**EDST 0115C Education in the USA, Fall 2024**

**Syllabus Date: August 23, 2024 and subject to revision**

**Course/Instructor Information:**

Course Title: Education in the USA

CRN: 92481

Semester/Year: Fall, 2024

Class meeting times: Tuesdays & Thursdays; 11:15 - 12:30

Class location: Twilight Hall 201

Instructor: Steve Hoffman

Email: hoffman@middlebury.edu

Office Hours via Zoom:

* Tuesdays 3:45 - 5:15 PM;
* Thursdays 9:15 - 10:45 AM;
* and by appointment

**Course Description**

What makes education in a democracy unique? What counts as evidence of that uniqueness? What roles do schools play in educating citizens in a democracy for a democracy? What, in the end, is the purpose of “education” and “school”? In this course, we will interrogate the extent to which schools can reify forms of oppression that exist in our larger culture and whether/how schools might also play a role in overcoming such patterns of injustice. We will engage these questions by investigating education as a social, cultural, political and economic process.

**Learning Outcomes**

In this course, we are working on developing a heart-centered, critical lens through which we might examine our own K-12 education and our current context and experience of Middlebury. The assumption is that by developing a heart-centered, critical lens, we are better able to make informed, conscious decisions about the purpose and direction of our own education and constructively contribute as citizens in a dynamic and diverse democratic republic.

**Guiding Principles**

This is a learning space. People will make mistakes as we navigate the difficult terrain of equity and access in our schools and confront racism and white supremacy. Please be willing to engage in difficult discussions with humility and respect.

* Respect means helping another person consider the impact of their words or the limits of their perspectives.
* Respect means authentically listening when one’s ideas are challenged or questioned.
* Respect means recognizing that people are experts of their own lives while not expecting people to speak for an entire people group
* Respect means realizing the difference between intent and impact and acting accordingly.

**Format of the course**

The general format is a mixture of pre-recorded lectures, in-class lectures, large-group discussion, asynchronous Canvas discussion, small-group work, and opportunities for students to lead learning. Formal class sessions are held every Tuesday and Thursday for 75 minutes on campus. Your active participation and engagement are essential to your success in this course.

“*Students who have Letters of Accommodation in this class are encouraged to contact me as early in the semester as possible to ensure that such accommodations are implemented in a timely fashion. For those without Letters of Accommodation, assistance is available to eligible students through the Disability Resource Center.*”

**Grading policies**

Grades are based on a typical 100-point system. A = 93 – 100; A- = 90 – 92; B+ = 87 – 89; etc.

Late work will likely be penalized.

* Attendance and participation – 20%
* Discussion posts – 20%
* Essay & Presentation– 20%
* Quizzes – 20%
* Final project – 20%

**Attendance and participation (20% of final grade).** Class attendance is required. A student who must miss a class should notify the instructor *before* the class meeting and arrange for alternate ways to contribute to the class community. Participation grades are calculated based on attendance, punctuality, and thoughtful engagement in class sessions and small-group work. There will also be short, graded assignments (your introductory video at the beginning of semester, for example), in-class group work, and sundry other tasks throughout the semester.

**Discussion Posts and responding to your colleagues (20% of final grade).** Students will write discussion posts ***or*** record videos in response to prompts about designated assigned readings. In general, a written post should comprise 400 words or fewer. A video post should be 2 minutes or shorter. Organize your thinking about the ideas and arguments made by the authors we are discussing. Make an informed critique of ideas, rather than merely summarizing the readings. If you reference articles, papers, books, or other media beyond the course texts, cite them appropriately. Finally, read or listen to your colleagues’ posts and write a brief response to four (4) of your classmates. Tentative discussion due dates: 9/20; 9/27; 10/4; 10/9; 11/1; 11/15; 12/6

**Essay and Presentation** **(20% of final grade).** Composing an essay (2,500 words or fewer) and presenting formally (typically with a slide deck and a video) via Panopto.

