Class Times: Tuesday, Thursday 9:30-10:45 AM
Class Location: ____

Instructor: Markus Kemmelmeier, Ph.D.
Office: Mack Social Sciences 304
Email: WebCampus message (preferred) or markusk@unr.edu
Phone: (775) 784-1287
Office hours: Tuesday, 10:45-12:00 PM or by appointment

Teaching assistant: ____
Office: Mack Social Sciences ____
Email: WebCampus message or ____
Office hours: ____

Course description
This course provides a social-psychological approach to education. This field is equally rooted in three academic disciplines: sociology, psychology and education; hence, the readings and theoretical approaches covered in this course draw on these three disciplines. The primary focus of this course is on social psychological questions and processes that occur in educational contexts, whether that includes kindergarten, elementary school, secondary school or higher education.

This course meets the university's general CAPSTONE requirement for undergraduate students. As such, undergraduate students must be at least of junior standing to be eligible for this class. The present course also includes graduate students. Given their more advanced academic standing, some of the assignments for graduate students will be more demanding and grading criteria will be applied more rigorously.

Core objectives and student learning outcomes
The course satisfies two core objectives (CO) of the Core Curriculum:

**CO 10 (Diversity & Equity):** Students will demonstrate an understanding of diversity through courses that focus on topics such as race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, religion, physical ability, language, and/or social class with an emphasis on the analysis of equity. Students will apply and evaluate approaches or modes of inquiry used to analyze diversity and equity and the social barriers to these goals.

*How will this be accomplished:* Education is central in structuring opportunity in any modern society. Readings, lectures, discussions, movies and assignments will focus on questions of advantage vs. disadvantage; cultural difference; differing mindsets and fairness in education. Students learn how to recognize how background characteristics, which are often outside of one’s control and awareness, help shape one’s trajectory through the educational system.

**CO 13 (Integration & Synthesis):** Students will be able to integrate and synthesize Core knowledge, enabling them to analyze open-ended problems or complex issues.

*How will this be accomplished:* Education is a multifaceted process that encompasses influences ranging from early experiences in the home to broad national policies. Readings, lectures, discussions, movies and assignments will focus on the different sources shaping individuals’ achievement, their motivation and interests, as well as the influence of educational institutions. Much attention will be devoted to former and ongoing policies aimed at improving educational outcomes and equity, and their often complex consequences. Students learn how to analyze and evaluate actual and proposed policies based on social psychological research and theory.
The course further develops (but does not satisfy) CO 1 (Effective composition and communication), CO 3 (Critical analysis and Use of Information), CO 6 (Cultures, Societies, and Individuals) and CO 11 (Global Contexts). It will do so via the following Student Learning Outcomes (SLO):

**SLO #1:** Students will be able to identify fundamental concepts and theories in studying educational processes from a social science perspective, apply theories from previous courses in psychology and/or sociology, and demonstrate knowledge of social-scientific methods for studying human social relations in the educational domain (satisfies CO 13; integrates CO 6)

**SLO #2:** Students will be able to recognize characteristic similarities and differences between diverse social and cultural groups, and identify the ways in which such differences shape achievement, attainment and educational systems (satisfies CO 10)

**SLO #3:** Students will be able to use insights from different academic disciplines, explain how institutional arrangements maintain, enhance or reduce levels of achievement, and analyze the social-psychological processes involved (satisfies CO 13; integrates CO 6)

**SLO #4:** Students will be able to integrate research and theory from different academic disciplines, identify and analyze educational problems and policy challenges, especially as they concern equality and the achievement of disadvantaged groups (satisfies CO 10, CO 13)

**SLO #5:** Students will be able to acquire scholarly knowledge about educational problems and challenges, and effectively compose written texts, which systematically analyze the problems, critically evaluate different perspectives and approaches, and communicate possible conclusions (satisfies CO 13; integrates CO 1, CO 3)

**SLO #6:** Students will be able to identify the similarities and differences between the educational systems of different countries, evaluate their successes and challenges, analyze the social, economic and policy factors that shape these systems, and explain implications for academic achievement (satisfies CO 13; integrates CO 11)

**Readings**

Regrettably, there exists no viable textbook on the social psychology of education; thus, course readings are primarily composed of books (short ones), chapters, articles, and book excerpts from a variety of different sources. The readings include original empirical research reports, which tend to be more demanding than most textbook fare. There will be readings for every class, with a slightly higher weekly reading load for graduate students compared to undergraduate students. Keeping up with the readings is critical not only for your success in this course, but also for the success of in-class discussion.

