

**DEPARTMENT OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES  
DOCTORAL SEMINAR: “EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH IN THE  
UNITED STATES: PROBLEMS AND POSSIBILITIES”**

**HMSS.GE.3011**

Course Syllabus – Fall 2015

Professor:

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Office hours: Mon. 2:30 – 4:30 or by appt.

Tuesdays 6:45 – 8:35 p.m.

246 Greene Street, Room 301  
(Kimball Hall)

**Course description**

This course will probe the history, development, and dilemmas of educational research in the United States. Designed as an introductory seminar for new doctoral students in Steinhardt, the course will analyze how—and why—educational research found its primary home in schools of education; how different disciplines have approached the study of education; how educational research has influenced public policy, and vice versa; and how the next generation of scholars might alter the research landscape. Students will write weekly critiques of assigned readings as well as a term paper that analyzes the existing research about a given educational subject or problem.

**Course Requirements**

1. **Attendance:** Each class meeting is a small-group discussion of weekly readings and will frequently include the authors of the assigned book and/or readings. Therefore it is critical that you attend every class and arrive on time. If you must be absent or late, please let me know beforehand.
2. **Weekly readings:** This course covers a vast intellectual territory, so it also carries a heavy reading load. I expect you to complete all of the readings for each class.
3. **Weekly critiques:** Each week, I ask that you submit a SHORT (2-3 pages, maximum) critique of the assigned reading. Rather than summarizing the work, the critique should identify AND evaluate the most important claim or claims in the work. Why did the author write it? How does it try to contribute to educational knowledge? Does it succeed? It will be easiest for me to grade and return these critiques to you if you submit them as a PDF by email to [sean.corcoran@nyu.edu](mailto:sean.corcoran@nyu.edu). Include your last name and date in the file name.
4. **Research Proposal:** On December 15, I will ask you to submit a Research Proposal that reviews the state of educational research in a subject area of your choice, and proposes a new line of research that would improve our knowledge of the topic. The subject area might be an educational institution (e.g., kindergartens; museums); instruction in a given discipline (e.g., the teaching of history or of math); a set of actors in the educational arena (e.g., teachers, parents); or the state of knowledge about a pressing public controversy (e.g.,

women in the sciences; “social promotion”). The paper should aim not simply to “review” the research in your chosen area, but also to comment about its strengths, deficiencies, and—most of all—possible avenues for improvement. Students will share their research and perspectives in brief classroom presentations near the end of the term.

### **Grading**

Your grade for this course will be determined as follows:

- Weekly critiques (weighted equally): 40%
- Research proposal: 40%
- Class participation: 20%

### **Other class information**

1. NYU Classes: Some materials for this course will be made available via NYU Classes. Enrollment in the course should automatically give you access to the class site. Check frequently for new materials and announcements.
2. Absences: Please see me immediately if you have any conflicts with scheduled assignments and/or exams, or if you anticipate being absent due to religious observances.
3. Class etiquette: Please make an effort to be on time (I will do the same) and please turn off your cell phone and other digital distractions while in class.
4. Academic integrity: NYU Steinhardt policies on academic integrity will be *strictly enforced* in this class. You can find the school’s official statement on academic integrity [here](#). You are encouraged to study and work together on problem sets, but all submitted work must be that of the individual student.
5. Withdrawal: If you wish to withdraw from the course, please do so formally with the University Registrar. If you withdraw without authorization, you are at risk for receiving a failing grade for the course. *September 15 is the last day for graduate and undergraduate students to withdraw without receiving a “W” on their transcripts.*
6. Accommodations: Any student requiring an accommodation due to a chronic psychological, visual, mobility and/or learning disability, or who is Deaf or Hard of Hearing, should register with and consult with the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities at 212-998-4980, 726 Broadway, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor ([www.nyu.edu/csd](http://www.nyu.edu/csd)). Of course, I am happy to provide any and all accommodations recommended by the Moses Center.

## COURSE OUTLINE: HMSS DOCTORAL SEMINAR

<b>September 8</b>	Course introduction
<b>September 15</b>	The Trouble with Ed Schools
<b>September 22</b>	<b>NO CLASS – Yom Kippur</b>
<b>Date TBD</b>	The Trouble with Universities
<b>September 29</b>	Sociology
<b>October 6</b>	Psychology
<b>October 13</b>	<b>NO CLASS – NYU meets on a Monday schedule</b>
<b>October 20</b>	Economics
<b>October 27</b>	Student progress reports on final paper
<b>November 3</b>	History
<b>November 10</b>	Philosophy
<b>November 17</b>	Randomized Control Trials and the “Education Sciences”
<b>November 24</b>	Anthropology
<b>December 1</b>	Presentations 1
<b>December 8</b>	Presentations 2
<b>December 15</b>	Research Proposal Due

## READING LIST

### September 8: Course Introduction

Andrew Abbott. 2004. *Methods of Discovery*. Chapter 7, "Ideas and Puzzles." W.W. Norton.

### September 15: The Trouble with Ed Schools

David Labaree. 2006. *The Trouble with Ed Schools*. Yale University Press

### September 22: NO CLASS (Yom Kippur)

### Date TBD: The Trouble with Universities

Kevin Carey. 2015. *The End of College: Creating the Future of Learning and the University of Everywhere*. Riverhead Books.

or:

Andrew Delbanco. 2014. *College: What It Was, Is, and Should Be*. Princeton University Press.

### September 29: Sociology

Richard Arum and Josipa Roksa. 2014. *Aspiring Adults Adrift: Tentative Transitions of College Graduates*. University of Chicago Press.

### October 6: Psychology

Niobe Way. 2011. *Deep Secrets: Boys' Friendships and the Crisis of Connection*. Harvard University Press.

### October 13: Economics

Dominic J. Brewer, Guilbert C. Hentschke, and Eric R. Eide. 2015. "The Role of Economics in Education Policy Research." In *Handbook of Research in Education Finance and Policy*. New York: Routledge.

Claudia Goldin and Lawrence F. Katz. 2010. *The Race between Education and Technology*. Belknap Press. Selected chapters.

### October 20: NO CLASS (NYU meets on a Monday schedule)

### October 27: Student progress reports on final paper

### November 3: History

Jonathan Zimmerman. 2015. *Hot and Bothered: Sex Education in the Modern World*. Princeton University Press.

## **November 10: Philosophy**

Rene Arcilla. "What is Still Controversial about Great Books Study?" Draft chapter from forthcoming book.

## **November 17: Randomized Control Trials and the "Education Sciences"**

Judith M. Gueron and Howard Rolston. 2013. "Chapter 1: The Issue, The Method, and The Story in Brief," in *Fighting for Reliable Evidence*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Judith M. Gueron and Howard Rolston. 2013. "Chapter 12: Conclusions and Lessons," in *Fighting for Reliable Evidence*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Judith Gueron. 2008. "The Politics of Random Assignment: Implementing Studies and Impacting Policy," *Journal of Children's Services* 3(1), pp. 14-26

Richard M. Murnane and John B. Willett. 2011. "Chapter 13: Methodological Lessons from the Long Quest," in *Methods Matter: Improving Causal Inference in Educational and Social Science*. New York: Oxford University Press.

## **November 24: Anthropology**

Mica Pollock. 2005. *Colormute: Race Talk Dilemmas in an American School*. Princeton University Press.

## **December 1, 8: Presentations**

## **December 15: Research proposal due**