* Option One: Focus on civic/democratic education: Provide an analysis of your K-12 civic education through the lens of Parker’s framework of democratic education. In your K-12 schooling, did you attend a school in which there was an emphasis on the kinds of topics and ideas that Walter Parker and James Baldwin wrote about or was there no such emphasis in your K-12 schooling? Was there a specific experience that you remember in which teachers or staff members emphasized that what you were doing was related to life in a democratic society? Was there ever a controversy related to reciting the Pledge or something similar? Reflecting back on these events now, what seems surprising or particularly pertinent to share with the class? [Be specific–it is better to choose one event and explore that one event rather than provide a shallow overview.]
* Option Two: Focus on a non-curricular element of your K-12 education such as the music program, theater program or sports program. Examine this program through the lens of Critical Race Theory. What do you notice now that you may not have considered before regarding the nature of that program? Questions to ask: If you are looking at your school’s theater program, who chose the plays? Looking back 20 years, who were the playwrights that you performed? Which playwrights were not chosen? Similarly, if you were in a marching band, who chose the music? Who were the composers? If you were in a sports program, consider the legacy of how accessible the program is. Were there extra fees? If this was a public school, was there a late bus that made getting to practice possible?
* Option Three: A topic of your choosing. But you must meet with me prior to making your decision about this so I can help you think through the topic.

More details about this assignment will be outlined in class on October 17, but here is a brief outline of the expectations: describe your essay topic to the class on October 24 (recording a short video on Canvas and speaking to your colleagues in person during class); provide a draft outline of your presentation by November 1; submit a final draft of your essay and a video of your presentation by November 12.

**Quizzes (20% of final grade - eight throughout the semester).** Short, relatively low-stakes quizzes throughout the semester allow the community of learners to check our understanding of the readings. Some of these quizzes will occur during face-to-face class sessions, sometimes at the beginning of class and sometimes at the end. (You’ll be alerted ahead of time, regardless.) And sometimes quizzes will be administered through Canvas, to be completed outside of class sessions. These are not meant to be high-pressure events. Tentative quiz dates: 9/11; 9/17; 9/26; 10/1; 10/8; 10/15; 10/22; 11/14.

**Final project (20% of final grade).***“Because if I am not what I’ve been told I am, then it means that you’re not what you thought you were either. And that is the crisis.”* – James Baldwin (1963) “A Talk to Teachers”

In this assignment, written and rewritten in stages throughout the final weeks of the term, you are asked to explore your educational experiences and the messages, lessons, distortions, celebrations, stereotypes, and ideas that you carry with you. Due dates for draft sections: November 22 & December 6. Final draft due on December 16. (3,000 words or fewer)

**Late Work and Absence Policy**

If you need an extension, please ask before the assignment is due. I will assume that if you ask, you need an extension for a valid reason and that you will turn the work in within a mutually agreed upon time frame. You need not divulge reasons you need the extension, but I ask that you work with me to come up with a reasonable plan for completing the assignment.

Class attendance and participation are important. I will post slides of class materials, but that does not replace the interaction and class activities we do in person. Come to class prepared and ready to participate. If you miss a class, please reach out. (Pro tip: Don’t write “let me know if I missed anything.”) Absences or lack of engagement in class sessions will negatively impact your grade in this course.

**Required Texts to purchase.** You may purchase a used text.

* Ewing, Eve. (2018). *Ghosts in the Schoolyard: Racism and School Closings on Chicago’s South Side*. University of Chicago Press.
* Vargas, Jose Antonio (2018). *Dear America: Notes of an Undocumented Citizen*. (I encourage you to listen to the audiobook version, read by the author, as you travel over Thanksgiving Break. But reading the print version is fine, too.)

**Letters of Accommodation.** Students who have Letters of Accommodation in this class are encouraged to contact me as early in the semester as possible to ensure that such accommodations are implemented in a timely fashion. For those without Letters of Accommodation, assistance is available to eligible students through the Disability Resource Center (DRC). Please contact ADA Coordinators Jodi Litchfield, Peter Ploegman, and Deirdre Kelly of the DRC at ada@middlebury.edu for more information. All discussions will remain confidential.

**TENTATIVE READING SCHEDULE (subject to minor changes)**

**Introduction to Education in the USA**

September 10:

* Course syllabus for EDST0115C
* Donahue, T. (2023, October 23). [If Everyone Gets an A, No One Gets an A](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/23/opinion/grade-inflation-high-school.html?searchResultPosition=6). *New York Times.*

September 12:

* Chapter 1: “Culture Wars and the Goals of Schooling” from *American Education*, 21st edition, by Joel Spring. (Canvas file)

**Education In and For Democratic Life**

September 17:

* Parker, W.C. (2023) *Education for Liberal Democracy: Using Classroom Discussion to Build Knowledge and Voice.* (pages 1 - 24) (Canvas file)

September 19:

* Parker, W.C. (2023) *Education for Liberal Democracy: Using Classroom Discussion to Build Knowledge and Voice.* Chapter 3: Teaching Against Idiocy (pages 41 - 52) (Canvas file)