Please purchase this book, which is available at the UNR bookstore:


All others readings are available via the library’s electronic reserves. Whatever is not available there, is posted on WebCampus. In order to open these files, your computer must have Adobe Acrobat Reader installed. If you do not have this program, download it for free from www.adobe.com. Because we will read the better part of it, it is recommended that you purchase the following book:


The above book is not available at the UNR bookstore because you can purchase it substantially cheaper via the Internet, new or used (e.g., alibris.com, amazon.com, bn.com, bookemporium.com, ecampus.com). This book is also available on (physical) reserve at the library along with the two movies that we will be watching in this course.
Website
This course uses WebCampus, an online system that allows you access to various course materials, including updated versions of the syllabus. Further, you need to submit your writing assignments via WebCampus. To access WebCampus, go to http://webcampus.unr.edu and log in with your net id and password. You need to check WebCampus regularly as updated course materials will be posted there. Further, you will be able to monitor your grades on this website.

All in-class PowerPoint presentations will be posted on WebCampus prior to or shortly after class. In order to download and open the presentation, you need Microsoft PowerPoint or Adobe Acrobat Reader.

Exams
There will be three exams: two midterm exams (75 min), and a 2-hour final exam. All exams consist of essay questions. The final exam will refer to material from the entire course. The exams mainly test your understanding of and your ability to think critically about the course materials, and to apply them to new situations. The exams are based on the readings and the material presented in class, including lectures, discussions, handouts, demonstrations, and audio-visual materials. Although you will receive various sample questions to help you prepare, there will be no study guide.

Quizzes
There will be a total of ten (10) quizzes. Each quiz will typically on a Thursday (but see schedule for exceptions) and focus on the readings of two days: those readings assigned for the day of the quiz, and the readings assigned for the day of the last class meeting (typically a Tuesday and Thursday of the same week). The quizzes will be very easy if you have taken the time do to do the readings—and in most instances we will have discussed some of the readings on the day prior to the quiz. We will discuss all quizzes in class to provide you with instant feedback. There will be no make-up quizzes, but only your seven best quizzes (i.e. 7 of 10) will count toward your final grade.

Article presentations
GRADUATE STUDENTS ONLY. As mentioned above, graduate students taking this course as SOC 663 have a slightly higher reading load than undergraduate students. In order for the entire class to benefit from these additional readings, for each session in which an additional reading is assigned, a graduate student will be put in charge of presenting the additional article to the remainder of the class (three (3) presentations per graduate student over the course of the semester). The presentation should be short and concise: Focus on the central take-home points. Explain what the authors did (e.g., if it is an empirical study), describe their findings, arguments and/or conclusions. Your in-class presentation should be around 5 minutes long. Use a short PowerPoint presentation or a handout, which can be shared with the remainder of the class.

Writing assignments
UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS: You are required to write THREE of four essays. You can choose any topic as long as your essay topic is related to the in-class topics of the weeks preceding the deadline of the paper. (If in doubt, don’t hesitate to ask!) The task is for you to generate a paper in which you deal with a particular question or problem, e.g., by discussing different perspectives and approaches. The essay must be related to the topics that were discussed in class during the weeks prior to the essay’s deadline. Each essay can incorporate material from the class readings, but it must also include materials from at least four (4) relevant scholarly sources that are not assigned as part of this course. Mind the in-class discussion of what qualifies as a scholarly source: in essence, all peer-reviewed materials (academic journals) count! See WebCampus for assistance with identifying scholarly sources. Additional sources can be the internet, newspaper reports, movies, talks, personal experience etc. You are encouraged to include relevant personal experience in the essay, but remember: the essay is not about you! The goals for these essays are for you:
   a) to demonstrate relevant knowledge in a particular area of the social psychology of education (loosely defined);
   b) to understand and integrate pertinent materials;
c) to draw conclusions from the material you review. The paper should NOT presume that the reader has taken this course (or is teaching this course). Write the paper to a general reader who is interested in educational issues, broadly conceived, and who might be interested in learning something about the issues you are discussing in your paper. At the same time, it is assumed that you know the material covered in class—feel free to discuss it as it pertains to your topic. Also, you may wish to cite class readings, though they will not count toward the above four required scholarly sources. Grading will reflect how well your paper achieves the above goals. Regarding format, to be accepted the paper must

