

SOCIOLOGY OF EDUCATION

Last Updated: Fri, 12/26/2025

Course prefix: HTS

Course number: 3072

Section: A

CRN (you may add up to five):
34997

Instructor First Name: CALVIN

Instructor Last Name: ZIMMERMANN

Semester: Spring

Academic year: 2026

Course description:

Why does educational inequality persist in the United States, and how does schooling reflect, and shape, broader patterns of social inequality? This course explores the sociology of education with a special focus on the relationship between race, education, and American society. Much of the course will examine the historical and contemporary educational experiences of Native Americans and Black Americans. We begin by examining the philosophical origins of American education and the ways in which historical struggles over race have produced enduring inequalities. We then turn to contemporary research, analyzing how inequality emerges and compounds over time. Along the way, we will consider how schools both challenge and reproduce broader social hierarchies, as well as how educational opportunities and barriers shape life chances.

Course learning outcomes:

By the end of the semester, you will:

- Have a research-based understanding of how and why race shapes educational outcomes
- Understand the diverse ways in which social scientists study educational inequality
- Identify the strengths and limitations of social scientific theories and research
- Develop your ability to connect social theories to contemporary real-world issues in American education
- Further develop your ability to critically analyze, produce, and present academic writing

Required course materials:

Ewing, Eve. 2025. *Original Sins: The (Mis)education of Black and Native Children and the Construction of American Racism*. Penguin Random House.

You can purchase the book from the Georgia Tech bookstore. New Print Buy: \$32; Digital: \$13.99

Grading policy:

Below is how your final grade will be computed.

- Attendance 7.5%
- Participation 7.5%
- Synthesis Papers (Due by 1/30, 3/20, & 4/10) 25%
- Research Proposal (Due by 2/20) 15%
- Research Paper Presentation 15%
- Research Paper (Due by 5/5) 30%

90% and above = A

80-89% = B

70-79% = C

60-69% = D

Less than 60% = F

Attendance policy:

Note that attendance (7.5%) and participation (7.5%) are a substantial part of your grade. Attendance is required and will be recorded each class period. I will allow one unexcused absence. All other absences must be formally excused by Georgia Tech and documented. After that, each unexcused absence will result in minus 2.5% for your final attendance. You are responsible for any content that you miss.

You are also expected to participate in daily class discussions and small-group activities. Please note that this class is based on a discussion-style rather than solely a lecture-style. The course will have a mix of lecture, small-group discussions, entire group discussions, in-class activities, and brief individual writing assignments where you will be expected to respond to a question. This will, potentially, allow me to randomly call on all students for discussion of course materials and ideas. At the beginning of the semester, I will discuss the various ways that students may participate including, but not limited to, asking questions, responding to discussion questions, and being an active participant in small-group activities/discussions.

Academic honesty/integrity statement:

Students are expected to maintain the highest standards of academic integrity. All work submitted must be original and properly cited. Plagiarism, cheating, or any form of academic dishonesty will result in immediate consequences as outlined in the university's academic integrity policy.

Core IMPACTS statement(s) (if applicable):

This is a Core IMPACTS course that is part of the Social Sciences area.

Core IMPACTS refers to the core curriculum, which provides students with essential knowledge in foundational academic areas. This course will help master course content, and support students' broad academic and career goals.

This course directs students toward a broad Orienting Question:

- How do I understand human experiences and connections?

Completion of this course enable students to meet the following Learning Outcome:

- Students will effectively analyze the complexity of human behavior, and how historical, economic, political, social, or geographic relationships develop, persist, or change.

Course content, activities and exercises in this course will help students develop the following Career-Ready Competencies:

- Intercultural Competence
- Perspective-Taking
- Persuasion