September 24:

* King, M.L. (1947). [“The Purpose of Education”](https://kinginstitute.stanford.edu/king-papers/documents/purpose-education). *Maroon Tiger.*
* Mineo, L. (2020). [How textbooks taught white supremacy](https://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2020/09/harvard-historian-examines-how-textbooks-taught-white-supremacy/?utm_source=SilverpopMailing&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Daily%20Gazette%2020200908%20(1)). *The Harvard Gazette.*
* [“A Call for Unity”](https://www.dbu.edu/mitchell/modern-resources/_documents/acallforunitytextandbackground.pdf), also known as “Statement by Alabama Clergymen”
* “[Letter from a Birmingham Jail](https://www.africa.upenn.edu/Articles_Gen/Letter_Birmingham.html)”, by Martin Luther King, Jr. April 1963.
* Baldwin, J. (1963) “[A Talk to Teachers](https://www.zinnedproject.org/materials/baldwin-talk-to-teachers)” Reprinted in *The Price of the Ticket: Collected Non-Fiction* (1985)
* Watch: Ta-nehisi Coates (2017) [When Every Word Doesn't Belong to Everyone](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QO15S3WC9pg)

September 26:

* Labaree, D.F. (1997). ["Public Goods, Private Goods: The American Struggle over Educational Goals.”](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/epdf/10.3102/00028312034001039) *American Educational Research Journal. 34*(1). pp 39-81. (Canvas file)

**The Challenge of Assessment**

October 1:

* Koretz, D. (2017), *The Testing Charade*, chapters 1-4, by Daniel Koretz [PDF of these chapters are on our Canvas site.]
* Lewis Jr., N. (2023). Are Standardized Tests Racist, or Are They Anti-racist? *The Atlantic*. (Canvas file or this link if you subscribe: [Are Standardized Tests Racist, or Are They Anti-racist? - The Atlantic](https://www.theatlantic.com/science/archive/2023/01/should-college-admissions-use-standardized-test-scores/672816/))

October 3:

* Familiarize yourself with the [NAEP website](https://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/) and “[The Nation’s Report Card”](https://www.nationsreportcard.gov/)
* Read: [A Technical History of NAEP](https://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/about/newnaephistory.aspx)
* Skim: [2022 NAEP Mathematics Assessment](https://www.nationsreportcard.gov/mathematics/?grade=4)
* Skim: [2022 NAEP Reading Assessment](https://www.nationsreportcard.gov/reading/?grade=4)

October 8:

* [PISA 2022 Results (Volume I): The State of Learning and Equity in Education](https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/docserver/53f23881-en.pdf?expires=1705444927&id=id&accname=guest&checksum=FD07B8770D59C4989EDE44B8A365E451)
	+ Executive Summary (pages 26 - 37)
	+ What is PISA? (pages 38 - 42) [What is PISA? | PISA 2022 Results (Volume I) : The State of Learning and Equity in Education | OECD iLibrary](https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/52197e02-en/index.html?itemId=/content/component/52197e02-en)

October 10:

* *The New York Times* (October 23, 2023): New SAT Data Highlights the Deep Inequality at the Heart of American Education
	+ Video: <https://www.nytimes.com/video/education/100000009225159/new-sat-data-highlights-the-deep-inequality-at-the-heart-of-american-education.html?searchResultPosition=1>
	+ Interactive Graphic: <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/10/23/upshot/sat-inequality.html?searchResultPosition=2>
* Flanagan, C. (April 4, 2019). [They had it coming.](https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2019/04/what-college-admissions-scandal-reveals/586468/) *The Atlantic*. (Canvas)
* Janowski, E. (May 15, 2021). [Cheating investigation embroils Geisel in controversy](https://www.thedartmouth.com/article/2021/05/cheating-investigation-embroils-geisel-in-controversy). *The Dartmouth*.
* Morey, A. (June 10, 2021). [Dartmouth drops cheating charges against med students, apologizes for flawed investigation.](https://www.thefire.org/dartmouth-drops-cheating-charges-against-med-students-apologizes-for-flawed-investigation/) *The Fire*.
* Levenson, M. (2022). [Hoping to Identify Cheaters, A Professor Sues His Own Students](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/03/17/us/chapman-law-cheating-professor.html?referringSource=articleShare). *The New York Times*.
* Goldstein, M. (2022). [Ernst & Young to Pay $100 Million Fine After Auditors Cheated on Ethics Exams](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/06/28/business/ernst-young-sec-cheating.html?referringSource=articleShare). *The New York Times*.