a) be between 2,200 and 2,800 words long.¹ The word count includes the text of your essay only, but not the title page or the reference list. Submissions with less than 2,200 words will not be accepted;

b) be double-spaced;

c) use a standard format for professional papers in sociology, psychology or education (i.e. ASA style, APA style, Chicago style, MLA style etc.);

d) use 12-point Times New Roman;

e) formatted with 1” or 1.25” margins;

f) have a cover sheet including the paper title, your name and the class (which does not count toward the total word count);

g) have a separate reference page (which does not count toward the total word count);

h) have numbered pages.

There will be four opportunities for you to submit essays, i.e. four essay deadlines, and you are encouraged to submit four essays that meet the above requirements. However, only the THREE BEST ESSAYS will count toward your final grade. The first essay, due on February 17, is MANDATORY.

You must submit at least 3 essays in order to pass this course.

GRADUATE STUDENTS: Your writing assignment is essentially the same as those of your classmates at the undergraduate level, except that your essays should include at least six (6) scholarly sources that are not assigned as part of this course.

SUBMISSION MODE. Submit your essays by 11:59 PM on or before the day indicated in the course schedule via the Assignment section in WebCampus. (Never paste your essay in the body of an email message). Note that we are using SafeAssign, a service that automatically checks for potential plagiarism.

LATE POLICY. For every day that your paper is late, I will deduct two thirds of a letter grade from your assignment grade (i.e. an A- will become a B; a B+ will become a B- etc.).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grading scale</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Midterm exam #1</td>
<td>13%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Midterm exam #2</td>
<td>13%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final exam</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 essays @ each 13%</td>
<td>39%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quizzes</td>
<td>13%</td>
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<tr>
<td>In-class participation</td>
<td>7%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
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 Unless noted otherwise, the grading scale will be 90-100% = A range, 80-90% = B range, 70-80% = C range, 60-70% = D range. The grading scale in this course includes “plus” (+) and “minus” (-) grades. This grading scale is also applied to the combined number of quizzes.

Computation of final grade: Letter grades will be converted to their GPA equivalent based on the UNR conversion table: A = 4.0; A- = 3.7; B+ = 3.3; B = 3.0; B- = 2.7 etc.

¹ Familiarize yourself with the “word count” function of your word processor. Do not look at the automatic word count at the bottom of your window. Instead highlight the text of your essay, and then click on “word count” or the equivalent tool.
Assistance
If you require any particular arrangements, e.g., due to a learning disability, please inform me immediately. It is your responsibility to seek assistance when you are having difficulty understanding the course material. Keep in mind that you should contact me as soon as an issue emerges, as you cannot necessarily expect to receive assistance on the day of the exam/on the due date of an assignment.

Writing assistance
An important part of your graduate education is that you hone your writing skills. And, as for any kind of learning process, feedback is crucially important if you want to get better. In order for you to improve your writing assignments, I recommend that you visit the UNR Writing Center http://www.unr.edu/writing_center/. There you will find people ready to give you helpful feedback. Keep in mind that the best writers always use others’ feedback to improve their work.

Participation & Attendance
Your active participation in discussions and activities is critically important for the success of this class. Naturally, this includes that you come to class, having done the readings for the day. However, there will be no formal record of your attendance. It is clear, though, that you cannot actively participate when you are not physically present. Further, given that the content of class presentations, demonstrations and discussions is exam-relevant, it is your responsibility to make sure that you have all relevant course notes.

