According to Students” \(The Atlantic, 2017\)](#)

Module 2: Classes and Bell Schedules: Periods, Bells, The Grammar of Schooling

Reading(s):

- Introductory Essay
- David Tyack and Larry Cuban, “Why the Grammar of Schooling Persists,” from *Tinkering Toward Utopia: A Century of Public School Reform* (2001), p. 85-109

Primary Sources/Current Issue Links:

- [School Bells Exhibit \(National Museum of American History\)](#)
- High School Floor Plans
 - [Example 1, Central High School \(1892\)](#)
 - [Example 2, Durango High School \(1920\)](#)
 - [Example 3, Wellesley High School \(1938\)](#)
- [“The New ‘New’ Education” \(The Atlantic, 2019\)](#)
- [Examples of Alternative Schooling \(Getting Smart, 2019\)](#)

Module 3: Curriculum: Shop class, Sex education, PE, Music, AP Classes

Reading(s):

- Background Presentation (no article or book chapter)

Primary Sources/Current Issue Links:

Practical vs. Traditional Curriculum

- [“Life Adjustment Education” Primary Source \(1948\)](#)
- [“Does school prepare students for the real world? This teen speaker says no.” \(TED Talk, 2015\)](#)
- [“When High Schools Shaped America’s Destiny” \(City Journal, 2017\)](#)
- [“Jaime Escalante dies at 79; math teacher who challenged East L.A. students to ‘Stand and Deliver’” \(Los Angeles Times, 2013.\)](#)

Ethnic Studies Classes

- [“The Chicano LA Schools Walkout” \(PBS Video\)](#)
- [“Fifty years ago, 35,000 Chicago students walked out of their classrooms in protest. They changed CPS forever” \(Reader, 2018\)](#)
- [“California Plans to Make Ethnic Studies a Requirement for Public-School Students. Here’s the History Behind the Idea” \(Time Magazine, 2020\)](#)
- [“Ethnic Studies in California” \(Education Next, 2021\)](#)

Sex Education

- [“Sex Education: Defining Gender Roles During the Sexual Revolution and Today” \(Trinity College Commons, 2019\)](#)
- [“A Brief History of Sex Education in America” \(Newsweek, 2009\)](#)
- [“Jonathan Zimmerman - Too Hot to Handle: A Global History of Sex Education”](#)
- [“What Should Students Learn in Sex Education? In This State, Voters Will Decide”](#)

Module 4: Testing and Grades: Intelligence Tests, Finals, and High Stakes Testing

Reading(s):

- Background Video
- Carole J. Gallagher, “Reconciling a Tradition of Testing with a New Learning Paradigm,” *Educational Psychology Review* (March 2003), p. 83-99.

Primary Sources/Current Issue Links:

- 19th century exam rationale primary source
- [“History of Standardized Testing in the United States” \(NEA, 2020\)](#)
- ["Can You Answer These Questions From the Original SAT? \(Time Magazine, 2016\)](#)
- ["The History of the SAT Is Mired in Racism and Elitism" \(Teen Vogue, 2018\)](#)
- ["Standardized Tests Can Promote Rigor" \(Inside Higher Ed, 2020\)](#)

Module 5: Technology and Tools: Desks, Blackboards, Flags, Computers

Reading(s):

- Tyack and Cuban, “Reinventing Schooling,” in *Tinkering Toward Utopia: A Century of Public School Reform* (2001), p. 121-126
- Steven D. Krause, “‘Among the Greatest Benefactors of Mankind’: What the Success of Chalkboards Tells Us about the Future of Computers in the Classroom,” *The Journal of the Midwest Modern Language Association* (2000), p. 6-16

Primary Sources/Current Issue Links:

- ["The Teacher & Technology"](#)
- ["A Visual History of School Desks" \(EdTech\)](#)
- ["School Scrambles To Preserve Newly Discovered Chalkboards From 1917" \(NPR, 2017\)](#)
- ["The Digital Divide Among Students During COVID-19: Who Has Access? Who Doesn't?" \(2020\)](#)
- ["After The Pandemic, American Education Will Never Be The Same — How That's A Good Thing" \(Forbes, 2021\)](#)

Module 6: School Spirit: Mascots, Sports, and Pep Rallies

Reading(s):

- Introductory Essay
- Pamela Grundy, “Preparation for Citizenship: The Spread of High School Basketball,” in *Learning to Win: Sports, Education, and Social Change in Twentieth-Century North Carolina* (2003), p. 69-96.