**FALL BREAK (October 11)**

**“Just What is Critical Race Theory and What’s It Doing in a Nice Field Like Education?”**

October 15:

* Wikipedia entry about CRT: (OK to skim, as there’s a lot!) <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Critical_race_theory>
* Ladson-Billings, G. (1998). “Just What is Critical Race Theory and What’s It Doing in a Nice Field Like Education?”, *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education, 11*(1) DOI: 10.1080/095183998236863
* Yosso, T (2005). “Whose culture has capital? A critical race theory discussion of community cultural wealth” *Race Ethnicity and Education, 8*(1), 69-91

October 17:

* Wikipedia entry 2020s controversies around critical race theory
* Ray, R. & Gibbons, A. (2021) Why are states banning critical race theory? *Brookings.* <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/why-are-states-banning-critical-race-theory/>
* UCLA School of Law CRT Forward Tracking Project. Executive Summary. [Tracking the Attack on Critical Race Theory](https://crtforward.law.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/UCLA-Law_CRT-Report_Exec-Summary.pdf) and peruse the Map [CRT Forward](https://crtforward.law.ucla.edu/)
* Butcher, J. (2022). A Critical Look at Critical Race Theory in America’s Classrooms. <https://www.heritage.org/education/commentary/critical-look-critical-race-theory-americas-classrooms>
* Xu, Kenny (2021). Critical Race Theory’s Poisonous Roots Trace Back to Harvard University. *The Federalist.* <https://thefederalist.com/2021/06/09/critical-race-theorys-poisonous-roots-trace-back-to-harvard-university/>
* Krasne, E. (2020). How Critical Race Theory Poisons Our Discussions of Racism. *The Heritage Foundation*. <https://www.heritage.org/civil-society/commentary/how-leftists-critical-race-theory-poisons-our-discussion-racism>
* Marino, M., Kuckelman, M., Burke, L. Ries, L. (2024). The Consequences of Unchecked Illegal Immigration on America’s Public Schools. *The Heritage Foundation.* <https://www.heritage.org/education/report/the-consequences-unchecked-illegal-immigration-americas-public-schools>
* Watch this [short video](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l8O-7KqDCew&t=1s) produced by The Heritage Foundation

Please skim these so that you know where to find this information:

* The Heritage Foundation: Critical Race Theory <https://www.heritage.org/crt>
	+ Scan through this collection to find some that you’re interested in.
	+ Moschella, M. (2022). Critical Race Theory, Public Schools, and Parental Rights. <https://www.heritage.org/education/commentary/critical-race-theory-public-schools-and-parental-rights>
* American Psychological Association. (2023). Inclusive language guide (2nd ed.). "<https://www.apa.org/about/apa/equity-diversity-inclusion/language-guidelines.pdf>”

October 22:

* 1619 Lead Essay, by Nikole Hannah-Jones, [America Wasn’t a Democracy, Until Black Americans Made It One - The New York Times](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2019/08/14/magazine/black-history-american-democracy.html) *New York Times Magazine*
* [John McWhorter: We cannot allow ‘1619’ to dumb down America in the name of a crusade](https://broadandliberty.com/2020/05/24/john-mcwhorter-we-cannot-allow-1619-to-dumb-down-america-in-the-name-of-a-crusade/). *Broad + Liberty*
* [The New York Times Begins Correcting the Historical Record on "1619 Project" | The Heritage Foundation](https://www.heritage.org/american-founders/commentary/the-new-york-times-begins-correcting-the-historical-record-1619)
* Skim: The 1776 Report (2021). “[The President’s Advisory 1776 Commission](https://trumpwhitehouse.archives.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/The-Presidents-Advisory-1776-Commission-Final-Report.pdf)”
* OPTIONAL: NYT Response to historians critiquing 1619 <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/12/20/magazine/we-respond-to-the-historians-who-critiqued-the-1619-project.html?ugrp=m&unlocked_article_code=1.hE0.RoZ-.xQjzRgObs8ci&smid=url-share>
* OPTIONAL: NYT update to 1619 <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/11/magazine/an-update-to-the-1619-project.html?ugrp=m&unlocked_article_code=1.hE0.QlEw.c9QxYWmSCxFp&smid=url-share>
* OPTIONAL: Ezra Klein Podcast. July 30, 2021. What’s Really Behind the 1619 Backlash? <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/07/30/opinion/ezra-klein-podcast-ta-nehisi-coates-nikole-hannah-jones.html?ugrp=m&unlocked_article_code=1.hE0.IFiH.V5_2cEzO3TZs&smid=url-share>
* OPTIONAL (NEW): Podcast (41 minutes): The Attack on Black History, with Nikole Hannah-Jones and Jelani Cobb [https://one.npr.org/i/1243125783:1243125785](https://one.npr.org/i/1243125783%3A1243125785)