Emergencies
If there is an emergency that does not allow you to complete assignments or take exams, please contact me as soon as possible. For example, should a family emergency require that you leave town, be sure to contact me before you leave, not afterwards.

Academic Dishonesty
Academic dishonesty (e.g., cheating on exams, plagiarism) is a serious offense. All work that you submit in this class must be your own original work, and must have been generated by you specifically for the assignments. Academic dishonesty can take on many forms including, but not limited to, the use of prohibited materials during examinations, having one’s own assignments completed by a third party, submit the identical paper in two different courses, and plagiarism—each of which is a serious offense.

Each student is responsible for being familiar with UNR's policies on academic dishonesty, available at http://www.unr.edu/student-conduct/policies/university-policies-and-guidelines/academic-standards/policy. It is the policy of the Department of Sociology that any student who engages in any act of academic dishonesty will receive automatically a course grade of “F.” Further, in accordance with the UNR’s Undergraduate Academic Dishonesty Procedures, a record will created with the Office of Student Judicial Affairs. Repeated offenses may lead to the expulsion from the university.

What is plagiarism? Whereas most acts of academic dishonesty are obvious, students are sometimes unclear what “plagiarism” entails. Plagiarism means that you incorporate another author’s work into your own, but create the impression that you yourself are the original author. For instance, it is plagiarism when you cut and paste another author’s text into your own paper, but do not clearly mark it as a quote and do not credit the original source. Another example of plagiarism is when you use another author’s text, but change the syntax and vocabulary only slightly. Yet another instance of plagiarism involves using another person’s ideas and presenting them as your own. The web offers a number of great resources on the subject of plagiarism that help you decide when you need to credit another author and when something can be assumed to be common knowledge (in which case you do not need to credit a source). See, e.g., http://libweb.uoregon.edu/guides/plagiarism/students/.

How to avoid plagiarism? When writing a paper, focus on what and how you want to say something, not on the language another author used. The easiest way is to follow a “closed source” policy: That is, when you have read a paper, book or website that is relevant to a paper that you are writing, close it and put it aside before you write your own text. Once you are done, go over your paper again and make sure that have not inadvertently
copied another person’s language. Likewise, make sure that you do not pretend that another person’s insights are
your own.

Keep in mind that plagiarism is more easily detected than you might think. Many instructors and graders have
access to the same resources as you (e.g., the internet) and routinely check up whether any text you have
submitted appears elsewhere. If you are in doubt whether something constitutes plagiarism or not, ask your
instructor, TA, or the UNR writing center, \url{http://www.unr.edu/writing_center/}.

Note that certain acts of academic dishonesty are also prohibited under Nevada law. Here the relevant section
from the Nevada Revised Statutes:

**NRS 207.320 Preparation or sale of academic writings.** Any person who prepares for sale or
sells any term paper, thesis, dissertation or similar writing intending such writing to be
submitted to an academic institution as the work of any person not the author in fulfillment of a
requirement for completion of a course of study, award of a degree or other academic credit is
guilty of a misdemeanor. (Added to NRS by 1973, 1161)

**Disputes**
In the unlikely case that there is a disagreement between the instructor and a student concerning any part of this
course, including grading, and the conflict cannot be resolved in a conference between student and instructor, it
is the student’s obligation to follow the grievance/appeal procedures as outlined in the University of Nevada
Catalog.

**Recording**
Surreptitious or covert video-taping of class or unauthorized audio recording of class is prohibited by law and by
Board of Regents policy. This class may be videotaped or audio recorded only with the written permission of the
instructor. In order to accommodate students with disabilities, some students may have been given permission to
record class lectures and discussions. If this occurs, students will be informed that their comments during class
may be recorded.