Primary Sources/Current Issue Links:

- High School Floor Plans
 - [Collection One](#)
 - [Collection Two](#)
- ["The Racist History of Prom," \(History, 2018\)](#)
- ["Meritocracy is Killing HighSchool Sports" \(The Atlantic, 2020\)](#)
- ["Extracurriculars Play a Vital Role During the Pandemic" \(Edutopia, 2020\)](#)
- ["Hundreds Of Schools Are Still Using Native Americans As Team Mascots" \(FiveThirtyEight, 2020\)](#)

Digital Activity(s) Grading Rubrics:

- In modules 1-2, students will create digital timelines for each of the topics. (Module 1 – Peer Feedback; Module 2 – Instructor Graded)

Rubric	Stellar 14-15 Points	Good 12-13 Points	Needs Work 9-11 Points	Poor/Little Effort 0-8 Points
Modules 1 and 2	Has 7-10 significant events listed that highlight the development of the topic over time. Each event has a clear 2-3 sentence description that explains why the event was important. Presentation is engaging with use of some visual representations of the events.	Has 7-10 events listed. Some descriptions are short or the significance of the event is unclear . Presentation uses a couple of visual representations.	Has fewer than 7 major events listed. The significance of the events are unclear and/or descriptions are not detailed . Presentation is not engaging with few visual representations .	Has only a couple of events listed and very little to no description. Disorganized presentation.

- In modules 3-4, students will create presentations answering questions about the arguments and evidence that secondary source articles use to support their claims. (Module 3 – Peer Feedback; Module 4 – Instructor Graded)

Rubric	Stellar 14-15 Points	Good 12-13 Points	Needs Work 9-11 Points	Poor/Little Effort 0-8 Points
Modules 3 and 4	Has 4-8 slides that clearly present the author’s perspective and argument. Strongly evaluates how well the claims are presented with the evidence.	Has 4-8 slides that present the author’s perspective and argument. Some evaluation of the evidence and claims might be unclear or weak .	Has fewer than 4 slides and/or does not evaluate the author’s arguments and evidence well.	Has fewer than 4 slides and makes little or no effort to evaluate the author’s arguments and evidence.

- In modules 5-6, students will record a short 1-2 minute podcast or vlog that has them reflect on how the historical content for those modules affected current and future issues in education. (Module 5 – Peer Feedback; Module 6 – Instructor Graded)

Rubric	Stellar 14-15 Points	Good 12-13 Points	Needs Work 9-11 Points	Poor/Little Effort 0-8 Points
Modules 5 and 6	<p>The vlog or podcast lasts 1-2 minutes. It clearly describes how the material in the module contributed to the presenter's understanding of contemporary issues. Reflection demonstrates a detailed understanding of how historical events shaped current educational issues.</p>	<p>The vlog or podcast lasts 1-2 minutes. It describes how material in the module contributed to the presenter's understanding and how the historical scholarship relates to contemporary issues. Reflection demonstrates a basic understanding of how historical events shaped current educational issues.</p>	<p>The vlog or podcast lasts under 1 minute. Does not clearly describe how the material in the module contributed to the presenter's understanding and/or how the historical scholarship relates to contemporary issues. Reflection demonstrates little to no understanding of how historical events shaped current educational issues.</p>	<p>The vlog or podcast lasts under 1 minute. There is little understanding of the topic and its connection to contemporary issues.</p>