October 24:

* Project 2025 Presidential Transition Project: Jigsaw activity
	+ *The Truth About Project 2025:* <https://www.project2025.org/truth/>
	+ Burke, L. M. (2024). Chapter 11: Department of Education <https://static.project2025.org/2025_MandateForLeadership_CHAPTER-11.pdf>

**Why do we talk so much about race in a class about education?**

October 29:

* Ladson-Billings, G. (2006) “[It’s Not the Culture of Poverty, It’s the Poverty of Culture: The Problem with Teacher Education](https://anthrosource.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1525/aeq.2006.37.2.104?saml_referrer)” *Anthropology and Education Quarterly, Vol. 37* (2), pp. 104–109.
* Talking to strangers? Parker, W.C. (2023) *Education for Liberal Democracy: Using Classroom Discussion to Build Knowledge and Voice.* Chapter 6: Listening to Strangers (pages 83 - 98) (Canvas file)

October 31:

* Peters, J. W. (February 1, 2024). [Coleman Hughes, the Young Black Conservative Who Grew Up With, and Rejects, D.E.I. - The New York Times](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/01/us/coleman-hughes-black-conservative-colorblind.html?searchResultPosition=1). *The New York Times*.
* Spiers, E. (January 14, 2024). [What Nikki Haley — and I — Learned at a Segregation Academy](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/14/opinion/nikki-haley-slavery-civil-war.html?searchResultPosition=1). *The New York Times.*
* [Wong, Janelle (2022). Asian Americans and the anti-racist equity agenda: Contradictions and common ground.](https://www.epi.org/publication/asian-americans-and-the-anti-racist-equity-agenda-contradictions-and-common-ground/) *Economic Policy Institute*.
* Edsall, T. (2023). [Who's Afraid of Integration? A Lot of People, Actually](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/04/05/opinion/school-integration-segregation). *The New York Times, April 5, 2023*.

**Teaching Banned Books with Professor Affolter**

November 5:

* [**READ THE PROLOGUE**](https://middlebury.instructure.com/courses/15351/files?preview=2712681&sort=created_at&order=desc)to the “big book” **(The "adult" version of *Stamped From The Beginning*)**
* Read the version that you selected – either the “For Kids” version or the “Young Adult” version of “Stamped from the Beginning”, by Ibram X. Kendi;
	+ “Stamped: Racism, Antiracism, and You”, by Jason Reynolds and Ibram X. Kendi;
	+ “Stamped (for Kids): Racism, Antiracism, and You”, by Jason Reynolds and Ibram X. Kendi, Adapted by Sonja Cherry-Paul; with art by Rachelle Baker

November 7:

* Watch “Author Jason Reynolds Speaks Out on Banned Books And Passing Along Love of Reading” ~ 8 minutes on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jEsF-Km_0g4>
* Prepare for Class Activity

**What Does a School Mean to a Community?**

November 12:

* Introduction, Chapter 1. *Ghosts in the Schoolyard: Racism and School Closings on Chicago’s South Side*.
* **Watch:**[Eve Ewing on the Daily Show](http://www.cc.com/video-clips/va29l1/the-daily-show-with-trevor-noah-eve-l--ewing---breaking-down-structural-racism-with--ghosts-in-the-schoolyard-)

November 14:

* Chapter 2. *Ghosts in the Schoolyard: Racism and School Closings on Chicago’s South Side*.

November 19:

* Chapter 3. *Ghosts in the Schoolyard: Racism and School Closings on Chicago’s South Side*.

November 21:

* Chapter 4. *Ghosts in the Schoolyard: Racism and School Closings on Chicago’s South Side*.

**THANKSGIVING BREAK**

**Our personal, educational experience is, also, always, and ever a**

**political experience.**

December 3:

* Read or Listen to: Vargas, J. (2017). *Dear America*. Parts 1 & 2

December 5:

* Read or Listen to: Vargas, J. (2017). *Dear America*. Part 3