**Course schedule & Reading List**
Read all readings for the day of the class meeting day under which they are listed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session 1</th>
<th>Introduction to the course/Academic dishonesty as a social psychological issue</th>
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<tr>
<th>Session 2</th>
<th>The societal context of education: Theoretical approaches</th>
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<p>| Session 3 | Micro &amp; macro approaches/A social psychological approach |</p>
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading/Notes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Session 4</td>
<td>Jan 30 R</td>
<td>Stratification and mobility – Quiz #1 (Sess. 3 &amp; 4)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Session 5</td>
<td>Feb 4 T</td>
<td>Begin Movie “Stand and Deliver”</td>
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<td>CO 10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Session 6</td>
<td>Feb 6 R</td>
<td>Finish “Stand and deliver”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Session 7</td>
<td>Feb 11 T</td>
<td>Organizational dynamics: Tracking and ability grouping</td>
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<td>CO 10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Session 8</td>
<td>Feb 13 R</td>
<td>Cultural capital/What do grades reflect? – Quiz #2 (Sess. 5 &amp; 6)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb 17 M</td>
<td>(Prez Day)</td>
<td>*** Submit ESSAY #1 on or before this date ***</td>
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<td>****************** MANDATORY ****** MANDATORY ****** MANDATORY ******</td>
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<tr>
<td>Session 9</td>
<td>Feb 18 T</td>
<td>Socialization processes: The hidden curriculum</td>
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egalitarian attitudes and values: Contextual and cultural determinants. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass, 1*, 541-556.

**Session 10**  
Feb 20 R  
CO 13

**Attribution & motivation: Meaning making in the classroom – Quiz #3 (Sess. 7 & 8)**


**Session 11**  
Feb 25 T  
CO 13

**Beliefs about ability and effort**


**Session 12**  
Feb 27 R  
CO 10, 13

**The academic self-concept/Self-esteem - Quiz #4 (Sess. 11 & 12)**


**March 4 T**** MIDTERM EXAM #1 ****

**Session 13**  
March 6 R  
CO 10, 13

**How bad is it…?/Begin Movie “Waiting for Superman”**

Best, J. (2011). Looking backwards at fears of failing schools. Ch. II (pp. 4-8) of *The stupidity epidemic: Worrying about students, schools and America’s future*.

Best, J. (2011). Is there evidence that stupidity is increasing? Ch. III (pp. 9-29) of *The stupidity epidemic: Worrying about students, schools and America’s future*.

**Session 14**  
March 11 T  
CO 10, 13

**How bad is it…?/End Movie “Waiting for Superman”**


Best, J. (2011). Explaining the concern/Beyond stupidity: Better ways to think about educational issues. Ch. IV/V (pp. 30-44) of *The stupidity epidemic: Worrying about students, schools and America’s future*.

**Session 15**  
March 13 R  
CO 13

**Expectancies/Social Roles - Quiz #5 (Sess. 14 & 15)**

### Session 16
**March 25 T**

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<tr>
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<th>Mentoring &amp; Feedback giving</th>
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### Session 17
**March 27 R**

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<tr>
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<th>Race/ethnicity and achievement - Quiz #6 (Sess. 16 &amp; 17)</th>
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### Session 18
**April 1 T**

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<th>&quot;Model minorities”/Stereotyping</th>
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### Session 19
**April 3 R**

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<th>Academic disengagement; Stigmatized identities - Quiz #7 (Sess. 18 &amp; 19)</th>
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### Session 20
**April 8 T**

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<th>Intergroup relations &amp; Cooperative learning</th>
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### Session 21
**April 10 R**

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<th>Diversity in education/Affirmative Action - Quiz #8 (Sess. 20 &amp; 21)</th>
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**Mar 16 Sun*** Submit ESSAY #2 on or before this date ***

**Mar 18 & 20**** SPRING BREAK ******

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**April 6 Sun*** Submit ESSAY #3 on or before this date ***
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings / Notes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>April 15</td>
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<td>**** MIDTERM EXAM #2 ****</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 24</td>
<td>Session 24</td>
<td>Movie “The Heart of the Nation”</td>
<td>Start Stevenson &amp; Stigler (1992) reading for following week</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 27</td>
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<td>*** ESSAY #4 is due on or before this date***</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 13</td>
<td></td>
<td>12:30– 2:30 PM ***** Final Exam *****</td>
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